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***Cultural Competency Standards  
for  
Programs Serving Victims of  
Domestic Violence and Sexual  
Assault and Other Crimes in Oregon***

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**Original Prepared for  
Criminal Justice Services Division  
Oregon Department of State Police  
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Revised July, 2006  
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## **Introduction**

These standards are intended to be used by grantee agencies in creating a new plan or enhancing an existing plan to increase agency-wide cultural competency. They were first created by a consultant for the Criminal Justice Services Division of the Oregon State Police/Office of Homeland Security. Then, they were pilot tested by ten grantee agencies over an 18-month period. The “pilot” agencies gave extensive feedback as to how the standards could be revised/rewritten/re-arranged to be more useful to grantees. Their generosity in sharing suggestions and experiences has crafted this document into a valuable tool for small and large, governmental and non-profit agencies.

There are many definitions of Cultural Competency. The working definition of Cultural Competency used in developing these standards is:

Cultural Competency results from the on-going commitment of an agency, organization, program or individual to:

- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of the beliefs and conventions of the diverse cultural groups in the community served;
- Employ policies, practices and skills in the workplace environment and client services that respect these beliefs and conventions; and
- Use self-assessment for continuous improvement in culturally responsive interactions.

The standards are divided into 5 functional areas:

- A. Boards/Leadership
- B. Directors/Administrators
- C. Human Resource Functions (including both employees and volunteers)
- D. Physical Facilities/Environment
- E. Employees/Volunteers

Each set of standards is presented twice:

1. As a statement followed by one or more examples of specific activities that could be used to implement the standard; and
2. As a self-assessment tool that Board members, program directors, staff, volunteers and community partners could complete to give an idea of where the agency is on the road to becoming culturally competent; and to prioritize the future steps it needs to take.

While the standards are broken down into single statements and steps, as you read through them you will see general strategies/themes that emerge. These include:

- **Creating and strengthening relationships** with culturally specific agencies, key community leaders and natural helpers, those who serve culturally specific populations, and with survivors;
- **Being flexible in those relationships.** Pilot participants repeatedly described successful relationships as those with the freedom and flexibility to develop naturally, rather than being narrowly defined. Their message is clear: invite your partners into your agency, make it possible for them to engage wherever they feel most comfortable/competent;
- Committing to **training for all levels of the organization.** Both initial and on-going training are essential. Training needs to cover the theories of oppression and cultural competency, looking at our own assumptions and biases, and information about specific cultures;
- **Developing strategies in partnership** with cultural experts to enhance services; and
- Recognizing that cultural competency is an **on-going process.** Demographics change in communities, cultures change and don't remain static, and individuals vary in their identification with their culture and what they take from it.

Try not to work from assumptions; if you don't learn something new, there's probably more to do.

Thanks to the individuals and agencies who participated in the pilot project and in the revision of these standards:

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## **A. Standards for Program Boards and / or Leadership**

**Who we mean by “Boards and/or Leadership”.** In general, we mean *whoever establishes the policies under which the grantee program operates*. In a non-profit victim services or multi-services provider agency, this means the Board of Directors of the agency, because the Board has the authority (and duty) to establish policy, including policy about cultural competency. For purposes of these standards, leadership in government-based grantee programs would be provided by the ultimate policy making body. This may be the County Commission, the District Attorney, the county Sheriff, the Chief of a police department, and the Presiding Judge or Court Administrator of a court. In practical terms, government based programs should probably begin by consulting the Office Manager to discuss the level of leadership appropriate for this planning process.

A government based grantee will probably want to share these standards with their Human Resources department. Some counties and cities already have a cultural competency plan or policies with regard to serving specific populations, but others do not. DOJ/CVAS is not requiring that the whole county consider adopting these standards, only the program receiving CVAS-administered funds (VOCA or VAWA). Government-based programs are urged to contact DOJ/CVAS prior to setting out on this process in order to discuss who might be the logical “leadership” for purposes of cultural competency planning.

**The Goal for Boards/Leadership** is to make cultural competency a priority and integrate it throughout the agency. The Board or Leader’s responsibility is to assess current functioning, develop a cultural competency plan or section of strategic plan that includes specific goals and objectives, and oversee implementation. The plan can include any or all of the following:

1. Incorporate a **diversity of perspectives** in the planning process.

Examples:

- *Convene a formal cultural competency committee, which may include representatives of culturally diverse populations in the community, different types of employees and volunteers, clients or survivors and/or ad-hoc members who lend specific expertise (e.g. representatives from culturally specific agencies, experts from outside of your area, etc.).*
- *Invite members of the Family/Domestic Violence Council, Child Abuse Multidisciplinary Team or Sexual Assault Response Team to engage in developing cultural competency protocols for the government based program.*
- *Hold informal focus groups, meetings, conversations with key stakeholders, community partners, staff, etc.*

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2. Develop of a **mission statement** that includes cultural competency as an integral component of the workplace environment and client services.
3. Integrate cultural competency into all **board/leadership policies and decisions** and develop written policies specifically regarding cultural competency.

*Examples:*

- *Adopt a policy that all Board/Leadership actions reflect cultural competency; that is, when the Board/Leadership proposes to take an action, a question integral to the process is, “How will this action affect the full range of community members we serve?”*
- *Does the annual budget reflect costs of providing services to the full range of community members? For example, if the community includes non-English speakers, does the budget include costs of a Language Line or translators?*

**Note:** Through networking relationships, your Board/Leadership may find that other agencies have already developed policies that meet your needs.

