



Three-Year Accreditation

CARF
Survey Report
for
The Arc of Opportunity

Organization

The Arc of Opportunity
564 Main Street
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Organizational Leadership

Cheryl A. Robillard, Division Director
Mary Heafy, President/CEO
Charles Powderly, Vice President Day Supports

Survey Dates

January 29-30, 2015

Survey Team

Mary A. Spencer, Administrative Surveyor
Cheryl Cotterill, LPN, Program Surveyor

Programs/Services Surveyed

Community Integration

Previous Survey

January 9-10, 2012
Three-Year Accreditation

Survey Outcome

Three-Year Accreditation
Expiration: February 2018



Three-Year Accreditation

SURVEY SUMMARY

The Arc of Opportunity has strengths in many areas.

- The president/CEO is an energetic and forward-thinking professional with many years of experience in the mental health sector and services to persons with developmental disabilities and intellectual challenges. She is action oriented and has a high level of sensitivity regarding the promotion of independence for and growth of the clients, staff members, and organization.
- The board is actively involved in promoting the organization's mission, direction, and goals through fundraising efforts.
- Staff growth and development are a high organizational planning priority focused on enveloping the staff members in The Arc of Opportunity's culture in order to develop desired professional skills and to promote the organization's mission.
- The actions and initiative of the compassionate and enthusiastic and highly dedicated staff members promote the clients' skills development, independence, and self-respect.
- The Arc of Opportunity's main facility, which was once a department store, has been renovated to include spacious areas for services provision and staff activities, and common areas for the clients and staff members. The renovations came in under budget, and used furnishings were purchased. The interior is decorated with colors that not only indicate distinct locations within the building, but also represent the organization's professional brand.
- Through activities including mergers and acquisitions, The Arc of Opportunity has significantly grown over the past three years. The organization has worked hard to consolidate its facilities and to distinctly brand itself as an organization of excellence.
- The Arc of Opportunity's initiatives include a well-orchestrated effort to solidify and perpetuate a positively directed culture that is oriented to learning and service provision. A process for training new staff members during the initial seven-day post-hire work period was recently implemented as a way to set expectations and to begin acculturation to the organization.
- Over the past three years, the organization has added executive staff members whose skill sets complement those of the other executive staff members.
- The Arc of Opportunity continues to systematically update its technology and has implemented the use of significant new technology. The organization also employs a technology expert to "light the technological way."
- The organization provides social activities for the clients and families. Its newsletter promotes domestic and international travel of long and short duration as well as participation in the local community, including regularly scheduled activities.
- The team members have significant tenure with The Arc of Opportunity. Along with newly hired staff members, they carry out their work with passion and are fully vested in the organization's highly visible vision and values. The ongoing staff training provided at every level of the organization suggests its ability to remain involved in leading-edge initiatives.
- The Arc of Opportunity is well organized and creatively uses its resources. For example, facility corridors are decorated with pictures and stories of the organization's growth.

- Team members at all levels “know” the clients and are aware of their unique needs. The compassionate and skilled members of the nursing team provide time and attention to the clients based on their individual needs.
- The clients appear to be happy with the services they receive and pleased with The Arc of Opportunity’s focus on meeting their unique individual needs.

In the following area The Arc of Opportunity demonstrates exemplary conformance to the standards.

- The Arc of Opportunity’s nursing services team has developed a very useful and user-friendly diagnostic resource tool that is detailed and written for nonmedical team members. This extensive resource is organized by the specific names of clients in the day habilitation program. It identifies each client’s disabilities and co-existing medical conditions and the treatments for the conditions, and discusses symptoms to watch for that might indicate a change in the conditions. This diagnostic resource has proven to be a valuable training aid as well as a communication and information source for further enhancing the person-centered care provided to each client in the day habilitation program.

The Arc of Opportunity should seek improvement in the areas identified by the recommendations in the report.

On balance, The Arc of Opportunity provides high quality community integration services to adults with development disabilities and intellectual challenges in their local communities. The organization offers a rich and rewarding environment for the clients and dedicated staff members. The energetic and goal-oriented president/CEO is a forward-thinking leader who has led the organization to a significant number of important accomplishments during the past three years. The caring and dedicated board members are involved in supporting the organization’s activities and growth. Staff members at all levels have longevity with The Arc of Opportunity and have participated in the organization’s positively evolving history of compassionate service provision. They are provided numerous professional development opportunities and an intensive and early orientation to their jobs and the organization’s culture. The clients and other stakeholders express high levels of satisfaction with the organization and the quality of its services. The interactions among the staff members and clients consistently appear to be warm and caring. The Arc of Opportunity demonstrates substantial conformance to the CARF standards. Although there are a few areas for improvement related to health and safety, they are minimal in comparison to the organization’s strengths. The receptivity of the leadership and staff members to the consultation and other feedback provided during this survey instills confidence that The Arc of Opportunity possesses the willingness and capacity to bring it into full conformance to the CARF standards.

The Arc of Opportunity has earned a Three-Year Accreditation. The board, leadership, and staff members are recognized for their efforts in pursuit of international accreditation. They are encouraged to use their resources to address the opportunities for improvement noted in this report and to continue to utilize the CARF standards on an ongoing basis as guidelines for continuous quality improvement.

