

## 2011 Program Report Card: Writing Affirmative Action Plans for DAS and SmART Agencies (Department of Administrative Services)

**Quality of Life Result:** All Connecticut residents are treated in a fair and non-discriminatory manner.

**Contribution to the Result:** DAS drafts Affirmative Action (AA) plans for several state agencies. AA plans contribute to fairness and non-discrimination by educating each agency and the interested public about the agency's equal employment opportunity (EEO) programs, encouraging the agencies to think critically about prior EEO activities and their effects, and documenting the agencies' plans for future EEO activities.

**Actual SFY 10 Total Program Expenditures:** \$263,356.00

**State Funding:** \$263,356.00

**Federal Funding:** \$0

**Other Funding:** \$0

**Estimated SFY 11 Total Program Expenditures:** \$263,356.00

**State Funding:** \$263,356.00

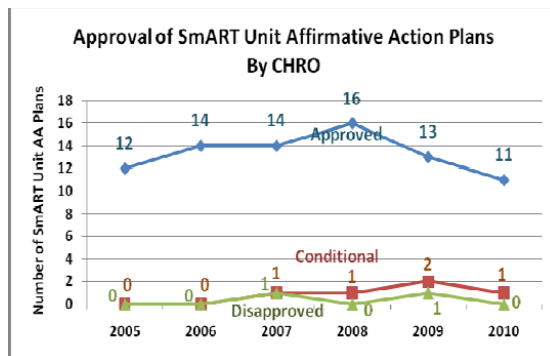
**Federal Funding:** \$0

**Other Funding:** \$0

**Partners:** CHRO, CT Association of Diversity and Equity Professionals, Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, African-American Affairs Commission, Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission, Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission, NAACP, Urban League of Greater Hartford and similar advocacy groups.

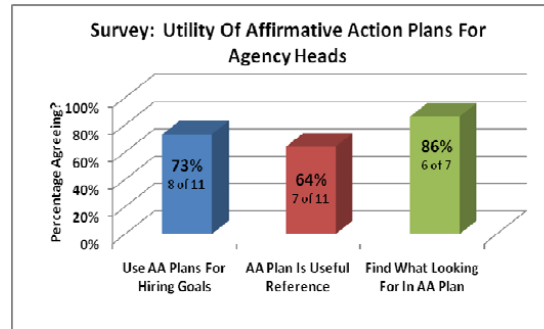
### Performance Measure 1:

Approval of "SmART unit" plans by CHRO



**Story behind the baseline:** This measure has an indirect and limited contribution to the ultimate result because approval is based on how well the plan complies with the CHRO's detailed and technical regulations, not specifically on the quality of the EEO activities. The usefulness of this measure is further weakened because many of the elements in the plan build on one another, such that a single error in one element may be repeated throughout the plan, compounding some deficiencies when there is conditional approval or disapproval. Most importantly, disapproval and conditional approvals have been very low incident occurrences so the value of this metric over time is questionable because there is so little variability.

**Performance Measure 2:** Utility of the plans to agency heads.



**Story behind the baseline:** DAS asked the "SmART agency" heads the following "yes" or "no" questions:

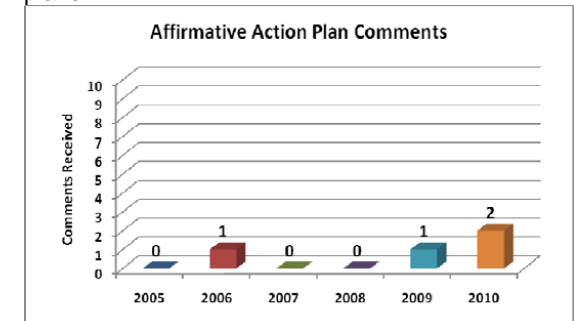
1. Do you look at your agency's AA plan (as opposed to calling your Human Resources or Affirmative Action officer) to determine your hiring goals?  
**RESPONSE: 8 out of 11 said YES**
2. Do you find that the AA plan is a useful reference tool in making decisions about agency programs and activities?  
**RESPONSE: 7 out of 11 said YES**
3. If you answered "yes" to #2, are you able to find what you are looking for in the AA plan readily?  
**RESPONSE: 6 out of 7 said YES**

The % of "yes" responses indicate that plan documents are somewhat useful resources to

agency heads but we do not have enough data to identify how agency heads use the plans and what changes are necessary to make the plans more useful.

**Data Development Agenda:** This was the first year the surveys were conducted. It would be useful to repeat the surveys on a yearly basis to measure change. It would also be useful to gather more detailed information about how agency heads use the plans and which aspects of AA plans they find to be most useful. It would also be beneficial to gather agency heads' opinions about whether there is information not contained in AA plans that they think should be included.