4. Develop strategies that encourage **open, safe and inclusive communication** around these issues.

*Examples:*

- *Participate in training that helps Board members, Leaders and management to recognize how their own cultural filters may be reflected in all aspects of agency functioning.*
- *Invite staff and volunteers to participate in an anonymous “cultural competency survey”. Use survey results to begin discussions around improving delivery of services to diverse populations.*
- *For government based programs within an agency, consider how cultural competency would enhance investigation or prosecution strategies.*
- *For non-profit agencies, make a list of ways in which communication may not feel safe and the actions to take to increase safety and inclusiveness. Make advocates available to staff and volunteers who want to present a grievance to the Board in order to address a power imbalance.*

5. Develop and annually **review** goals, objectives, policies and activities related to improving cultural competency and revise as needed.

*Examples:*

- *The cultural competency committee of a non-profit agency annually reviews client feedback forms received, discusses any cultural competency issues identified at a staff meeting, and then prepares a report for the full Board, identifying strengths and areas in need of improvement.*
- *If a formal county or city cultural competency committee exists, its members can be engaged in this process and can determine how the information gathered can best be shared.*

6. As appropriate, **share information** with community partner agencies and key leaders regarding the increasing cultural diversity of the local community to generate their interest in expanding services for culturally diverse populations.

Examples:

- *An agency that has begun to be contacted by “mail-order brides” invites community partners and other key leaders to a meeting to share information, evaluate existing resources, identify gaps in resources and make a plan for addressing those gaps.*
- *A District Attorney’s office notices an increase of child abuse cases involving children of a local non-English speaking population group and asks the local child abuse MDT to discuss options for improved law enforcement response within this population group.)*

7. Require annual cultural competency **training** for Boards, administrators, employees, and volunteers. Offer on-going training opportunities, such as facilitated brown bag lunch discussions and presentations, trainings on specific topics at meetings, consultations, and feedback from self-assessments.

Examples:

- *A government based program can set aside time within an office staff meeting to review recent federal and state statutory or administrative rule change regarding immigration and its implication for investigation or prosecution.*
- *Non-profit agencies can include information on developing and increasing cultural competency in the initial Board information/application packet. An example of possible materials is the “Stages of Cultural Competency” included as an attachment to these standards.*
- *Identify a monthly Board or office staff meeting at which cultural competency will be the topic each year. Institute a “resource sharing” agenda item on Board and staff meeting agendas and ask specifically about cultural competency events.*

8. **Recruit** and support Board members who represent the culturally diverse populations in the community that the program serves.

Examples:

- *Establish an Advisory Board or other ad hoc group or relationship that could be a preliminary step to recruitment.*
- *Assign Board mentors to provide support and technical assistance, which is useful for all new Board members, not just members from diverse populations.*

9. Offer **support** for culturally diverse persons in administrator or director positions.

Example:

- *Demonstrate willingness to provide support through cultural competency activities described in other portions of this section.*

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- *Ask for feedback/suggestions in the annual evaluation. When feedback/suggestions are given make a good faith effort to respond positively.*
- *Government-based Leadership can communicate feedback collected to the county or city Human Resources Department, if applicable.*

10. Where possible, **promote or formally recognize** administrators, employees, and volunteers for their work on cultural competency.

*Examples:*

- *Include as part of criteria for promotion an evaluation of the applicant's participation in cultural competency training, planning and participation in community events, membership on related committees or organizations.*
- *Ask community partners to recommend staff and volunteers for recognition by your agency.*

11. Lead by example.

*Example:*

- *Board members and government-based Leadership demonstrate a commitment to developing cultural competency by attending trainings, participating in the planning process, meeting with community partners, attending formal and informal events, and recognizing staff contributions in this area.*

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**Self-Assessment Tool:**

*First, please rank each Standard (from 1 to 11) in order of importance to your program. **Second**, please indicate the date(s) that each Standard is assessed as “Achieved,” “In Progress,” “Not Yet Addressed,” or “N/A” (Not Applicable). You can use the rankings later to help plan your implementation of those Standards that are “In Progress” or “Not Yet Addressed.” Then you can indicate the reassessment date(s) without erasing the earlier assessment date(s) to help you keep track of your progress over time.*

Standard	Rank This Standard in Order of Importance (from 1-10)	Indicate Date(s) Assessed as...			
		Achieved	In Progress	Not Yet Addressed	N/A
A1. Incorporate a <b>diversity of perspectives</b> in the planning process.					
A2. Develop of a <b>mission statement</b> that includes cultural competency as an integral component of the workplace environment and client services					
A3. Integrate cultural competency into all <b>board/leadership policies and decisions</b> and develop written policies specifically regarding cultural competency.					
A4. Develop strategies that encourage open, safe and inclusive <b>communication</b> around these issues.					
A5. Annually <b>review</b> goals, objectives, policies and activities related to improving cultural competency and revise as needed.					
A6. As appropriate, <b>share information</b> with community partner agencies and key leaders regarding the increasing cultural diversity of the local community to generate their interest in expanding services for culturally diverse populations.					

