

CARF Accreditation Report
for
Veterans Place of Washington
Boulevard

Three-Year Accreditation



Contents

[Executive Summary](#)

[Survey Details](#)

[Survey Participants](#)

[Survey Activities](#)

[Program\(s\)/Service\(s\) Surveyed](#)

[Representations and Constraints](#)

[Survey Findings](#)

[Program\(s\)/Service\(s\) by Location](#)

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.

Organization

Veterans Place of Washington Boulevard
945 Washington Boulevard
Pittsburgh, PA 15206

Organizational Leadership

Kevin Kordzi, Executive Director

Survey Number

178792

Survey Date(s)

January 17, 2024–January 19, 2024

Surveyor(s)

Monica L. Davis, MBA, Administrative
James Murphy, MA, Program

Program(s)/Service(s) Surveyed

Community Employment Services: Employment Supports
Community Employment Services: Job Development
Community Housing
Services Coordination

Previous Survey

February 22, 2021–February 23, 2021
Three-Year Accreditation

Accreditation Decision**Three-Year Accreditation**

Expiration: February 28, 2027

Executive Summary

This report contains the findings of CARF's site survey of Veterans Place of Washington Boulevard conducted January 17, 2024–January 19, 2024. 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, Veterans Place of Washington Boulevard demonstrated substantial conformance to the standards. Veterans Place is a resilient organization with the motto "Helping Veterans Help Themselves." The homes are carefully located, well maintained, and integrated into the communities. Veterans report that staff is responsive to their needs and that they like their homes and the services offered. Staff members are dedicated, well trained, and eager to learn new techniques to help the veterans; they also feel supported by leadership and are happy to work for the organization. Veterans Place has a very engaged board of directors, with a few members stepping in to bridge gaps during the search for a new executive director. The organization has gathered a diverse group of supporters who not only offer financial support but also spread the word about the work it does. There are opportunities for improvement in the following recommendations, including implementing additional written codes of ethical conduct and expanding some related procedures; implementing a cultural competency, diversity, and inclusion plan; testing all emergency procedures at least annually with a documented analysis; and completing a written analysis of all critical incidents at least annually. Additional opportunities include enhancing the rights of veterans, enhancing policy and procedures by which veterans may formally complain to the organization, and ensuring that personnel are provided with documented education and training about early signs indicating possible dementia and aging-related decline. Veterans Place's leadership and staff members were very receptive to the consultation offered and seem likely to properly address these recommendations.

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

Veterans Place of Washington Boulevard 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 Veterans Place of Washington Boulevard was conducted by the following CARF surveyor(s):

- Monica L. Davis, MBA, Administrative
- James Murphy, MA, 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 Veterans Place of Washington Boulevard 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 Employment Services: Employment Supports
- Community Employment Services: Job Development
- Community Housing
- 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 Veterans Place of Washington Boulevard demonstrated the following strengths:

