

**Health Equity Portfolio**

Office of Health Equity  
Office of Rural Health  
Office of People, Culture, and Belonging  
Office of Olmstead/TCL

**Community and  
Partner Engagement  
Tool for Community  
Based Organizations**

# Cultural Competency Checklist for Community Engagements



## Background

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) manages the delivery of health and human-related services for all North Carolinians, especially groups that have been marginalized economically and socially – children, elderly, disabled, and low-income families. Our mission is to work collaboratively with partners to improve the health, safety, and well-being of all North Carolinians.

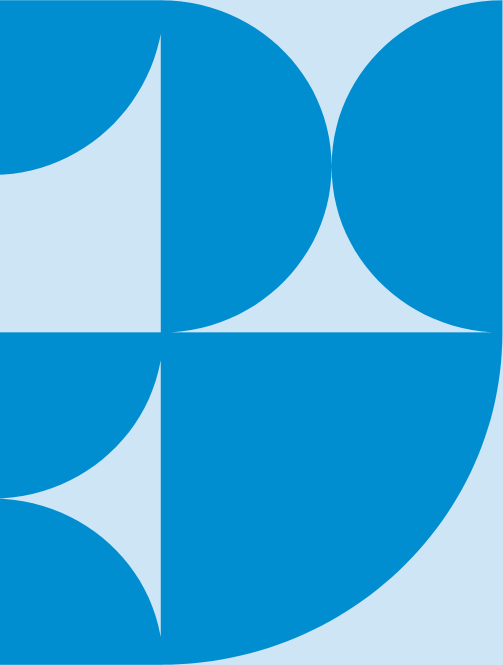
Among other factors, improving health outcomes requires community, partnership, commitment, and collaboration. A key component to successful community engagements and partnerships includes individuals who are culturally competent and display cultural humility.

### Key Definitions:

1. **Cultural Competence:** Cultural competence can be defined as the ability of an individual to understand and respect values, attitudes, and beliefs from different cultures and understand how to address differences appropriately in policies, programs, practices, and quality of services. Cultural competence includes gaining the skills that enable effective and equitable services for diverse populations. Cultural competence is an ongoing process of intellectual curiosity, intentional learning, and critical thinking.
2. **Community and Partner Engagement:** Community and partner engagement can be defined as a mutual and purposeful exchange of lived experience, acquired skills, and genuine trust among partners and communities working together to achieve a common goal ([NCDHHS Community & Partner Engagement Guide, page 5](#)).

<sup>1</sup> <https://nccc.georgetown.edu/curricula/culturalcompetence.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cvims.org/community/cultural-competency/>



**Purpose:** This checklist is for individuals who plan, conduct, or facilitate engagements with the community and partners to ensure interactions are culturally responsive and inclusive, acknowledging and respecting the differences within the community.

**Timing:** Individuals should use this checklist before, during, and after conducting an event with the community.

**Objectives:**

1. This document should be used to ensure all work, interactions, and engagements are centered on, and committed to cultural competency.
2. This document should be used often to consistently build and maintain a culturally competent culture.

