

## Frequently Asked Questions about the CLAS Standards

Since 2013, the DPH Office of Health Equity has provided training and technical assistance to Local Health Department (LHD) partners on the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care ([CLAS Standards](#)). Following are answers to some frequently asked questions (FAQs) by LHDs over the past three years. Please continue to send us your questions via e-mail: [dphhealthequity@ct.gov](mailto:dphhealthequity@ct.gov) and we will answer!

**QUESTION 1: Can you please share information about best practices to incorporate CLAS Standards at local health departments?**

**ANSWER:** A list of useful educational materials, trainings, and reports that identify “best practices” related to CLAS Standards can be found in the CT DPH **Health Equity Toolkit for Local Health Departments and Other Partners**, which is available towards the bottom of the [DPH Office of Health Equity Webpage](#). In the Toolkit, you can access the following guides, which identify best practices, as well as other useful materials:

- *Guide to Providing Effective Communication and Language Assistance Services* (US DHHS OMH)
- *Making CLAS Happen: Six Areas for Action* (MA Department of Health and Human Services) (see Chapter 6 for Language Access)

**QUESTION 2: How can the CLAS Standards be related to Public Health Accreditation ([PHAB](#))?**

**ANSWER:** PHAB Standard 11.1: “Develop and maintain an operational infrastructure to support the performance of public health functions” and its related Measure 11.1.4A 1 – “Policies, processes, programs, and interventions provided that are socially, culturally, and linguistically appropriate to specific populations with higher health risks and poorer health outcomes” – pertain to aspects of the CLAS Standards. Materials and guides related to Measure 11.1.4A 1. can be found in the DPH [Health Equity Toolkit for Local Health Departments and Other Partners](#) .

**QUESTION 3: How do we deal with real language barriers to communication with licensees such as hair salons and restaurants?**

**ANSWER:** Ideally bi-lingual, bi-cultural staff members provide the best approach for communicating with non-English speaking clients. Professional assistance via phone line for interpretation or translated materials have proven to be a valuable and successful tool for state field staff. See Question 6 for more details.

**QUESTION 4: How do we achieve compliance with regulations?**

**ANSWER:** Restaurants and other establishments, including landlords, are not exempt from regulations because they may not be fluent in English. Health Department staff must make reasonable efforts to communicate with non-English language speakers both verbally and in writing. Please see the federal [DHHS Four-factor analysis](#) for more details. The federal government recognizes that LHD compliance with federal anti-discrimination laws and the CLAS Standards may be limited, specifically in what the LHDs may be able to provide to reach satisfactory communications with LEP persons.

**QUESTION 5: Please direct our LHD staff to CLAS training materials.**

**ANSWER:** A wide variety of CLAS Standards training materials are available on DPH Office of [Health Equity Toolkit for LHDs and Other Partners](#). [TRAIN-CT](#) also provides free training materials available to LHD's. See, in particular, Dr. Alison Stratton's CLAS 101 course – # 1058875 .

**QUESTION 6: Can DPH provide needed translations?**

**ANSWER:** A wide variety of DPH documents have been translated into Spanish, Chinese, and other common non-English languages spoken in CT. A partial list of translated documents can be found on the DPH Office of [Health Equity Toolkit for LHDs and Other Partners](#) and are available upon request. Other translated documents may be directly available from individual DPH Programs' webpages.

It's important to have a qualified translator who can maintain the quality of your original document(s). The list of State-approved vendors may be helpful. The list can be found in the Appendix section of the [DPH Language Access Policy](#).

**QUESTION 7: Are the results of the 2015 CLAS Standards survey of LHDs available?**

**ANSWER:** Yes. Please see the summary table on page 3 below.

**Results of the CLAS Standards Survey  
of Local Health Departments/Districts, Fall 2015**

QUESTION		Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't Know	Total
<b>Q1: I am familiar with the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care (CLAS Standards).</b>	% (n)	74.2 (23)	16.1 (5)	9.7 (3)	100.0 (31)
<b>Q2: Between September 1, 2013 and August 31, 2014, my Local Health Department/District made efforts to promote one or more of the CLAS Standards in its everyday work.</b>	% (n)	41.9 (13)	41.9 (13)	16.1 (5)	100.0 (31)
<b>Q3: Between September 1, 2013 and August 31, 2014, my Local Health Department/District adopted the CLAS Standards.</b>	% (n)	9.7 (3)	71.0 (22)	19.4 (6)	100.0 (31)
<b>Q4: Between September 1, 2014 and August 31, 2015, my Local Health Department/District made efforts to promote one or more of the CLAS Standards in its every day work.</b>	% (n)	41.9 (13)	45.2 (14)	12.9 (4)	100.0 (31)
<b>Q5: Between September 1, 2014 and August 31, 2015, my Local Health Department/District adopted the CLAS Standards.</b>	% (n)	19.4 (6)	64.5 (20)	16.1 (5)	100.0 (31)