



## No Wrong Door Inter-Agency Cultural and Linguistic Conceptual Framework and Definition<sup>1</sup>

Cultural and linguistic competence (CLC) is a process that evolves over an extended period. The CLC conceptual framework and definition is based on knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The CLC conceptual framework and definition requires underlying structural components that are critical to both cultural competence and linguistic competence – which are policies, protocols, structures, practices, and procedures.

### Cultural Competence:

Cultural competence is the ability of District agencies and personnel that provide support and services to:

- Deliver such services respectfully and effectively, in a manner that affirms worth, preserves dignity, and honors the preferences and choices of people of all cultures and human identities. Services are provided in accordance to the DC Human Rights Act<sup>2</sup>, which makes discrimination illegal based on 19 protected traits for people that live, visit, or work in the District of Columbia;
- Incorporate a person's cultural values, beliefs, economic status and practices including sensitivity to the environment from which the person comes and to which the person may ultimately return in all aspects of service delivery;
- Foster positive relationships with diverse cultural groups; and
- Communicate in the person's language or mode of communication.

### Linguistic Competence:

Linguistic competence is the ability of District agencies and personnel that provide support and services to:

- Communicate in a manner that is easily understood by diverse groups, including but not exclusive to persons who have low literacy skills or are not literate, persons with

---

<sup>1</sup> Adapted with permission from Georgetown University National Center for Cultural Competence: <https://nccc.georgetown.edu/foundations/frameworks.html>

<sup>2</sup> DC Office of Human Rights: <https://ohr.dc.gov/protectedtraits> (19 protected traits - race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, family responsibilities, political affiliation, disability, matriculation, familial status, genetic information, source of income, place of residence or business, status as a victim of an intrafamily offense)

disabilities as in accordance to the American with Disabilities Act of 1990<sup>3</sup>, persons who are blind or have low vision, those who are deaf or hard of hearing, and persons who have limited and non-English proficiency as in accordance to the DC Language Access Act of 2004<sup>4</sup>;

- Make materials available in the person’s preferred language in multiple formats and platform;
- Convey information in plain language, in a variety of communication modalities (e.g., videos, symbols, large print), and be responsive to diverse cultural health beliefs and health literacy<sup>5</sup>; and
- Recognize that a person’s preferred language reflects cultural values, traditions, and meanings and is connected with a person’s world view and community.

---

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division: <https://www.ada.gov/>

<sup>4</sup> DC Office of Human Rights: <https://ohr.dc.gov/publication/dc-language-access-act-2004-english>

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Office of Minority Health: National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health Care - <https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/assets/pdf/checked/finalreport.pdf>