

# **LOUISIANA MEDICAID HEALTH EQUITY LANGUAGE TOOL**

Updated January 12, 2022

**PURPOSE:** Ensure the utilization of inclusive language in Medicaid documents to reflect the agency’s commitment to health equity as described in the LDH Diversity and Inclusion Statement:

<https://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/4157>.

## **HOW TO USE THE CHECKLIST**

1. Refer to topics in the Language Checklist and determine their relevance to the document being reviewed.
2. Flag any language in the document that is potentially exclusionary, discriminatory, or otherwise contrary to LDH values. If it is helpful, the Checklist may be filled out and include specific notes about the concern.
3. Submit concerns to the Policy and Compliance Unit responsible for circulating the document.

<b>Language Checklist*</b>	<b>Language Used Appropriately</b>			<b>Notes</b>
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>	
<b>Person-Centered</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Substance Use Disorder</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Incarceration</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Race</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Ethnicity</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Immigration Status and Nationality</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Ability</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Gender and Gender Identity</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Sexuality</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Socio-economic status</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Geography</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

\*This list is not exhaustive and will be updated as needed.

## Examples of appropriate terminology use and implications for each topic

Topic	Examples of appropriate terminology	Health Equity Implications
Person-Centered Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child with asthma</li> <li>• Beneficiaries with diabetes</li> </ul>	Emphasize the person over their condition.
Substance Use Disorder (SUD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beneficiaries with SUD</li> <li>• Individuals with a history of substance use</li> </ul>	Avoid placing value on the experiences of using substances, such as “suffering from” or “struggling with”.
Incarceration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently or formerly incarcerated beneficiary</li> </ul>	Humanizing terms encourage appropriate care to people with a history of incarceration. Avoid terms like “convict” or “offender.”
Race	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use nouns with specific racial identifiers, such as, Black Louisianans or Asian beneficiaries</li> </ul>	Experiences often vary so try to use specific language instead of grouping all people of color together. Avoid marginalizing terms like “non-white” or “minority.”
Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When referring to a group, consider using Latinx since it is gender inclusive</li> </ul>	“Hispanic” refers to people from Spanish speaking countries. “Latino,” “Latina,” or “Latinx” refer to people of Latin American descent who can be of any race or language background.
Immigration Status and Nationality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undocumented populations</li> <li>• Lawfully residing children</li> </ul>	Language with negative connotations (e.g., “illegal”) can create a bias or reduce individuals to a legal status.
Ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beneficiaries with intellectual or developmental disabilities</li> </ul>	Use identity-first language. Do not use the word “normal” to describe people without disabilities.
Gender and Gender Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A child’s caregiver</li> <li>• “They” pronouns instead of “s/he”</li> </ul>	Gender and power often intersect so it is important to use gender neutral language when possible.
Sexuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A beneficiary’s partner</li> <li>• Heterosexual, same sex, or bisexual</li> </ul>	Sexuality refers to an individual’s romantic or sexual attraction, which is different from their gender identity or their sexual behaviors.
Socio-economic status (SES)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families with incomes below the federal poverty level</li> <li>• Beneficiary with unstable housing</li> <li>• People experiencing homelessness</li> <li>• Children with food insecurity</li> </ul>	SES does not determine other demographic characteristics (e.g., educational level). Individuals’ SES can change throughout their lives.
Geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under-resourced area</li> <li>• Neighborhoods with high rates of poverty</li> <li>• Rural area with access to fewer opportunities</li> </ul>	The community or place a person lives should be referred to without stigmatizing language.

## Resources

The Difference Between d/Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing. AI Media. Accessed December 4, 2021.

<https://www.ai-media.tv/the-difference-between-d-deaf-and-hard-of-hearing-2/>

Equity Language Guide. Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities. Washington State.

Approved December 6, 2018. Accessed December 4, 2021.

[https://healthequity.wa.gov/Portals/9/Doc/Publications/EquityLanguageGuide\\_Final.pdf](https://healthequity.wa.gov/Portals/9/Doc/Publications/EquityLanguageGuide_Final.pdf)

Guidance for Integrating Health Equity Language into Funding Announcements. Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), February 2018. Accessed December 4, 2021.

<https://www.astho.org/Health-Equity/Guidance-for-Integrating-Health-Equity-Language-Into-Funding-Announcements/>

Warren, V. Guidelines for Nonsexist Use of Language. American Psychological Association. Accessed December 4, 2021. <http://www.apaonlinecs.org/apa-guidelines-for-non-sexist-use-of-language/>

Health Equity for People with Disabilities. Northern Arizona University, Center for Health Equity Research. Accessed December 4, 2021. <https://nau.edu/cher/health-equity-for-people-with-disabilities/#:~:text=Health%20equity%20for%20people%20with%20disabilities%20People%20with,to%20technology%2C%20and%20in-home%20support%20for%20their%20caregivers.>

Health Equity Resources. PolicyLink.org. Accessed December 4, 2021.

<https://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/HealthEquityResources.pdf>

Inclusive Language Guide. Northwestern University; The Family Institute. October 16, 2019. Accessed December 4, 2021. <https://counseling.northwestern.edu/blog/inclusive-language-guide/>

Inclusive Language Guide. University of South Carolina-Aiken Department of Diversity Initiatives. Accessed December 4, 2021. <https://www.usca.edu/diversity-initiatives/training-resources/guide-to-inclusive-language/inclusive-language-guide/file>

Measuring What Works to Achieve Health Equity: Metrics for the Determinants of Health, Executive Summary. Prepared for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Prevention Institute. Updated June 2015. Accessed December 4, 2021.

[https://www.preventioninstitute.org/sites/default/files/publications/Measuring%20What%20Works%20to%20Achieve%20Health%20Equity-%20Metrics%20for%20the%20Determinants%20of%20Health\\_Executive\\_Summary.pdf](https://www.preventioninstitute.org/sites/default/files/publications/Measuring%20What%20Works%20to%20Achieve%20Health%20Equity-%20Metrics%20for%20the%20Determinants%20of%20Health_Executive_Summary.pdf)

Satcher, D., Rachel, S.A. Promoting Mental Health Equity: The Role of Integrated Care. *J Clin Psychol Med Settings* **24**, 182–186 (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10880-016-9465-8>

Explaining AP Style on Black and white. AP News. Accessed December 30, 2021.

<https://apnews.com/article/archive-race-and-ethnicity-9105661462>

Definitions Related to Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity in APA Documents. Accessed January 12, 2022. <https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/sexuality-definitions.pdf>