- Veterans Place has gathered a robust list of community partners, donors, and supporters to aid and promote its mission. From this pool, the organization has recruited an engaged and diverse board of directors that is committed to the organization's success. During the recent leadership transition, some board members stepped into more active operational roles, using the benefit of their knowledge and experience to bridge gaps until a new executive director could be found.
- Veterans Place strongly employs the use of data and analytics to guide its decision making. The executive director regularly reports service and key business performance indicators to the board so that it is well informed on service performance and business functions. The accessibility and risk management plans are comprehensive with clear goals and defined timelines.
- The new leadership staff members at Veterans Place are passionate about the organization and its mission despite a short collective tenure. These leaders have demonstrated both sensitivity and respect for the existing processes while forming their own visions for the organization's next steps. All the leaders and managers are creative, resolute thinkers who are open to feedback that can improve the lives of the veterans they serve.
- Veterans Place's physical location is friendly and lively with content veterans who are more than willing to chat about their homes and the services they receive. The staff members and volunteers are knowledgeable and welcoming, providing help and encouragement to the veterans and truly exemplifying the organization's ethos of "Helping Veterans Help Themselves."
- One of Veterans Place's long-term goals is to reach female veterans and create transitional housing for them and their children. The organization understands that this is an underserved population and that serving it will require creative changes, including take childcare needs into consideration. This goal demonstrates the organization's inclusive thinking while also strategically positioning it for positive future growth.
- Veterans Place has identified an opportunity to grow its unrestricted revenue through smaller dollar donations via social media. As such, it has hired a new development manager with extensive marketing experience to help raise the organization's image and online presence to expand its donor base. These generated funds could provide Veterans Place with some flexibility to cover costs its grants do not in order to benefit its veterans.
- The individual service and employment plans are written in the veterans' own words. This shows the organization's person-centered approach to meeting each veteran's needs. The plans are easy to understand, achievable, and updated on a regular basis to build upon any achieved momentum.
- Veterans Place utilizes a very comprehensive exit summary for veterans leaving its services. It lists out important information on what has been provided along with referrals to additional services. It can be a great tool for the veterans as they move forward in their endeavors.
- The Veterans Resource Center at Veterans Place is a friendly, welcoming space for homeless veterans in the community. The outreach has impacted the lives of many veterans by providing a safe environment for meals, laundry, showering, and computer use. The program provides transportation support and works with local agencies to house a food pantry. The veterans are appreciative of this resource found with Veterans Place.
- Veterans Place recently added AEDs to the safety equipment located in the transitional housing townhomes. In addition, the veterans have been trained on the use of Narcan®. This demonstrates that the health and safety of veterans are priorities within the organization. Veterans Place is also in the process of constructing another building to house veterans with significant accessibility barriers.
- The homeless veterans reintegration program's employment staff is very well connected within the community. These staff members have established great working relationships with employers, referral sources, and other community resources. They are known for their successful record finding long-term employment. Veterans

and other stakeholders acknowledge the tenacity of the manager and staff members and appreciate their approaches to finding solutions that benefit everyone involved. The staff is known for having "boots on the ground" and being actively involved in the entire process.

- The staff and management are very warm and engaging. The veterans and other stakeholders shared that they feel very connected to the programs and staff. One veteran shared that he was "rescued" by Veterans Place and its commitment to meeting his needs. Referral sources and employers value the relationships that have been built and want to do everything possible to ensure that they continue as a benefit to all.

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.5.a.(1)

1.A.5.a.(2)

1.A.5.a.(3)

1.A.5.b.(1)

1.A.5.b.(2)

1.A.5.b.(3)

1.A.5.b.(4)

1.A.5.b.(5)

1.A.5.b.(6)

1.A.5.b.(7)

1.A.5.b.(8)

1.A.5.b.(9)

1.A.5.c.

1.A.5.d.

1.A.5.e.

Although Veterans Place has developed a framework for a cultural competency plan and a procedure to populate the plan, it has not yet completed the plan or implemented it. Therefore, it is recommended that the organization implement a cultural competency, diversity, and inclusion plan that addresses veterans, personnel, and other stakeholders; is based on consideration of the diversity of its stakeholders in the areas of culture, age, gender, sexual orientation, spiritual beliefs, socioeconomic status, language, race, and other factors (as relevant); includes actions to be taken; is reviewed at least annually for relevance; and is updated as needed.

1.A.6.a.(10)(a)

1.A.6.a.(10)(b)

1.A.6.a.(10)(c)

1.A.6.a.(10)(d)

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

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

Although Veterans Place has revised its code of ethical conduct since its previous accreditation report, it still does not address all elements of the standards. Corporate responsibility efforts should include written ethical codes of conduct in the area of prohibition of waste, fraud, abuse, and other wrongdoing and written procedures to deal with allegations of violations of ethical codes, including timeframes that are adequate for prompt consideration and result in timely decisions. Veterans Place could create a separate training on waste, fraud, abuse, and other wrongdoing for new hires and ongoing annual trainings for all personnel. Also, the section on reporting in the employee handbook states that the organization will provide a response to a complaint; however, there are no defined timeframes for investigation of the complaint or notifying the complainant. It could revise its employee handbook and/or compliance policy to include these timeframes.