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Standard	Rank This Standard in Order of Importance (from 1-10)	Indicate Date(s) Assessed as...			
		Achieved	In Progress	Not Yet Addressed	N/A
A7. Require annual cultural competency <b>training</b> for administrators, employees, and volunteers. Offer on-going training opportunities, such as facilitated brown bag lunch discussions and presentations, trainings on specific topics at meetings, consultations, and feedback from self-assessments					
A8. <b>Recruit</b> and support board members that represent the culturally diverse populations in the community that the program serves.					
A9. Offer <b>support</b> for culturally diverse persons in administrator or director positions.					
A10. Where possible, <b>promote or formally recognize</b> administrators, employees, and volunteers for their work on cultural competency.					
A.11. <b>Lead by example.</b>					

## **B. Standards for Program Directors and / or Administrators**

The Program Director and/or Administrator contributes to the development of the cultural competency plan and is a leader in the day to day implementation of the plan.

Directors/administrators encourage a sense of ownership of the plan among staff and volunteers, and foster environments based on respect and responsiveness to staff and client diverse needs. Directors/administrators in government based programs should consider engaging the support and participation of office managers. Implementation can include any or all of the following:

1. Identify and actively **network** with community resource people, advocacy organizations, faith-based organizations, and professional associations from the culturally diverse populations served.

*Examples:*

- *Work closely with the local immigration expert or immigration counseling service to enable employees and volunteers to deliver coordinated services to immigrant clients. For example, a District Attorney's office may consider an arrangement with an agency providing services to immigrant and refugee victims of crime to communicate notification of victim rights and case hearings to victims who do not have a mailing address.*
  - *Collaborate with community resources that employ both traditional and non-traditional (such as spiritual) methods of helping that represent the values of the diverse populations served.*
  - *Collaborate with court personnel and court interpreters to provide translation services for victims in criminal cases.*
  - *Contact county or city Human Resources departments to inquire if any cultural competency planning efforts have taken place.*
  - *Government-based agencies may also draw from the expertise of culturally specific staff at child abuse assessment centers, legal aid offices, Senior and Disabled services and local DV/SA programs.*
  - *Attend cultural events and meetings of cultural groups in the community to obtain a sense of the strengths of the culture and to identify potential advisors. Allow paid time for employees to attend similar events and meetings.*
  - *One non-profit agency wrote a grant for outreach to a culturally specific group in their community, including in grant activities building an advisory board. As community members became involved in the project, they identified a different role for the advisory board than the agency had envisioned. Respecting the cultural expertise of these advisory board members, the agency let the group design its own process & agenda.*
2. In **planning** for development of cultural competency, consider all types of services including prevention, crisis, individual, family, outreach, community, and education services.

Examples:

- Interview partner agencies with specific questions on each type of service. A group meeting might generate dialogue that adds to your knowledge.
  - Government based programs may work with local MDTs, task forces or councils on addressing how services to culturally specific populations can be improved. For example, a family violence council may establish a subcommittee for the purposes of addressing strategies in reaching Hispanic/Latino community members regarding child abuse reporting.
  - Current or former clients may be willing to participate in a focus group. Feedback collected may be useful in delineating services that need enhancement.
3. Maintain accurate and current **demographic data** about the culturally diverse populations in the community served, and annually review the demographic trends. Compare community data with agency service data and consider differences in planning services.

Examples:

- Bookmark the U.S. Census and the Oregon Blue Book Counties Information pages at:  

[www.factfinder.census.gov](http://www.factfinder.census.gov)  
<http://www.bluebook.state.or.us/local/counties/counties01.htm>

*Annually print out this information and compare it to client service data.*
  - Other sources of information are the county assessor's office, city manager's office, Sheriff's office, local police department and county public health office.
4. Develop a process to learn about **new populations** in your community.

Examples:

- Agencies that piloted these standards report that their greatest success in this area comes from building formal & informal community partnerships. Often it is through informal conversation, as well as from information shared at collaborative meetings, that they learn about new populations/issues in their communities.
  - Local MDTs or councils and task forces may decide to conduct research locally on culturally specific population groups.
5. **Involve staff and volunteers throughout the agency in the planning and implementation** of cultural competency services so that cultural competency is viewed as an issue they want to address, rather than something being handed down to them.

Example:

- *One agency used an anonymous “culture survey” to encourage staff to evaluate the agency environment for safety with regard to their own and clients’ cultures. They incorporated feedback into long and short-term strategies. For example, being a large & vocal staff, they instituted small group discussion as part of staff meetings to encourage those uncomfortable with speaking up to be able to share their ideas. They also instituted a “multicultural moment” at each staff meeting, when a member shares something from another culture (either their own or one they know about). Sharing has included reading a poem & telling story.*

6. Build **cultural competency subcommittee** activities into the job descriptions of subcommittee members, to formalize their responsibility and to allocate the necessary time and resources for success.

Examples:

- *Because membership on the subcommittee may change, a non-profit agency may want to draft a “supplemental position activities” statement that describes the activities the position will assume, estimates the weekly time required and describes how other job responsibilities will be adjusted to compensate for this additional responsibility.*
- *Government-based program directors may encourage staff and volunteers to participate on an internal subcommittee; a subcommittee of an MDT, council or task force; or as a member of a community-based cross-disciplinary effort.*

7. Improve cultural competency in **hiring and promotion**, as well as in developing and managing services. Be aware of the prejudices and misconceptions that can compromise all of these activities.