**Performance Measure 3:** Employee interest in the plans.

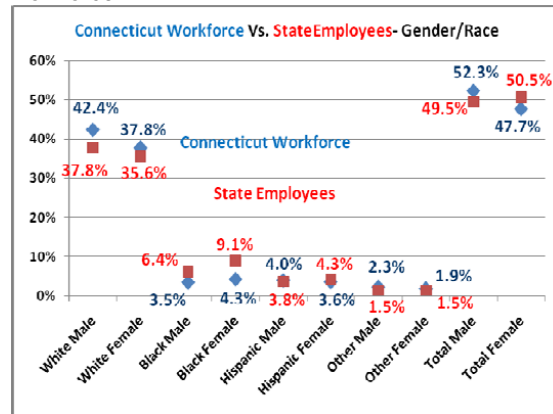


**Story behind the baseline:** Pursuant to CHRO regulations, employees of each agency are offered opportunities to comment on their agency's plan each year. Comments received are reported in the following year's plan. Since 2005, DAS has

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drafted plans on behalf of 12 to 17 agencies that cumulatively employ more than 1500 employees. In that time span, DAS has received only four (4) comments from employees. The consistently small number of comments on plans indicates that employees are not using the plans as an educational tool about their agencies' EEO activities.

**Performance Measure 4:** Diversity of agencies' workforce

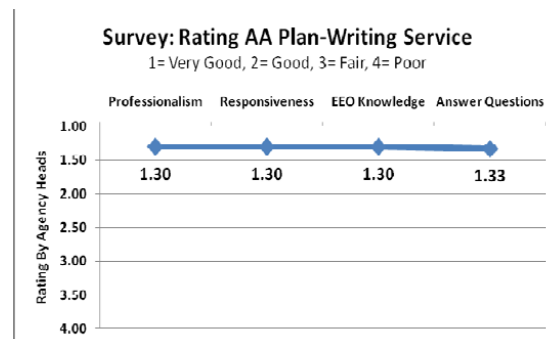


**Story behind the baseline:** The data above comparing the total Connecticut workforce with the employees who work in state government is taken from the 2008 CHRO annual report on Affirmative Action in Connecticut State Agencies. (The 2009 report has not yet been published.) The breakdown of employees by race and gender in the SmART agencies is consistent with the percentages reported for all state employees. (Although not included in the graph, the 2008 numbers vary from the 2005, 2006 and 2007 numbers by less than 1%).

As the CHRO explains on its website, race-conscious affirmative action plans may be proper if there is sufficient evidence of a history of discrimination in the particular setting at issue and if the proscribed affirmative action is narrowly tailored to meet a compelling governmental interest. That

the race and gender distribution in the state government workforce has closely tracked the race and gender distribution in the CT labor force raises questions about how often new goals should be developed and reported in plans (since there is not much variability with the reference group) and whether or not there may be more value in setting goals for groups of agencies (e.g., law enforcement agencies; general administration agencies) as compared to separate agencies or other levels of analyses (e.g. occupational groups within state government).

**Performance Measure 5:** Agency's satisfaction with the service provided by DAS in connection with the SmART Unit's plan-writing function



**Story behind the baseline:** DAS asked the heads of the SmART agencies to assess how well DAS serves them in connection with the plan writing function of the DAS SmART team in terms of: professionalism, responsiveness, EEO knowledge and ability to answer questions about AA plans and the plan writing process. (This was the first year DAS sent this survey to agency heads.)

Out of a scale from 1 to 4 (1 = Very Good, 4 = Poor), the average score from the 11 responders was as follows: Professionalism: 1.3; Responsiveness: 1.3; EEO Knowledge: 1.3; and Ability to Answer Questions: 1.33.

**Proposed actions to turn the curve:** DAS believes that AA plans *could be* useful educational and analytical tools but believes that the way they are currently required to be constructed and are evaluated is counterproductive.

Currently, a plan's adherence to the technical elements of the regulations (including requiring statistical calculations on extremely small populations) is more important than the quality of an agency's EEO activities. Moreover, the drafting requirements and assessment process place no value on whether plans are, in fact, being used as educational or analytical tools. Additionally, writing a plan that conforms to the current requirements is a time consuming process that to some extent diverts the time and resources of agencies and affirmative action staff away from actions that more directly contribute to the goal of a fair and non-discriminatory workplace, like training, outreach and intervention.

DAS proposes working with the CHRO, other partners and the legislature to enact statutory or regulatory changes to streamline the AA plan requirements to eliminate unnecessary or redundant elements and to organize the structure and content of the plans to make them more readable and useful to agencies and employees.

DAS will also take the following steps to improve its service to its customer agencies:

- Developing a process to systematically obtain feedback from our customer agencies.
- Improving the substantive content of our plans by engaging with external partners as we identify and develop program goals and recommendations.
- Taking steps to educate agency heads and agency employees about the contents and potential utility of AA plans.