

**CARF Accreditation Report
for
MRCI**

Three-Year Accreditation



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About CARF

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

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

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

For more information or to contact CARF, please visit www.carf.org/contact-us.

Organization

MRCI
1750 Energy Drive
Mankato, MN 56001

Organizational Leadership

Brian Benshoof, MS, Chief Executive Officer

Survey Number

143045

Survey Date(s)

December 1, 2021–December 3, 2021

Surveyor(s)

Jean M. Rommes, PhD, Administrative
John C. Purkey, MA, Program

Program(s)/Service(s) Surveyed

Community Employment Services: Employment Supports
Community Employment Services: Job Development
Community Integration
Employee Development Services
Employment Planning Services
Employment Skills Training Services

Previous Survey

July 23, 2018–July 25, 2018
Three-Year Accreditation

Accreditation Decision

Three-Year Accreditation
Expiration: June 30, 2024

Executive Summary

This report contains the findings of CARF's site survey of MRCI conducted December 1, 2021–December 3, 2021. This report includes the following information:

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

Accreditation Decision

On balance, MRCI demonstrated substantial conformance to the standards. MRCI has successfully changed service delivery from a facility-based approach to an approach that is truly person centered, individualized, and community-based. The board, leadership, management, staff at all levels, business partners, families/guardians, employers, and the community at large were included in this change. There is only one identified area for improvement noted, which is related to implementing written procedures for performance appraisal. During the survey, staff members invited consultation and information to help them. MRCI appears to have the tools, staff, and willingness to make improvements. The organization is also encouraged to review the consultation given and use what may be helpful in the delivery of services.

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

MRCI 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 MRCI was conducted by the following CARF surveyor(s):

- Jean M. Rommes, PhD, Administrative
- John C. Purkey, 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 MRCI 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 Integration
- Employee Development Services
- Employment Planning Services
- Employment Skills Training Services

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 MRCI demonstrated the following strengths:

- The board of directors appears to represent a good cross-section of people representing county government, parents and family members, and business and professional leaders. Board members are aware that their responsibility is to provide direction and support to the executive director while leaving the day-to-day operations to the executive director and staff. Board members attend meetings virtually and in person, as appropriate, and often represent the organization at events that are both external and internal to the organization. Some board members have volunteered their services during the COVID-19 pandemic. One board member worked with a choir made up of clients (which was a regular activity offered in the day program), and their participation in the organization's big fundraiser was one of the high points of the evening.
- The executive director is an experienced professional with over 30 years of service to MRCI. He is well known and respected throughout the state of Minnesota and in national professional circles. He has been able to develop a culture of leadership that listens and responds to needs in ways that are helpful and appropriate.
- The executive team is made up of two very experienced individuals with a variety of experiences that have proved to be invaluable. A group of direct service personnel provide the middle management expertise and support for the entire infrastructure of the organization. The major strength of this group is its innovation, imagination, and ability to listen and develop solutions that work both for the clients and staff.
- Moving to a community-based setting for all programming has changed the approach to safety. Many safety protocols have been reworked to recognize the different safety needs that exist when the clients and staff are spending time in the community. Training now focuses on how staff members can keep the clients safe, how they can work with community partners, and what to be aware of in various locations. The clients have also received training on what they can do in the event of an emergency if the staff member cannot respond.
- The training program for the staff is extensive. As clients are assigned to staff based on interest and need, the staff is trained in getting to know the clients and developing programs and experiences that will address the needs of each client. The new performance appraisal format that has been developed reinforces the person-centered philosophy that is at the heart of everything that MRCI does.
- MRCI has developed a new job description and performance appraisal format that is designed to give all staff members a chance to show how they can influence or inform five major domains, which include the client, customer, financial, process/innovation, and culture. During the performance appraisal, each staff member and supervisor are to describe how this position participates in, informs, or influences each of the domains through a description or a goal designed to add to the breadth and depth of that area within MRCI. Goals are tracked and evaluated. This is an excellent example of how MRCI has transformed a routine task into a contributor toward a new corporate culture.
- The Cultural Champions Training that is being conducted throughout the organization is something unique and commendable. Although a member of the management team is leading the effort, everyone in the organization participates once a month in a small group led by one of a team of facilitators. Some facilitators are direct service professionals while others are directors and managers. It is one of a number of activities that MRCI is using to enhance its person-centered culture.
- Staff members build strong working relationships with the clients, guardians, employers, families, and funders and are able to offer flexible programming to meet the needs of the clients.
- MRCI has been able to successfully place clients as a result of building strong relationships with employers. The employers trust that MRCI will be there to assist if an issue arises or the client wants to advance in their employment.
- MRCI collaborates with its funding sources, such as the counties, vocational rehabilitation, and schools to enhance programing and develop action plans. All funders interviewed spoke very highly of the organization.