Example:

- *Invite members of the community or staff from allied agencies or business partners to participate on the interview panel and incorporate their feedback into the selection process. These individuals often pick up on subtleties that may otherwise be overlooked, or may be able to identify additional skills from which your organization could benefit.*

8. Use culturally specific communication when **advertising** program services to diverse populations.

Examples:

- *Use neighborhood associations, religious organizations, and local businesses to advertise services.*
- *DA/VAPs might post information about victims’ rights, compensation and assistance at Head Starts, community colleges, libraries, court house bulletin boards, community cable television channels, animal shelters, front entrances of*

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*Sheriff's and Police Departments, hospital waiting rooms, local medical clinics, Jail and Parole/Probation reception areas.*

- *Use multilingual materials such as brochures, posters, flyers, etc.*
- *Use PSAs on culturally specific media.*

9. Have a **plan for interpretation, translation and other communication support.**

Examples:

- *Provide bilingual staff and/ or volunteers on site including those who are fluent in American Sign Language.*
- *Locate individuals or organizations in the community that provide language translation and interpretation services.*
- *Access Language Banks, TTDs, Relay Services, computer support and other technology.*
- *Government-based programs should check with the Office Manager or Human Resources Department regarding translation services for victims.*
- *Be willing to collect client feedback, where possible, as to the quality of the services. This may be possible with clients with whom you work over a period of time.*

10. Communicate that services to immigrant women will not be denied or diminished on the basis of **immigration status.**

Examples:

- *Get to know key contacts in your community, who will be able to pass along assurances that your agency is safe to work with. These contacts may include Head Start, the school district, the health department.*
- *Use specific language in your outreach materials that says: "We work with everyone: men, gender minorities, immigrants, etc."*
- *Constantly remind community partners that you are available to the clients & communities they serve.*

11. Create a **safe environment** for employees, volunteers, and clients to voice concerns related to discrimination or culturally insensitive practices to boards, directors, or administrators without fear of repercussions. Give employees, volunteers, and clients a safe way to offer **suggestions about services** that they believe are needed.

Example:

- *Have a brief survey form that can be dropped in an easily visible box. Be willing to respond to suggestions promptly and in a safe and respectful way.*

12. Conduct initial and ongoing **assessments** of what employees and volunteers identify as their professional development needs related to serving culturally diverse clients.

*Example:*

- *Include this question on annual employee evaluation. Ask it periodically at staff meetings.*

13. Provide initial staff/volunteer **training**, as well as on-going training, addressing overall cultural competency theory and training addressing specific populations.

*Examples:*

- *Anti-oppression and anti-racism training is important, but it is only one piece of developing cultural competency. If you don't have an initial training plan, use the CVAS or OCADSV or similar listserves to ask for other agency examples.*
- *Have appropriate community partners review & provide feedback on your selection before you incorporate it into your training.*
- *Use listserves and community partnerships to identify ongoing training opportunities and make these available to Board, staff and volunteers.*
- *Clearly identify the topics of the training. Institute the practice that those attending trainings share what they have learned at staff or other meetings.*
- *Support those who express the most interest to attend trainings and to share information/skills learned at staff & other meetings.*
- *Make the connection between information and skills learned at a training and agency work and/or goals.*

14. Convene facilitated **brown bag lunches or other forums** to engage administrators, employees, and volunteers in exploring attitudes, beliefs, and values related to cultural competency. Invite community advocates and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and other crimes from culturally diverse populations to join in these discussions.

*Examples:*

- *This standard envisions sharing specific information about what it is like to be a member of a specific cultural group in your community. It is not about theoretical or general information, as described in the preceding section.*
- *A government based program may ask the county or city Human Resources Department to host such presentations.*

15. Maintain a current **resource library** housing materials (articles, books, videotapes) concerning cultural competency in service delivery for the culturally diverse populations in the community served.

*Examples:*

- *Larger agencies with multiple locations might consider emailing articles/information or posting on bulletin boards or including in agency newsletter.*

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- *Videos and/or review of resources could be incorporated into staff meetings, and reading can be assigned and then discussed. This could follow up or support a brown bag lunch, described above.*

16. Develop a short **client complaint form** and put it where clients can easily see it. Use patterns of complaints to identify service trouble spots. Use complaints and their resolution as opportunities to share information and promote cultural competency.

*Examples:*

- *Consult with partners and/or cultural experts as to any practice within culturally specific groups with regard to official complaints and try to reflect their information in your process.*
- *Placement of a written complaint form should be as confidential as possible, so that clients are able to take or read information without feeling they are being watched by agency personnel; and all agency personnel should be able to offer and explain the procedure by telephone or in person.*
- *Give a client with a complaint the option of identifying herself and being contacted for resolution, or submitting the information anonymously.*
- *Offer the option of the client bringing a support person to any resolution meetings.*
- *Regularly ask partners for feedback on your agency that they may have heard within their communities.*

17. Prepare **annual reports** of progress on activities related to improving cultural competency for review by the Board, CVAS, and / or CAF.

