

Policy & Procedure

Policy Title: Cultural Competency and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Policy
Policy Number: 426

Policy:

Arc Human Services (AHS) and affiliated organizations are committed to providing high-quality, culturally competent services to our diverse community. We recognize that cultural competence and effective communication are crucial in delivering appropriate and respectful care to individuals with diverse cultural backgrounds, languages, and belief systems. As such, it is the organization's policy to commit to:

- Cultural Competency: Understanding, respecting, and appropriately responding to the cultural and linguistic needs of individuals served and employees.
- Effective Communication: Ensuring that individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) can access and fully participate in our programs and services.
- Equitable Access: Providing equitable access to services and resources for all individuals, regardless of their cultural background or language proficiency.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline our commitment to cultural competency and to provide guidelines for ensuring effective communication with individuals who have limited English proficiency (LEP). This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, and contractors of AHS and affiliate organizations, and it covers all interactions with individuals served by AHS and our affiliated organizations, including their families, caregivers, and other stakeholders. It also applies to our internal workforce and organizational operations.

Standards & Guidelines:

A. Cultural Competency Training:

- All employees will receive ongoing training in cultural competency to enhance their understanding of and sensitivity to cultural differences.
- Training will include topics such as cultural awareness, bias reduction, effective communication strategies, and the impact of culture on health and behavior.

B. Language Access Services:

- AHS and affiliated organizations will provide language assistance services to individuals with LEP at no cost to them.
- Language assistance services may include bilingual staff, interpreter services, and translated materials.
- Vital documents, including consent forms, educational materials, and notices of rights, will be translated into the primary languages of the populations served.

C. Use of Interpreters:

- Professional interpreters will be used for complex or sensitive communications, particularly those involving medical, legal, or financial matters.
- Family members or friends of individuals with LEP should not be used as interpreters unless specifically requested by the individual and after being informed of the availability of free professional interpretation services.
- Employees will be trained on how to effectively work with interpreters to ensure clear and accurate communication.

Policy & Procedure

D. Assessment and Planning:

- Regular assessments will be conducted to identify the cultural and linguistic needs of the populations served.
- Organizational planning will include goals and objectives related to improving cultural competency and language access.
- Feedback from individuals served and their families will be solicited to continually improve services and ensure they are culturally and linguistically appropriate.

E. Employee Support:

- Resources and support will be provided to employees to enhance their cultural competency and ability to serve individuals or work with individuals with LEP.
- Employee resource groups and cultural competency champions may be established to promote ongoing learning and support within the organization.

F. Accountability

- All employees are responsible for upholding this policy and integrating cultural competency and language access principles into their daily work. Supervisors and managers are responsible for ensuring that their teams comply with this policy and for providing the necessary support and resources.

G. Reporting and Resolution

- Employees who encounter challenges or barriers in providing culturally competent care or language access services are encouraged to report these issues to their supervisor or the Human Resources Department. All reports will be addressed promptly, and appropriate measures will be taken to resolve any identified issues.

Updated 11/15/24