



CULTURAL COMPETENCY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PLAN

Approved Annually

X Board Approval

Date Approved: May 7, 2026

PURPOSE

Desert Arc is committed to fostering a culturally competent, diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment that enhances the quality of life and expands opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

This policy establishes a framework to ensure that all services, employment practices, and organizational systems are person-centered, respectful of individual identity, and responsive to the diverse needs of the individuals and communities we serve.

POLICY

Desert Arc prohibits discrimination and is committed to equitable access, inclusion, and respect for all individuals, including persons served, families, employees, and community partners.

The organization ensures that all services and employment practices are delivered in a manner that recognizes and respects:

- Culture
- Language
- Race and ethnicity
- Gender identity and sexual orientation
- Age



- Disability
- Socio-economic status
- Religious and spiritual beliefs
- Veteran status
- Personal identity and lived experience

Desert Arc affirms the dignity, rights, and self-determination of every individual and integrates cultural competency into all aspects of service delivery and organizational operations.

DEFINITIONS

Cultural Competency

An ongoing organizational capability to effectively deliver services that are responsive to the cultural, linguistic, and individual needs of persons served.

Equity

Ensuring fair access to services, opportunities, and resources by addressing barriers and providing support based on individual needs.

Inclusion

Creating environments where all individuals feel valued, respected, and able to fully participate.

Self-Determination

The right of individuals to make choices and direct their own lives, supported by appropriate services and resources.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- All Desert Arc employees, contractors, and volunteers
- All persons served and their families/support systems
- All programs, services, and business operations
- All community partnerships and stakeholder interactions



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Executive Leadership

- Ensure organizational alignment with this policy
- Monitor outcomes and integrate cultural competency into strategic planning

Human Resources

- Lead workforce diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts
- Ensure training, onboarding, and policy compliance

Program Leadership

- Ensure culturally responsive, person-centered service delivery
- Identify and address barriers to access and participation

Information Technology

- Support digital accessibility, language access tools, and equitable access to technology
- Ensure systems support inclusive communication and service delivery

All Employees

- Demonstrate cultural awareness, respect, and responsiveness
- Participate in required training and uphold this policy in daily work

PROCEDURES

A. Person-Centered and Culturally Responsive Services

- Services will be designed and delivered based on individual goals, preferences, and cultural considerations
- Staff will actively support self-determination and informed choice
- Cultural, linguistic, and accessibility needs will be identified during intake and throughout service delivery

B. Language Access and Communication

- Preferred language and communication needs will be identified at intake



- Interpretation and translation services will be provided proactively, not only upon request
- Materials will be made available in accessible formats, including multiple languages and alternative media

C. Workforce Diversity and Inclusion

- Recruitment and hiring practices will promote a diverse workforce reflective of the community
- Equal opportunity employment practices will be maintained at all times
- A respectful, inclusive work environment will be actively fostered

D. Training and Development

- All employees will complete cultural competency training upon hire and annually thereafter
- Training will include:
 - Cultural awareness and bias recognition
 - Person-centered practices and self-determination
 - Communication across differences
 - Disability awareness and inclusion
 - Leadership and direct service staff will receive role-specific training

E. Community Engagement

- Desert Arc will maintain and expand partnerships that support culturally responsive services and inclusive opportunities
- Community relationships will be leveraged to improve access, employment pathways, and program effectiveness

F. Digital Inclusion and Accessibility

- Desert Arc recognizes access to technology as a component of equity
- The organization will:
 - Expand access to devices and digital tools for persons served
 - Promote digital literacy and training
 - Ensure systems and platforms are accessible and inclusive

G. Reporting and Resolution



- Employees, persons served, and stakeholders may report concerns related to discrimination, cultural insensitivity, or barriers to access
- Reports may be made to supervisors, Human Resources, or executive leadership
- All concerns will be reviewed, investigated, and addressed in a timely and appropriate manner

MONITORING AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Desert Arc will track and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy through measurable outcomes, including:

- Employee training completion rates
- Client and family satisfaction
- Access to language services
- Workforce diversity metrics
- Identification and resolution of service barriers
- Participation rates across programs

Findings will be reviewed annually and used to inform continuous improvement efforts.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Desert Arc is committed to ongoing evaluation and enhancement of its cultural competency and inclusion efforts. This includes:

- Annual policy review and updates
- Integration with organizational strategic goals and Compass initiatives
- Staff and stakeholder feedback
- Alignment with CARF standards and regulatory requirements