*Example:*

- *Add cultural competency to the topics regularly included in the agency annual report.*

18. Lead by example.

*Example:*

- *Program directors and/or administrators demonstrate their commitment to developing cultural competency by attending trainings, participating in the planning process, meeting with community partners, attending formal and informal events, and recognizing staff contributions in this area.*

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**Self-Assessment Tool:**

*First, please rank each Standard (from 1 to 18) in order of importance to your program. **Second**, please indicate the date(s) that each Standard is assessed as “Achieved,” “In Progress,” “Not Yet Addressed,” or “N/A” (Not Applicable). You can use the rankings later to help plan your implementation of those Standards that are “In Progress” or “Not Yet Addressed.” Then you can indicate the reassessment date(s) without erasing the earlier assessment date(s) to help you keep track of your progress over time.*

Standard	Rank This Standard in Order of Importance (from 1-10)	Indicate Date(s) Assessed as...			
		Achieved	In Progress	Not Yet Addressed	N/A
<b>B1.</b> Identify and actively <b>network</b> with community resource people, advocacy organizations, faith-based organizations, and professional associations from the culturally diverse populations served. Allow paid time for employees to attend similar events and meetings.					
<b>B2.</b> In <b>planning</b> for development of cultural competency, consider all types of services (including prevention, crisis, individual, family, outreach, community, and education services).					
<b>B3.</b> Maintain accurate and current <b>demographic data</b> about the culturally diverse populations in the community served, and annually review the demographic trends. Compare community data with agency service data and consider differences in planning services.					
<b>B4.</b> Develop a process to learn <b>new populations</b> in your community.					
<b>B5.</b> <b>Involve staff and volunteers throughout the agency in the planning and implementation</b> of cultural competency services so that cultural competency is viewed as an issue they want to address, rather than something being handed down to them.					

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Standard	Rank This Standard in Order of Importance (from 1-10)	Indicate Date(s) Assessed as...			
		Achieved	In Progress	Not Yet Addressed	N/A
B6. <b>Build</b> cultural competency subcommittee activities into the job descriptions of subcommittee members to formalize the responsibility and allocate the necessary time and resources for success.					
B7. Improve cultural competency in <b>hiring and promotion</b> , as well as developing and managing services. Be aware of the prejudices and misconceptions that can compromise these activities.					
B8. Use culturally specific communication when <b>advertising</b> program services to diverse populations.					
B9. Have a <b>plan for interpretation</b> , translation and other communication support.					
B10. Communicate that services to immigrant women will not be denied or impaired on the basis of <b>immigration status</b> .					
B11. Create a <b>safe environment</b> for employees, volunteers, and clients to voice concerns related to discrimination or culturally insensitive practices to boards, directors, or administrators without fear of repercussions. Give employees, volunteers, and clients a safe way to offer <b>suggestions about services</b> that they believe are needed.					
B12. Conduct initial and ongoing <b>assessments</b> of what employees and volunteers identify as their professional development needs related to serving culturally diverse clients.					

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Standard	Rank This Standard in Order of Importance (from 1-10)	Indicate Date(s) Assessed as...			
		Achieved	In Progress	Not Yet Addressed	N/A
B13. Provide initial staff/volunteer <b>training</b> , as well as on-going training, addressing overall cultural competency theory <u>and</u> training addressing specific populations.					
B14. Convene facilitated <b>brown bag lunches or other forums</b> to engage administrators, employees, and volunteers in exploring attitudes, beliefs, and values related to cultural competency. Invite community advocates and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and other crimes from culturally diverse populations to join in these discussions.					
B15. Maintain a current <b>resource library</b> housing materials (articles, books, videotapes) concerning cultural competency in service delivery for the culturally diverse populations in the community served.					
B16. Develop a short <b>client complaint form</b> and put it where clients can easily see it. Use patterns of complaints to identify service trouble spots. Use complaints and their resolution as opportunities to share information and promote cultural competency.					
B17. Prepare <b>annual reports of progress</b> on activities related to improving cultural competency for review by the Board and CJSD, CVAS, and / or CAF.					
B18. <b>Lead by example.</b>					

### **C. Standards for Program Human Resources Functions and / or Professionals (including Volunteer Coordinators)**

The Human Resources Person (or director/supervisor) ensures compliance with non discrimination laws and provides leadership in recruitment, hiring, training and advancement representing diverse populations. In larger agencies this may be a full job position; in smaller agencies it may be one of the many responsibilities of the agency director. All of the actions described below are relevant to volunteers as well as staff. Implementation can include any or all of the following:

1. Develop **position descriptions** that value experience, competence, and sensitivity in working with culturally diverse populations. Use cultural experts to review position descriptions.

*Examples:*

- *Convene an advisory committee or seek the individual advice of those with cultural expertise to help create job descriptions that are clear, responsive to community needs and realistic. For instance, if you are developing a position for an outreach advocate to serve people with disabilities, consult with disability community leaders, service providers and other activists as to location, needs and other special considerations of the job.*
- *Consider and plan for agency capacity to serve culturally specific clients who respond to the outreach. If your “outreach advocate” is busy reaching out, who will serve those who respond?*

2. **Actively recruit** administrators, employees, and volunteers from diverse populations.

*Examples:*

- *Post local job ads in publications that reach culturally diverse populations.*
- *Mai/e-mail job ads to organizations and professionals who work with diverse populations.*
- *Use networks of community partners and key stakeholders in recruiting. An advisory committee or individual advisors that review/create a position description would be a natural resource in recruitment of qualified candidates.*
- *When bicultural applicants to one agency do not have required basic experience, the agency works to include applicants in upcoming volunteer training so they can gain knowledge and ascertain whether the work is right for them. The agency lets such unsuccessful applicants know that it is interested in supporting them to gain knowledge and reapply for future openings.*

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3. Develop questions for **hiring interviews** that explore applicants' experience, knowledge, and values related to cultural competency. Include representatives from diverse communities or people with cultural competency expertise on the hiring committee or interview panel.

*Example:*

- *Members of an advisory committee or the advisors who developed a position description could be invited to serve on the hiring panel—or to recommend and help recruit others who could serve.*

4. Develop **job performance review** criteria that include assessments of cultural competency skills, as well as efforts to develop these skills. Recognize staff/volunteers for cultural competency work and training.

