

# Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) CHECKLIST

Using CLAS improves quality of care by helping the organization become aware and responsive to each person's culture and communication needs.

CLAS takes into account

- cultural health beliefs,
- preferred languages,
- health literacy levels and
- communication needs.



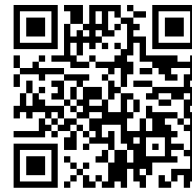
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# Overview: National CLAS Standards



The national standards for CLAS give health organizations 15 steps to providing CLAS. The standards and information on implementation can be found by going to [thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/clas](http://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/clas) or by scanning the QR code at the top of the page.

The principal standard calls on organizations to “provide effective, equitable, understandable and respectful quality care and services that are responsive to diverse cultural health beliefs and practices, preferred languages, health literacy, and other communication needs.”

The remaining standards are divided into three themes:

1. Governance, leadership and workforce
2. Communication and language assistance
3. Engagement, continuous improvement and accountability

These standards can be applied to a wide array of professions and sectors, including medical care, behavioral health, public health, social work, community health and emergency health.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Minority Health (OMH) developed these standards to advance health equity, improve quality of services and help eliminate disparities. While there isn't a single, right way to implement the CLAS standards, there is a guide called [National Standards for CLAS in Health and Health Care: A Blueprint for Advancing and Sustaining CLAS Policy and Practice](#) to help organizations get started. Organizations can choose which standards to implement and the timing of implementation. Chosen standards can be introduced all at once or staggered over time.



# Checklist: National CLAS Standards Implementation

Select your organization's stage of implementation	Currently implementing	Planning to implement	Not planning to implement at this time
<p><b>1.</b> Identify and designate a CLAS champion(s) and then create and implement a formal CLAS plan. Standardize procedures and scripts for staff members and train staff in those procedures/scripts. Deliver or make continuous, freely available, CLAS-related training and technical assistance to leadership and all staff. Use the CLAS implementation plan to create internal organizational mentorship programs.</p>			
<p><b>2.</b> Create and disseminate new resources about CLAS within the organization using widely-accessible staff platforms. Incorporate an assessment of CLAS competencies (e.g., bilingual communication, cross-cultural communication, cultural and linguistic knowledge) on an ongoing basis into staff performance ratings.</p>			
<p><b>3.</b> Provide financial and/or human resource incentives (e.g., time off) to staff who complete interpreter training and meet assessment criteria. Formalize the processes for translating materials into languages other than English and for evaluating the quality of these translations. Require all individuals serving as an interpreter to complete certification and/or formal assessment of linguistic and health care terminology skills to demonstrate competency.</p>			
<p><b>4.</b> Complete a CLAS-related organizational assessment specific to language assistance services to describe existing language assistance services and to determine how they can be more effective and efficient. Tailor existing evaluation efforts to include measures of CLAS implementation and incorporate CLAS into the organization's mission, vision and/or strategic plans.</p>			
<p><b>5.</b> Collect (at a minimum) race, ethnicity and language data from all individuals receiving services. Use the data to identify needs, describe current care and service provision trends and improve care and service provision. Target recruitment efforts to those populations to increase the recruitment of culturally and linguistically diverse individuals.</p>			

Select your organization's stage of implementation	Currently implementing	Planning to implement	Not planning to implement at this time
6. Provide individuals with notification of the available communication and language assistance, in what languages the assistance is available and to whom they are available. Notification should clearly state that communication and language assistance are provided free of charge.			
7. Collaborate with stakeholders and community members in community health needs assessment data collection, analysis, planning, developing and reporting efforts to increase data reliability and validity.			
8. Utilize staff as cultural brokers to help improve feedback mechanisms, conflict resolution processes and communication with culturally and linguistically diverse individuals. Partner with community organizations to lead discussions about the services provided and progress made to create advisory boards on issues affecting diverse populations and how to best reach and serve those populations.			

Choose three practices the organization will focus on implementing. Write these practices below, along with a timeline for implementation.

- 1.
  
- 2.
  
- 3.

Write down some concrete steps to help your organization implement the national CLAS standards. Consider the objectives, challenges, staff and resources that can be leveraged for support.