

**CARF Accreditation Report
for
Life Unlimited, Inc.
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

Life Unlimited, Inc.
320 Armour Road, Suite 101
North Kansas City, MO 64116

Organizational Leadership

Brian Watson, Chief Financial Officer
Julie Edlund, CEO

Survey Number

162758

Survey Date(s)

November 16, 2022–November 18, 2022

Surveyor(s)

Donna Daley, MBA, MS, HCA, Administrative
Jeff W. Gilbank, Program
Timothy W. Landis, MSA, Program

Program(s)/Service(s) Surveyed

Behavioral Consultation Services
Community Employment Services: Employment Supports
Community Employment Services: Job Development
Community Housing
Community Integration
Employment Planning Services
Supported Living

Previous Survey

September 23, 2019–September 25, 2019
Three-Year Accreditation

Accreditation Decision**Three-Year Accreditation**

Expiration: November 30, 2025

Executive Summary

This report contains the findings of CARF's site survey of Life Unlimited, Inc. conducted November 16, 2022–November 18, 2022. 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, Life Unlimited, Inc. demonstrated substantial conformance to the standards. Life Unlimited has been diligent in implementing CARF standards in its policies, practices, procedures, and processes. The leadership is dedicated to ensuring the quality of its operations through a focused hands-on approach. The organization also demonstrates a priority of enhancing accessibility to its services. The leadership and staff demonstrate a commitment to improving the individuals' lives through quality, person-centered services. Although Life Unlimited had no recommendations, it is already following up on plans to optimize the use of technology, advance communications, and enhance the individuals' lives. The organization provides programs and services that are clearly beneficial to the individuals served.

Life Unlimited, Inc. appears likely to maintain and/or improve its current method of operation and demonstrates a commitment to ongoing quality improvement.

Life Unlimited, Inc. 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 Life Unlimited, Inc. was conducted by the following CARF surveyor(s):

- Donna Daley, MBA, MS, HCA, Administrative
- Jeff W. Gilbank, Program
- Timothy W. Landis, MSA, 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 Life Unlimited, Inc. 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):

- Behavioral Consultation Services
- Community Employment Services: Employment Supports
- Community Employment Services: Job Development
- Community Housing
- Community Integration
- Employment Planning Services
- Supported Living

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 Life Unlimited, Inc. demonstrated the following strengths:

- Leadership is a mix of extremely skilled and experienced professionals who choose to provide their best efforts to make the organization successful. The CEO recruited this amazing team that is transparent, collaborative, and innovative to provide cutting-edge services so individuals can live, work, and play in the communities of their choice. The philosophy of inclusion and equity is clearly evident in the table of the organization that has the individuals served on the top and executive leadership and board of directors on the bottom. Every effort by leadership and team members is focused on making the lives of the individuals served richer and full of choice.
- The board of directors are talented and rich with varying expertise. Many come from the other organizations that combined to form Life Unlimited. Interestingly, they feel the mergers were "painless," causing no disruption to the persons served or team members, and that the culture was a great fit for the merged organization. Board members stated that they were especially proud of how the organization handled the COVID-19 crises with quick decisiveness to maintain a healthy and safe environment for the persons served and team members. The leadership team is very forward thinking in many ways like leveraging technology and meeting the financial challenges of COVID-19.
- Strategic planning is done differently at Life Unlimited, with each program and each resource department creating its own plan with a team mission statement, ongoing priorities, accomplishments, opportunities, challenges, strengths, and goals (short and long term), as well as a five- and ten-year vision. These plans are then aligned in a matrix, priorities are developed, and all of this is shared with the board and team members. Leadership, board members, and management participate in a three-day activity that produces strong planning for the organization's future that never loses sight of enriching the lives of persons served.
- The new offices that Life Unlimited just moved into in the last four months are a renovated bank that includes three large vaults, three floors of shared offices, administrative office training rooms, conference rooms, and a rooftop patio for relaxation and special events. The offices combined three other locations, centralizing the organization in North Kansas City with state-of-the-art technology, attractive furnishings, open workspaces, standing desks, and conference rooms that can be booked through Microsoft® Office. A large breakroom has a well-equipped kitchen that is often used in the evening by the recreation team and individuals served.
- Stakeholders have good, positive praise and enjoy the strong relationships that exist between Life Unlimited and them. They like the direction that Life Unlimited is taking with analytics and technology and feel that the organization will be a leader in the state with its outstanding residential and recreation services.
- The pandemic response by Life Unlimited was swift and focused. Within 48 hours, programming shifted to meet the health and safety needs of the persons served and all of the staff. CDC guidelines were put into effect for testing. There was N95 masking, social distancing, hand hygiene, and cleanliness. Team members from day programs shifted to provide those services in the residences. PPE was made available for team members to take home, and quarantine houses were established as needed. No persons served or team members were lost to the pandemic, and services were never interrupted. All team members were mandated to take the vaccines when they became available, and the nursing team created on-site vaccination clinics and did a lot of drive-by vaccinations for both team members and individuals served. Leadership and management helped out with shift work when needed and held weekly meetings with all team members to keep good communication going, sent encouraging emails and notes to team members to let them know how appreciated they were, and even had drive-by parades at houses for birthday and holiday celebrations during the pandemic.
- The Employee Assistance Fund was established to support staff members who were in need of financial assistance during the pandemic. Team members can apply for and receive money for rent, food, medical bills, or whatever they need. The money for this fund was raised from individual giving. Life Unlimited understands the value of the staff members and how they enhance the persons' lives.