- In its virtual day services, Embracing Aging Through Social Engagement (EASE) day services, and community-based day services, the clients are exposed to a wide variety of experiences that enhance the clients' lives.
- MRCI utilizes every opportunity to be positive. The culture at MRCI is strong, and the mission moments are powerful.
- MRCI is forward-thinking, as evidenced by the infrastructure put in place, such as electronic files, electronic referrals, multifactor identification, new websites (internal and external), new orientation programs, performance plans, and the ability to support remote workers.

MRCI also demonstrated exemplary conformance to the standards as set forth below. Recognition of exemplary conformance indicates a practice that produces outstanding business or clinical results and/or is innovative or creative and beneficial to be shared with the field.

- MRCI was able to use the opportunities that COVID-19 provided in a remarkable way. Having to stop services to over 1,300 clients and furlough over 300 staff members gave the organization an opportunity it never would have had otherwise. Part of its strategic plan was to cease in-facility services and make a transition to community-based services. This was expected to take several years and cause a lot of resistance in the clients, families, and staff. The change would also involve overhauling the way services would be planned and delivered and involve closing buildings throughout the southwest Minnesota area. These changes were expected to have a major impact on the financial status of the organization and require a huge change in staff behavior and culture as well as organizational behavior and culture. MRCI was able to successfully make a complete transition from a facility-based organization to community-based organization in the space of about a year. It was able to sell buildings, create a system of service delivery using small groups of clients with a staff person (no more than four), and reorganize the staff to accomplish this. It was done first on a small scale, and now well over half of the client base is receiving services in the community, including individually, in small groups, and virtually at home, with a significant reduction in the number of staff. The IT department recognizes that using the limited staff as efficiently as possible is critical, and it has already instituted technology that frees the staff to concentrate on programs and service delivery. A fleet of vehicles is available, and staff members have a specific vehicle assigned that they use to provide new experiences to clients that were not available before. Staff members have Chromebooks, phones, laptops, and desktops assigned to them for use in their homes, with access to all cloud- and server-based programs. Training and staff meetings are done using Microsoft Teams. In addition, the culture change in the organization has been phenomenal. The managers meet with direct service personnel regularly, discuss problems, and develop approaches that can be tried and adapted if they work. For example, staff members indicated that they could not afford family health insurance, so MRCI decided to use some of the money it was saving by not having to support and maintain the buildings to fund more of the health insurance costs for the staff. Really hearing staff concerns and developing solutions that actually work is central to the culture that is being created.
(1.A.3.a.(1), 1.A.3.a.(2), 1.A.3.b., 1.A.3.c., 1.A.3.d., 1.A.3.e., 1.A.3.f., 1.A.3.g., 1.A.3.h., 1.A.3.i.)

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

There are no recommendations in this area.

Consultation

- Although the process outlined in the ethics policy does indicate that any investigations are to be done in a "timely" manner, it is suggested that specific timeframes be given, such as five or ten working days, if possible. The organization could also consider streamlining the investigation procedure by having the investigation concentrate on a "substantiated" or "unsubstantiated" outcome. If substantiated, the decision could then be made to deal with the allegation through the disciplinary process, referral to law enforcement, or referral to federal agents. This could close the investigative part of the process and move it into a timeframe that the organization can control (discipline process) or completely out of its control (to law enforcement or federal authorities).

- In practice, prospective employees are checked against the federal exclusion list maintained by the Office of Inspector General in the Department of Human Services background study that is required for all employees. It is suggested that the corporate compliance plan make reference to this.
- MRCI is encouraged to submit the CEO's recommendation for corporate compliance officer to the board for approval annually. This practice could ensure that the board is aware of who the corporate compliance officer is and ensure that any changes are noted.

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.

