



**Cultural Competency,  
Diversity, and Inclusion Plan  
2023**

# **The Arc of the Ozarks**

## **2023 Cultural Competency Plan**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Arc of the Ozarks is committed to fostering an environment that encourages and celebrates diversity, equity, and inclusion for individuals receiving services, employees, and other stakeholders. The mission and vision of The Arc of the Ozarks is the foundation from which our cultural competency is built.

Recognizing the complexity of the issues involved, this plan is created to increase cultural competence across all staff and organizational levels. Understanding that many different strata comprise the concept of ‘culture’, such as language, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, and age, just to name a few. The ability to appreciate and interact with people with different backgrounds, cultures, and belief systems are central to a culturally competent environment. The Arc of the Ozarks also recognizes that culture can influence issues related to service provision, including barriers to service, attitudes towards services, beliefs about specific disabilities, and help-seeking behaviors.

As a commitment to furthering the cultural competency of the organization, The Arc of the Ozarks added a goal to their strategic plan to create and implement diversity and inclusion training for all staff. In addition, core values were edited to reflect an emphasis on this area by adding “Inclusion” to the core value of “Diversity”.

### **WHAT IS CULTURAL COMPETENCE?**

Cultural competency, is the ability and willingness of a system to value the importance of culture in the delivery of services to all segments of the population. It is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that enables an organization to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. It requires a systems perspective which values and embraces differences and is responsive to diversity at all levels; e.g., policy, governance, administrative, workforce and client. Cultural competence is developmental, community focused and family oriented. On an

individual level, cultural competency evolves through changes in behaviors, attitudes, knowledge and skills.

Cultural competence activities include the development of skills through training, use of self-assessment tools, and implementation of objectives to ensure that policies and procedures, as well as service delivery practices are responsive to the culture and diversity within the populations served. It requires all levels of the organization to adhere to the ethical codes of conduct established, and reflect that the values of The Arc of the Ozarks are based upon the principles of honesty, sincerity, understanding and integrity.

### **PURPOSE, AUTHORITY & STRUCTURE**

The Arc of the Ozarks' Cultural Competency Plan will be used to ensure that service delivery to all persons is delivered in a culturally sensitive manner. The plan will also line out the organization's commitment to providing a diverse and inclusive environment for all staff. This plan is comprehensive and covers all levels of the organization; governance, administration and staff.

The President/CEO is delegated the authority and responsibility to integrate cultural competency throughout the organization. The President/CEO has authorized the Vice-President of Human Resources & Staff Development to oversee the implementation and periodic review of cultural competency activities and review progress towards goals and objectives.

The overall aim of the plan is to foster an environment of culturally competent service delivery by:

- Assessing cultural competence
- Raising awareness of diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Offer immediate access to culturally competent services
- Offer culturally diverse education and training for staff
- Promote recruitment of staff prevalent to the secondary language/culture of our service delivery area.

The overall strategy will follow a continuous loop of 1) assessment, 2) planning of steps necessary to correct deficiencies and build on strengths identified, 3) implement plans developed, and 4) evaluate effects of implementation.

## **OVERALL GOALS**

Development of this Cultural Competency Plan includes defining our expectations with respect to providing culturally proficient services. This includes:

- Development of specific goals;
- Identifying strategies to meet those goals; and
- Measurement of the extent to which goals are met

The following goals and objectives have been identified as the initial expectations of this Cultural Competency Plan

**Goal I:      Ensure that clients receive from all staff effective, understandable, and respectful services that are provided in a manner compatible with their cultural beliefs and language.**

- Objectives:
1.      Impact of culture is included in program planning
  2.      Recruitment of multicultural staff
  3.      Cultural Competency training for all staff

Measures: Case records reviews, client satisfaction surveys, staff self-assessments.

**Goal II:      Implement strategies to recruit, retain and promote at all levels a diverse staff and leadership that is representative of the service area demographics.**

Objectives: 1. Organizational assessment

2. Knowledge of service area demographics

Measures: EEO-1 reports, turnover reports, staff questionnaires, attendance at seminars on diversity, equity and inclusion.

**GOAL III: Ensure services are sensitive to linguistic needs of clients.**

Objectives: 1. Utilization of translation services

2. Client materials are easily understood and available in appropriate languages

Measures: Materials and signage reviewed annually

**GOAL IV: Raise awareness on diversity, equity and inclusion among staff members.**

1. Create training for all staff regarding various types of diversity and how to encourage equitable and inclusive environments.

2. Distribute diversity awareness material agency wide monthly for team meetings.

3. Conduct additional training for management staff on diversity equity and inclusion.

Measures: staff questionnaires, training completion, employee turnover.

This plan will be reviewed at least annually by the Vice-President of Human Resources & Staff Development, with a report delivered to the administrator regarding goal attainments, challenges or additional areas needing attention.