



# 2018 - 2019 Cultural Competency Plan

2018 EQRO

SAN FRANCISCO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH – BEHAVIOREAL HEALTH SERVICES

CULTURAL COMPETENCY UNIT

## **Cultural Competence Plan FY 18-19**

### **Maintaining BHS' commitment to National CLAS Standards**

Over the course of 2018, DPH-Behavioral Health Services has continued to adhere to the National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services Standards. Given the constant increase in demand for services from Limited English Proficiency (LEP) clients and greater emphasis on this from Dept. of Health Care Services, BHS has been allowed to devote a greater amount of resources to meeting these needs. Across different service areas, improvements have been made and new monitoring tools introduced to ensure that the future of service provision accounts for the changes taking place in the community.

### **Increased Budget Allocation for Services**

The Office of Cultural Competence has seen a steady increase in the demand for both translations and interpretation over the past year. This increase has come both from requests at individual clinics but also as a result of BHS documentation updates necessitated by new requirements from the State. The primary vendor used for translations and interpretations is International Effectiveness Centers (IEC). With the start of each fiscal year, a purchase order for IEC worth \$10,000 is created to fulfill requests from BHS. By Spring 2018, several months before the close of FY 17-18, the funds of that purchase order had been exhausted, necessitating a request for an additional \$6000. The same was true for BHS' purchase order for Language Line, which offers 24/7 telephone interpretation support in a vast array of languages for the Behavioral Health Access Center and other BHS programs/sites, along with translation services. At the time of writing, for the present fiscal year, the purchase order for IEC has already been exhausted and a new one worth \$10k has been created. The initial FY 18-19 purchase order for Language Line has already been increased by \$3000 from last year to \$20k. Given the continued importance of meeting the City's linguistic diversity, it makes sense for BHS' fiscal/budget teams to accommodate the need for more resources through expanded allocation of funds.

### **Language Line Improvements**

In February 2018, the Behavioral Health Access Center (BHAC) Coordinator was alerted by some of his staff that they were having issues with some of the Language Line telephone interpreters, particularly with Chinese dialects. As a result, a new series of test calls were conducted to pinpoint the issues. This was in addition to previous test calls conducted during the fall and winter of 2017/2018. Problems included:

- longer than expected wait times
- information from client not being relayed to Access Line staff
- unfamiliarity with medical terms

The BHAC Coordinator and Cultural Competence staff arranged a March meeting with the regional Language Line Liaison to go over quality control issues. Among the system outcomes was a priority adjustment amongst Language Line customers. BHS' account was moved up in priority level from Basic to the second highest position, meaning only 911 emergency calls or similar would be prioritized by LL interpreters before those of BHS.

Furthermore, upon recommendation from the liaison, BHS' account was split in two to further prioritize the call center and allow for improved record keeping. All other calls would be categorized as Mental Health Clinical Services. The call center's sub-account was modified in two ways. First, for outbound calls to LL, BHAC would use a new toll-free number that LL would be able to identify as coming from the call center, thus removing the need to provide a Client ID. This was put into effect soon after the meeting and, coupled with the upgraded priority level, has yielded positive results with decreased wait times, as evidenced in the month by month charts in Appendix A.

Secondly, in the future for inbound calls to BHAC, the regularly used number will become a Direct Response Line, meaning this line would be directly routed to an LL interpreter, who would then call BHAC and queue for an English-speaking employee. As part of this, all the pre-recorded messages (in the threshold languages) one typically hears when calling will be re-recorded by LL interpreters whereas the current recordings were done by BHS staff who happened to speak the respective language.

In the event of critical communications, there will be better information sharing between all parties. Previously, any alerts about system outages on LL would be sent to Isis Fernandez at the Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs. This major information wouldn't be passed on to anyone at BHS. Now, Steve and BHAC have been added to the liaison's email group for alerts so BHS is aware of service disruptions.

At the individual interpreter level, emphasis was put on enhancing accuracy. As such, following the meeting, LL interpreters fielding calls from BHS would see a message on their screen with a note on the account reinforcing the need to "Accuracy is critical here. Calls are often tested by the state of CA. Always repeat the spelling of names, addresses, phone numbers, and drop-in hours."

The discussion also included possible QA Calibration work with test calls being setup and having LL's QA Manager and other staff monitor the calls to see where the shortcomings are. There is also potential for trainings of BHAC call center staff and clinicians on how to best work with interpreters (BHS also provides this training through Office of Cultural Competence).

