ORANGE COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

Subject: **Organizational Collaboration and Conflict Resolution**   Number: D 4

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Approved: Date: 09-23-03

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I.   PURPOSE

- To establish the policy that the Social Services Agency is committed to providing an organizational environment with effective methods for resolving conflicting objectives between divisions, programs, and sections within SSA and other business partners.

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II.   POLICY

- The best method to avoid conflicts is to collaborate with affected stakeholders on issues and projects at the onset. Use of this practice is to be encouraged for all staff by management. On those occasions where conflicts arise, resolution attempts will be made first at the staff level and, if unsuccessful at that level, brought up the chain of command for resolution.

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III.   PROCEDURE

- A. Key Principles
  - 1. Properly managed conflict and collaborative efforts can have beneficial effects and be used as a catalyst for innovation that benefits the Agency and the County.2. All staff are encouraged to collaborate on issues and projects at the onset (see III B, "Framework for Conflict Resolution" below). Collaboration includes checking with other appropriate divisions, programs, and sections of the Agency to ensure agreement with the proposed projects, goals and objectives. Collaboration with other departments, agencies, and business partners may also be necessary; e.g., safety procedures are coordinated with CEO/Risk Management/Safety.3. Employees and supervisors are jointly responsible to discuss and attempt to resolve conflicting issues or objectives within, and among supervisors between SSA sections, as immediately as possible.4. Conflicts that are not resolved by employees and supervisors should be pursued through regular channels to higher levels of supervision. Conflicts are to be further pursued, via the chain of command, with the appropriate functional Director, and ultimately with the Agency Director for resolution, as necessary.
- B. Framework for Conflict Resolution (from Enlightened Leadership)
  - 1. Establish common ground on the issues.Where is there already agreement? What is already working in existing relationships?2. Find specifics about the common ground on the issues.What is it about these common areas that already have agreement?3. Identify specifics about areas of conflict or disagreement. How can these best be resolved to all stakeholder interests?4. Establish joint objectives and goals. What are the common goals? What is to be accomplished?5. Establish individual and joint objectives and goals.

What are the benefits of reaching consensus and achieving joint goals?6. Build on common ground as a foundation for reaching the objectives.What shared resources are available or needed to achieve joint goals?Given agreement, what else can be done to reach objectives? What can be done (better or differently) to reach objectives or goals?

- C. Requesting Formal Policy and Procedural Changes
    - 1. To request formal policy and procedural changes, refer to P&P A 1, "SSA Administrative Policies and Procedures."2. Coordination of policy and procedural changes is the responsibility of the individual or unit charged with its development. Coordination is described as the process of checking and collaboration with other appropriate divisions, programs, and sections of the Agency to ensure agreement with the proposed goals and process described within the P&P. Coordination with other departments and agencies and other business partners may also be necessary.