SECTION 1. ASPIRE TO EXCELLENCE®

A. Leadership

Principle Statement

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
 - Leadership guidance
 - Commitment to diversity
 - Corporate responsibility
 - Corporate compliance
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Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

C. Strategic Planning

Principle Statement

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

- Strategic planning considers stakeholder expectations and environmental impacts
 - Written strategic plan sets goals
 - Plan is implemented, shared, and kept relevant
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

D. Input from Persons Served and Other Stakeholders

Principle Statement

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

- Ongoing collection of information from a variety of sources
 - Analysis and integration into business practices
 - Leadership response to information collected
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

E. Legal Requirements

Principle Statement

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

Key Areas Addressed

- Compliance with all legal/regulatory requirements
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Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

F. Financial Planning and Management

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations strive to be financially responsible and solvent, conducting fiscal management in a manner that supports their mission, values, and annual 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

- Budget(s) prepared, shared, and reflective of strategic planning
 - Financial results reported/compared to budgeted performance
 - Organization review
 - Fiscal policies and procedures
 - Review of service billing records and fee structure
 - Financial review/audit
 - Safeguarding funds of persons served
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

G. Risk Management

Principle Statement

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

- Identification of loss exposures
 - Development of risk management plan
 - Adequate insurance coverage
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

H. Health and Safety

Principle Statement

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

- Inspections
 - Emergency procedures
 - Access to emergency first aid
 - Competency of personnel in safety procedures
 - Reporting/reviewing critical incidents
 - Infection control
-

Recommendations

H.5.a.(2) through H.5.a.(6)

The Arc of Opportunity has developed an excellent written fire evacuation procedure as well as some information specific to other emergency situations; however, there should be written emergency procedures for bomb threats, natural disasters, utility failures, medical emergencies, and violent or other threatening situations.

H.7.a.(2) through H.7.d.

Although the organization conducts monthly fire evacuation drills, there is no documentation of the testing of other emergency procedures. Unannounced tests of all emergency procedures should be conducted at least annually at each location. The tests should include complete actual or simulated physical evacuation drills; be analyzed for performance that addresses areas needing improvement, actions to be taken, results of performance improvement plans, and necessary education and training of personnel; and be evidenced in writing.

H.10.a. through H.10.b.(8)

The Arc of Opportunity documents individual critical incidents and related causes, trends, and reporting requirements. However, a written analysis of all critical incidents should be provided to or conducted by the leadership at least annually that addresses causes, trends, actions for improvement, results of performance improvement plans, necessary education and training of personnel, prevention of recurrence, and internal and external reporting requirements.

I. Human Resources

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations demonstrate that they value their human resources. It should be evident that personnel are involved and engaged in the success of the organization and the persons they serve.

Key Areas Addressed

- Adequate staffing
 - Verification of background/credentials
 - Recruitment/retention efforts
 - Personnel skills/characteristics
 - Annual review of job descriptions/performance
 - Policies regarding students/volunteers, if applicable
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

J. Technology

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations plan for the use of technology to support and advance effective and efficient service and business practices.

Key Areas Addressed

- Written technology and system plan
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Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

K. Rights of Persons Served

Principle Statement

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

- Communication of rights
 - Policies that promote rights
 - Complaint, grievance, and appeals policy
 - Annual review of complaints
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

L. Accessibility

Principle Statement

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

Key Areas Addressed

- Written accessibility plan(s)
 - Requests for reasonable accommodations
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

M. Performance Measurement and Management

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations are committed to continually improving their organizations and service delivery to the persons served. Data are collected and analyzed, and information is used to manage and improve service delivery.

Key Areas Addressed

- Information collection, use, and management
- Setting and measuring performance indicators

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

N. Performance Improvement

Principle Statement

The dynamic nature of continuous improvement in a CARF-accredited organization sets it apart from other organizations providing similar services. CARF-accredited organizations share and provide the persons served and other interested stakeholders with ongoing information about their actual performance as a business entity and their ability to achieve optimal outcomes for the persons served through their programs and services.

Key Areas Addressed

- Proactive performance improvement
 - Performance information shared with all stakeholders
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Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

SECTION 2. QUALITY INDIVIDUALIZED SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

A. Program/Service Structure

Principle Statement

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.

Exemplary Conformance

A.7.

The Arc of Opportunity's nursing services team has developed a very useful and user-friendly diagnostic resource tool that is detailed and written for nonmedical team members. This extensive resource is organized by the specific names of clients in the day habilitation program. It identifies each client's disabilities and co-existing medical conditions and the treatments for the conditions, and discusses symptoms to watch for that might indicate a change in the conditions. This diagnostic resource has proven to be a valuable training aid as well as a communication and information source for further enhancing the person-centered care provided to each client in the day habilitation program.

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

Principle Statement

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 his or her 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.

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

There are no recommendations in this area.

F. Community Services Principle Standards

Key Areas Addressed

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

There are no recommendations in this area.

SECTION 3. EMPLOYMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Principle Statement

An organization seeking CARF accreditation in the area of employment and 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.
- Increased independence.
- Meaningful activities.
- Increased employment options.
- Employment obtained and maintained.
- Competitive employment.
- Economic self-sufficiency.
- Employment with benefits.
- Career advancement.

P. Community Integration

Principle Statement

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.
- Development of work attitudes.
- Employment activities.
- 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.).

Key Areas Addressed

- Opportunities for community participation
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Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.
