

Preparing for CARF Accreditation

Accreditation Principles (inherent in standards)

- Promoting basic human rights
- Involvement of the person served, e.g., in planning services
- Services designed to enhance self-sufficiency and quality of life
- Individualized, goal-oriented team approach leading to desired outcomes

Accreditation Conditions

- For a minimum of six months before the site survey, programs use and implement standards, and provide the services seeking accreditation.
- Organizations provide records and reports requested by CARF.
- A quality improvement plan is submitted within 90 days following notice of accreditation. The notice of accreditation follows approximately four to six weeks after the site survey.
- Organizations with a three-year accreditation submit an annual report to CARF demonstrating their ongoing conformance to standards.

CARF Divisions (relevant to BC)

- Behavioural Health: Mental Health programs, e.g., Assertive Community Treatment, Case Management, Community Housing, Employee Assistance; Prevention; and other programs that offer counselling/therapy services
- Employment and Community Services: Supported living programs, e.g., Case Management/Services Coordination, Community Living Services; Foster Family services; Respite services; Employment programs
- Child and Youth Standards (CYS): CYS are used by agencies serving children, youth, and their families exclusively. Child and Youth programs span the continuum from early childhood development through to safety and permanence and enhancement for community living.
- Medical Rehabilitation: Outpatient Medical Rehabilitation programs; Home- and Community-Based Rehabilitation programs; Pediatric Family-Centered Rehabilitation
- **Note:** CARF's "Assisted Living" division covers seniors' apartment complexes with support services; this division does not cover CLBC assisted living services.

The Accreditation Process

1. Determine the CARF division your programs fall under by visiting the [CARF web site](#) and consulting with CARF.
2. Contact [MCFD's Accreditation Analyst](#), Accreditation Project, for CARF manuals via the ministry's password-protected website.
3. Preparation for a CARF site survey takes approximately 12 to 18 months.

4. Arrange for a [Mock Survey](#); Contact [MCFD's Accreditation Analyst](#) to start the process of requesting a mock survey.
5. Submit Application: 4 - 6 months prior to preferred survey date.
6. Site Survey: on-site visit by peer surveyors who examine the agency's conformance to the standards.
7. Survey Report and Outcome: 4-6 weeks after survey.
8. Quality Improvement Plan: due 90 days after receipt of survey report.

Survey Preparation Suggestions

- Allow adequate time and resources.
- Determine timetable for survey preparation.
- 12 - 18 months average (standards must be in use for a minimum of six months prior to the survey).
- Obtain [CARF Connection](#) newsletters from the Internet for lots of helpful advice from surveyors.
- The CARF Yahoo group website is <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/carfbc>. Visit the website and click on the "Join this Group" section in the upper right hand side of the page. Follow the steps asked and be ready with a password for future access.
 - When you send e-mail to carfbc@yahogroups.com, it will be sent to everyone who has joined the e-mail group and hopefully there will be a helpful soul out there who will assist you with your concerns.
 - Each member must join the group upon their first visit. They will be requested to provide a password thereafter to access the e-mail group. This is not a public forum so it will not be listed on the yahoo site.

TASKS (SEE WORKPLAN BELOW)	TIPS
<p>AT LEAST TWELVE MONTHS PRIOR TO SURVEY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify programs and division(s) in which to seek accreditation • Obtain manuals from the ministry (contact MCFD's Accreditation Analyst) Appoint CARF contact person • Establish CARF committee • Visit/contact other agencies with similar programs who are working on accreditation, to share preparation and standard conformance measures • Call CARF for any standards interpretation or other questions: unlimited phone technical assistance 	<p>CARF COMMITTEE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one designated "detail" person to coordinate • Use the strengths/interests of staff to implement new systems, policies, and procedures, e.g., Health and Safety, outcomes • Include ALL staff and Board members; everyone needs to do something <p>COMMUNICATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve your Board, other stakeholders, and MCFD/CLBC partners right from the beginning • Orient all staff that this is about improving service quality, not passing the survey: time spent preparing for accreditation <i>is</i> direct service • Communicate: newsletters, internal and external; e-groups; regular meetings <p>REMEMBER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the time to do the process well and the outcome will take care of itself • Document, document, document: you will find that your organization is already <i>in practice</i> meeting many of the standards; what may be missing is the documentation of these informal practices • Be prepared to demonstrate conformance

SIX TO TWELVE MONTHS PRIOR TO SURVEY

- Implement new systems, policies, procedures, and establish your review of systems
- Identify and focus on the areas that will take the most time to meet conformance
- Gather information and samples of conformance
- ORGANIZE

STRATEGIES

- Work backwards from target survey date
- Identify quarterly/annual tasks, e.g., make a calendar
- Request mentoring assistance, practicum/co-op students, extra help
- Do the organizational standards first
- Don't renovate or take on large new projects
- Attend CARF training, if available

MENTORING

- Anytime during the preparation process and definitely before submitting an application: **CONTACT A MENTOR** (email [MCFD's Accreditation Analyst](#))