Consultation

- Although the strategic accomplishments achieved over the past year are noted in a variety of documents, including the newsletter and board and team meeting minutes, there is a booklet published that is mailed to various stakeholders at the end of the year. It is suggested that this booklet be posted on the website so that it can be available to anyone interested.

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.

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

- There is extensive information given to staff in policy and procedure regarding subpoenas, search warrants, and other investigations. MRCI is encouraged to develop a short set of instructions that could be placed strategically around the organization so that the staff can have ready access to the information.
- There is extensive information regarding client records, including how they are secured, how confidentiality is maintained, and compliance demonstrated with laws and state code. There is some information regarding financial records and personnel records, but there is little information regarding the security or confidentiality of those records and how the organization is compliant with laws and regulations. No other confidential administrative records are identified. It is suggested that MRCI identify all confidential administrative records and add more information regarding the security and confidentiality of those records to the existing policy. This could include hard copy records as well as electronic records and provide general rules and specific guidelines to ensure that the records are kept safe and secure and that confidentiality is maintained. The organization could also address how individuals might access those records and under what circumstances.
- Retention of information maintained in the client records is discussed in the client records procedures. It is suggested that these guidelines be added to the Records Retention grid. It is further suggested that the source of the time limitation be cited in the Records Retention grid for all records.

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.

Consultation

- Although there are fiscal control policies regarding internal controls, it is suggested that these be reviewed and that any changes to the internal control mechanisms be detailed in the policies. The policies could have more detail and be more complete as a result.

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

There are no recommendations in this area.

Consultation

- Temporary shelter for the Mankato facility is a large bus where the clients could shelter until they can either reenter the building or leave for home. It is suggested that a specific staff member be assigned to bring the keys to ensure that the vehicle can be used for shelter.
- It was noted that not all of the evacuation maps posted on the walls were oriented properly. MRCI is encouraged to review the placement of the maps to ensure that each is oriented properly, as this could make it easier to read for guests or persons unfamiliar with the building.
- There are first aid kits designed for emergencies that are hanging on the walls in various places throughout the buildings, which are checked and restocked every month. The kits used in the program areas could be added to the monthly checks that are done to ensure that the supplies are available and that nothing is expired.

- MRCI’s property liability insurance representative has conducted the external health and safety inspections for the last several years. Both locations are included on one form with no indication that both locations were inspected. No issues have been found, and no recommendations have been made. The organization is aware that these inspections have been less rigorous, and it has noted a significant difference between this performance and the information received from the previous insurance representative. The MRCI leadership is encouraged to discuss this issue with the insurance carrier in hopes that these inspections can be conducted more thoroughly in the future.

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

1.I.8.a.

1.I.8.f.

1.I.8.g.

1.I.8.h.

There are several presentations for various staff groups addressing performance appraisal, but there are no written procedures that describe how the system is to be used and what the outcomes are intended to be. MRCI is urged to implement complete written procedures for performance appraisal that address the identified workforce, measurable goals, sources of input, and opportunities for development. The written procedures could address all steps and what each step is intended to contribute to the development of the organization. The description could also include how each aspect of the appraisal process contributes to the overall development of each staff member and to the development of the organization as a whole. It could also include how individual goals are expected to be developed and tracked in one of five different areas. The description could also demonstrate that goals are expected to be measurable and expected to add to the staff member’s skill set, experience, or competencies or to contribute to the organization in some way that helps the organization reach its goals. These expectations could be clear in the description and demonstrate how the appraisal system both contributes to and benefits from the corporate culture that MRCI is establishing.

Consultation

- Although full- and part-time employees and exempt and non-exempt employees are identified in the employee handbook, there are also on-call staff members who are not identified. There is also occasionally an intern from a local college or university. It is suggested that MRCI review all of the potential types of workers and include all of them when identifying the composition of the workforce.

- The job descriptions have been reviewed, revised, and placed into a new format that is consistent throughout the organization. The job descriptions identify the types of tasks the individual will be performing along with the percentage of time that the individual is expected to be doing each type of activity (such as driving a vehicle, walking, sitting using a computer, etc.). This is particularly helpful when evaluating requests for reasonable accommodations, and MRCI is encouraged to continue to refine this aspect of the job descriptions.
- It is suggested that MRCI indicate how the employment decision could be influenced if credentials are not verified as expected.