- Life Unlimited has strong expertise in fundraising and building homes and is now focusing on matching funds for a capital campaign to create a "pocket neighborhood" on the land around Liberty. This would be one-, two-, or three-bedroom houses for persons served. The homes have smart home technology and are close to other living and day services provided by Life Unlimited. The two large fundraising events are the Hats Off to Mothers Celebration and the Bowl-a-thon. The development team is also starting a planned giving project for the organization.
- The state of Missouri is encouraging team members to complete a specific training curriculum that is 158 hours of focused training for team members. This training mirrors much of the national direct service provider training, which also includes competency testing with essays. The remarkable aspect of these certifications is that team members can receive bonuses for completing the different levels of certification and also qualify for increases in their hourly rates.
- The human resources team is an exciting team that has come together over the last five years and is energized, insightful, and engaged to provide strong supports to the staff members. The organization has been able to raise the rates paid to direct service personnel (DSP) and to be more competitive in the community. Life Unlimited offers weekend differentials and referral bonuses and is engaging in active recruiting in the locales of homes where DSP is needed. The organization has contacts with schools and community colleges and is getting help from the marketing team to attract and display Life Unlimited as one of the best places to work in the Kansas City area. Over 40 percent of new hires come to Life Unlimited through current team member referrals.
- With over 600 individuals coming to recreation activities offered by Life Unlimited, scheduling, time, and space are important elements for the recreation team to consider. Recently, the technology team has been able to install and activate Pro Class so individuals wanting to attend a specific activity can see the schedule and sign up for various recreational activities. StationMD is software being used by the state of Missouri to provide focused telehealth for individuals served. When an individual served is ill, the nurse is called and makes the decision as to whether the individual needs to go to urgent care or use StationMD. The virtual physician then decides what treatment should be given or that the individual needs to go to urgent care. This software has been able to provide care with little wait time and has decreased emergency department visits by up to 85 percent. Life Unlimited is using it in more locations than the state requires because the benefit is so great for the persons served.
- Beyond Feedback is a new software program that provides systematic feedback from persons served, team members, and other stakeholders. It is rolling out to team members first this year, persons served next, and then other stakeholders, and it will make getting input from these populations easier, systematic, and efficient with this cloud-based platform.
- Leveraging technology to improve the quality of services is a strong focus of Life Unlimited. The technology plan includes business analytics, network administration, and projects. Like most organizations, Life Unlimited has accumulated massive amounts of data but the organization is focused on using it effectively. It is in the process of developing a data warehouse to more easily capture information for making business decisions. As well, Life Unlimited has created an impressive multi-function spreadsheet to track all emergency drills at its many locations to ensure compliance. This year alone, the organization has begun using an array of software that provides data security, noise cancelling, scheduling for recreation activities, electronic locks with key cards, and tracking maintenance requests. Life Unlimited is in the forefront of nonprofit organizations in its use of technology.
- The remote support project is a state partnership that provides technological supports for individuals not receiving 24/7 care. It provides an opportunity for greater independence and creates added safety measures based on the individuals' individual needs. Currently, it is being used on the night shift and is monitored by staff members who contact the individual if the doors are unlocked, there is unusual movement in the home, or there is any other unusual event.