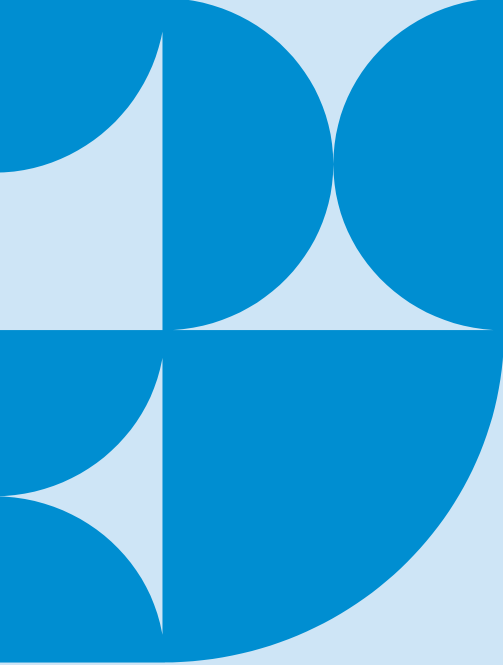
**Checklist**

Before Engagements	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Engagements are designed to put the needs of the community first and build through genuine relationships and partnerships.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Individuals planning engagements have taken the <a href="#">NCDHHS Cultural Competency Awareness Self-Assessment</a> to improve awareness of cultural similarities and differences between various groups.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop relationships and work with key community members and trusted messengers to ensure communication, outreach, and other engagement strategies are designed to respond and apply to the needs and cultural contexts of the communities you serve.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consider taking the <a href="#">NCDHHS Cultural Humility Practices</a> for self-reflection and monitoring practices to engage in constant self-reflection, checking in on assumptions, and learning to recognize biases.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Materials (promotional, educational, informational, etc.) and communication are offered in multiple languages, large font, plain language, and easy-to-read text. All community partners are provided access to timely, accurate, and culturally and linguistically appropriate information and resources.

**Cultural Competency Resources:**

1. [Principle 1: Embrace cultural humility and community engagement. \(cdc.gov\)](#)
2. [Culturally Informed Community Engagement: Implications for Inclusive Science and Health Equity - NCBI Bookshelf \(nih.gov\)](#)
3. [Cultural Competence in Health Care: Is it important for people with chronic conditions? | Health Policy Institute | Georgetown University](#)



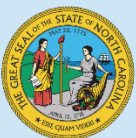


**Common Risks / Pitfalls to Consider:**

1. Commitment to cultural competency is an ongoing practice that takes more time than people plan for and expect.
2. Establishing a culturally competent framework requires long-term commitment, thought, intentionality, flexibility, and openness.

**For More Information, Visit:**

1. [NCDHHS Office of Health Equity](#)
2. [Community and Partner Engagement | NCDHHS](#)



**During Events and Engagements**

<input type="checkbox"/>	All engagements prioritize ensuring that all individuals have an equal voice and that decisions are made collaboratively. During your engagements, create a culture of respectful co-learning, evaluation, reflection, and transparency about community needs/priorities to build trust with community partners.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consider using different storytelling methods. Encourage the community to share their specific stories about the topic of the engagement to highlight the voices of the community and individual experiences.
<input type="checkbox"/>	During engagements, individuals show cultural responsiveness by being aware, respectful, and accepting of differences.
<input type="checkbox"/>	All engagement activities are rooted in cultural humility where everyone is responsible for <b>self-reflection, self-critique</b> <sup>3</sup> , acknowledging personal biases, and committed to lifelong learning. Ensure you are leading by example by regularly examining your own beliefs and cultural identities.
<input type="checkbox"/>	All engagements are rooted in all partners having an equal voice.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Communication is at a minimum bidirectional, consistent, accessible, transparent, and empowering.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Communication is centered on <b>listening reflectively</b> <sup>4</sup> to communities and community partners to foster cultural awareness, sensitivity, competence, and humility. When community partners are speaking, be sure to repeat key phrases back to practice reflective listening. An example of reflective listening is the following: "Please correct me if I am wrong. What I am hearing you say is..."

**After Engagements**

<input type="checkbox"/>	After engagements, consider taking the NCDHHS Cultural Competency Awareness Self-Assessment again to practice constant self-reflection and assess any shifts in competence.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ask for feedback and then take steps to act on feedback to improve cultural responsiveness and accountability to the community. Follow up with communities or individuals who have given feedback to let them know the action you took based on their feedback.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Thank community partners for their input and involvement in the engagement.

<sup>3</sup> "Cultural humility is a lifelong process of self-reflection and self-critique whereby the individual not only learns about another's culture, but one starts with an examination of her/his own beliefs and cultural identities." (Yeager, K. A., & Bauer-Wu, S. (2013). Cultural humility: essential foundation for clinical researchers. Applied nursing research: ANR, 26(4), 251-256. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apnr.2013.06.008>)

<sup>4</sup> Reflective listening is a practice involving mirroring (repeating key phrases) and paraphrasing (repeating rephrased sentences). Learn more at Reflective Listening | UNSW Teaching Staff Gateway