### **Video Interpretation at BHAC**

Last year's Cultural Competence Plan alluded to the possibility of video interpretation and how it is preferable to use of over-the-phone interpreters. After significant planning, this is finally coming to fruition. Throughout 2018, BHS has worked with Language Line and Interpreter

Services (based out of Zuckerberg SF General Hospital) to organize the infrastructure needed to establish video interpretation at 1380 Howard's BHAC Clinics. Having been determined that the bandwidth of the wired network was adequate to handle video calls, we were able to move along with laying out the plans to carry this out. This site will be the first to host this new platform. Language Line shipped two video interpretation units to 1380. These will be installed in two counseling rooms that have been specifically designated for this purpose and integrated into the wired telecom network. Operating them is relatively easy, though interpretation services will provide in-service trainings to the clinic staff. There is a button on the console that is clearly marked for dialing an interpreter. As part of the collaborative effort between BHS and Interpreter Services (IS), the system has been setup so that once dialed, the call will go first to the IS team of interpreters first. This is ideal since the internal interpreters are guaranteed to know the local environment and understanding of how the system works here, more so than someone at a remote location out of state or even country. If by chance all of IS' lines for that language are busy, only then will the call be routed to Language Line's interpreters.

One of the primary uses will be to account for drop-in clients at the clinic. However, perhaps the more critical use of the two video interpretation consoles will be to provide support for other sites whose clinicians don't have the language capacity to support some of their clients. A BHS system-wide scheduling system will be created whereby clinicians from both civil service and contracted community-based organization programs can reserve time slots at 1380. During that time, they and their LEP or hearing-impaired client can conduct their standard appoint with the interpreter present via the video console. Because Interpreter Services has three additional video phones available for use and the clinic has a several more rooms that could handle the setup, BHS has the ability to expand the capacity and accommodate more requests for video interpretation, based on demand.

Looking at 2019 and beyond, this enhanced capacity will be expanded to other sites. Many of BHS programs are co-located at several of the city's public health centers, such as Ocean Park and Silver Avenue Family Centers, all of which have the wired infrastructure suitable for video calling. Since these sites have the physical space to install video consoles, there is no reason this can't be done, which would eliminate the need to travel to 1380 Howard.

### **Expanding on Cultural Competence and Laying Out a Direction for the Future**

Given the ever-changing landscape of Behavioral Health Services and the work being done within the community, it was determined by leadership that going forward, it is important to expand upon the purpose of the Office of Cultural Competence. Rather than merely focusing on Cultural Competence and Consumer Relations, the mission of the unit should be put at the forefront of its identity. The purpose of having a culturally competent system is to ensure equity in access to services for all members of the community. Furthermore, in a socioeconomic system and political climate that inherently erects barriers to healthcare for the disenfranchised or those with communication hardships, equity becomes a matter of social justice. Achieving both equity and justice require education, both internally on the part of staff

and externally through sharing information to the community in ways all its members can understand. That means accounting for the different populations being served and how demographic trends reflect a changing San Francisco. All these things being considered, the unit has now taken on the name of Office of Equity, Social Justice & Multicultural Education. This office will oversee several units, including the BHS Training Unit, Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) administration, and of course the former Cultural Competence/Consumer Relations team. Having these unified under the umbrella of one entity represents the collective response to the evolving behavioral health needs as transitions occur both at the organizational level and on the streets.

After more than of a year of being vacant, the position that was once the Director of Cultural Competence will be filled under the new Office of Equity, Social Justice & Multicultural Education. After a long period of time spent crafting a job description, formalizing parameters and responsibilities and working with HR/Fiscal to budget for and finalize the position, this new Director role was created and announced in March 2018. Aside from merely being posted on the public DPH job listings page, the position was disseminated throughout the larger BHS network at contractor meetings, the Cultural Competence Task Force and other avenues. With this recruitment, the goal was to cast the net as wide as possible to draw the best available candidates. Over two dozen applied for the role with around twenty making it through HR's screening processes. The applicants' backgrounds ranged from academia to nonprofit and public sector providers and even consultants, with several being internal to SFDPH and more coming from outside the system and even beyond the Bay Area. After extensive review of each candidate's resume and responses to a supplemental questionnaire, a total of eight were granted an initial interview, and half that number for the second round. In the end, an excellent internal candidate was chosen, someone who has held this title in two other large and diverse California counties. The selected candidate is someone with both drive and extensive San Francisco and Bay Area experience, providing a foundation of knowledge from which new initiatives and collaborations can be formed.

### **Rebuilding an Online Presence**

One of the major areas in which the Office of Cultural Competence has fallen short is its representation online within the DPH portal. As a collective whole, the Dept. of Public Health website is cluttered, with a user interface that is clunky and unwieldy. In the specific case of the OCC, the page it occupies is hard to find, buried within two dropdown menus from the public SFDPH homepage. In fact, before 2018, the page wasn't labeled as such but rather was listed as a subpage of BHS policies labeled for the CLAS Standards. Lastly, all the information on the page was outdated, with lists of leadership and groups such as the Task Force including people who are years removed from working at SFDPH, or policies that have since been updated. In sum, the secluded location of the page on the DPH portal and the quality of information within it rendered the page of limited use.