- Training is imperative for Life Unlimited, and the organization has been able to maximize the functions of a very common learning management system. Assigning and tracking, adding certifications content, and constant reminders are efficiently managed so the benefits to the persons served are optimal. Additionally, Life Unlimited has focused supervisory and aspiring leaders programs that team members participate in to create candidates internally.
- Life Unlimited has increasingly invested in employee/team member training in the last few years, and it is evident this is paying off. Maximizing the use of the Relias platform, developing and implementing internal training such as the “Team Player/Dream Slayer” curriculum, and having a dedicated staff group to make this all happen are just some of the many examples. As one employee said, “We are very well trained at Life Unlimited.”
- Life Unlimited’s Therap® system is a comprehensive information management system, and the organization has done well to utilize its many modules and features. Many examples of data mining were on full display as a result of the export to spreadsheet function, and detailed reports were evident. Another useful example coveted by other team members is the incident reporting feature that documents and communicates critical information to key decision makers in real time by means of its alert system. This feature allows management to get key information about individual activity to ensure appropriate responsiveness.
- The physical working environments at Life Unlimited reflect the spirit of the organization and ultimately, the individuals served. For example, a tour of the day facilities displayed bright and colorful settings furnished with artwork from individuals served that communicated a place of welcome and inclusion. Posters of the organization’s value statements also communicate this as well. These types of visual representations extend beyond the purview of the organization into more community awareness and brand recognition.
- Life Unlimited has well-maintained, person-centered residential homes that have struck an excellent balance between required health and safety features and the look and feel of very personalized homes that demonstrate the true reflection of individuals' preferred activities, likes, and personalities. This does not go unnoticed by guardian members. As one person said, "Without a doubt, Life Unlimited has made a huge, positive, life-changing impact on my daughter."
- The staff members are highly supportive of each other, and it is evident that teamwork and collaboration are core values. The intentionality of matching employee/team member talents and skills to key job descriptions has generated excellent results. Open lines of communication between employees were observed, and exchanges were very positive and supportive. This person-to-person approach translates well into the overall service delivery and may help further drive stakeholder and community engagement.
- Life Unlimited offers services that are administered and delivered in settings that are attractive, well maintained, and welcoming. Persons served enjoy the locations where the services are provided. The Liberty office site is a 38-acre estate and campus with a pond that persons served also enjoy. The organization also uses solar panels on the campus, and the homes there do not receive an electric bill.
- The organization’s mission and its values are evident in the day-to-day delivery of services. The planning process is person centered and enables persons served to develop their own personal visions and receive supports necessary to be able to succeed in reaching individual goals.
- The staff members have a diversity of expertise and experience and are dedicated to the enhancement of the quality of life for the persons served. They have developed strong relationships with the persons served, funders, referral sources, and community members. They are recognized for being caring, compassionate, dedicated, and knowledgeable. This is evident in their day-to-day delivery of services as well as from the feedback from stakeholders.
- Clear strengths of Life Unlimited include the enthusiasm of the team members and their eagerness to embrace ways to improve the quality of services provided to the persons served. The team members have made a close connection to the persons served, and it is clear that they have made a commitment to enhancing the quality of life of the individuals served.