*Examples:*

- *See sample job evaluation form that specifically reviews cultural competency.*

5. Track **retention** of program administrators, employees, and volunteers, and develop a record of successful retention of individuals from culturally diverse populations in the community.

*Examples:*

- *If the last two bilingual/bicultural advocates left, regretfully, for higher paying positions consider paying a “language add-on” to recognize the specialized skills required for the position.*
- *Ask community partners to help you identify necessary accommodations to allow people with disabilities to effectively work/ volunteer for your agency.*
- *For a small program the “tracking” may be more informal, but it should be sufficiently formal to assure that underlying cultural competency issues are not overlooked for more culture-neutral explanations, such as better benefits, better hours, etc.*

6. **Support** culturally diverse administrators, employees, and volunteers. Develop mechanisms for staff/volunteers to safely express their concerns about discrimination or cultural insensitivity without fear of repercussions.

*Examples:*

- *Identify one or more neutral people to whom concerns can be expressed. This may be the person with the Human Resources function in your agency, or it may be someone else, who is seen as generally trustworthy and discrete by volunteers and staff.*

**Cultural Competency Standards for Programs**  
**Serving Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault and Other Crime in Oregon**

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**Self-Assessment Tool:**

*First, please rank each Standard (from 1 to 17) in order of importance to your program. **Second**, please indicate the date(s) that each Standard is assessed as “Achieved,” “In Progress,” “Not Yet Addressed,” or “N/A” (Not Applicable). You can use the rankings later to help plan your implementation of those Standards that are “In Progress” or “Not Yet Addressed.” Then you can indicate the reassessment date(s) without erasing the earlier assessment date(s) to help you keep track of your progress over time.*

Standard	Rank This Standard in Order of Importance (from 1-6)	Indicate Date(s) Assessed as...			
		Achieved	In Progress	Not Yet Addressed	N/A
C1. Develop <b>position descriptions</b> that value experience, competence, and sensitivity in working with culturally diverse populations. Use cultural experts to review position descriptions.					
C2. <b>Actively recruit</b> administrators, employees, and volunteers from diverse populations.					
C3. Develop questions for <b>hiring interviews</b> that explore applicants’ experience, knowledge, and values related to cultural competency. Include representatives from diverse communities or people with cultural competency expertise on the hiring committee or interview panel.					
C4. Develop <b>job performance review criteria</b> that include assessments of cultural competency skills, as well as efforts to develop these skills. Recognize staff/volunteers for cultural competency work and training.					

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Standard	Rank This Standard in Order of Importance (from 1-6)	Indicate Date(s) Assessed as...			
		Achieved	In Progress	Not Yet Addressed	N/A
C5. <b>Track retention</b> of program administrators, employees, and volunteers, and develop a record of successful retention of individuals from culturally diverse populations in the community.					
C6. <b>Support</b> culturally diverse administrators, employees, and volunteers. Develop mechanisms for staff/volunteers to safely express their concerns about discrimination or cultural insensitivity without fear of repercussions.					

## **D. Standards for Program Facilities and / or Environments**

Facilities need to be accessible and welcoming to diverse populations. Implementation can include any or all of the following:

1. When possible, **locate offices** near public transportation and/or near diverse populations. If this is not possible, explore partnerships with other agencies for outreach space.

*Examples:*

- *This is generally not an issue for government-based programs that are centrally located, but may be for non-profits.*
- *Locating near Head Start or a school or having a designated office in a multi-service agency building may be safe and accessible.*
- *Another alternative is to have a prearranged spot in an agency that can be accessed as-needed (e.g., a room at the local police department or a doctor's office).*
- *Determine who in a community a victim might seek out. In one tiny rural community, the owner of the local store has a supply of transportation vouchers and periodically brings victims to the nearest program.*

2. Make services wheelchair or other aid **accessible** for employees, volunteers, and clients.

*Examples:*

- *Use the “real people test.” Have someone in a wheelchair come and do a roll through. One agency found that their ramp was inaccessibly long for a victim with a heart condition that made it difficult for her to push herself and also for someone on crutches. Someone who is blind or deaf may have issues you haven't considered.*
- *The nearest Center for Independent Living would be a source of expertise (list of all CILS included). Having someone with a disability spend the night during shelter cleaning/closure would give them time to move around & critique.*

3. Have **information and signage posted** in languages that reflect the cultural diversity of the community served. Display multilingual brochures, palm cards, safety-planning instructions, and resource and referral lists that are appropriate for the culturally diverse populations served.

*Example:*

- *Put care into presentation of materials as well as its content. The more interesting & attractive the material, the more likely it is to be noticed.*

*Pictures for common rooms and/or items cross languages and language ability.*

4. **Display artwork, posters, books, magazines, audio, and video resources** that reflect the cultural diversity of the community served. Ensure that these resources have been screened for negative cultural, ethnic, racial, or other stereotyping based on group identity.

*Examples:*

- *Attend local festivals or other events at which artwork and music may be presented.*
- *Budget funds to enable staff who attend conferences or trainings at which culturally specific resources may be available to make purchases.*
- *Consult with partners/allies as to what audio/visual presentations would be appropriate.*

5. Include songs reflecting the cultural diversity of the community served, if **music** is played in the program lobby, office, or over the intercom.

