



SURVEY OUTCOME
Three-Year Accreditation

CARF
Survey Report
for
St. Louis Center for
Exceptional Children and
Adults

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Organization

St. Louis Center for Exceptional Children and Adults (SLC)
16195 Old U.S. 12
Chelsea, MI 48118

Organizational Leadership

Steven W. Daut, Finance Director

Survey Dates

March 26-27, 2009

Survey Team

Margaret A. O'Brien, M.S., Administrative Surveyor
Annie Chiu, Program Surveyor

Programs/Services Surveyed

Community Services: Community Housing

Previous Survey

May 18-19, 2006
Three-Year Accreditation

Survey Outcome

Three-Year Accreditation
Expiration: May 2012



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SURVEY SUMMARY

St. Louis Center for Exceptional Children and Adults (SLC) has strengths in many areas.

- SLC has conscientious, dedicated, and enthusiastic staff at all levels. There is a clear focus on the needs of individuals served. Of note, are the caliber, commitment, and achievement of the staff members who provide direct care and clinical services. It was most apparent that there are long and positive relationships between staff and persons served that contribute to the development of their self-esteem, independence, and confidence.
- The organization is very highly regarded in the local community, especially by funding and referring agencies. Each source indicates a high level of satisfaction with the services and service results.
- Referring sources indicate that the organization is seen as a “solution” and proactively solves problems and issues.
- SLC is complimented for the various financial controls and financial trending tools it has developed.
- There is a strong budget planning process in place that has resulted in the development of realistic budget projections. The financial trending tools have allowed the organization to monitor its cash flow positions and implement early corrective actions when needed.
- At all levels within the organization, there is a clear dedication to put the person first and at the center of services. The spirit of the organization emphasizes compassion, caring, commitment, and embodies the vision of its founder.
- SLC is highly commended for the long-standing supportive and generous community advisory council. The community advisory council actively supports and promotes the mission and values of the organization through a variety of community events and generous donations of time.
- SLC employs dedicated, enthusiastic, and caring staff members who are responsive to the needs of persons served. There is a noticeable commitment to improve the quality of life of the individuals they support.
- The family members are highly pleased with the services that SLC provides. They feel that the organization is very responsive to their concerns and opinions.
- The organization promotes and participates in a wide range of activities that generate community inclusion opportunities for persons served, as well as providing education to the community as a whole.
- SLC demonstrates great effort in developing an intensive staff training program to meet the changing needs of the persons served.
- The individual person-centered plan goals are selected and written to ensure that the persons served are working toward personal growth and independence.

St. Louis Center for Exceptional Children and Adults should seek improvement in the areas identified by the recommendations in the report. Consultation given does not indicate nonconformance to standards but is offered as a suggestion for further quality improvement.

On balance, SLC demonstrates substantial conformance to the CARF standards. It is apparent that the needs of persons served are being met and that there is a significant impact on the quality of life through the services offered. Staff is committed and strongly connected to the organization. Positive satisfaction reports and a high regard from persons served, funding sources, and referring entities all attest to the significant effectiveness of SLC's services and supports. The board, leadership, and staff are all committed to the mission of the organization and to persons served. Based on past program performance, administrative leadership, and the organization's commitment to service quality, there is every reason to believe that SLC will continue to achieve continued success.

The recommendations in this report are few and scattered through the organization's operations. It appears that SLC has the resources, expertise, and the desire to address the areas for improvement.

St. Louis Center for Exceptional Children and Adults has earned a Three-Year Accreditation. The organization is urged to use this report to continue to enhance and improve its overall operations. The organization is encouraged to stay abreast of any future changes that are made to the CARF standards to further improve its services. The board of directors, leadership, and staff are complimented on this accomplishment and their efforts in providing quality employment services.

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
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

Consultation

- The organization is encouraged to strengthen the language on how to address allegations of violations of the code of ethics involving community advisory council members. Although there is some broad language included in the bylaws and organizational policies, these policies could be strengthened to clarify the process.
-

C. Strategic Integrated 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 expectation and environmental impacts
 - Written strategic plan sets goals
 - Plan is implemented, shared, and kept relevant
-

Recommendations

C.2.e.(1)

C.2.e.(2)

It is recommended that key information about the strategic plan be shared with persons served and other stakeholders in a manner that is useful to them. This information could be included in the newsletter, reviewed at the house meetings and parent support groups, and included on the organization's website.

