

Be CLASy: A Best Practice Guide for Hiring Diverse Staff

The National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health and Health Care are intended to: advance health equity, improve quality, help eliminate health care disparities.

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Why does it matter to ensure the hiring of diverse staff representing the communities we serve?

- Members feel connected, understood.
- To increase inclusion, empathy, cultural responsiveness.
- Provider self-disclosure of staff diversity leads to higher levels of trust, rapport, similarity, likeability, intention to disclose, satisfaction, behavioral intention to continue using the provider, and intention to recommend the provider.

What impact can a diverse and inclusive environment have on members?

- Increase in engagement, equity, and positive outcomes.
- Decrease in disparities and reduction in care gaps.

Data and Care Gaps¹

- Racially minoritized patients who match their physical-emotional-mental health providers based on their racial and ethnic demographics have better perceptions of care, and better health outcomes.
- Research shows that patient-provider harmony is positively associated with high ratings of patient experience.

Guidance – CLAS Standards and National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA)

- CLAS guides the service planning framework in AZ <https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/clas>.
- NCQA Health Equity Accreditation, a guide to help health systems, health plans and other care organizations advance health equity <https://www.ncqa.org/>.

Where do I start?

- Ask the member about their cultural demographics.
- Assess membership demographics-language preferences in your service area(s) and compare to staff demographics in your service area(s). Compare ratios. Do you have enough representation? Where are the gaps?
- Recruit.
- Update job descriptions.
- Advertise with educational institutions, diverse job fairs, diverse job boards, in communities, and at events/health fairs.

How do I retain diverse staff?

- Develop employee inclusion groups, host Courageous Conversations, offer educational opportunities, create Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Councils, create safe spaces environments.

Resources

- LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/>
- Work opportunity tax Credit <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/wotc>
- Diversity and Inclusion <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/employers/diversity-inclusion>
- The How and Why of Building a Diverse Workforce <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2021/07/26/the-how-and-why-of-building-a-diverse-workforce/?sh=574d085b4cb1>
- Vocational Rehabilitation <https://des.az.gov/services/employment/rehabilitation-services/vocational-rehabilitation-vr>
- Social Security Ticket to Work Program <https://des.az.gov/services/employment/rehabilitation-services/social-security-ticket-work-program>

Testimonials From Members and Staff

“I want to see a representation of myself when I walk into the office, I want to see people that look like my daughter, and I want to not only see that I am physically represented but I want to feel it.” -Member

“Even if the staff don’t look exactly like me, they can still be representative by understanding my culture and respecting it. The energy members first feel when coming into the provider agency is paramount. I don’t want my experience to feel “phony”. - Member

“My experience with my health homes have been somewhat of a roller coaster but have gotten help with a lot of different people and different ways which have helped me grow within myself. Experiencing peer support has taught me to be more confident and believe in myself.” - Staff

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Member expressed that receiving peer support services helped her learned about community resources and connected her to a provider that helped her understand more about her diagnosis (Diabetes) she participated in a one-year program related to diabetes and is proud to say that she has learned and understands more now than she ever has in 35 years. Her provider is extremely happy for bringing down her A-1C from 14.3 in January 2023 to 6.4 in September 2023. Member encourages others who have diabetes to try that program.

Questions or need additional support? AzCHCulturalAffairs@azcompletehealth.com

¹ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31119610/> and <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9640880/>