REMEMBER

- Accreditation will always be a work in progress
- Accreditation is a lifestyle change, not a one-time test
- You do not need to have complicated or sophisticated data analysis systems: **KEEP IT SIMPLE** when developing your information management system; you will be fine-tuning it for years to come; you can conform to the standards with very basic processes

FIVE TO SIX MONTHS PRIOR TO SURVEY

- Arrange for a mock survey with a mentor and include all staff
- After a successful mock survey, request the ministry's authorization from an MCF [Accreditation Analyst](#) to include with your application to CARF
- Complete on-line application through CARF's Customer Connect site (should be at least 4 months prior to desired survey dates)
- Remember: if your survey is scheduled and then you cancel, it costs the equivalent of one surveyor day

REMEMBER

- Maintain a balance between the detail and the big picture

THE "LOOP OF IMPROVEMENT"

- Any information you gather (e.g., anecdotal, statistical, published reports) at whatever level (e.g., program, organizational, committee) should be analyzed and fed into an existing framework (e.g., performance improvement plan, outcomes management system, quarterly review of services).
- To complete the "loop": document what decisions were made from the analysis (e.g., changes to practice, changes to data-gathering methods, accomplishment of goals); document to whom and how this information was reported (e.g., to staff, board, stakeholders), and; finally, document how this information will be utilized to continue to improve the quality of service, improve the information management system, and be incorporated into the annual performance improvement plan.

<p>THREE TO FOUR MONTHS PRIOR TO SURVEY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review all documents and think from a surveyor perspective in all activities • Create an action plan from results of internal review • Educate staff and assign responsibility for corrective action or last minute details 	<p>THE SURVEYOR'S APPROACH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A consultant, <u>not</u> an inspector • Looks for strengths and abilities • Organizations are to take the initiative with the surveyors to demonstrate conformance • Sticks to the standards • 50% interviews and observation and 50% documentation
<p>ONE MONTH PRIOR TO SURVEY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will receive written notice from CARF at least 30 days prior to survey • Two to three weeks prior you will receive a call from the survey team coordinator 	<p>SURVEY PREPARATION GUIDE [SPG]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After you have completed the "master" SPG, make a copy for each surveyor and include this in the package of materials the surveyors receive when they arrive at their hotel
<p>ONE WEEK PRIOR TO SURVEY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep staff informed • Recognize staff and their efforts • Prepare room with documents for surveyors • ORGANIZE • Prepare "rough" agenda • Arrange for interview of persons served • Invite all staff, Board, ministry representative(s), clients, and other stakeholders to the Orientation and Exit conferences • Schedule post-survey celebration/party 	<p>FOR THE SURVEYORS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written materials should be clear, neat, logical, and organized • Be prepared to walk through a client file • Have a designated point person available throughout the survey • Provide a private room for the surveyors to work in

THE SITE SURVEY	FOR THE SURVEYORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have resource materials available at hotel when surveyors arrive • Orientation Conference • Documents and Interviews • Pre-exit and Exit Conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although it is not necessary, you can include a welcoming letter with the materials left at the hotel for the surveyors. A list of good local restaurants is always appreciated.

WORKPLAN FOR CARF ACCREDITATION PREPARATION

This workplan is provided as an optional tool for you to use as you like. You may find it helpful to fill in the columns and track the completion of time-sensitive tasks as you prepare for your accreditation survey. Please feel free to add or delete rows and columns, as required.

AT LEAST TWELVE MONTHS PRIOR TO SURVEY:

Steps	Participants/Who's responsible? (e.g., managers, board, E.D., staff)	Process (e.g., meetings, notes, newsletter)	Timeframe for Task Completion
Appoint CARF contact person			
Establish CARF committee			
Determine programs to be accredited and appropriate CARF division(s)			
Obtain standards manual and other publications from MCFD			

SIX TO TWELVE MONTHS PRIOR TO SURVEY:

Steps	Participants/Who's responsible?	Process (e.g., meetings, notes, newsletter)	Timeframe for Task Completion
Identify the areas that will take the most time to meet conformance			
Gather samples of conformance			
Implement new systems, policies, procedures, and establish review of systems			

FIVE TO SIX MONTHS PRIOR TO SURVEY:

Steps	Participants/Who's responsible?	Process (e.g., meetings, notes, newsletter)	Timeframe for Task Completion
Arrange for a "mock" survey (email MCFD's Accreditation Analyst)			
Complete on-line application through CARF's Customer Connect site (should be at least 4 months prior to desired survey dates but not more than six)			

THREE TO FOUR MONTHS PRIOR TO SURVEY:

Steps	Participants/Who's responsible?	Process (e.g., meetings, notes, newsletter)	Timeframe for Task Completion
Create/update action plan (using results of mock survey)			
Be sure that all staff have a role in preparation			
Prepare tool (binder, files, chart) for surveyors to locate conformance to all standards			

ONE MONTH PRIOR TO SURVEY:

Steps	Participants/Who's responsible?	Process (e.g., meetings, notes, newsletter)	Timeframe for Task Completion
CARF survey team leader will phone to set preliminary agenda			
Decide who to invite to Orientation and Exit conferences			
Arrange interviews of consumers, funders, and staff, as agreed to with CARF survey team leader			