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 the legal and regulatory requirements of federal, state, provincial, county, and city entities.

Key Areas Addressed

- Compliance with all legal/regulatory requirements
-

Recommendations

E.1.g.

It is recommended that SLC review and assess its process for determining employment eligibility for all employees, specifically the documentation and completion of I-9 forms.

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 its people, property, income, goodwill, and ability to accomplish goals.

Key Areas Addressed

- Written 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.c.(6)

H.5.c.(7)

Although in practice the organization has a general idea about how it might address the continuation of critical services, these practices are not evident in writing. It is recommended that SLC develop written emergency procedures, such as a business continuity plan, that address the identification and continuation of essential services.

H.7.a.

The organization has a comprehensive written procedure on critical incidents; however, the procedure does not address the prevention of incidents. It is recommended that the written procedures be expanded to include the prevention of incidents.

H.10.j.

H.10.k.

Currently there is only one cell phone available for use by the organization's transportation program. More than one vehicle is out on the road at a time. It is recommended that a method of consistent communication be available for each vehicle when transporting persons served. It is recommended that each vehicle used to transport persons served be outfitted with road warning/hazard equipment, which could include warning cones or triangles and/or flares. The organization has written road emergency procedures in place. It is suggested that these procedures be placed in each vehicle or in the emergency grab and go kit. In addition, the organization might consider expanding these procedures to include other types of emergencies such as medical emergencies and/or inclement weather.

H.13.a. through H.13.e.

The organization regularly tests its emergency plans for fires and tornadoes. It is recommended that SLC also test its other emergency plans for medical emergencies, utility failures, bomb threats, and safety during potentially violent situations as part of the emergency test rotation. Tests of all emergency plans should be conducted at least annually and include actual or simulated physical evaluations when included in the procedures. There should be documented evidence that the tests were conducted, that they were analyzed for performance improvement, and that they resulted in improvement or affirmation of satisfactory current practice.

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 description/performance
 - Policies regarding students/volunteers, if applicable
-

Recommendations

I.5.d.(1)

I.5.d.(4)(a)

I.5.d.(4)(b)

The current performance evaluation system addresses general work characteristics and traits. It is recommended that the evaluation process be expanded and based on an assessment of the job functions and competencies identified for each position. It is recommended that the performance evaluation process be used to assess performance related to objectives established in the last evaluation period and be used to establish measurable performance objectives for the next year.

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
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

K. Rights of Persons Served

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations protect and promote the rights of the 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
-

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)
- Status report regarding removal of identified barriers
- Requests for reasonable accommodations

Recommendations

L.2.a.(8)

In practice, the organization is involved in many activities that address community integration barriers. It is recommended that the accessibility plan be expanded to reflect some of the community integration barriers that are experienced by persons served and the corresponding actions that are being implemented to reduce these barriers. As the organization continues to refresh its accessibility plan, staff members are encouraged to continue conducting self-assessments to identify any specific attitudinal barriers. Examples of things to be assessed could be the use of age-appropriate language and the recognition of the potential of the person served.

M. Information 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 information is used to manage and improve service delivery.

Key Areas Addressed

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

Recommendations

M.4.c.(1) through M.4.d.(4)

Although the organization has a performance measurement system on its business functions, the performance improvement system lacks measurable indicators for the program that is seeking accreditation, specifically the community housing program. It is recommended that measures for indicators be established for the community housing program that include service effectiveness, service efficiency, service access, and satisfaction and other feedback from persons served and other stakeholders. For each indicator, there should be a framework that addresses to whom the indicator will be applied, how the data will be collected, a performance goal based on an industry benchmark, the organization's history, or a target established by the organization or other stakeholder, and extenuating/influencing factors that should be considered when analyzing performance.