1.A.7.d.(2)

Although the organization receives federal funding and has implemented a corporate compliance program, it does not currently have procedures for allegations of fraud, waste, and abuse on which personnel could be trained. Once these procedures are implemented, the organization should further demonstrate corporate compliance through training of personnel on corporate compliance, including its procedures for allegations of fraud, waste, abuse, and other wrongdoing.

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

There are no recommendations in this area.

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 from persons served, personnel, and other stakeholders
- Integration of input into business practices and planning

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

Consultation

- Veterans Place gathers continuous input on its services, programs, and residences on a regular basis through groups held on Sundays and Wednesdays. Although it actively gathers this information and uses it to make changes to improve the lives of the veterans, the organization might consider more actively tracking the verbal feedback gathered at these meetings and matching it to the more formal surveys obtained from the VA report. This may help identify trends and other areas for improvement.

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.

Consultation

- The current procedure on responding to subpoenas, search warrants, investigations, and other legal actions first states that it is the organization's position that personnel "be helpful" to law enforcement, followed by the procedure to contact human resources and the executive director. The wording could be interpreted by personnel to mean they are to fully cooperate first and then contact the appropriate leadership. Veterans Place might consider rewording this procedure to clarify the desired action for personnel in these situations.

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
- Review/audit of financial statements
- Safeguarding funds of persons served, if applicable

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

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

- Healthy and safe environment
- Competency-based training on health and safety procedures and practices
- Emergency and evacuation procedures
- Access to first aid and emergency information
- Critical incidents
- Infections and communicable diseases
- Health and safety inspections

Recommendations

1.H.7.a.(1)

1.H.7.a.(2)

1.H.7.b.

1.H.7.c.(1)

1.H.7.c.(2)

1.H.7.c.(3)

1.H.7.c.(4)

1.H.7.c.(5)

1.H.7.d.

Although the organization has monthly fire drills, there is no evidence of the organization's other emergency procedures being tested. The fire drills also do not occur on each shift, and none of the fire drills have been analyzed for performance. An unannounced test of each emergency procedure (fires, bomb threats, natural disasters, utility failures, medical emergencies, and violent or other threatening situations) should be conducted at least annually on each shift at each location; include, as relevant to the emergency procedure, a complete actual or simulated physical evacuation drill; be analyzed for performance that addresses areas needing improvement, actions to address the improvements needed, implementation of the actions, necessary education and training of personnel, and whether the actions taken accomplished the intended results; and be evidenced in writing, including the analysis.

1.H.11.a.

1.H.11.b.(1)

1.H.11.b.(2)

1.H.11.b.(3)

1.H.11.b.(4)

1.H.11.b.(5)

1.H.11.b.(6)

1.H.11.b.(7)

1.H.11.b.(8)

1.H.11.b.(9)

1.H.11.b.(10)

Veterans Place has created a risk committee to address critical incidents; however, the committee is still new and has not yet completed an analysis of the organization's critical incidents. Therefore, it is recommended that a written analysis of all critical incidents be provided to or conducted by the leadership at least annually that

addresses causes, trends, areas needing improvement, actions to address the improvements needed, implementation of the actions, whether the actions taken accomplished the intended results, necessary education and training of personnel, prevention of recurrence, internal reporting requirements, and external reporting requirements.