- The persons served express sincere appreciation and praise for not only the services from Life Unlimited, but also for the support from team members. It is clear that the organization puts the persons served first in the daily fulfillment of its mission.
- Referral sources express strong and positive comments when asked to discuss satisfaction surrounding quality of services received. Referral sources are referring persons served from other organizations to Life Unlimited because it is providing better services.
- Life Unlimited is complimented on its efforts to create successful community employment outcomes that often result from the use of natural supports and creative accommodations for the persons served. The persons served express high satisfaction with their jobs. The strength of the site development has been demonstrated by many examples of placements exceeding multiple years, and the positive relationships between the employers and the organization's team members are clearly recognized.
- Behavioral consultation services team members are complimented for their commitment to providing positive behavioral strategies for persons served. Team members are highly trained and experienced. An individual positive behavior support plan is crafted for each person served. A thorough and careful review of all behavioral incidents, oversight from the interdisciplinary team, and modifying service delivery conditions for change have resulted in strong program delivery. The program is experiencing growth and is hiring additional team members to meet the demand for services.
- Clear strengths of Life Unlimited are its ability to be involved in the community and the large number of options available for resources for the persons served. As one person served stated, "Don't know what we would do without them. They are there for us on the journey to independence and a life-changing experience."

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. Life Unlimited, Inc. received no recommendations from this survey. This accomplishment is achieved on approximately 3 percent of CARF surveys.

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.

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.

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.

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

There are no recommendations in this area.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

- Although the organization takes time to review its information verbally with the individuals served about its services, it is suggested that Life Unlimited adapt written materials intended for individuals to be written with more plain language. An example could be the organization's handbook. If this is not practical, a separate standalone document written in plain language could be developed. This could benefit individuals served and those with reading challenges if they ever had to reference the material at a later date.

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.

2.F. Service Delivery Using Information and Communication Technologies

Description

Depending on the type of program, a variety of terminology may be used to describe the use of information and communication technologies to deliver services; e.g., telepractice, telehealth, telemental health, telerehabilitation, telespeech, etc. Based on the individual plan for the person served, the use of information and communication technologies allows providers to see, hear, and/or interact with persons served, family/support system members, and other providers in remote settings.

The provision of services via information and communication technologies may:

- Include services such as assessment, individual planning, monitoring, prevention, intervention, follow-up, supervision, education, consultation, and counseling.
- Involve a variety of professionals such as case managers/service coordinators, social workers, psychologists, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, physicians, nurses, rehabilitation engineers, assistive technologists, and teachers.
- Encompass settings such as:
 - Hospitals, clinics, professional offices, and other organization-based settings.
 - Schools, work sites, libraries, community centers, and other community settings.
 - Congregate living, individual homes, and other residential settings.

The use of technology for strictly informational purposes, such as having a website that provides information about the programs and services available, is not considered providing services via the use of information and communication technologies.

Key Areas Addressed

- Written procedures for the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in service delivery
- Personnel training on how to deliver services via ICT and the equipment used
- Instruction and training for persons served, family/support system members, and others
- Provision of information related to ICT
- Maintenance of ICT equipment
- Emergency procedures that address unique aspects of service delivery via ICT

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

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.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.

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.

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 twelve months and can be offered in congregate settings that may be larger than residences typically found in the community.
- Long-term housing that provides stable, supported community living or assists the persons served to obtain and maintain safe, affordable, accessible, and stable housing.

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

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.I. Supported Living (SL)

Description

Supported living addresses the desires, goals, strengths, abilities, needs, health, safety, and life span issues of persons usually living in their own homes (apartments, townhouses, or other residential settings). Supported living services are generally long-term in nature but may change in scope, duration, intensity, or location as the needs and preferences of individuals change over time.

Supported living refers to the support services provided to the person served, not the residence in which these services are provided. A sample of people receiving services/supports in these sites will be visited as part of the interview process. Although the residence will generally be owned, rented, or leased by the person who lives there, the organization may occasionally rent or lease an apartment when the person served is unable to do so. Typically, in this situation the organization would co-sign or in other ways guarantee the lease or rental agreement; however, the person served would be identified as the tenant.

