

2026 IAOHRA Annual Training Conference

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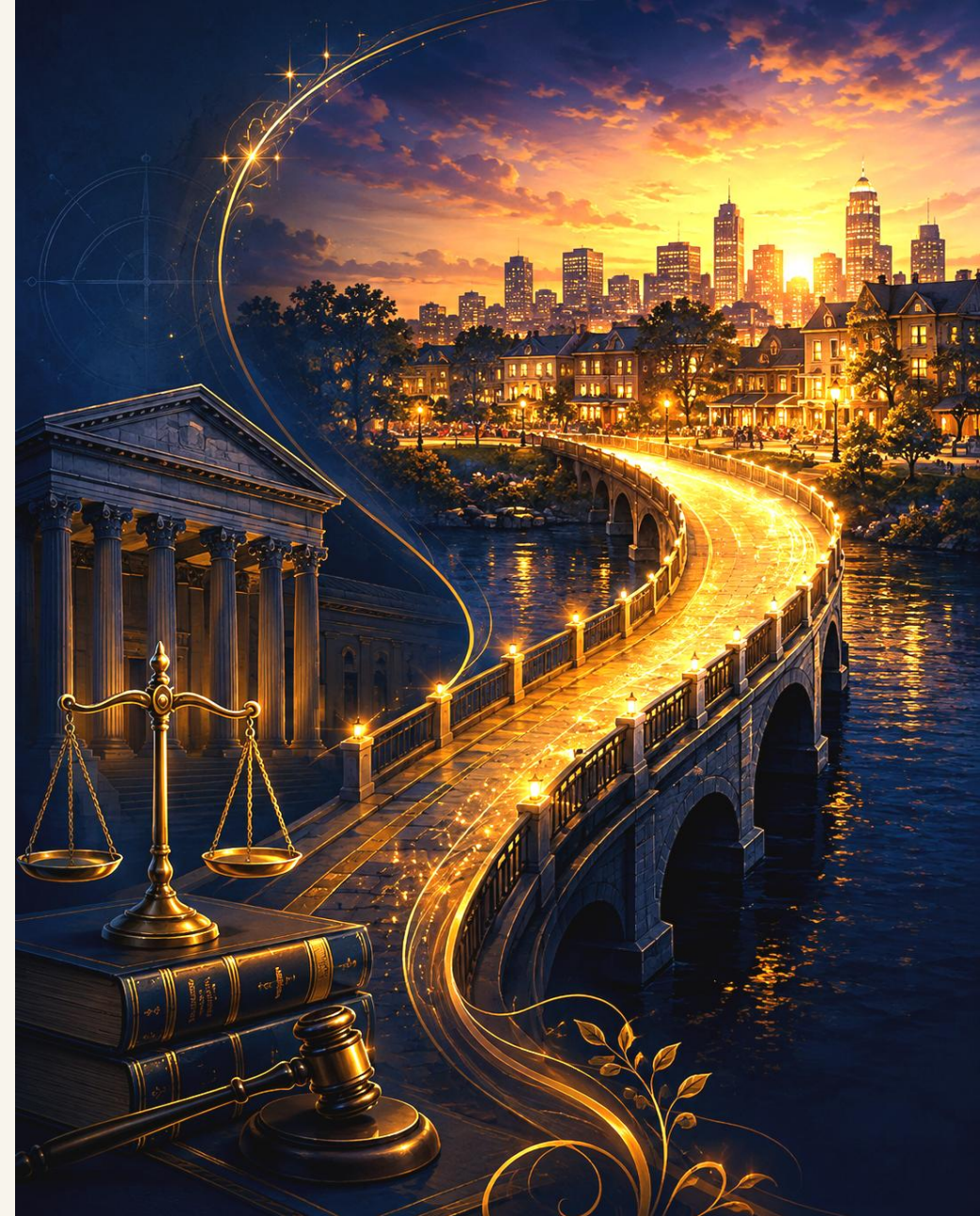
From Policy to Practice: Embedding Human Rights Principles into Organizational Culture

People. Culture. Results.

WORKSHOP PRESENTER:

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TRANSFORMING POLICIES INTO PRACTICES. VALUES INTO CULTURE. PURPOSE INTO IMPACT.

SESSION PROMISE

Policy is the promise. Practice is the proof.

Civil and human rights principles create the standard. Leadership and agency management determine whether that standard becomes a lived experience.

The gap between policy and practice is where trust is either built or broken.



WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

What participants will leave with

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- 01 Identify the implementation gaps that keep civil and human rights commitments from becoming consistent practice.
- 02 Use a rights-based culture lens to align leadership behaviors, workforce practices, and agency systems.
- 03 Build practical accountability routines that strengthen equity, public trust, and organizational effectiveness.
- 04 Draft a 90-day action plan for translating one policy commitment into measurable practice.



THE CORE QUESTION

How do rights move from paper to people?



The work of leadership is to make the pathway reliable, equitable, and visible in the experience of staff and community members.