Consultation

- Veterans Place might consider creating a simplified, to-the-point version of its emergency procedures. This could take the form of laminated, color-coded flip chart cards with relevant information for posting in a prominent place at each site for ready access in case of emergency.
- Veterans Place has easy-to-understand evacuation plans posted in its buildings; however, these are often not correctly oriented to the location where posted. The organization is encouraged to orient each posting so that visitors have a clear understanding of the exit routes in the event of an emergency.
- First aid kits are located in Veterans Place's buildings and vehicles. All the kits contain a variety of creams, ointments, and over-the-counter medications, such as ibuprofen and acetaminophen. Veterans Place might choose to remove all creams and over-the-counter medications as these have expiration dates to be tracked and require replacement upon expiration. In addition, the vehicles are parked outside the buildings in extreme heat and cold weather, which can compromise the efficacy of creams and ointments due to temperature fluctuations.
- Veterans Place maintains in its vehicles procedures for what to do in the event of an accident. The organization might consider expanding its emergency procedures to include vehicle breakdowns, inclement weather, and other emergencies.
- Veterans Place has a solid and consistent process for conducting comprehensive health and safety self-inspections. It is suggested that documentation include the full date (at least the month and year) on top of each sheet in case the pages ever get separated from the binder.

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 backgrounds/credentials/fitness for duty
- Workforce engagement and development
- Performance appraisals
- Succession planning

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

Consultation

- Veterans Place might consider analyzing the data gathered from the personnel exit interview form for any patterns or trends that could be used to better identify problem areas to be addressed.
- Veterans Place has a human resources procedure manual and an employee handbook. The organization is encouraged to update both documents to reflect operational and leadership changes that have occurred over the past three years. This could also include updating the message from the executive director and the holiday calendar.
- Veterans Place has a comprehensive list of required trainings for all personnel listed in its human resources procedures. The organization is encouraged to turn this list into a training checklist to more easily track completion without searching each individual personnel file. Keeping a checklist could also allow for easy audit of the training records and identify any personnel who might have missed a training or have a training coming due.

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, including input from stakeholders
- Technology and system plan implementation and periodic review
- Technology policies and procedures

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

Consultation

- Veterans Place is encouraged to revise its technology and system plan to include more specific details. Although the current plan appears to address all elements of the standards, additional detail could strengthen the technology plan's ties to the strategic plan, risk management plan, and accessibility plan.
- Although the organization has conducted simulated tests of its business continuity/disaster recovery plan, it is also encouraged to conduct a practical test, particularly for data backup. For example, the backup policy states that local backups are retained for 30 days. A practical test could involve attempting to restore a file at ten days, 20 days, and/or 29 days to ensure that the procedure actually works.

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

1.K.1.c.(1)

1.K.1.c.(2)

1.K.1.c.(3)

1.K.1.c.(4)

1.K.1.c.(5)

It is recommended that the organization implement policies promoting the rights of the veterans that include freedom from abuse, financial or other exploitation, retaliation, humiliation, and neglect.

1.K.3.a.(2)

It is recommended that the organization fully implement a policy and written procedure by which veterans served may formally complain to the organization to specify that the action will not result in retaliation or barriers to services.

Consultation

- Veterans Place has an easy-to-read and understandable version of the veterans' rights. It might consider providing these rights in alternate versions, such as in large type or other languages, to assist the veterans in better understanding how Veterans Place helps them exercise their rights.
- Veterans Place has language regarding anti-retaliation in the employee handbook. This wording could be used to update the grievance policy and written procedure to clarify that retaliation when filing a grievance is prohibited.

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.

Consultation

- Veterans Place has implemented an accessibility plan that includes timelines for 2024's identified barriers. The organization might consider adding a title date to the accessibility plan so that it is clear what timeframe it covers and that previous and subsequent plans can be tracked annually and analyzed for trends that may assist in strategic planning.

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

There are no recommendations in this area.

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

There are no recommendations in this area.

