



Objective: Develop infrastructure that supports diversity, inclusion, and cultural & linguistic competence; and builds capacity to address and reduce inequities and disparities.

In order for the AUCD network to be successful in implementing activities of diversity and inclusion, we must develop an infrastructure that supports inclusive and diverse activities, addressing and eliminating inequities and disparities. This is supported by national best practice—the Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care (CLAS Standards) by the Office of Minority Health, updated most recently in 2013. Among the changes is a new Standard #2: Advance and sustain organizational governance and leadership that promotes CLAS and health equity through policy, practices, and allocated resources. The standard reads: “CLAS must permeate every aspect of the organization, from the top down and from the bottom up. Cultural and linguistic competency has historically been a grassroots strategy. However, it is the organization’s leadership that establishes the culture of the organization through its priorities, expectations, and the behavior that it models (Schyve & The Governance Institute, 2009) and through designing service delivery processes and expectations (Rice, 2007).”

The development of a supportive infrastructure is essential to support inclusive, diverse, and culturally and linguistically competent activities. Centers and Programs within the AUCD network who have made significant progress in this area have all attended closely to aspects of their infrastructure, and have highlighted this as a priority area for others. Leadership and personnel expertise, job responsibilities and performance expectations, policies and budgets, and other infrastructure considerations all contribute to creating lasting improvements in this area.

Strategies:

1. Address diversity, inclusion, and cultural and linguistic competence in value statement for organization. Develop new language collaboratively with all members of organization, including “collective intelligence” of other external partners.
2. Be systematic and intentional in planning infrastructure to enhance efforts. Complete an organizational self-assessment to establish a baseline in diverse and inclusive efforts. Involve organizational members, boards/advisors, individuals and families receiving services, interpreters, and cultural brokers. This includes review of organizational policies and practices, finance and contracting functions, budget, governance, outreach, and engagement to identify how support for diversity, inclusion, and cultural and linguistic competence is present in each area. Disseminate findings from organizational self-assessment and utilize those findings to guide change, involving staff and partners where greater support and impact is needed in each function. Check-in annually for progress and re-evaluate/re-adjust as needed.

3. Ensure funds are budgeted for efforts related to diversity, inclusion, and cultural and linguistic competence. This may include budgeted funds for cultural brokering, language translation, video captioning, ASL interpreters, accessibility accommodations, child care, professional development, and more. Reduce other budget lines, particularly staff and faculty who can be covered by other leveraged funds, to create funding needed to support this effort. Where unanticipated program savings arise, utilize them for these efforts.
4. Model and promote diversity, inclusion, and cultural and linguistic competence as a priority for all levels of the organization. Communicate the importance of this topic to all staff, students, interns, grantees, volunteers, and federal and community partners.
5. Evaluate time and effort devoted to planning for initiatives in diversity, inclusion, and cultural and linguistic competence versus implementing those initiatives. Ensure planning leads to action.
6. Give publicity and attention to the positive effects of improving diversity, inclusion, and cultural and linguistic competence. Share success stories internally-and also on the Toolkit website-for broader dissemination within the network.
7. Develop a subcommittee of Board, Advisory Council, or other appropriate body with a focus on diversity, inclusion, resiliencies and disparities, and cultural and linguistic competence. Ensure meaningful participation of community members. Create safe spaces for communities and underrepresented groups to voice their concerns. Make sure colleagues are kept up to date on progress, so communication is open, silos are broken down, and staff have the ability to identify any areas of opportunity in their own work and partnerships.
8. Apply cultural brokering model in health, social, recreational, education, and other services and settings. Identify cultural brokers in order to bridge access to underrepresented cultural groups.
9. Become familiar with and implement change management processes.
10. Ensure that conference and meeting presenters, speakers and panelists are diverse and address the topic of the conference, rather than be boxed into speaking only on the topic of diversity and inclusion.
11. Join professional groups and listservs to stay up to date on information related to diversity, inclusion, and cultural and linguistic competence.
12. Review strategic plan for priorities of diversity, inclusion, and cultural and linguistic competency. Where priorities are lacking, update strategic plan in collaborative, open, inviting manner with internal and external partners.
13. Where additional ideas are needed, review diversity, inclusion, and cultural and linguistic competence initiatives, blueprints, and strategic planning process from other organizations.
14. Funding and policy impact equates to power. Help community organizations gain and sustain power through co-applying for grants, sharing funds, building mentorship and partnerships into grant proposals, creating grant opportunities for community organizations, collaboratively developing products and contributing to published literature, and turning over successful projects to community organizations so the Center/Program can innovate rather than hold ongoing power through running long-term community programs.
15. Include specific goals/objectives related to diversity, inclusion, and cultural and linguistic competence in strategic plan, 5-year plans, and other guiding documents and proposals.

16. Identify diverse populations in the State or Territory, including refugees and migrant workers. Partner with community leaders to learn about cultures. Identify strengths, gifts and needs of these populations at the grassroots level. Focus core efforts on maximizing strengths and meeting needs to help bridge the gap in resiliencies and disparities within your State or Territory.
17. Work with the State or Territory DD networks, inclusive of UCEDDs, LENDs, Protection and Advocacy agencies and State Developmental Disability Councils to influence strategically aligned diversity, inclusion, and cultural and linguistic competence goals.