

**CARF Accreditation Report  
for  
The Arc of Opportunity  
Three-Year Accreditation**



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## About CARF

CARF is an independent, nonprofit accreditor of health and human services, enhancing the lives of persons served worldwide.

The accreditation process applies CARF's internationally recognized standards during a site survey conducted by peer surveyors. Accreditation, however, is an ongoing process that distinguishes a provider's service delivery and signals to the public that the provider is committed to continuous performance improvement, responsive to feedback, and accountable to the community and its other stakeholders.

CARF accreditation promotes providers' demonstration of value and Quality Across the Lifespan® of millions of persons served through application of rigorous organizational and program standards organized around the ASPIRE to Excellence® continuous quality improvement framework. CARF accreditation has been the recognized benchmark of quality health and human services for more than 50 years.

For more information or to contact CARF, please visit [www.carf.org/contact-us](http://www.carf.org/contact-us).

**Organization**

The Arc of Opportunity  
564 Main Street  
Fitchburg, MA 01420

**Organizational Leadership**

Kevin Salera, COO  
Mary Heafy, President & CEO

**Survey Number**

138661

**Survey Date(s)**

January 7, 2021–January 8, 2021

**Surveyor(s)**

Jill R. Bonthuis, LLMSW, DESS Administrative  
Heather A. Bergink, DESS Program

**Program(s)/Service(s) Surveyed**

Community Integration  
Services Coordination

**Previous Survey**

January 11, 2018–January 12, 2018  
Three-Year Accreditation

**Accreditation Decision**

**Three-Year Accreditation**  
**Expiration: February 29, 2024**

# Executive Summary

This report contains the findings of CARF's site survey of The Arc of Opportunity conducted January 7, 2021–January 8, 2021. This report includes the following information:

- Documentation of the accreditation decision and the basis for the decision as determined by CARF's consideration of the survey findings.
- Identification of the specific program(s)/service(s) and location(s) to which this accreditation decision applies.
- Identification of the CARF surveyor(s) who conducted the survey and an overview of the CARF survey process and how conformance to the standards was determined.
- Feedback on the organization's strengths and recognition of any areas where the organization demonstrated exemplary conformance to the standards.
- Documentation of the specific sections of the CARF standards that were applied on the survey.
- Recommendations for improvement in any areas where the organization did not meet the minimum requirements to demonstrate full conformance to the standards.
- Any consultative suggestions documented by the surveyor(s) to help the organization improve its program(s)/service(s) and business operations.

## Accreditation Decision

On balance, The Arc of Opportunity demonstrated substantial conformance to the standards. The Arc of Opportunity provides quality services that have allowed it to hold a strong reputation with the community, referral sources, and its funders. The organization values its employees and provides opportunities for peer nominated recognition on a regular basis. This recognition and value of employees were continued virtually even through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Arc of Opportunity utilizes continuous improvement through its services as well as its business aspects. The organization has currently realigned its management structure in order to redefine its needs through an in-depth method of strategic planning. The services are assessed continually for potential for improvements and measured on success. The organization has grown in programming and services and continues to assess community needs in order to be an integral part of the community. Persons served and family members praise the services and feel The Arc of Opportunity is invaluable to them, and persons served and families feel like the input they provide is valued. The day program staff members are committed to the fundamentals of the organization and are recognized for providing compassionate services. Although the Adult Foster Care (AFC) program area is new since the previous CARF survey, it has a good reputation for its level of service provided in this area and its staff members celebrate in successes of the persons served. The service standards in this area are strong. The AFC team has approached its first CARF accreditation experience (for this program) with openness and willingness to apply to the CARF language and standards to the great work it is already doing. There are a few opportunities for improvement noted, including the code of ethics, strategic planning, performance management and improvement, and written medication procedures. The Arc of Opportunity strives for greatness and it is evident through this survey.

The Arc of Opportunity appears likely to maintain and/or improve its current method of operation and demonstrates a commitment to ongoing quality improvement. The Arc of Opportunity is required to submit a post-survey Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) to CARF that addresses all recommendations identified in this report.