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

- Veterans Place utilizes a list of interest for those looking for placement in its transitional housing program. The organization might consider adding the terminology and the process to its policy on referrals so that it is clear to employees, veterans, and other stakeholders how any vacant beds will be filled. It could also be helpful to put this same process in place for those veterans accessing the homeless veterans' reintegration program for employment services.
- Veterans Place reviews many policies and procedures with the veterans on an annual basis. The current practice is to review and sign each policy. It might be helpful to provide each veteran with a printed copy of each of the policies when reviewed and have one acknowledgement page signed listing all the policies and procedures. This could cut down on time and resources and decrease the likelihood of missing a signature on required documents.

- Veterans Place utilizes several releases of information for a variety of uses. It is suggested that Veterans Place pare down the number of releases being signed by consolidating the process into one form with check boxes indicating the types of information the veterans will allow to be released to more than one entity or agency.
- Veterans Place does not restrict the veterans' rights. The organization might consider adding this to its veterans' rights information when reviewing with the veterans annually.
- Veterans Place has a policy about medications and their uses in the transitional housing program. The organization might consider adding clarifying language so that it is clear that staff members have no role in monitoring or managing medications.

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 affect 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.D. Employment Services Principle Standards

Description

An organization seeking CARF accreditation in the area of employment services provides individualized services and supports to achieve identified employment outcomes. The array of services and supports may include:

- Identification of employment opportunities and resources in the local job market.
- Development of viable work skills that match workforce needs within the geographic area.
- Development of realistic employment goals.
- Establishment of service plans to achieve employment outcomes.
- Identification of resources and supports to achieve and maintain employment.
- Coordination of and referral to employment-related services and supports.

The organization maintains its strategic positioning in the employment sector of the community by designing and continually improving its services based on input from the persons served and from employers in the local job market, and managing results of the organization's outcomes management system. The provision of quality employment services requires a continuous focus on the persons served and the personnel needs of employers in the organization's local job market.

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

- Individualized, appropriate accommodations.
- A flexible, interactive process that involves the person.
- Increased independence.
- Increased employment options.
- Timely services and reports.
- Persons served obtain and maintain employment consistent with their preferences, strengths, and needs.
- Person served obtains a job at minimum wage or higher and maintains appropriate benefits.
- Person served maintains the job.

Key Areas Addressed

- Goals of the persons served
- Community resources available
- Personnel needs of local employers
- Economic trends in the local employment sector

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

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

2.E.5.a.

When appropriate to services and the population served, it is recommended that the program ensure that personnel are provided with documented education and training about early signs indicating possible dementia and aging-related decline.

Section 3. Employment Services

Description

An organization seeking CARF accreditation in the area of employment 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 self-direction, self-determination, and self-reliance.
- Self-esteem.
- Community citizenship.
- Increased independence.
- Meaningful activities.
- Increased employment options.
- Employment obtained and maintained.
- Competitive employment.
- Employment at or above minimum wage.
- Economic self-sufficiency.
- Employment with benefits.
- Career advancement.

3.G. Community Employment Services (CES)

Description

Community employment services assist persons to obtain successful community employment opportunities that are responsive to their choices and preferences. Through a strengths-based approach, the program provides person-directed services/supports to individuals to choose, achieve, and maintain employment in integrated community employment settings.

Work is a fundamental part of adult life. Individually tailored job development, training, and support recognize each person's employability and potential contribution to the labor market. Persons are supported as needed through an individualized person-centered model of services to choose and obtain a successful employment opportunity consistent with their preferences, keep the employment, and find new employment if necessary or for purposes of career advancement.

Such services may be described as individualized competitive employment, individual placements, contracted temporary personnel services, competitive employment, supported employment, transitional employment, mobile work crews, contracted work groups in the community, community-based SourceAmerica® contracts, and other business-based work groups in community-integrated designs. In Canada, employment in the form of bona fide volunteer placements is possible.

Individuals may be paid by community employers or by the organization. Employment is in the community.

The following service categories are available under Community Employment Services:

- Job Development (CES:JD)
- Employment Supports (CES:ES)

If an organization provides only Job Development or Employment Supports, then it may be accredited for only that service. If it is providing both Job Development and Employment Supports, then it must seek accreditation for both.