Supported living programs may be referred to as supported living services, independent living, supportive living, semi-independent living, and apartment living, and services/supports may include home health aide and personal care attendant services. Typically there would not be more than two or three persons served living in a residence, no house rules or structure would be applied to the living situation by the organization, and persons served can come and go as they please. Service planning often identifies the number of hours and types of support services provided.

The home or individual apartment of the person served, even when the organization holds the lease or rental agreement on behalf of the person served, is not included in the survey application or identified as a site on the accreditation outcome.

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

- Persons served achieving choice of housing, either rent or ownership.
- Persons served choosing whom they will live with, if anyone.
- Minimizing individual risks.
- Persons served have access to the benefits of community living.
- Persons served have autonomy and independence in making life choices.

Key Areas Addressed

- Safe, affordable, accessible housing chosen by the individual
- Supports available based on needs and desires
- In-home safety needs
- Living as desired in the community
- Support personnel available based on needs
- Persons have opportunities to access community activities

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

4.L. Behavioral Consultation Services (BCS)

Description

The focus of Behavioral Consultation Services is to increase the ability of persons served to express more effective and acceptable behaviors. Behavioral strategies are implemented to teach the persons served better ways to manage environmental and personal stressors so that targeted behaviors are reduced and positive behaviors are learned and maintained. Through redirection of a targeted behavior to a more socially and culturally acceptable behavior, persons served are able to achieve increased participation in mainstream community activities. Behavioral Consultation Services includes services to address targeted behaviors such as eating disorders, disruptive behaviors, or self-injurious behaviors in the home or community.

Key Areas Addressed

- Competencies of personnel
- Team meetings
- Behavioral assessment input
- Individualized behavioral strategies to address targeted behaviors
- Strategies developed with key persons
- Training supports implementation
- Monitoring strategies

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

Program(s)/Service(s) by Location

Life Unlimited, Inc.

320 Armour Road, Suite 101
North Kansas City, MO 64116

Behavioral Consultation Services
Community Employment Services: Employment Supports
Community Employment Services: Job Development
Community Integration
Employment Planning Services
Supported Living

Ashland

2138 Manor Way
Liberty, MO 64068

Community Housing

Bee

2142 Manor Way
Liberty, MO 64068

Community Housing

Broadacres Day Hab Program

2144 Manor Way
Liberty, MO 64068

Community Integration

Cabana

2127 Manor Way
Liberty, MO 64068

Community Housing

Central Group Home

9003 Central Street
Kansas City, MO 64114

Community Housing

Deer Run

2129 Manor Way
Liberty, MO 64068

Community Housing

Empress

2133 Manor Way
Liberty, MO 64068

Community Housing

Flora House

6027 North Cypress Avenue
Kansas City, MO 64119

Community Housing

Glen Arbor Group Home

11201 Wornall Terrace
Kansas City, MO 64131

Community Housing

L & C Brown Opportunity Apartments

5876 Northeast Russell Road, Apartment 1
Kansas City, MO 64117-2994

Community Housing

Liberty House

1525 South Birmingham Road
Liberty, MO 64068

Community Housing

Life Unlimited, Inc. Liberty

2135 Manor Way
Liberty, MO 64068

Administrative Location Only

My Day Mill Street - Day Habilitation Program

236 West Mill Street
Liberty, MO 64068

Community Integration

Newton Group Home

608 West 101st Terrace
Kansas City, MO 64114

Community Housing

Northland House

1008 Lilac Lane
Liberty, MO 64068

Community Housing

Ridgeway House

1119 Ridgeway
Liberty, MO 64068

Community Housing

Sherwood House

717 North Laurel Avenue
Liberty, MO 64068

Community Housing

Unique

1484 Hampton Court
Liberty, MO 64068

Community Housing

Willow Group Home

201 East 99th Street
Kansas City, MO 64114

Community Housing

Winslow Group Home

9705 Winslow Place
Kansas City, MO 64131

Community Housing