

## **Rationale**

Every organizations has a "culture" of policies, procedures, programs, and processes, and incorporate certain values, beliefs, assumptions, and customs into those activities. Organizational cultures largely echo mainstream culture in its sense of time orientation, perception, and use of time. An organizational culture may not always lend itself to cultural competence, so skill building is needed to infuse these elements. A culturally competent organization brings together knowledge about different groups of people -- and transforms it into standards, policies, and practices that make everything work.

Building a culturally and linguistically competence organization has many benefits including:

- Increased respect and mutual understanding that can enhance the therapeutic relationship.
- Increased clarity around processes and policies when working with diverse communities.
- Achievement of a cost savings when language services are streamlined and non-duplicative.
- Increased creativity in problem-solving through new perspectives, ideas, and strategies.
- Decreased potential negative impacts on an agency's reputation.
- Increased participation and involvement of other cultural groups.
- Increased trust and cooperation.

Many organizations have complex processes and siloed operations which makes the implementation of policies and practices to improve access and outcomes for diverse communities challenging. A committee dedicated to identifying and addressing strategies to increased access and positive outcomes for diverse communities can help an organization address issues systematically instead of piece meal. This approach can often result in cost savings, streamlining of complex processes, increased partnerships with multicultural community resources, and systems changes help support employees who seek to provide effective, person centered, and recovery orientated services.

## **Cultural and Linguistic Competence Committee Description**

What follows is a modified description created by the Technical Assistance Partnership for Child and Mental Health. A link to the original document can be found in the reference below. It provides a comprehensive description of how to create a committee. It is a prototype and should be modified to meet each organization's unique needs.

### *Authorization and Reporting Relationships:*

The CLC Committee is authorized by the leadership team of the Agency. They report to this team.

### *Charge of the Committee:*

The CLC Committee is a task oriented working group that assists the agency to implement culturally and linguistically competent practices within the following six domains: (1) governance and organizational infrastructure (e.g. policy; financing and budget; board composition, selection, development and accountability; CLC plans and implementation; and leadership and management)(2) services and supports (3) planning and continuous quality improvement (4) collaboration (5) communication and (6) workforce development. Specifically, the charge of the CLC Committee is to ensure that the agency adopts a systemic, systematic and strategic approach to increasing the cultural and linguistic competence of services and supports delivered to the individuals they serve, eliminate or reduce cultural, racial, ethnic or geographic disparities, and encourage sensitivity and appreciation for diversity and cultural issues throughout the agency.

***Recommended Composition of the Committee:***

The executive team should identify, recruit and select members for the committee with input from cultural leaders and representatives of the individuals they serve. The individuals selected for this committee should be key decision-makers, subject matter experts or those with influence within the agency. The committee should include, but not be limited to representatives from the following stakeholder groups:

- Family members
- Individuals served
- Representatives from partnering agencies
- Community members that represent the populations of focus including cultural and faith-based leaders
- Staff representatives (administration and management, practitioners and support staff)
- Member of executive team
- Member of agency board

***Recruitment of Members:***

To the extent possible, the committee should reflect the populations of focus, the public and community-based service organizations participating in the system of care and decision makers from the agency. Recruitment should include invitations to informal community leaders, cultural leaders, representatives of the faith community and the leaders of emerging population groups within the community. Members should be appointed by the Executive Director.

*Retention of Members:*

An orientation and induction process should be instituted to assist every member to fully participate in the committee's deliberation and activities. A strength-based assessment of the assets of members (skills, knowledge and attributes) should be conducted to ensure that each member is positioned to make a valuable contribution to the work. It is also recommended that mentors and/or "buddies" be assigned to those who have limited experience serving on community-wide committees. Similarly, an orientation and buddy system may be needed for agency representatives who may not be familiar with committees with significant family/youth/consumer participation.

*Role of the Committee Chairperson(s):*

The leadership of the committee should be structured both to maximize action by the agency as well as the trust of the cultural communities. This will ensure that the recommendations made by the committee are used to inform decision-making at all levels, and reflect the needs and interests of the communities of focus. The chair is responsible for establishing the committee's agenda, scheduling and facilitating meetings, and working in concert with staff and other members to assign tasks and monitor the progress of task completion as indicated within the Cultural and Linguistic Competence (CLC) Plan.

*Recommended Goals and Responsibilities:*

1. Conduct demographic analysis, linguistic analysis, and cultural analyses to identify priorities for the CLC Plan.
2. Develop and implement the CLC Plan.
3. Develop policy recommendations for consideration by the agency that supports the implementation of the CLC Plan.
4. Develop and monitor outcomes related to the delivery of culturally and linguistically competent services as specified in the Continuous Quality Improvement Plan.
5. Develop and disseminate quarterly status report of the action steps and activities completed within the CLC Plan to the executive team and annual status reports for the agency workforce and the community.

*Time and Commitment Requirements:*

## Creating a Cultural & Linguistic Competence Committee

The committee should meet at a minimum of four times per year. However, members are expected to participate on subcommittees to complete specific tasks. It is anticipated that service on this committee will require a minimum of two hours every other month for meetings of the full committee and additional time for subcommittee work.

### References

Technical Assistance Partnership for Child and Family Mental Health. *A System of Care Team Guide to Implementing Cultural and Linguistic Competence*. Cultural Competence Action Team. July 2010.  
[http://www.tapartnership.org/docs/clcCommitteeDescription\\_200705.pdf](http://www.tapartnership.org/docs/clcCommitteeDescription_200705.pdf).

National Center for Cultural Competence. *The Compelling Need for Cultural Competence*. 1997.  
<http://nccc.georgetown.edu/foundations/need.html>