*Example:*

- *Rotate music to assure a variety. One agency suggests that instrumental music does not present a language barrier.*

6. Offer **toys and other play accessories** that reflect the cultural diversity of the community served.

*Example:*

- *One agency shared that participating in the annual “Toys for Tots” program provides them with up-to-date information on the toys most popular with specific cultural communities. Head Start might be another good source of this information.*

7. Offer **food items** that reflect the cultural diversity and traditions of the community served. Respect and support the needs of some clients to adhere to special diets.

*Examples:*

- *Ask clients who are not in crisis to give you some feedback as to what foods they would like to have while at shelter, or while waiting during some phase of a case. A good question to repeat is, “Can I do something to make you more comfortable?”*
- *Understand that the information they give you is only about their preferences and don’t ask an individual client to serve as a cultural representative.*
- *Remember, as you serve more clients from a specific community, you will gain more knowledge and experience.*

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**Self-Assessment Tool:**

*First, please rank each Standard (from 1 to 7) in order of importance to your program. **Second**, please indicate the date(s) that each Standard is assessed as “Achieved,” “In Progress,” “Not Yet Addressed,” or “N/A” (Not Applicable). You can use the rankings later to help plan your implementation of those Standards that are “In Progress” or “Not Yet Addressed.” Then you can indicate the reassessment date(s) without erasing the earlier assessment date(s) to help you keep track of your progress over time.*

Standard	Rank This Standard in Order of Importance (from 1-7)	Indicate Date(s) Assessed as...			
		Achieved	In Progress	Not Yet Addressed	N/A
D1. When possible, <b>locate</b> offices near public transportation and/or near diverse populations. If this is not possible, explore partnerships with other agencies for outreach space.					
D2. Make services wheelchair or other aid <b>accessible</b> for clients employees, and volunteers.					
D3. Have <b>information and signage posted</b> in languages that reflect the cultural diversity of the community served. Display multilingual brochures, palm cards, safety-planning instructions, and resource and referral lists that are appropriate for the culturally diverse populations served.					
D4. <b>Display artwork, posters, books, magazines, audio, and video resources</b> that reflect the cultural diversity of the community served. Ensure that these resources have been screened for negative cultural, ethnic, racial, or other stereotyping based on group identity.					

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Standard	Rank This Standard in Order of Importance (from 1-7)	Indicate Date(s) Assessed as...			
		Achieved	In Progress	Not Yet Addressed	N/A
D5. Include songs reflecting the cultural diversity of the community served, if <b>music</b> is played in the program lobby, office, or over the intercom.					
D6. Offer <b>toys and other play accessories</b> that reflect the cultural diversity of the community served.					
D7. Offer <b>food items</b> that reflect the cultural diversity and traditions of the community served. Respect and support the needs of some clients to adhere to special diets.					

## **E. Standards for Direct Service Employees and Volunteers**

Staff and volunteers are the face of the cultural competency plan and bring the plan to life through direct services and community presence. Implementation can include any or all of the following:

1. **Improve cultural competency** in the workplace environment and in service delivery. Be aware of the prejudices and misconceptions that can compromise all relationships (between staff and staff, staff and client).

*Examples:*

- *Take advantage of opportunity to participate in a training on how cultural “filters” or assumptions can shape interpersonal relations.*
- *Use agency surveys, suggestion boxes or staff meetings to voice perceptions and experiences while at work.*
- *Review and discuss relevant client and community partner feedback in staff meetings.*

2. Acknowledge that **variation exists** among individuals within cultures, and that these variations may influence service needs.

*Example:*

- *“Hispanic” represents a variety of countries and cultures; within each of those cultures, there is variation of how people identify with culture.*

3. Participate in cultural competency **plan development and review** to continue improving the workplace environment and client services.

*Examples:*

- *Join the cultural competency committee.*
- *Give information and ideas to committee members.*

4. Learn and use **proper pronunciation** of clients’ surnames and words of greeting from the cultures of immigrant, refugee, and native populations.

*Examples:*

- *Take extra time to learn proper pronunciation and greetings.*
- *Research resources and tools that can assist with this.*
- *Remember learning a new language takes patience and perseverance and that it’s okay to struggle with pronunciation, just as clients may struggle to master English. Often this process helps to build understanding and trust.*

5. Understand and allow for **cultural differences in communication**, including culturally appropriate levels of eye contact and physical contact.

Examples:

- *Through training they received, one agency learned that a tribal elder was addressed without direct eye contact.*
- *Another agency learned that in working with their local tribal leadership, respect may require not speaking unless asked a direct question in a formal meeting.*
- *Often the time to ask questions will come informally after the meeting.*

6. Use **oral, written, and visual communication styles** as appropriate. Notice reading and writing abilities of clients. Provide additional assistance to clients who have difficulties.

Example:

- *One agency learned that often in Mexico, cursive is not taught until the higher grades, so someone who did not receive a high school education may be able to read print, but not cursive.*

7. Use **language translation and interpretation** services whenever possible when staff do not speak the same primary language as a client.

Example:

- *A client may speak English as a second language sufficiently to be able to understand and discuss shelter rules, but she may need translation/interpretation in order to fully understand court information or to fully participate in a support group discussion of trauma.*

8. **Confirm that clients understand** and accept all aspects of the services being provided.