**The Arc of Opportunity has earned a Three-Year Accreditation.** The leadership team and staff are complimented and congratulated for this achievement. In order to maintain this accreditation, throughout the term of accreditation, the organization is required to:

- Submit annual reporting documents and other required information to CARF, as detailed in the Accreditation Policies and Procedures section in the standards manual.
- Maintain ongoing conformance to CARF's standards, satisfy all accreditation conditions, and comply with all accreditation policies and procedures, as they are published and made effective by CARF.

## Survey Details

### Survey Participants

The survey of The Arc of Opportunity was conducted by the following CARF surveyor(s):

- Jill R. Bonthuis, LLMSW, DESS Administrative
- Heather A. Bergink, DESS Program

CARF considers the involvement of persons served to be vital to the survey process. As part of the accreditation survey for all organizations, CARF surveyors interact with and conduct direct, confidential interviews with consenting current and former persons served in the program(s)/service(s) for which the organization is seeking accreditation. In addition, as applicable and available, interviews may be conducted with family members and/or representatives of the persons served such as guardians, advocates, or members of their support system.

Interviews are also conducted with individuals associated with the organization, as applicable, which may include:

- The organization's leadership, such as board members, executives, owners, and managers.
- Business unit resources, such as finance and human resources.
- Personnel who serve and directly interact with persons served in the program(s)/service(s) for which the organization is seeking accreditation.
- Other stakeholders, such as referral sources, payers, insurers, and fiscal intermediaries.
- Community constituents and governmental representatives.

### Survey Activities

Achieving CARF accreditation involves demonstrating conformance to the applicable CARF standards, evidenced through observable practices, verifiable results over time, and comprehensive supporting documentation. The survey of The Arc of Opportunity and its program(s)/service(s) consisted of the following activities:

- Confidential interviews and direct interactions, as outlined in the previous section.
- Direct observation of the organization's operations and service delivery practices.
- Observation of the organization's location(s) where services are delivered.
- Review of organizational documents, which may include policies; plans; written procedures; promotional materials; governing documents, such as articles of incorporation and bylaws; financial statements; and other documents necessary to determine conformance to standards.

- Review of documents related to program/service design, delivery, outcomes, and improvement, such as program descriptions, records of services provided, documentation of reviews of program resources and services conducted, and program evaluations.
- Review of records of current and former persons served.

## **Program(s)/Service(s) Surveyed**

The survey addressed by this report is specific to the following program(s)/service(s):

- Community Integration
- Services Coordination

A list of the organization's accredited program(s)/service(s) by location is included at the end of this report.

## **Representations and Constraints**

The accreditation decision and survey findings contained in this report are based on an on-balance consideration of the information obtained by the surveyor(s) during the site survey. Any information that was unavailable, not presented, or outside the scope of the survey was not considered and, had it been considered, may have affected the contents of this report. If at any time CARF subsequently learns or has reason to believe that the organization did not participate in the accreditation process in good faith or that any information presented was not accurate, truthful, or complete, CARF may modify the accreditation decision, up to and including revocation of accreditation.

## **Survey Findings**

This report provides a summary of the organization's strengths and identifies the sections of the CARF standards that were applied on the survey and the findings in each area. In conjunction with its evaluation of conformance to the specific program/service standards, CARF assessed conformance to its business practice standards, referred to as Section 1. ASPIRE to Excellence, which are designed to support the delivery of the program(s)/service(s) within a sound business operating framework to promote long-term success.

The specific standards applied from each section vary based on a variety of factors, including, but not limited to, the scope(s) of the program(s)/service(s), population(s) served, location(s), methods of service delivery, and survey type. Information about the specific standards applied on each survey is included in the standards manual and other instructions that may be provided by CARF.

## **Areas of Strength**

CARF found that The Arc of Opportunity demonstrated the following strengths:

- The Arc of Opportunity is able to offer enriching activities and opportunities to the persons served due to its proactive application for grants from a variety of sources. Whether it is funding for a collaborative community art project through Activate Mill Street or connecting with the Department of Disability Services for training certified sexuality educators, the staff members are well versed at finding and seizing opportunities to expand the horizons of the persons served.

