

## What else does CARF offer?

### Publications, blog, and newsletters

CARF publishes annual standards manuals and survey preparation workbooks that correspond to areas of accreditation. The standards manuals are updated annually to ensure that they reflect current, practical, and relevant standards for quality. Go to the Online Store at [www.carf.org/catalog](http://www.carf.org/catalog).

The *CARF Connection Blog* has articles on health and human services topics and trends, tips and resources for improving services, and general news. Read the blog at [www.carf.org/blog](http://www.carf.org/blog).

CARF also offers free online newsletters, CARF also offers free online newsletters, such as the *Promising Practices* series. Read and subscribe at [www.carf.org/newsletters](http://www.carf.org/newsletters).

### Education

CARF offers live learning and on-demand educational opportunities. Sessions on preparing for or maintaining accreditation are excellent ways for your organization to receive information about the application of the standards, the survey process, and CARF's policies and procedures. Area and topic-focused webinars recordings can be purchased to view on your schedule. For details and to see a training calendar, go to [www.carf.org/what-we-offer](http://www.carf.org/what-we-offer).

### Data and feedback information

uSPEQ® data and information services were developed by CARF for providers to gather feedback from persons served on their experiences with a program, service, or provider and from employees on the organizational climate.

Providers use the confidential reported information to improve the quality of programs and services. The information is independent from the accreditation process, although having it during the process can help you meet standards for data collection, analysis, and use for performance improvement.

Visit [www.uspeq.org](http://www.uspeq.org) for more information.

### Support and assistance

A designated resource specialist is available to provide guidance and technical assistance during the entire accreditation process. Connect with us at [www.carf.org/contact-us](http://www.carf.org/contact-us).

### Value of CARF accreditation:

- **Business strategy**
- **Continuous quality improvement**
- **Service excellence**
- **Competitive differentiation**
- **Risk management**
- **Accountability and transparency**

### Have confidence in your choice; become an accredited provider

The CARF family of organizations currently includes more than 64,000 accredited programs and services at over 30,000 locations on five continents.

### Who is accredited?

Use our provider search tool to see what other organizations have accredited programs and services. Go to [www.carf.org/find-provider](http://www.carf.org/find-provider) to explore.

More than 13.7 million persons are served annually by organizations with CARF-accredited programs/services. Go to [www.carf.org](http://www.carf.org) to learn more about CARF accreditation. Become part of the family today!

# Answering Your Questions About

## carf INTERNATIONAL



## What is CARF?

CARF International was established in 1966 and is an independent, nonprofit accreditor of health and human services. Through accreditation, CARF assists service providers to improve the quality of their services and impact outcomes for persons served.

## What is accreditation and why does it matter?

Accreditation is an impartial and independent review with a more global scope than what licensing or certification can provide. Accreditation is evidence that your organization strives to improve efficiency, fiscal health, and service delivery—creating a foundation for continuous quality improvement and consumer satisfaction.

CARF accreditation is a continuous quality improvement process where peers apply internationally-recognized standards to an organization's programs/services through a consultative survey. Accreditation addresses stakeholder needs for accountability in efficiency, fiscal health, outcomes of services, and satisfaction with services and the organization.

## What distinguishes CARF?

CARF accreditation is a partnership between CARF and the service provider. The peer-review survey process is consultative rather than prescriptive and is a valuable resource to address many of the challenges facing providers. In addition to interviewing staff members, persons served, and their families, the surveyors observe organizational practices, review appropriate documentation, answer questions, and suggest ways to improve operations and service delivery. In addition to standards for programming and service delivery, CARF has robust standards for business practices. Known as ASPIRE to Excellence®, these standards support organizations' efforts to build their foundation and sustain and grow their business.

Fees are not based on organizational revenue. CARF's fee structure is based on the number of surveyors and days needed to complete the survey plus applicable travel expenses and taxes.

## Who are the surveyors?

Surveyors are peer professionals in the field who are often employed by organizations that have CARF-accredited programs or services. We recruit and train the most highly qualified professionals to conduct surveys. As a result, surveyors who conduct your organization's survey are among the most knowledgeable and respected experts in the field of health and human services.

## What are the areas of accreditation?

CARF annually accredits thousands of programs/services across the continuum of care, serving children to seniors.

Given the diverse needs of the various populations, programs/services that CARF accredits are organized into standards manuals for the areas of accreditation.

Program areas accredited by CARF are:

- Aging Services
- Behavioral Health
- Child and Youth Services
- Employment and Community Services
- Medical Rehabilitation
- Opioid Treatment Program
- Vision Rehabilitation Services

To view all programs available for accreditation, visit [www.carf.org/Programs](http://www.carf.org/Programs).

Providers can seek accreditation using the program standards that match their multi-faceted services.

## How are the standards developed?

The CARF standards have evolved and been refined for more than 57 years. CARF convenes its International Advisory Council, as well as specialty groups to systematically review and revise the standards and develop standards for new accreditation opportunities. These committees and groups, composed of professionals with expertise and experience as well as persons served, make recommendations to CARF about the standards. This input is used to develop proposed new and revised standards, which are then made available for review by the public, persons served, providers, surveyors, national professional groups, advocacy groups, third-party purchasers, and other stakeholders.

## What are the elements of accreditation?

The CARF accreditation process starts with an organization's commitment to continuous improvement and culminates with external review and recognition that the business and service practices meet international standards of quality—with all the steps in between focused on optimal outcomes for the persons served and sustained organizational success.

Once committed to accreditation, the organization should conduct a thorough self-evaluation that applies the relevant accreditation standards against actual program or service practices before requesting a survey.

### Survey

The survey process is rooted in peer review and networking. The survey team of professional peers provides an impartial, external review of conformance to the accreditation standards. Surveyors can provide confirmation of what you are doing well and offer consultation for ongoing quality improvement.

Organizations choose a two-month timeframe in which they would like to have the survey and are informed of the scheduled dates. No surprise visits.

### Accreditation report

After the survey, CARF issues a report highlighting strengths and areas for improvement based on the organization's level of conformance to the standards. A letter informing the organization of the accreditation decision accompanies the report.

### Improvement plan

Equipped with the accreditation report information, the organization prepares a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) to address the areas for improvement. CARF reviews the plan for completeness and is available to assist in developing the plan.

### Annual reporting

To maintain accreditation, an organization will review new and revised standards each year and update policies and practices as needed to ensure ongoing conformance to the standards. Leadership is required to send a signed commitment, called an Annual Conformance to Quality Report, stating that it is using the current CARF standards to guide the organization. Maintaining accreditation is a commitment to continuous quality improvement.

A full list of the steps to accreditation is available at [www.carf.org/StepsToAccreditation](http://www.carf.org/StepsToAccreditation).