Examples:

- *Rephrase questions and ask a client to repeat back her understanding.*
- *Case managers at one agency use a dry-erase board using pictures to explain things to be sure clients understand.*
- *Another agency uses art as alternative means of communication.*
- *Use terms a client is likely to understand -- “B Street” instead of “Community Action Program” or “Sylvia” instead of “Victim Assistance Program.”*

9. Be aware that clients from some cultures may be uncomfortable with **answering questions**. Limit the number of questions asked of clients upon initial intake to gather only the most essential information needed to determine service needs. Gather additional information after a positive rapport is established

Examples:

- *While the intake process may be burdensome for all clients, for some clients from certain cultures the questions being asked -- and the fact of their being asked by a stranger -- may present even more difficulty.*
- *One agency found that some of its questions, when translated into Spanish, became culturally inappropriate.*
- *Another agency found that by asking fewer good or open-ended questions they could get the same amount of information by encouraging the client to tell her story.*
- *Showing the client what you are writing may make the intake seem safer.*

10. Approach cultural competency **trainings** as opportunities for personal and professional growth and for improving relationships.

11. **Partner** with diverse individuals and agencies **to further understanding** of how client backgrounds affect perceptions of victimization, protection, and support.

Examples:

- *Develop Advisory Committees or relationships with individual advisors for specific parts of your program.*
- *Invite partners to join you in cross-training staff/volunteers in the specifics of a community cultural group, including its community history. For example, staff/volunteers need to know that the land on which the community is built was taken away from the local tribe, or that the Japanese members of the community arrived as internees during WWII.*
- *Make multiple options for collaboration available to the culturally specific partners who come in contact with your agency -- board membership, co-case management, speaker at brownbag lunch – so they know they're welcome to participate at any level and aren't being asked to be a token representative in a specific slot.*

12. **Provide services jointly** or partner through referrals to existing organizations in the community that have been identified as serving specific cultures.

Example:

- *Co-case management/collaboration with a culturally specific agency may make it possible for a culturally specific client to stay at your shelter, or fully access her crime victim rights.*

13. Develop multiple **strategies for outreach** to the culturally diverse populations in the community.

Examples:

- *Cultivate networks of survivors to do word-of-mouth outreach.*
- *Advertise in community newspapers and community institutions.*

14. **Provide specialized services** or adapt services to respond to diverse needs. Use culture-relevant assessments of client problems, and deliver culture-relevant services.

*Examples:*

- *Allow space for a healing ceremony in lieu of usual support group curriculum.*
- *Learn how the victims' compensation program may accept culturally specific services and explain this to victims, as appropriate.*

15. **Acknowledge clients' abilities and rights** to draw strength from their cultures and make their own decisions. Acknowledge that clients may desire varying degrees of acculturation to the dominant culture.

*Examples:*

- *A survivor may chose a tribal elder instead of a restraining order to resolve a violent situation. Different tribes may have different beliefs or practices.*
- *Build rapport with client to understand how individual relates to her own cultural heritage.*
- *Remember, before you can address this standard, you have to know enough about the culture to understand what might be at stake*

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**Self-Assessment Tool:**

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Standard	Rank This Standard in Order of Importance (from 1-10)	Indicate Date(s) Assessed as...			
		Achieved	In Progress	Not Yet Addressed	N/A
E1. When possible, <b>locate</b> offices near public transportation and/or near diverse populations. If this is not possible, explore partnerships with other agencies for outreach space.					
E2. Acknowledge that <b>variation exists</b> among individuals within cultures, and that these variations may influence service needs.					
E3. Participate in cultural competency <b>plan development and review</b> to continue improving the workplace environment and client services.					
E4. Learn and use <b>proper pronunciation</b> of clients’ surnames and words of greeting from the cultures of immigrant, refugee, and native populations.					
E5. Understand and allow for <b>cultural differences in communication</b> , including culturally appropriate levels of eye contact and physical contact.					

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Standard	Rank This Standard in Order of Importance (from 1-10)	Indicate Date(s) Assessed as...			
		Achieved	In Progress	Not Yet Addressed	N/A
E6. Use <b>oral, written, and visual communication styles</b> as appropriate. Notice reading and writing abilities of clients. Provide additional assistance to clients who have difficulties.					
E7. Use <b>language translation and interpretation</b> services whenever possible when staff do not speak the same primary language as a client.					
E8. <b>Confirm that clients understand</b> and accept all aspects of the services being provided.					
E9. Be aware that clients from some cultures may be uncomfortable with <b>answering questions</b> . Limit the number of questions asked of clients upon initial intake to gather only the most essential information needed to determine service needs. Gather additional information after a positive rapport is established.					
E10. Approach cultural competency <b>trainings</b> as opportunities for personal and professional growth and for improving relationships.					
E11. <b>Partner</b> with diverse individuals and agencies <b>to further understanding</b> of how client backgrounds affect perceptions of victimization, protection, and support.					

**Cultural Competency Standards for Programs**  
**Serving Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault and Other Crime in Oregon**

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Standard	Rank This Standard in Order of Importance (from 1-10)	Indicate Date(s) Assessed as...			
		Achieved	In Progress	Not Yet Addressed	N/A
E12. <b>Provide services jointly</b> or partner through referrals to existing organizations in the community that have been identified as serving specific cultures					
E13. Develop multiple <b>strategies for outreach</b> to the culturally diverse populations in the community.					
E14. <b>Provide specialized services</b> or adapt services to respond to diverse needs. Use culture-relevant assessments of client problems, and deliver culture-relevant services.					
E15. <b>Acknowledge clients' abilities and rights</b> to draw strength from their cultures and make their own decisions. Acknowledge that clients may desire varying degrees of acculturation to the dominant culture.					