- It is obvious that the staff, leadership, persons served, and other stakeholders at The Arc of Opportunity cherish the relationships they have with each other and with the members of the wider community. This is especially evident in the enthusiasm which they describe the community outreach, events, meetings, gatherings, and ways to connect in person, which many of them are looking forward to experiencing again after the pandemic.
- The organization provides a culture of caring, which threads through to services, policies, and communication. The leadership contributed to a shift in culture through creating The Way of The Arc, which is a list of 31 fundamentals that provide a basis of beliefs that are threaded through policies, services, and attitudes of employees throughout the organization. These fundamentals are ingrained in policy, communication, and into the recognition of employees. One way staff members are recognized is through the electronic Book of Recognition created to honor staff members by their peers on a regular basis. This culture shift has allowed leadership to gain open and honest communication throughout the workforce.
- The financial policies are clear, provide step-by-step instructions on processes, and define who will oversee specific functions. The years of experience in this department are reflected through this clear policy.
- The use of a risk register is a unique in that it is accessible to all leadership and defines categories with both levels and the colors of the stoplight, which provide immediate and ongoing attention to the continuous improvement work of the organization.
- The performance review of employees is built around specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely (SMART) goals that are ongoing and reviewed quarterly, which is a great way to keep the continuous improvement and development of employees ongoing.
- The Arc of Opportunity is acknowledged for its rapid response to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially its ability to creatively utilize the knowledge and individual gifts of its staff members and persons served to quickly pivot to offering engaging virtual programming. Throughout the pandemic, and in collaboration with its funders, The Arc of Opportunity has demonstrated its willingness to offer programming outside the traditional service hours to best meet the needs of the persons served and their families. Although the COVID-19 pandemic prevented face-to-face services, The Arc of Opportunity pivoted its focus to request for and receive a grant to allow for Chromebook® notebook computer for day program participants to allow for a continuity of service. The organization provides a focus on person-centeredness in this continuation by individualizing each Chromebook with the specific accessibility standards necessary to meet the person's needs.
- The technology of the organization has had to adapt to a changing work environment due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the organization has offered upgrades to security and accessibility to employees through these challenges. The organization is recognized on the provision of technology to persons served that was set up with the individual accessibility needs of the persons served. Each person served was also provided training on use. This provided a continuity of services for persons served through a virtual means.
- The Arc of Opportunity is complimented on its hard work to improve the clarity and consistency of written information at the organization. By including useful and clear definitions in documents, such as Types of Guardianship and Definitions of Restrictive Practices, the organization provides its staff and stakeholders with valuable and detailed information that raises the overall standard of service provided.
- The organization provides a policy on document retention that is concise and documents various needs.
- The Arc of Opportunity provides transparent communication to staff members on how to report any abuse, fraud, or conflict concerns with cards attached right to the phones that include contact information to the corporate compliance officer. This is a very user-friendly way to provide information.
- The Arc of Opportunity's leadership is complimented on its ongoing acceptance of creative new opportunities. One staff member remarks that "creativity is supported at all levels," and other staff members consistently describe ways they are encouraged to solve problems and seek out challenges with creativity.

