

Utilizing Cultural Competence Professional Development

In 20 states (45%), the SMHA conducts regular staff and organizational assessment to identify staffing needs related to cultural competence, diversity, inclusion, and equity. Twenty-two (50%) SMHAs reported not providing cultural competence professional development. Despite less than half of SMHAs conducting cultural competence needs assessments, many SMHAs have organization initiatives centered around diversity, equity, and inclusion. Some highlights include:

- In Arizona, one aim of [Arizona Contractor's Operation Manual - ACOM 407, the Workforce Development policy](#) is to promote the acquisition, development and retention of the provider workforce that is interpersonally, culturally, clinically, and technically competent.
- In Georgia, the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) partnered with the Yale School of Medicine to participate in the Recovery-Oriented Service Evaluation (ROSE) study, which is the first federally funded, nationally representative study of recovery-oriented practices in community mental health centers as they relate to service utilization and treatment outcomes. Guided by outcomes within the Yale study's five domains in consumer care, particularly in the Diverse Treatment Options domain, DBHDD's Office of Behavioral Health Prevention and Federal Grants, Office of Children, Youth and Families, Office of Recovery Transformation, Office of Adult Mental Health, Office of Addictive Disease, and Office of Quality Improvement developed Diversity Works: A Cultural & Linguistic Competency Series for behavioral health providers and stakeholders across the state. This series of webinars and in-person trainings is designed to equip participants with new skills, tools, and strategies to have more meaningful conversations and thoughtful interactions across diverse populations when delivering services.
- In Illinois, the Illinois's Department of Human Services (DHS) issued an Equal Employment Opportunity, Affirmative Action Plan for fiscal year 2022 and works closely with the Illinois Department of Human Rights.
- In Massachusetts, the Department of Mental Health has begun building the foundation in the agency's culture with the following key areas of focus: agency culture ("Our agency is welcoming, respectful, and a safe place that is intentional about equity"); data, analytics, & reporting ("We have clear, coherent, and complete data and are comfortable using it to drive equitable decision making"); workforce ("We have diversity of thought and experience across our colleagues that is representative of all communities in the Commonwealth"); community engagement ("We can effectively identify, reach out to, and support communities that have been underserved"); and service delivery ("Our service design, procurement, and provision reflect our values of diversity, equity, & inclusion").
- In Minnesota, the SMHA consists of many diverse populations and cultures, which are constantly growing, making it vital to develop culturally and linguistically competent providers capable of delivering culturally appropriate services. The SMHA is working to address policies to improve treatment planning and practices related to cultural competency and health disparities. The SMHA administers grants that cover clinical supervision costs for cultural minority candidates for mental health professional licensure; training for practitioners and behavior aides; and direct services for uninsured children of minority families.

76%

of reporting SMHAs conduct needs assessments to guide cultural competence

62%

of reporting SMHAs use community demographics to guide recruitment

19%

of reporting SMHAs have cultural standards surrounding serving diverse populations

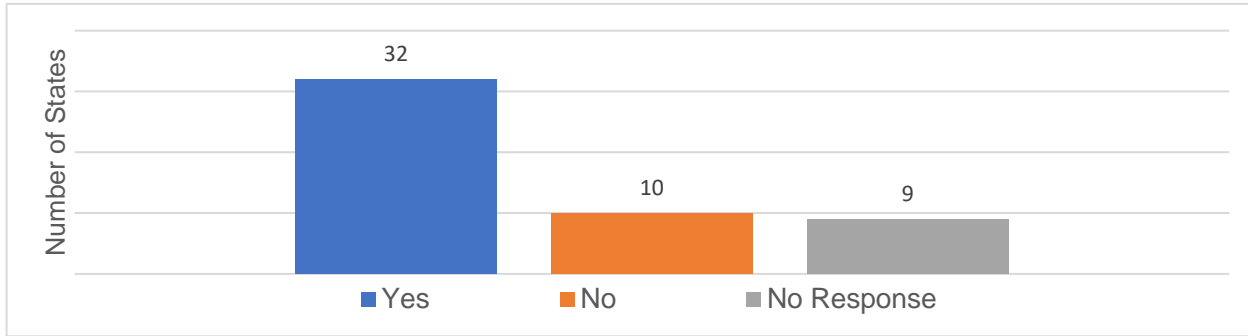
- In Oklahoma, it is the policy of Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS) to provide equal opportunity in employment, advancement and other conditions of employment to all qualified applicants and employees without regard to political or religious opinion or affiliation, race, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, color, national origin, ancestry or disability.
- In Pennsylvania, the mission and vision of the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (DMH-OMHSAS) is that every individual served by the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Service system will have the opportunity for growth, recovery, and inclusion in the community, have access to culturally competent services and supports of their choice and enjoy a quality of life that includes family members and friends. OMHSAS's Guiding Principles direct the mental health and substance abuse service system to provide quality services and supports that facilitate recovery for adults and resiliency for children; are responsive to individuals' unique strengths and needs throughout their lives; focus on prevention and early intervention; recognize, respect and accommodate differences as they relate to culture/ ethnicity/race, religion, gender identity and sexual orientation; ensure individual human rights and eliminate discrimination and stigma; are provided in a comprehensive array by unifying programs and funding that build on natural and community supports unique to each individual and family; are developed, monitored and evaluated in partnership with consumers, families and advocates; and represent collaboration with other agencies and service systems.
- In Texas, the Statewide Behavioral Health Strategic Plan outlines guiding principles which includes culturally and linguistically sensitive with agencies, programs and services that reflect the cultural, racial, ethnic, and linguistic differences of the populations served. Specific goals include strengthening the behavioral health workforce by enhancing the recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce.
- In Washington, the SMHA created a new Health Equity and Social Justice Manager position to guide the agency's adoption of incorporating an equity lens in all core business functions, including legislative bill analysis and contracts. Washington has also convened the Crisis Response Improvement Strategy (CRIS) committee that has the charge of improving equity in crisis services.

SMHAs Using Community Demographics to Guide Recruitment

Employee and community demographic data can be cross analyzed to ensure that the SMHAs', or representative entities', workforce is representative of the communities they serve. Thirty-two (72%) SMHAs are utilizing community demographics to guide recruitment and the hiring of a diverse workforce (see Figure 2). Other SMHAs are utilizing data to guide employee selection processes including:

- Examining census data to determine utilization by demographics (Missouri and Oklahoma) and where access/utilization challenges exist (Minnesota and Tennessee).
- Collaborating with the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI) to develop a DEI strategic plan to explore plans for improving the correlation between diversity in the workforce and the demographics of the communities we serve (South Carolina).
- Utilizing disparities data with the local authority system and internally with state Human Resources (HR) to improve the recruitment for these needs (Utah).

Figure 2. Number of States Using Demographics to Guide Recruitment



Referral Network to Relevant Behavioral Health Workforce

Twenty-six (59%) SMHAs develop and maintain relationships with other service and support agencies to ensure clients receive appropriate and relevant referrals to mental health, substance use or other needed support. Several SMHAs reported collaborating with other state “sister organizations” such as the Department of Corrections, Department of Children and Family Services, Department of Public Health, and the state Department of Veteran Affairs. Other SMHAs mentioned forming partnerships with local community-based, private organizations, and advocacy organizations (i.e., March of Dimes and hospital associations).

Please contact NRI at profiles@nri-inc.org with any questions or comments about this and other State Profiles reports.