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
- Written procedures for the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in service delivery, if applicable
- ICT instruction and training, if applicable
- Provision of information related to ICT, if applicable
- Maintenance of ICT equipment, if applicable
- Emergency procedures that address unique aspects of service delivery via ICT, if applicable

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

Consultation

- Assistive technology is generally addressed in the program areas, and it is suggested that it be referenced in policy as well. Assistive technology that might be helpful for the staff falls under reasonable accommodations and could also be referenced in the policy.
- MRCI uses technology in many ways to support the business processes of the organization and to support the delivery of personalized services in a variety of formats. Although some of this is captured in the plan, MRCI is encouraged to add examples and supporting statements to the technology plan to demonstrate this further.
- It was noted that many of the policies and procedures regarding technology issues (such as security, access management, audit capabilities, data export and transfer capabilities, decommissioning of hardware and destruction of data, and protection from malicious activity) focused almost exclusively on HIPAA requirements regarding protected data. MRCI is encouraged to review these policies and consider how these issues are important to all aspects of the organization's data management system. While protecting data regarding health is certainly important, protecting all of MRCI's data is also important. It is suggested that these policies be revised to include all data maintained by the organization, not just the health-related data.

- MRCI’s data is maintained in at least two separate cloud storage units that are managed by a contractor. It is set up in such a way that, as long as the organization has access to a working computer, the system can be restored. This system is evaluated daily and reported. Data is sometimes lost for a variety of reasons and restored, which happens several times in a given year and is considered a test of the system. It is suggested that, when this happens, a report be compiled according to the CARF standards and delivered to leadership in writing.
- Although the organization does get the consent of the client to receive virtual services at the beginning of service delivery and does not do audio or video recording or photographing without consent, MRCI is encouraged to add this information to the instructions regarding virtual programming that are given to each client at the beginning of each month of services.

1.K. Rights of Persons Served

Description

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

Key Areas Addressed

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

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

Consultation

- Some, but not all, of the clients served by MRCI are fully capable of reading their rights as printed in the client handbook. MRCI is encouraged to consider developing pictorial rights and exploring the possibility of developing videos that could demonstrate what violations of rights might look like and what respecting rights might look like. This could be developed as a group activity in the community and could involve college and university filming studios and staff. It could also be used to demonstrate what accessibility looks like and raise awareness. These videos could then be used as training for the clients and staff or as presentations designed to raise community awareness.
- The grievance procedure implies that a grievance becomes formal when it is put in writing. It is suggested that MRCI state this directly in its policies and procedures. It could also consider using the term *complaint procedure* rather than *grievance procedure*, as the former appears to be more understandable to most people.

1.L. Accessibility

Description

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

Key Areas Addressed

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

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

1.M. Performance Measurement and Management

Description

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

The foundation for successful performance measurement and management includes:

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

Key Areas Addressed

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

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

Consultation

- MRCI's data collection system is well defined and organized. Each program seeking accreditation has a set of data points, and business practice data are being collected by each department on a regular basis. The way that data have been used to help make business decisions was well established prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the pandemic actually provided an opportunity to achieve these goals much quicker than anticipated. Now that services have been moved from in the facility to the community, the system is being completely overhauled to reflect this focus. This is still a work in progress, but it is clear that the MRCI staff is aware of the problems that it faces in determining issues, including how to ensure data validity and reliability when many different staff members are required to make decisions about whether or not activities meet specific requirements in the data collection, among other issues. The organization is encouraged to continue working on data validity and reliability and implement methods to ensure consistency in meeting these data criteria.

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

- It is suggested that job developers visit with probation and parole staff to obtain the list of employers who offer employment to job seekers with a felony conviction.

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

Description

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

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

Key Areas Addressed

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

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

2.C. Medication Monitoring and Management

Key Areas Addressed

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

Recommendations

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

There are no recommendations in this area.

Consultation

- It is suggested that the organization explore the feasibility of establishing a Best Buddies® program to encourage the development of positive relationships between the persons served and students from a local university. A Best Buddies program could facilitate the integration of the persons served into mainstream society and might enhance the lives of both the persons served and the student volunteers.