- Input from persons served is gathered through varied means, and the leadership is accessible to persons served, families, and staff members for open dialogue and feedback through Talks with the CEO, surveys, and the CEO's time spent in the service areas.
- A strength of The Arc of Opportunity is how it actively involves the persons served in the interviewing process for new staff members. Persons served are invited to ask the candidates questions and to provide feedback afterward on what they liked and did not like about the potential staff person. Their input is overtly valued by the fact that if the opinions of the persons served are mistakenly left out of the interview package, the human resources department will follow up to ensure their input is included and considered.
- The day habilitation program at The Arc of Opportunity creates and facilitates meaningful engagement with the community for the persons served, including partnerships with Applewild School, yoga, drum circles, REV Up! voter education, local museums, the botanical gardens, a wildlife sanctuary, the YMCA, and the *I Spy on Main Street* game that is played by staff members and persons served. The collaboration with Lawrence Academy offers a meaningful avenue for high school students to receive training and hands-on experience supporting individuals with disabilities, and for The Arc of Opportunity to benefit from creating a more inclusive community and relationships with future volunteers and staff members.
- The day habilitation program greatly benefits from the skill, creativity, and person-centered focus of its art therapist. The therapist uses expertise in art therapy and knowledge of each unique person served to build art skills, self-confidence, and ability to engage with the community.
- The day habilitation program recruits and retains dedicated front-line staff members, including one who states, "I love to know I had something to do with someone meeting a goal. They can now do something they couldn't do before, and that makes me feel good inside." A stakeholder said about one of the case managers, "You can see how much he cares about these people by how attentive and kind he is." The family members of the persons served report being very grateful for the excellent service the program provides. One family member said, "I trust them completely and we're very blessed to have them," and another reported, "I sincerely mean it when I say what they're doing is right on!"
- The Arc of Opportunity deserves praise for the high quality of clinical staff members it employs to serve the medical needs of the persons served. One of the nurses is described by a colleague as, "the best nurse I've ever worked with." The nursing staff members demonstrate continuous quality improvement by working to enhance methods and systems of communication so that their colleagues receive information that is clear and useful to them in their roles.
- The Adult Foster Care (AFC) program at The Arc of Opportunity has committed staff members who excel at working together as a team to celebrate successes in addition to solving problems proactively. The care providers deeply value the expertise and support of the AFC staff members, saying, "If we didn't have them as part of our team, this would be a lot more difficult" and "In the most heartfelt way possible, I'd like to say that we are so grateful to them." The staff team in the AFC program is also known for being very responsive, and one care provider shared, "We know that we can access [the staff] at any point, and that's been the biggest help."
- The AFC program staff members have extensive knowledge of local resources, and they collaborate effectively with many community agencies and service providers, including the local crisis intervention team, to bring a high standard of wraparound care to the persons served.
- The AFC staff members demonstrate a high level of curiosity about new ways of providing services and a willingness to learn from others in the community.
- The Arc of Opportunity allows frequent and varied opportunities for persons served, families, guardians, funding sources, and employees to provide feedback. The organization has utilized this feedback to provide improvement and modifications.



## Opportunities for Quality Improvement

The CARF survey process identifies opportunities for continuous improvement, a core concept of “aspiring to excellence.” This section of the report lists the sections of the CARF standards that were applied on the survey, including a description of the business practice area and/or the specific program(s)/service(s) surveyed and a summary of the key areas addressed in that section of the standards.

In this section of the report, a recommendation identifies any standard for which CARF determined that the organization did not meet the minimum requirements to demonstrate full conformance. All recommendations must be addressed in a QIP submitted to CARF.

In addition, consultation may be provided for areas of or specific standards where the surveyor(s) documented suggestions that the organization may consider to improve its business or service delivery practices. Note that consultation may be offered for areas of specific standards that do not have any recommendations. Such consultation does not indicate nonconformance to the standards; it is intended to offer ideas that the organization might find helpful in its ongoing quality improvement efforts. The organization is not required to address consultation.

When CARF surveyors visit an organization, their role is that of independent peer reviewers, and their goal is not only to gather and assess information to determine conformance to the standards, but also to engage in relevant and meaningful consultative dialogue. Not all consultation or suggestions discussed during the survey are noted in this report. The organization is encouraged to review any notes made during the survey and consider the consultation or suggestions that were discussed.

During the process of preparing for a CARF accreditation survey, an organization may conduct a detailed self-assessment and engage in deliberations and discussions within the organization as well as with external stakeholders as it considers ways to implement and use the standards to guide its quality improvement efforts. The organization is encouraged to review these discussions and deliberations as it considers ways to implement innovative changes and further advance its business and service delivery practices.

## Section 1. ASPIRE to Excellence®

### 1.A. Leadership

#### Description

CARF-accredited organizations identify leadership that embraces the values of accountability and responsibility to the individual organization’s stated mission. The leadership demonstrates corporate social responsibility.