Note: In making the determination of what an organization is actually providing in comparison to these service descriptions, these factors are considered: the mission of the services, the program descriptions, brochures and marketing image for these services, and the outcomes of the services.

Depending on the scope of the services provided, some examples of the quality outcomes desired by the different stakeholders of these services include:

- Persons obtain community employment.
- Persons obtain individualized competitive employment.
- Employment matches interests and desires of persons.
- Wages, benefits, and hours of employment achieved as desired.
- Average number of hours worked per week increases.
- Average number of hours worked per week meets the desires of the person served.
- Full-time employment with benefits.
- Transition-age youth move directly from their educational environment into community employment.
- Potential for upward mobility.
- Self-sufficiency.
- Integration.
- Responsive services.
- Safe working conditions.
- Cost-effective for placement achieved.
- Performance level achieved meets requirements of job or position.
- Increase in skills.
- Increase in productivity.
- Increase in hours worked.
- Increase in pay.
- Employment retention.
- Increase in natural supports from coworkers.
- Persons served treated with respect.
- Minimize length of time for supports.

- Type and amount of staff interaction meets needs.
- Employer satisfaction.
- Responsiveness to customers.

Job Development (CES:JD): Successful job development concurrently uses assessment information about the strengths and interests of the person seeking employment to target the types of jobs available from potential employers in the local labor market. Typical job development activities include reviewing local employment opportunities and developing potential employers/customers through direct and indirect promotional strategies. Job development may include facilitating a hiring agreement between an employer and a person seeking employment. Some persons seeking employment may want assistance at only a basic, informational level, such as support for a self-directed job search.

Employment Supports (CES:ES): Employment support services promote successful training of a person to a new job, job adjustment, retention, and advancement. These services are based on the individual employee with a focus on achieving long-term retention of the person in the job. The level of employment support services is individualized to each employee and the complexity of the job.

Often supports are intensive for the initial orientation and training of an employee with the intent of leading to natural supports and/or reduced external job coaching. However, some persons may not require any employment supports at the job site; others may require intensive initial training with a quick decrease in supports, while some will be most successful when long-term supports are provided.

Supports can include assisting the employee with understanding the job culture, industry practices, and work behaviors expected by the employer. It may also include helping the employer and coworkers to understand the support strategies and accommodations needed by the worker.

Supports are a critical element of the long-term effectiveness of community employment. Support services address issues such as assistance in training a person to complete new tasks, changes in work schedule or work promotion, a decrease in productivity of the person served, adjusting to new supervisors, and managing changes in nonwork environments or other critical life activities that may affect work performance. Routine follow-up with the employer and the employee is crucial to continued job success.

Key Areas Addressed

- Integrated employment choice
- Integrated employment obtainment
- Employment provided in regular business settings
- Integrated employment retention
- Provides career advancement resources

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

Consultation

- The employment program staff may benefit from customized employment training. This training provides tools to assist with specializing job development based on more person-centered needs. This could increase the success rate of job placements for veterans who have historically struggled in maintaining employment due to addiction or other circumstances.

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.H. Community Housing (CH)

Description

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/supports 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 twenty-four 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.

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

- Safe housing.
- Persons choosing where they live.
- Persons choosing with whom they will live.
- Persons having privacy in their homes.
- Persons increasing independent living skills.
- Persons having access to the benefits of community living.
- Persons having the opportunity to receive services in the most integrated setting.
- Persons' rights to privacy, dignity, respect, and freedom from coercion and restraint are ensured.
- Persons having the freedom to furnish and decorate their sleeping or living units as they choose.
- Persons having freedom and support to control their schedules and activities.
- Settings that are physically accessible to the individuals.

Key Areas Addressed

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

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.

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

Veterans Place of Washington Boulevard

945 Washington Boulevard
Pittsburgh, PA 15206

Community Employment Services: Employment Supports
Community Employment Services: Job Development
Community Housing
Services Coordination