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.A. Employment Planning Services (EPS)

Description

Employment planning services are designed to assist a person seeking employment to learn about employment opportunities within the community and to make informed decisions. Employment planning services are individualized to assist a person to choose employment outcomes and/or career development opportunities based on the person’s preferences, strengths, abilities, and needs. Services begin from a presumption of employability for all persons and seek to provide meaningful information related to planning effective programs for persons with intervention strategies needed to achieve the goal of employment.

Employment planning uses some type of employment exploration model. This may involve one or more of the following:

- Situational assessments.
- Paid work trials.
- Job tryouts (may be individual, crew, enclave, cluster, etc.).
- Job shadowing.
- Community-based assessments.
- Simulated job sites.
- Staffing agencies/temporary employment agencies.
- Volunteer opportunities.
- Transitional employment.

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

- Work interests are explored and identified.
- Recommendations for employment options are appropriate.
- Employment planning reports lead to job goals.
- Transferable work skills and employment barriers are identified.
- Benefits planning is included.
- Services are timely in their delivery.
- Services are cost-effective.
- Individuals served understand recommendations that are made.
- Individuals served identify desired employment outcomes.

Key Areas Addressed

- Employment opportunities within the community
- Informed decision making by participants
- Referrals to services to implement employment plan

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

3.D. Employee Development Services (EDS)

Description

Employee development services are individualized services/supports that assist persons seeking employment to develop or reestablish skills, attitudes, personal characteristics, interpersonal skills, work behaviors, functional capacities, etc., to achieve positive employment outcomes.

Such services/supports are time limited and can be provided directly to persons seeking employment or indirectly through corporate employer/employee support programs. These services/supports can be provided at community job sites, within formal and organized training and educational settings, through coaching, by tutorial services, or within the organization. These services may be offered in a free-standing unit or as a functional piece of other services.

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

- Person served obtains employment.
- Person served moves to a training program or better employment.
- Person served retains employment.
- Person served obtains improved benefits.
- Increased wages.
- Increased skills.
- Increased work hours.
- Movement to individualized competitive employment.
- Employment in an integrated environment.
- Job advancement potential increases.
- Job-seeking skills are developed.
- Career growth and development.
- Level of support needed is reduced.
- Exposure to and availability of a variety of jobs.
- Program is kept at capacity.
- Services are cost-effective for the results achieved.
- Responsiveness (days from referral to starting services).

Key Areas Addressed

- Skills development/reestablishment
- Attitude development/reestablishment
- Work behaviors development/reestablishment
- Employment outcomes

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

3.E. Employment Skills Training Services (EST)

Description

Employment skills training services are organized formal training services that assist a person seeking employment to acquire the skills necessary for specific jobs or families of jobs. Such services can be provided at job sites in the form of apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and/or volunteer situations; within formal and organized training and educational settings (such as community colleges and trade and technical schools); or within the organization.

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

- Persons show improvement in skill level.
- Specific marketable skills are developed.
- Persons served achieve employment in the area of training.
- Persons secure employment with benefits.
- Persons retain employment.
- Training is completed in a timely manner.
- Training is cost-effective for the results produced.

Key Areas Addressed

- Formal training services
- Skills, attitude, and work behaviors development/reestablishment

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

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 (please refer to the program descriptions and applicable standards):

- 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. If any clarification is needed, please contact your CARF resource specialist. There is no charge for consultation.

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

- It is suggested that the organization learn about SourceAmerica, an AbilityOne® authorized enterprise. This is a network of nonprofits creating jobs for people with disabilities, and it links customers who need products and services to nonprofits that employ a dedicated workforce of individuals with disabilities to provide them.

Section 4. Community Services

Description

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

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

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

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

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

- Increased independence.
- Meaningful activities.
- Increased employment options.

4.G. Community Integration (COI)

Description

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

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

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

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

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

Key Areas Addressed

- Opportunities for community participation

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

Consultation

- It is suggested that MRCI look into Charting the LifeCourse. The available tools may be helpful in initiating conversations with team members regarding the balance between safety and independent growth.

Program(s)/Service(s) by Location

MRCI

1750 Energy Drive
Mankato, MN 56001

Community Employment Services: Employment Supports
Community Employment Services: Job Development
Community Integration
Employee Development Services
Employment Planning Services
Employment Skills Training Services

MRCI - New Ulm

2100 North Broadway
New Ulm, MN 56073

Community Employment Services: Employment Supports
Community Employment Services: Job Development
Community Integration
Employee Development Services
Employment Planning Services