#### Key Areas Addressed

- Leadership structure and responsibilities
- Person-centered philosophy
- Organizational guidance
- Leadership accessibility
- Cultural competency and diversity
- Corporate responsibility
- Organizational fundraising, if applicable

## **Recommendations**

### **1.A.6.a.(6)(a)(ii)**

### **1.A.6.a.(6)(a)(iii)**

### **1.A.6.a.(6)(d)**

### **1.A.6.b.(2)(a)**

### **1.A.6.b.(2)(b)**

The Arc of Opportunity provides information in its employee handbook on service delivery and the code of conduct on the inability for employees to exchange (accept or receive) gifts. The organization is urged to expand its corporate responsibility efforts by updating its written codes of ethical conduct to address, in the area of service delivery, the exchange of money or gratuities and setting boundaries. Further, although The Arc of Opportunity documents the process in how violations will be considered and who will be responsible to facilitate investigations, it should ensure that written procedures to deal with allegations of violations of ethical codes include timeframes that are adequate for prompt consideration and result in timely decisions. This could be accomplished by adding a specified timeframe as to when the action will be reviewed and completed.

## **Consultation**

- Although the organization does not raise funds specifically for the programs seeking accreditation, it is encouraged to develop comprehensive fundraising policies.

## **1.C. Strategic Planning**

### **Description**

CARF-accredited organizations establish a foundation for success through strategic planning focused on taking advantage of strengths and opportunities and addressing weaknesses and threats.

### **Key Areas Addressed**

- Environmental considerations
- Strategic plan development, implementation, and periodic review

## **Recommendations**

### **1.C.2.b.(3)(a)**

Although the organization implements a strategic plan, the plan does not include evidence of the financial needs of the goals and priorities within the plan and how these goals and priorities could be financially supported throughout the plan years. The organization should implement a strategic plan that reflects the organization's financial position with respect to allocating financial resources necessary to support accomplishment of the plan.

## **1.D. Input from Persons Served and Other Stakeholders**

### **Description**

CARF-accredited organizations continually focus on the expectations of the persons served and other stakeholders. The standards in this subsection direct the organization's focus to soliciting, collecting, analyzing, and using input from all stakeholders to create services that meet or exceed the expectations of the persons served, the community, and other stakeholders.

### **Key Areas Addressed**

- Collection of input
- Integration of input into business practices and planning

## **Recommendations**

There are no recommendations in this area.

## **1.E. Legal Requirements**

### **Description**

CARF-accredited organizations comply with all legal and regulatory requirements.

### **Key Areas Addressed**

- Compliance with obligations
- Response to legal action
- Confidentiality and security of records

### **Recommendations**

There are no recommendations in this area.

## **1.F. Financial Planning and Management**

### **Description**

CARF-accredited organizations strive to be financially responsible and solvent, conducting fiscal management in a manner that supports their mission, values, and performance objectives. Fiscal practices adhere to established accounting principles and business practices. Fiscal management covers daily operational cost management and incorporates plans for long-term solvency.

### **Key Areas Addressed**

- Budgets
- Review of financial results and relevant factors
- Fiscal policies and procedures
- Reviews of bills for services and fee structures, if applicable
- Safeguarding funds of persons served, if applicable
- Review/audit of financial statements

### **Recommendations**

#### **1.F.11.c.**

When The Arc of Opportunity takes responsibility for the funds of persons served, it should implement written procedures that addresses how the persons served will access the records of their funds.

## **1.G. Risk Management**

### **Description**

CARF-accredited organizations engage in a coordinated set of activities designed to control threats to their people, property, income, goodwill, and ability to accomplish goals.

### **Key Areas Addressed**

- Risk management plan implementation and periodic review
- Adequate insurance coverage
- Media relations and social media procedures
- Reviews of contract services

### **Recommendations**

There are no recommendations in this area.

## **1.H. Health and Safety**

### **Description**

CARF-accredited organizations maintain healthy, safe, and clean environments that support quality services and minimize risk of harm to persons served, personnel, and other stakeholders.

### **Key Areas Addressed**

- Competency-based training on safety procedures and practices
- Emergency procedures
- Access to first aid and emergency information
- Critical incidents
- Infection control
- Health and safety inspections

### **Recommendations**

There are no recommendations in this area.

### **Consultation**

- The organization implements written procedures regarding critical incidents that include timely debriefings conducted following critical incidents. Although the health and safety committee debriefs each critical incident report, it is suggested that the organization also implement written procedures to ensure that the staff members and/or persons served are provided with the support of a debrief discussion after each critical incident.

