

**A**nswering  
*Your Questions*  
*About CARF*  
*International*





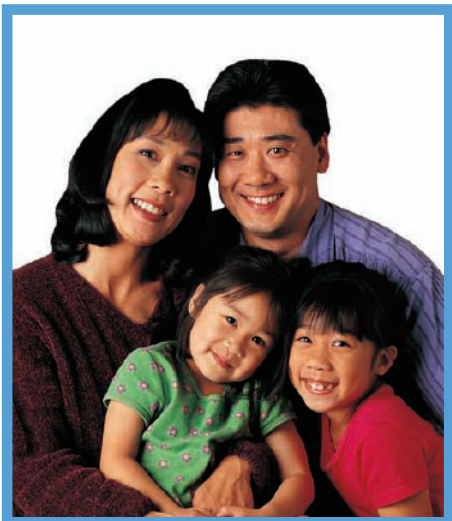
## WHO ARE WE?

Founded in 1966, CARF is an international, independent, nonprofit accreditor of human service providers and networks in the areas of aging services, behavioral health, child and youth services, employment and community services, and medical rehabilitation. The accreditation services are provided throughout the CARF International family of organizations, which includes CARF, CARF Canada, and CARF-CCAC.



## WHAT IS OUR MISSION?

TO PROMOTE THE  
QUALITY, VALUE, AND  
OPTIMAL OUTCOMES  
OF SERVICES THROUGH  
A CONSULTATIVE  
ACCREDITATION PROCESS  
THAT CENTERS ON  
ENHANCING THE LIVES  
OF PERSONS SERVED.



## WHAT IS THE ROLE OF PERSONS SERVED?

Persons served are the moral owners of CARF. We affirm that all our products and services are focused on creating a positive impact in the lives of persons who receive services from CARF-accredited providers.

Persons served are central to CARF's mission and vision. CARF's core values further specify that:

- All people have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- All people should have access to needed services that achieve optimal outcomes.
- All people should be empowered to exercise informed choice.

## WHO ARE OUR SURVEYORS?

Surveyors are peers in the field employed by organizations that have CARF accreditation and who have expertise in the types of programs and services accredited by the CARF family of organizations.

Our goal is to recruit and train the most highly qualified professionals to conduct surveys. As a result, the surveyors who come to your organization during an on-site survey are among the industry's most knowledgeable and respected experts in the field of human services.

"We were very happy that the expertise of the survey team matched our agency. This is the best thing we've ever done as an organization to improve our system of care."

— an accredited provider



## WHAT IS A CARF SURVEY?

As a step toward accreditation, a provider invites CARF to send a team of surveyors to visit its site and evaluate its services for quality. The surveyors consult with leadership and staff members, and interview people who use the provider's services. Based on the surveyors' review, the provider may be awarded accreditation for a term of one or three years, or for CARF-CCAC accreditation, a term of up to five years. In some cases, the provider may need to improve its services before it can become accredited.

## WHAT DISTINGUISHES OUR ACCREDITATION SURVEY?

We believe that accreditation is a partnership with the service provider. The survey is consultative rather than inspective. The survey team recommends improvements to services. We allow you to seek accreditation with the program standards that match your needs—including the option to blend from different standards manuals to accurately reflect your agency's multi-faceted services.

## WHAT DISTINGUISHES AN ACCREDITED ORGANIZATION?

Organizations that have achieved accreditation demonstrate:

- A higher degree of internal quality.
- Greater involvement of persons served in their services.
- Increased cohesion among staff members at all levels within the organization.
- Enhanced status of the surveyed services within the community.

When your organization is accredited, the public is assured that you are committed to continually improving the quality of your services and your organization's focus is on service outcomes and customer feedback and satisfaction.

"Insurance companies that are most aggressive in their pricing (and have the most knowledge of the human service field) take CARF accreditation very seriously in their pricing judgments. Your accreditation programs ensure that organizations have addressed such things as documentation of procedures and dignified treatment of staff and clients."

—*an insurer*

"Is it worthwhile? From a rating standpoint, a marketing standpoint, a client satisfaction standpoint ... all of those things, undeniably, make accreditation worthwhile.

— *an accredited provider*

Ninety percent of CARF's customers report accreditation helps improve their business.

## WHAT DO PERSONS SERVED AND THEIR FAMILIES SAY?

“A consumer needs understanding in the form of dependable guidance, which includes full disclosure about outcomes, CARF survey results, program elements, a list of past patients who have agreed to be contacted, an on-site acute care evaluation, and an invitation to tour the organization. ...I urge providers to place information in as many hands as possible.”

— *Spouse of a stroke patient*

## WHAT DO PAYERS, INSURERS, AND FUNDERS SAY?

“Providers with CARF-accredited services are considered lower risks, in part because they conform to CARF standards relating to risk management, health and safety, corporate compliance, and business practices.”

