

## About Parity

As we each look to our plan of work for our specific areas of programming, we should first know who our potential clientele is within each program area. Generally this comes from several sources, including relevant and current statistical abstracts (not just the US Census, the Census can be a beginning, but may not be all inclusive); other appropriate advisory committees based on the program area, your State Extension Leadership; and your own community based research.

As we know our potential clientele, we should equally know our actual contacts. We should know these numbers by target groups, as appropriate; White, African American, Asian American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, some other race, two or more races and Hispanic. Remember that Hispanic is an ethnic identification, not a racial group, because Hispanics can be white or black or some other racial make-up. Also we should know how many males and females there are as potential and actual.

Programs are considered to be in parity when the percentage of each of these categories in the actual clientele group is within 80 percent of the percent of that category in the potential clientele group. For example: if the potential audience is 80% white with 20% American Indian, and the actual face to face contacts are 90% white and 10 American Indian, then we are not in parity with respect to American Indians.

When we have not achieved parity in program participants we must demonstrate (and document) “all reasonable efforts” we have implemented to attempt to achieve parity. This is where your Public Notification Plan kicks in and works for you. It is not enough to say, “it was in our newsletter”, as that most likely will not get it done. Document everything you do and why you did it (including thinking/doing outside the box; what you haven’t done in the past, etc.).

Rick Chavez  
USDA Civil Rights Review Team

(with edits Dionardo Pizana)