## **1.I. Workforce Development and Management**

### **Description**

CARF-accredited organizations demonstrate that they value their human resources and focus on aligning and linking human resources processes, procedures, and initiatives with the strategic objectives of the organization.

Organizational effectiveness depends on the organization's ability to develop and manage the knowledge, skills, abilities, and behavioral expectations of its workforce. The organization describes its workforce, which is often composed of a diverse blend of human resources. Effective workforce development and management promote engagement and organizational sustainability and foster an environment that promotes the provision of services that center on enhancing the lives of persons served.

### **Key Areas Addressed**

- Composition of workforce
- Ongoing workforce planning
- Verification of background/credentials/fitness for duty

- Workforce engagement and development
- Performance appraisals
- Succession planning

### **Recommendations**

There are no recommendations in this area.

## **1.J. Technology**

### **Description**

Guided by leadership and a shared vision, CARF-accredited organizations are committed to exploring and, within their resources, acquiring and implementing technology systems and solutions that will support and enhance:

- Business processes and practices.
- Privacy and security of protected information.
- Service delivery.
- Performance management and improvement.
- Satisfaction of persons served, personnel, and other stakeholders.

### **Key Areas Addressed**

- Ongoing assessment of technology and data use
- Technology and system plan implementation and periodic review
- Technology policies and procedures
- Written procedures for the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in service delivery, if applicable
- ICT instruction and training, if applicable
- Access to ICT information and assistance, if applicable
- Maintenance of ICT equipment, if applicable
- Emergency procedures that address unique aspects of service delivery via ICT, if applicable

### **Recommendations**

There are no recommendations in this area.

## **1.K. Rights of Persons Served**

### **Description**

CARF-accredited organizations protect and promote the rights of all persons served. This commitment guides the delivery of services and ongoing interactions with the persons served.

### **Key Areas Addressed**

- Policies that promote rights of persons served
- Communication of rights to persons served
- Formal complaints by persons served

### **Recommendations**

There are no recommendations in this area.

## **Consultation**

- Although The Arc of Opportunity includes its definition of a formal complaint in the Human Rights Manual for Individuals, persons served could also benefit from the inclusion of the definition of a formal complaint on the complaint/grievance form.

## **1.L. Accessibility**

### **Description**

CARF-accredited organizations promote accessibility and the removal of barriers for the persons served and other stakeholders.

### **Key Areas Addressed**

- Assessment of accessibility needs and identification of barriers
- Accessibility plan implementation and periodic review
- Requests for reasonable accommodations

### **Recommendations**

There are no recommendations in this area.

## **1.M. Performance Measurement and Management**

### **Description**

CARF-accredited organizations demonstrate a culture of accountability by developing and implementing performance measurement and management plans that produce information an organization can act on to improve results for the persons served, other stakeholders, and the organization itself.

The foundation for successful performance measurement and management includes:

- Leadership accountability and support.
- Mission-driven measurement.
- A focus on results achieved for the persons served.
- Meaningful engagement of stakeholders.
- An understanding of extenuating and influencing factors that may impact performance.
- A workforce that is knowledgeable about and engaged in performance measurement and management.
- An investment in resources to implement performance measurement and management.
- Measurement and management of business functions to sustain and enhance the organization.

### **Key Areas Addressed**

- Leadership accountability for performance measurement and management
- Identification of gaps and opportunities related to performance measurement and management
- Input from stakeholders
- Performance measurement and management plan
- Identification of objectives and performance indicators for service delivery
- Identification of objectives and performance indicators for priority business functions
- Personnel training on performance measurement and management

## **Recommendations**

### **1.M.3.a.(3)(a)**

### **1.M.3.a.(3)(c)**

### **1.M.3.a.(3)(d)**

Although the organization provides a yearly performance measurement and management plan, the plan should address the collection of data about the persons served at the beginning of services, at the end of services, and at points in time following services.

## **1.N. Performance Improvement**

### **Description**

CARF-accredited organizations demonstrate a culture of performance improvement through their commitment to proactive and ongoing review, analysis, reflection on their results in both service delivery and business functions, and transparency. The results of performance analysis are used to identify and implement data-driven actions to improve the quality of programs and services and to inform decision making. Performance information that is accurate and understandable to the target audience is shared with persons served, personnel, and other stakeholders in accordance with their interests and needs.

