

Organizational Cultural Competency: Areas for Consideration
Developed by the Association for the Study and Development of Community

Overview

This list was developed with funds from The Colorado Trust and adapted for organizations and agencies in Howard County. It was created based on a literature review and experiences of a group of organizations in Colorado that are addressing health inequities. We believe, however, that the list is applicable to most organizations and if not, can be adapted to fit your organization's context. This is why we chose to use the phrase "communities with which you work" rather than naming the community. If your organization is interested in becoming more culturally competent, we suggest that you look into these areas to determine if there are policies and procedures in place to ensure the practices; this can typically be accomplished through an analysis of policy manuals, codes of conduct, etc.

To determine the degree to which the policies and procedures are enforced and practiced by staff at all levels, from executive leadership to line staff, requires a well-thought out assessment process. We recommend that you engage or consult with a trained facilitator to assist you in developing the assessment process.

Board and Staff Development:

- Recruit and retain board members who reflect the demographic characteristics of the communities with which you work
- Recruit, hire, retain, and promote staff who reflect the demographic characteristics of the communities with which you work
- Engage staff at all levels of organization in decision making, planning, design, and provision of services
- Provide professional development opportunities and incentive awards to encourage staff to improve their cultural competency

Organizational Environment and Infrastructure:

- Establish an infrastructure for promoting and supporting cultural competency by:
 - Developing and implementing a cultural competency plan
 - Designating a staff person or position to ensure culturally competent practices
 - Allocating funds in the budget to ensure cultural competency
- Develop and implement policies and procedures to ensure accountability to cultural competency plan

Education and Training:

- Conduct ongoing, regular education activities (e.g., trainings, dialogues, facilitated discussions, readings) to improve the cultural competency of board members, staff, and partners
- Continuously develop and review education, training, and other materials and strategies to ensure cultural appropriateness and competency

Access:

- Provide and use professional interpreters
- Provide professional translation of materials
- Translate signs, telephone menus, forms, and other administrative information
- Adapt facilities and services to minimize barriers to access for the communities with which you work by ensuring:
 - *Availability* (e.g., alter hours, add locations, decrease waiting times)
 - *Affordability* (e.g., provide services for free or at reduced cost)
 - *Acceptability* (e.g., create a welcoming environment)

Community Engagement:

- Hire, train, and use individuals from the communities with which you work to assist with tasks related to your organization's goals (e.g., community health workers, paraprofessionals)
- Engage representatives from the communities with which you work in planning services and outreach (e.g., advisory committee, task force)
- Partner with community organizations that support the groups with which you work to plan, outreach, and provide services

Data Gathering and Utilization:

- Use or train staff to use demographic data on the communities with which you work to plan strategies and services, monitor outcomes, and detect disparities (e.g., health, education)
- Collect, analyze, and use information about the perceptions of the people with whom you work regarding your organization's cultural competency
- Use demographic data on staff and partners to monitor diversity

Service Provision:

- Disseminate information to educate other providers and educators about providing culturally competent services to the communities with which you work
- Disseminate information in a culturally appropriate way to educate the people from the communities with which you are working
- Understand and provide or teach culturally-based complementary and alternative interventions or treatments (e.g., adapt services to become more compatible with the beliefs, values, and experiences of that particular community)
- Promote healthy practices and behaviors in a culturally appropriate way