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
-

Recommendations

N.1.b.(2)(a) through N.1.c.(3)

Once indicators for the community housing program have been identified and defined, it is recommended that the annual performance analysis be expanded to include an analysis of the results of the indicators for service effectiveness, service efficiency, service access, and the satisfaction and other feedback from the persons served and other stakeholders. The report should identify any areas for performance improvement, result in an action plan to address these areas to reach established or revised performance goals, and outline actions taken or improvements made to improve performance.

N.2.b.

It is recommended that once defined and analyzed, the outcomes information for the community housing program be used to improve the quality of services.

N.3.a. through N.3.c.

It is recommended that the performance results of the program be shared in a manner that is useful to persons served, personnel, and other stakeholders. This could be shared at house meetings and with the parent support groups.

SECTION 2. QUALITY INDIVIDUALIZED SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

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

Principle Statement

Improvement of the quality of an individual's services 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 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 are evident. The service environment reflects identified cultural needs, practices, and diversity. The person served is given information about the purposes of the organization.

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.

B. Records of the Persons Served

Principle Statement

The organization maintains complete records and treats all information related to persons served as confidential.

Key Areas Addressed

- Complete, confidential records are maintained
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

Consultation

- SLC is encouraged to archive all old documents within the record of the person served as appropriate. This could allow for easier use of the case records.
-

E. Medication Monitoring and Management

Principle Statement

These standards apply only to programs that are responsible for monitoring and/or managing medications for the persons served.

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

Principle Statement

The standards in this subsection assert basic principles that should be demonstrated by any organization seeking accreditation in the area of community services.

Key Areas Addressed

- Access to community resources and services
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

SECTION 4. COMMUNITY SERVICES

Principle Statement

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

J. Community Housing

Principle Statement

Community housing addresses the desires, goals, strengths, abilities, needs, health, safety, and life span issues of the persons served, regardless of the home in which they live and/or the scope, duration, and intensity of the services they receive. The residences in which services/supports are provided are typically owned, rented, leased, or operated directly by the organization, or may be owned, rented, or leased by a third party, such as a governmental entity. Providers exercise control over these sites in terms of having direct or indirect responsibility for the physical conditions of the facility.

Community housing is provided in partnership with individuals. These services/supports are designed to assist the persons served to achieve success in and satisfaction with community living. They may be temporary or long-term in nature. The services/supports are focused on home and community integration and engagement in productive activities. Community housing enhances the independence, dignity, personal choice, and privacy of the persons served. For persons in alcohol and other drug programs, these services are focused on providing sober living environments to increase the likelihood of sobriety and abstinence and to decrease the potential for relapse.

Community housing programs may be referred to as group homes, halfway houses, three-quarter way houses, recovery residences, sober housing, domestic violence or homeless shelters, and safe houses. These programs may be located in rural or urban settings and in houses, apartments, townhouses, or other residential settings owned, rented, leased, or operated by the organization.

They may include congregate living facilities and clustered homes/apartments in multiple-unit settings. These residences are often physically integrated into the community, and every effort is made to ensure that they approximate other homes in their neighborhoods in terms of size and number of individuals.

Community housing may include either or both of the following:

- Transitional living that provides interim supports and services for persons who are at risk of institutional placement, persons transitioning from institutional settings, or persons who are homeless. Transitional living is typically provided for six to twelve months and can be offered in congregate settings that may be larger than residences typically found in the community.
- Long-term housing that provides stable, supported community living or assists the persons served to obtain and maintain safe, affordable, accessible, and stable housing.

The residences in which community housing services are provided must be identified in the Intent to Survey. These sites will be visited during the survey process and identified in the survey report and accreditation outcome as a site at which the organization provides a community housing program.

Key Areas Addressed

- Safe, secure, private location
 - In-home safety needs
 - Options to make changes in living arrangements
 - Support to persons as they explore alternatives
 - Access as desired to community activities
 - System for on-call availability of personnel
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

Consultation

- In the environments that have a higher supervision requirement, it is suggested that the organization consider other ways of providing opportunities in typical household activities such as home meal preparation and laundry tasks.
 - In practice, the organization assists the person served in locating more appropriate housing situations according to his or her needs. It is suggested that the organization strengthen its written procedures to reflect these practices.
-