### **Key Areas Addressed**

- Analysis of service delivery performance
- Analysis of business function performance
- Identification of areas needing performance improvement
- Implementation of action plans
- Use of performance information to improve program/service quality and make decisions
- Communication of performance information

## **Recommendations**

### **1.N.1.c.(5)**

Although The Arc of Opportunity represents service access category in the objectives for the AFC program, it did not address service access category in the area of day habilitation services. The analysis of service delivery performance should address service delivery indicators for each program/service seeking accreditation, including service access.

## **Section 2. Quality Individualized Services and Supports**

### **Description**

For an organization to achieve quality services, the persons served are active participants in the planning, implementation, and ongoing review and revision of the services offered. The organization's commitment to quality and the involvement of the persons served spans the entire time that the persons served are involved with services. The service planning process is individualized, establishing goals and measurable objectives that incorporate the unique strengths, abilities, needs, and preferences of the persons served. Services are responsive to the expectations of persons served and their desired outcomes from services, and are relevant to their maximum participation in the environments of their choice.

## 2.A. Program/Service Structure

### Description

A fundamental responsibility of the organization is to provide a comprehensive program structure. The staffing is designed to maximize opportunities for the persons served to obtain and participate in the services provided.

### Key Areas Addressed

- Services are person centered and individualized
- Persons are given information about the organization's purposes and ability to address desired outcomes
- Documented scope of services shared with stakeholders
- Service delivery based on accepted field practices
- Communication for effective service delivery
- Entrance/exit/transition criteria

### Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

### Consultation

- Information about the organization provided to the persons inquiring about services includes service availability, including possible waiting time for services. The Arc of Opportunity's operating procedures explain that the "waiting list is reviewed on a regular basis by the Vice President of Day Supports." It is suggested that the organization define the term *regular basis* so that prospective persons served and other stakeholders could better understand the timeframe.

## 2.B. Individual-Centered Service Planning, Design, and Delivery

### Description

Improvement of the quality of an individual's services/supports requires a focus on the person and/or family served and their identified strengths, abilities, needs, and preferences. The organization's services are designed around the identified needs and desires of the persons served, are responsive to their expectations and desired outcomes from services, and are relevant to their maximum participation in the environments of their choice.

The person served participates in decision making, directing, and planning that affects the person's life. Efforts to include the person served in the direction or delivery of those services/supports are evident.

### Key Areas Addressed

- Services are person centered and individualized
- Persons are given information about the organization's purposes and ability to address desired outcomes

### Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.



## **2.C. Medication Monitoring and Management**

### **Key Areas Addressed**

- Current, complete records of medications used by persons served
- Written procedures for storage and safe handling of medications
- Educational resources and advocacy for persons served in decision making
- Physician review of medication use
- Training and education for persons served regarding medications

### **Recommendations**

#### **2.C.6.b.**

Although The Arc of Opportunity collects documentation in the day habilitation program for consent to receive services (including medication management), and the nursing staff verbally confirms consent before administering each medication, these practices are not written in the procedures. The organization should implement written medication procedures that provide for documentation or confirmation of informed consent for each medication administered, when possible.

## **2.E. Community Services Principle Standards**

### **Description**

An organization seeking CARF accreditation in the area of community services assists the persons and/or families served in obtaining access to the resources and services of their choice. The persons and/or families served are included in their communities to the degree they desire. This may be accomplished by direct service provision or linkages to existing opportunities and natural supports in the community.

The organization obtains information from the persons and/or families served regarding resources and services they want or require that will meet their identified needs, and offers an array of services it arranges for or provides. The organization provides the persons and/or families served with information so that they may make informed choices and decisions.

The services and supports are changed as necessary to meet the identified needs of the persons and/or families served and other stakeholders. Service designs address identified individual, family, socioeconomic, and cultural needs.

Expected results from these services may include:

- Increased or maintained inclusion in meaningful community activities.
- Increased or maintained ability to perform activities of daily living.
- Increased self-direction, self-determination, and self-reliance.
- Increased self-esteem.

### **Key Areas Addressed**

- Access to community resources and services
- Enhanced quality of life
- Community inclusion
- Community participation

## **Recommendations**

There are no recommendations in this area.

