



# Explainer: National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS Standards)

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The table below explains [CLAS Standards](#) in plain language. Use it to learn what each standard means and how you and your organization can meet them to improve care.

CLAS Standard	Meaning
<b>Principle Standard</b>	
1. <i>Provide good, fair, easy-to-understand, and respectful care that fits with different cultural health beliefs and practices, languages people prefer, health knowledge, and other communication needs.</i>	Make sure everyone gets good and fair healthcare that is easy to understand and respects their culture, language, and how much they know about health.
<b>Governance, Leadership, and Workforce</b>	
2. <i>Advance and sustain organizational governance and leadership that promotes CLAS and health equity through policy, practices, and allocated resources.</i>	Make sure organizational policies and leadership are dedicated to equitable care for everyone.
3. <i>Recruit, promote, and support a culturally and linguistically diverse governance, leadership, and workforce that are responsive to the population in the service area.</i>	Hire and support a workforce that that is responsive to the language and cultural needs of communities.
4. <i>Educate and train governance, leadership, and workforce in culturally and linguistically appropriate policies and practices on an ongoing basis.</i>	Create regular learning opportunities about how to exercise practices that respect different cultures and languages in the workplace.
<b>Communication and Language Assistance</b>	
5. <i>Offer language assistance to individuals who have limited English proficiency and/or other communication needs, at no cost to them, to facilitate timely access to all health care and services.</i>	Provide free interpretation help for <i>people who don't speak English well</i> so they can get healthcare quickly.
6. <i>Inform all individuals of the availability of language assistance services clearly and in their preferred language, verbally and in writing.</i>	Let everyone know, in their own language, that free interpretation is available.
7. <i>Ensure the competence of individuals providing language assistance, recognizing that the use of untrained individuals and/or minors as interpreters should be avoided.</i>	Use trained, certified interpreters—not family members—to help with communication.

8. *Provide easy-to-understand print and multimedia materials and signage in the languages commonly used by the populations in the service area.* Make all communication easy to understand and in languages spoken by the people you serve.

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## Engagement, Continuous Improvement, and Accountability

9. *Establish culturally and linguistically appropriate goals, policies, and management accountability, and infuse them throughout the organization's planning and operations.* Make sure it's someone's responsibility to set goals and make rules that explain how to work with people from different cultures and speak different languages. Make sure these are part of all the organization's plans and actions.
10. *Conduct ongoing assessments of the organization's CLAS-related activities and integrate CLAS-related measures into measurement and continuous quality improvement activities.* Track and make changes based on how well the organization is providing fair and respectful services to people who speak different languages.
11. *Collect and maintain accurate and reliable demographic data to monitor and evaluate the impact of CLAS on health equity and outcomes and to inform service delivery.* Collect and update information about communities to see how using CLAS Standards is improving health and services.
12. *Conduct regular assessments of community health assets and needs and use the results to plan and implement services that respond to the cultural and linguistic diversity of populations in the service area.* Learn about the people and places in communities to plan services that keep culture and language needs in mind.
13. *Partner with the community to design, implement, and evaluate policies, practices, and services to ensure cultural and linguistic appropriateness.* Include community members on boards, committees, and workgroups to help create policies and services that respect different cultures and languages.
14. *Create conflict and grievance resolution processes that are culturally and linguistically appropriate to identify, prevent, and resolve conflicts or complaints.* Create ways to solve problems and complaints that respect different cultures and languages.
15. *Communicate the organization's progress in implementing and sustaining CLAS to all stakeholders, constituents, and the general public.* Share information on how the organization is doing in providing equitable and respectful care.

To learn more about CLAS, please visit [health.ri.gov/clas](https://health.ri.gov/clas).