IMPLEMENTATION REALITY

Where the promise can break

- 1 Interpretation Gap** Different people apply the same policy differently.
- 2 Behavior Gap** Values are stated, but leadership routines do not reinforce them.
- 3 Systems Gap** Processes, data, resources, and handoffs do not support the desired outcome.
- 4 Trust Gap** People cannot see the connection between the commitment and their experience.

A rights-based culture closes these gaps by aligning expectations, routines, decisions, and measures.

RIGHTS-BASED CULTURE

The principles has to be managed into practice

Use these principles as a culture lens when assessing policies, meetings, decisions, training, supervision, and community-facing practices.

Dignity

How people are treated

Fairness

How decisions are made

Access

How people enter and navigate services

Transparency

How information is shared

Accountability

How commitments are enforced

Equity

How outcomes are examined and improved

CULTURE IS THE DELIVERY SYSTEM

What people experience is what the system produces



Culture is not the poster on the wall. Culture is the operating pattern people can predict.

LEADERSHIP ACCOUNTABILITY

Agency leaders shape the conditions for rights-based practice

01

Priorities

What gets named,
funded, timed, and
protected

02

Routines

What gets reviewed,
escalated, coached, and
documented

03

Handoffs

How work moves without
being dropped or hidden

04

Consequences

What happens when
standards are met,
missed, or ignored

Leaders do not control every outcome. They do control the conditions under which outcomes are produced.

EXERCISE 1

Statute-to-Street Mapping

Choose one civil or human rights commitment your agency is responsible for making real.

- 1 Name the commitment** What promise does the policy make?
- 2 Map the practice** Where should people see or feel it?
- 3 Find the weak link** Where does the promise most often break down?
- 4 Name the proof** How would you know it is improving?

Timing: 6 minutes individual reflection + 6 minutes partner discussion + 5 minutes debrief

CASE IN PRACTICE

When the policy is right, but the experience is wrong

Scenario

An agency has a clear nondiscrimination policy and a defined complaint process. A community member files a concern. The case is technically handled, but communication is delayed, language access is inconsistent, staff handoffs are unclear, and the person leaves feeling dismissed.

Discuss

- 1. Where did the promise break?**
- 2. Which leadership lever is involved?**
- 3. What system needs to change?**
- 4. What would strengthen trust?**

The issue is not only whether the rule was followed. The issue is whether the rule produced the dignity, fairness, access, transparency, and trust it was intended to protect.

OAIB IMPLEMENTATION LENS

Translate values into systems, behaviors, and measures

Commitment

What we promise

System

How work is designed

Behavior

How leaders and
staff act

Measure

How we know it is
working

Example:
Language Access

Policy commitment → intake workflow → staff response standard → response time, access quality, user feedback

The lens works because it forces leaders to manage the bridge between written intent and lived impact.

ACCOUNTABILITY WITHOUT BLAME

The goal is consistent practice, not performative compliance

1

Clarify

Define what good practice looks like.

2

Equip

Give people the tools, training, and authority to do it.

3

Inspect

Review evidence before the problem becomes a crisis.

4

Coach

Correct behaviors early and reinforce what works.

5

Escalate

Use consequences when standards are repeatedly ignored.

If standards are not managed, culture will be managed by habit.

EXERCISE 2

Rights-Based Culture Audit

Using the commitment you mapped, assess **YOUR** agency against four practical questions.

- Q1** Can people explain the standard in the same way?
- Q2** Do leaders model and reinforce the standard consistently?
- Q3** Do workflows and handoffs make the standard easy to follow?
- Q4** Do measures show whether people experience the standard?

Mark each question: Strong | Mixed | Needs Attention

Then choose one “Needs Attention” area to build into your 90-day action plan.

MEASURES THAT MATTER

Measure the bridge, not just the endpoint

Compliance Measures

Are requirements being met?

timeliness
policy completion
case closure
training completion

Practice Measures

Are routines working?

handoff quality
response consistency
escalation patterns
coaching follow-up

Trust Measures

Are people experiencing fairness?

feedback themes
access barriers
respect indicators
repeat concerns

Meaningful measurement helps leaders see where the promise is getting stuck.

FROM INSIGHT TO ACTION

Build a 90-day implementation move

30 Days

Clarify

Name the policy promise, the desired practice, and the specific gap to close.

60 Days

Align

Update one routine, workflow, handoff, training, or leadership expectation.

90 Days

Measure

Review one practical indicator and decide what to reinforce, coach, or correct.

Choose one action small enough to start and meaningful enough to matter.

LEADERSHIP REFLECTION

Three questions to take back

- 1 Where are our rights-based commitments strongest on paper, but weakest in practice?
- 2 Which leadership routine would most quickly close the gap?
- 3 What evidence would show the community and workforce experience a real difference?

Culture changes when leadership attention changes.



CLOSING COMMITMENT

One promise. One practice. One proof.

Before you leave, complete this sentence:

I will help move _____ from policy to practice by _____ and measure progress through _____.

Make it specific enough to act on within 90 days.

THANK YOU

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THE PROMISE OF RIGHTS BECOMES REAL IN THE PRACTICE OF LEADERSHIP.