



MARYLAND STATE LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAMS (MLRP) PART IV – Cultural Competency Requirements

Maryland's healthcare providers serve culturally and linguistically diverse communities. As the Maryland Department of Health is committed to improving access to quality healthcare for all, the Maryland Loan Repayment Programs (MLRP) require participants to ensure they are fully aware of and providing services that consistently incorporate the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care (National CLAS Standards). This means ensuring access to services, information, and materials delivered by competent providers in a manner which factors in the language needs, cultural richness, and diversity of the populations served. Quality also means that, where appropriate, data collection instruments should adhere to culturally competent and linguistically appropriate norms.

The U.S. Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health (OMH) developed the [National CLAS Standards](https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/clas/standards) to improve quality of services, and help eliminate disparities. The National CLAS Standards are a comprehensive set of 15 action steps that provide a blueprint for individuals and health and health care organizations to provide CLAS. To learn more about the National CLAS Standards, visit <https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/clas/standards>, which also offers a National CLAS Standards Implementation Checklist.

To fulfill the MLRP cultural competency requirement, MLRP Participants and Practice Sites are required to participate in some fundamental "cultural competency requirements" activities.

MLRP Applicants: MLRP participants are required to complete 6 (six) hours and submit proof of continuing education credit in cultural, linguistic, or health literacy competency as part of the annual conditions of award. Proof of completion will be requested at the mid-term of each participant's service obligation. Of note, this requirement is not connected to licensure-required Implicit Bias Training and will be required regardless of past completion of the licensure-required training.

Practice Sites: Sites will complete an organizational assessment tool to evaluate their current integration of the CLAS Standards, issued by OMH. MDH will assist Sites in identifying technical assistance resources to help advance the Sites' implementation of the CLAS standards, as identified. Proof of completion will be requested at the mid-term of each participant's service obligation.

Additional information and resources are available on the MLRP webpage: <https://health.maryland.gov/pophealth/Pages/State-Loan-Repayment-Program.aspx>