— *Senior vice president of a national insurance company*



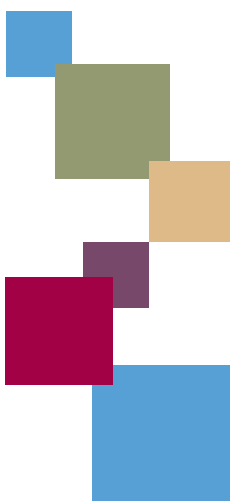
## WHAT DO PROVIDERS SAY?

Here is a sampling of the feedback we have received from different organizations soon after a survey.

“Our involvement with CARF has benefitted the people we serve beyond belief. We have become even more customer driven and outcomes based. CARF has demonstrated that you can be rural and deliver quality care.”

“Initially, we began solely for future contract requirements. However, as we became more familiar with the standards and what accreditation stands for, we became excited about the fact that CARF accreditation represents a continuous push for excellence.”

“The standards were very supportive of the services, philosophy, and mission of our organizations. The standards assisted us in fine-tuning our client-oriented program and in establishing systems for accountability.”



## WHAT ARE THE ACCREDITATION AREAS?

We accredit providers for many specific programs and services, and many providers seek CARF accreditation in more than one area. The CARF standards manuals used to accredit programs and services are:

- Aging Services
- CARF–CCAC ASPIRE to Excellence (for Continuing Care Retirement Communities and Aging Services Networks)
- Behavioral Health
- Business and Services Management Network
- Child and Youth Services
- Employment and Community Services
- Medical Rehabilitation
- One-Stop Career Center
- Opioid Treatment Program
- Vision Rehabilitation Services





## HOW ARE THE STANDARDS DEVELOPED?

We convene our International Advisory Council; advisory committees; and regional, national, and international focus groups each year to review and revise standards and develop standards for new accreditation opportunities. The standards development process provides opportunities for persons served, organizations, surveyors, national professional groups, advocacy groups, third-party purchasers, and other stakeholders to be actively involved in developing standards.

# WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS

## **On-Site Survey**

The survey process is rooted in peer review, networking, and improvement of business practices and organizational quality. The on-site survey team of professional peers provides an impartial, external review of your organization's conformance to the accreditation standards and can provide confirmation of what you are doing well. The survey team members also offer consultation for ongoing quality improvement.

## **Survey Report**

After the survey, CARF prepares a report highlighting your organization's strengths and areas for improvement, based on your organization's level of conformance to the standards.

## **Term of Accreditation**

The accreditation award is based on your organization's demonstration of its conformance to the standards. The CARF accreditation term may be for one or three years. The CARF-CCAC accreditation term may be for up to five years.



# OF ACCREDITATION?

## Quality Improvement Plan

The quality improvement plan is a key part of the accreditation process. Equipped with the survey report information, your organization prepares a quality improvement plan to address the areas for improvement during the term of the accreditation. CARF reviews the plan for completeness, and is also available to assist you to develop the plan.

## Annual Reporting

An accredited provider participates in an annual review of its practices. The leadership of your organization sends a signed commitment to us stating that it is using our standards to guide the organization. Accreditation is a commitment to continuous quality improvement.

“The opportunity for an objective and standardized review of our programs validated our focus for service delivery. The opportunity for feedback, dialogue, and exchange of ideas provided the impetus for further creativity and identified areas for improvement.”

— *an accredited provider*

# DOES CARF INTERNATIONAL OFFER

## **Publications**

The CARF family of organizations publishes standards manuals that correspond to the fields served by the areas eligible for accreditation. Individuals in those fields develop the standards with the input of persons served, professionals, purchasers, providers of services, and other interested parties. The standards manuals are updated annually or as necessary to ensure that they reflect current, practical, and relevant standards for quality. CARF also offers many other publications to help your organization's efforts in providing programs and services focused on quality.

## **Education**

Seminars and conferences are an excellent way for your organization to receive information about the application of the accreditation standards, the survey process, and our policies and procedures. If your organization is preparing for a survey for the first time, it is helpful to send key staff members to an educational event offered in cities throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe.

# MORE THAN JUST ACCREDITATION?

## Information

uSPEQ™ data and information services was developed by CARF to gather opinions on participants' experiences with a program, service, or provider. In turn, the provider uses the reported information to improve the quality of its programs and services.

## Consultation

The CARF family of organizations assists your organization in improving the quality of its services, demonstrating value, and meeting internationally recognized organization and program standards. Surveyors are peers in the field who have experience in the programs and services that CARF accredits, and who typically have a direct link to organizations that have achieved accreditation. Surveyors receive extensive training and are matched to organizations they survey based on the organization's characteristics and program types. In addition, consultation with staff members is personalized and prompt. They will be glad to answer your questions about interpreting and implementing standards.



## HOW DO I BECOME AN ACCREDITED PROVIDER?

Join more than 4,900 accredited service providers who serve more than 6.3 million persons annually. Contact CARF to find out how to start the accreditation process. CARF-accreditation opportunities are in the United States, Canada, Western Europe, and South America. Call CARF to find out how you can become accredited.

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