In late 2017 and early 2018, the Cultural Competence Analyst began working with the DPH Information Systems team to begin setting the groundwork for an overhaul of the Cultural Competence's online presence. A large amount of the outdated written content was deleted. Dead links and links to old forms were also removed. Thus far, the goal has been consolidating information that can be used by the civil service and contracted providers who interact with the OCC on an ongoing basis to meet reporting requirements and access language resources. For providers, newly added resources include:

- Link to the Cultural Competence Tracking System database
- A Powerpoint training manual that outlines structure of the database and how to use it for submitting staff reports, generating language capacity data and uploading forms
- The annual CC Questionnaire, the memo explaining its purpose and a related outline
- Link to the multilingual Language Line Posters that inform clients of free access to telephone interpreters
- Link to the Interpreter/Translation Requisition Form needed to request such services
- Contact information for the Cultural Competence Analyst
- Link to the Federal Class Standards Checklist

All of this can be found in the URL below (and previewed in Appendix B):

<https://www.sfdph.org/dph/comupg/aboutdph/insideDept/CLAS/OCC.asp>

In addition to this, the subpage for the CC Task Force has been updated to reflect the current membership. These changes are just the first of many to come.

Long-term the idea is to two distinct resource pages; one for consumers and the other for providers. In addition to the resources above, the provider page would add an archive of CC policies and memoranda for easy reference. Ideally, there will also be links granting access to the standard set of BHS intake forms in each of the threshold languages. A calendar would have a list of any relevant trainings being hosted by the BHS Training unit, with links to the page where one would register.

On the consumer side, the resources would include some policies but more importantly general information regarding the rights they have, such as access to interpretation at no cost. Additionally, there should be a list of the civil service clinics and the language capacities at each. The page is still a work in progress but enhancing the online presence of what is to become the Office of Equity, Social Justice & Multicultural Education will prove an invaluable asset in conveying BHS' goals and sharing the information needed to facilitate the process of working to achieve them.

### **Diversity of Trainings**

Across the system, numerous Cultural Competence trainings are available to staff from both civil service sites and contracted CBO providers. Given the political climate of today and the unique role of San Francisco with regards to the LGBTQ community, trainings such as the *Adult*

*Transgender Cultural Competence and Cultural Humility: 101, LGBTQ Youth Sensitivity* and the *SO/GI 101* (Sexual orientation gender identity) online trainings are mandatory across BHS. At the program level, many sites provide staff with access to their own focused trainings such as *Cultural Humility* with Ken Hardy, *Culture Based Countertransference* and *Culturally Sensitive Approaches in Suicide Prevention*. Other trainings at different programs include:

- *Immigration and Psychosis* (at Richmond Area Multi-Services, Inc. -RAMS)
- *Clinical Thinking & Cultural Reflections about Case Management* (RAMS)
- *Critical Race Theory as a Tool for Understanding Poor Engagement* (SF AIDS Foundation)
- *Racial Equity Foundations Training* (South Van Ness Adult BHS)
- *Medical Interpretation Training* (all BHS)

Despite having a robust array of trainings throughout the system, usually it is only the BHS-wide trainings that draw clinicians and staff from different programs. Even though many agencies' trainings are open to all, this fact goes largely unknown. At the latest Cultural Competence Task Force Meeting, the BHS Director suggested that going forward, any agency that wants to share announcements about open trainings should send the information to him for inclusion in the monthly Director's Report, which is distributed across the system. This will serve as a reliable and centralized source from which training developments can be spread. Long-term it could also result in reducing any replication of trainings and saving program resources. Much as the online trainings serve to establish system-wide standards, this sharing of other trainings will do the same leveraging of information to improve service standards throughout.

## **Conclusion**

Even as the Office of Cultural Competence is in the process of transitioning to both a new name and new leadership, the work of ensuring access to each of the City's diverse populations will hasn't ceased. The demand for this effort has in fact increased due in part to the political climate at the national level but also demographic changes on the street level. The resources allocated by SFDPH for cultural competence have increased somewhat but not so much so that the unit has not had to innovate and find new opportunities for collaboration with partners, whether it be Human Resources or contracted providers. With new leadership, those opportunities will get the support needed to push new initiatives and expand the system's capacity to serve everyone with the equity and justice the community deserves.