# **Section 4. Community Services**

## **Description**

An organization seeking CARF accreditation in the area of community services assists the persons served through an individualized person-centered process to obtain access to the services, supports, and resources of their choice to achieve their desired outcomes. This may be accomplished by direct service provision, linkages to existing generic opportunities and natural supports in the community, or any combination of these. The persons served are included in their communities to the degree they desire.

The organization provides the persons served with information so that they may make informed choices and decisions. Although we use the phrase person served, this may also include family served, as appropriate to the service and the individual.

The services and supports are arranged and changed as necessary to meet the identified desires of the persons served. Service designs address identified individual, family, socioeconomic, and cultural preferences.

Depending on the program's scope of services, expected results from these services/supports may include:

- Increased inclusion in community activities.
- Increased or maintained ability to perform activities of daily living.
- Increased self-direction, self-determination, and self-reliance.
- Self-esteem.
- Housing opportunities.
- Community citizenship.
- Increased independence.
- Meaningful activities.
- Increased employment options.

## **4.G. Community Integration (COI)**

### **Description**

Community integration is designed to help persons to optimize their personal, social, and vocational competency to live successfully in the community. Persons served are active partners in determining the activities they desire to participate in. Therefore, the settings can be informal to reduce barriers between staff members and persons served. An activity center, a day program, a clubhouse, and a drop-in center are examples of community integration services. Consumer-run programs are also included.

Community integration provides opportunities for the community participation of the persons served. The organization defines the scope of these services and supports based on the identified needs and desires of the persons served. This may include services for persons who without this option are at risk of receiving services full-time in more restrictive environments with intensive levels of supports such as hospitalization or nursing home care. A person may participate in a variety of community life experiences or interactions that may include, but are not limited to:

- Leisure or recreational activities.
- Communication activities.
- Spiritual activities.
- Cultural activities.
- Pre-vocational experiences.
- Vocational pursuits.
- Volunteerism in the community.
- Educational and training activities.
- Development of living skills.
- Health and wellness promotion.
- Orientation, mobility, and destination training.
- Access and utilization of public transportation.
- Interacting with volunteers from the community in program activities.
- Community collaborations and social connections developed by the program (partnerships with community entities such as senior centers, arts councils, etc.).

Some examples of the quality results desired by the different stakeholders of these services include:

- Community participation.
- Increased independence.
- Increased interdependence.
- Greater quality of life.
- Skill development.
- Slowing of decline associated with aging.
- Volunteer placement.
- Movement to employment.
- Center-based socialization activities during the day that enable persons to remain in their community residence.
- Activity alternatives to avoid or reduce time spent in more restrictive environments, such as hospitalization or nursing home care.

### **Key Areas Addressed**

- Opportunities for community participation

### **Recommendations**

There are no recommendations in this area.

## 4.J. Services Coordination (SC)

### Description

Services coordination programs provide goal-oriented and individualized supports focusing on improved self-sufficiency for the persons served through assessment, planning, linkage, advocacy, coordination, and monitoring activities. Successful services coordination results in community opportunities and increased independence for the persons served. Programs may provide occasional supportive counseling and crisis intervention services, when allowed by regulatory or funding authorities.

Services coordination may be provided by an organization as part of its individual service planning and delivery, by a department or division within the organization that works with individuals who are internal and/or external to the organization, or by an organization with the sole purpose of providing community services coordination. Such programs are typically provided by qualified services coordinators or by case management teams.

Organizations performing services coordination as a routine function of other services or programs are not required to apply these standards unless they are specifically seeking accreditation for this program.

Some examples of the quality results desired by the different stakeholders of these services include:

- Access to a variety of services/supports.
- Access to choices of services.
- Individualized services to meet needs.
- Persons achieving goals.
- Persons achieving independence.
- Access to vocational training.
- Persons achieving employment.
- Access to career development.

### Key Areas Addressed

- Goal-oriented and systematic process of advocacy
- Formation of linkages with community resources and services
- Coordination of services

### Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

# Program(s)/Service(s) by Location

## **The Arc of Opportunity**

564 Main Street  
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Community Integration  
Services Coordination