## Appendix A – Language Line Wait Times by Language/Month

October 2017

LANGUAGE	CALLS	MINUTES	CHARGES	Avg. Searchtime
SPANISH	72	846	702.18	43.26
CANTONESE	13	216	179.28	32.62
RUSSIAN	7	65	53.95	25.43
VIETNAMESE	6	97	80.51	55.17
KOREAN	5	60	49.80	23.60
TAGALOG	3	19	15.77	2.33
PORTUGUESE	2	42	34.86	19.50
URDU	2	26	21.58	19.00
MANDARIN	1	22	18.26	1.00
PUNJABI	1	27	22.41	25.00

April 2018

LANGUAGE	CALLS	MINUTES	CHARGES	Avg. Searchtime
SPANISH	122	1433	1189.39	11.84
MANDARIN	6	57	47.31	2.00
INDONESIAN	6	98	81.34	15.67
CANTONESE	6	122	101.26	6.67
CAMBODIAN	3	37	30.71	154.67
KOREAN	3	20	16.60	3.00
RUSSIAN	3	64	53.12	1.00
VIETNAMESE	2	28	23.24	13.50
ARABIC	2	55	45.65	.50
FRENCH	2	28	23.24	128.50
TAGALOG	1	15	12.45	7.00
PUNJABI	1	8	6.64	17.00

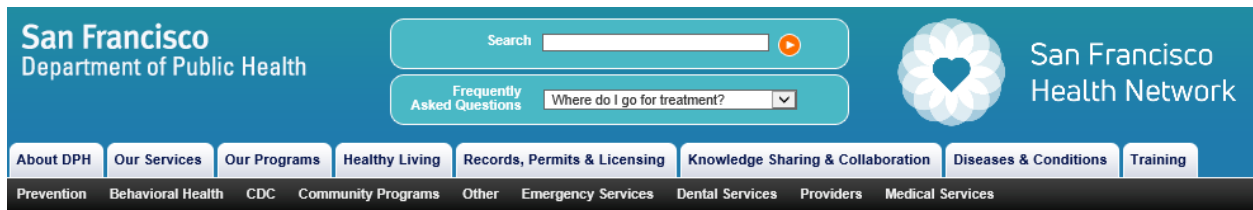
August 2018

LANGUAGE	CALLS	MINUTES	CHARGES	Avg. Searchtime
SPANISH	17	260	215.80	4.06
INDONESIAN	6	121	100.43	17.17
CANTONESE	5	130	107.90	10.00
KOREAN	2	10	8.30	1.50
CHIN	2	30	24.90	20.50



MANDARIN	1	11	9.13	12.00
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# Appendix B – Office of Cultural Competence on SFDPH Site



The header features the San Francisco Department of Public Health logo on the left, a search bar with a magnifying glass icon, and the San Francisco Health Network logo on the right. Below the search bar is a 'Frequently Asked Questions' dropdown menu with the text 'Where do I go for treatment?'. A navigation bar at the bottom contains links for 'About DPH', 'Our Services', 'Our Programs', 'Healthy Living', 'Records, Permits & Licensing', 'Knowledge Sharing & Collaboration', 'Diseases & Conditions', and 'Training'. A secondary navigation bar below that lists 'Prevention', 'Behavioral Health', 'CDC', 'Community Programs', 'Other', 'Emergency Services', 'Dental Services', 'Providers', and 'Medical Services'.

## Office of Cultural Competence

### Provider Resources

The Office of Cultural Competence strives to promote and embed the Federal CLAS Standards into the policies, procedures and makeup of mental health programs among both civil service clinics and community-based organizations. As public and nonprofit programs go about addressing cultural competence in their own ways, we support those efforts through consolidation of information and having standardized reporting procedures that are simple to follow. Coordinating with the Business Office of Contract Compliance, these Cultural Competence reporting tools have become incorporated into the Administrative Binders that agencies complete on an annual basis, further emphasizing their importance to improving service delivery.

### CLAS Standards Checklist

The National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) are the benchmark for improving both quality and equity in the provision of health care. It is with these in mind that BHS clinics, programs and CBO partners continually work to eliminate the health disparities in access, and ultimately the outcomes, for different communities along the lines of ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, etc. The CLAS Standards Checklist (linked below) provides agencies and programs with an outline of steps they can and should take to go about that effort in breaking down barriers. Progress can be made by becoming more aware of the community they serve, as well as the internal programmatic areas that must adapt to better connect with said community.

- [CLAS Standards Checklist](#)

### Cultural Competence Tracking System

- [Cultural Competence Tracking System Database](#)
- [Cultural Competence Tracking System Training & User Manual](#)

### Cultural Competence Community Advisory Board (CAB) Questionnaire

- [An Introduction to CAB Report Questionnaire](#)
- [2017-18 CAB Report Questionnaire Template](#)
- [Community Advisory Board Questionnaire Outline](#)

### Language Line Posters:

BHS policy stipulates that in the reception areas of all civil service clinics and program sites, there must be signage prominently displayed indicating to the public that they have access to interpreters in their desired language at no cost to them.

Language Line has provided signage and posters featuring the same message in dozens of different languages.

### HELPFUL LINKS

- [Policies](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Task Force](#)
- [2017-18 Cultural Competence & Equity Report](#)