COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION

ENGAGE. EMPOWER. EVOLVE.

COA Fact Sheet

The Council on Accreditation (COA) is an independent nonprofit accreditor of community-based behavioral health and social services.

History and Activities

- Founded in 1977 by the Child Welfare League of America and Family Service America (now the Alliance for Children and Families).

- Accredits 50 different service areas, including substance abuse treatment, adult day care, services for the homeless, foster care, employee assistance programs, and credit counseling services.

Mission

Partnering with human and social service organizations to strengthen their ability to improve the lives of the people they serve.

Who is Accredited

- Although most of COA-accredited organizations are private not-for-profit agencies, COA also accredits for-profit companies and public agencies at the state, county, and municipal levels.

- COA accredits 50 different service areas and over 125 types of programs. The majority of organizations are multi-service social service and behavioral health care providers.

- At present, six state-administered child welfare systems—Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, and Tennessee—have been accredited by COA, while another two are in process.

- Some 25% of COA-accredited agencies have a budget of less than $2 million; the budget of another 25% is between $2 and $5 million.

- While most organizations are located in the United States, they can also be found in Canada, Puerto Rico, Bermuda, England, and the Philippiness.

Size, Composition & Revenue

- Over 2,200 organizations and programs serving more than 7 million persons are currently either COA-accredited or engaged in the accreditation process. A complete listing can be found on www.COAnet.org.

- COA has a $12 million annual budget and is supported primarily by organizations' accreditation fees.

- Accreditation fees are calculated on a sliding fee scale, based on an organization's annual gross audited revenue. Fees for the entire four-year accreditation cycle start at $6,720.

- COA accreditation is supported by a cadre of 29 national membership organizations.

In our current outcomes-oriented environment, human service organizations and programs are increasingly called upon to demonstrate the impact of their services. COA accreditation places human service organizations and programs in a strong competitive position for accessing funding by demonstrating their accountability in the management of resources, meeting standardized best practice thresholds for service and administration, and providing increased organizational capacity through a framework for ongoing performance quality improvement.

For Consumers:

- Ensures that the services provided meet best practice standards
- Reflects a commitment by the organization to deliver the highest quality services
- Ensures that an organization's staff is appropriately trained and prepared to meet all of the client's needs
- Guarantees involvement in the decision-making process for all aspects of service delivery
- Requires that services are provided in a safe and respectful environment
- Supports positive outcomes
- Protects privacy

For Leadership:

- Ensures ethics in practice
- Promotes performance quality improvement and strategic planning
- Strengthens organizational integrity
- Ensures board is the policy-setting entity
- Requires the monitoring of the CEO
- Facilitates resource development
- Emphasizes budget and other fiduciary responsibilities
- Requires adherence to policies and procedures that address conflict of interests, preferential treatment, accountability, and delegation of authority
- Manages fundraising
- Requires audits
- Focuses on risk management
- Guides investments

For Staff:

- Promotes a culture of excellence
- Focuses on health and safety issues
- Ensures effective service environments
- Promotes culturally competent services
- Defines professional staff qualifications
- Creates a performance and quality improvement-oriented culture that is outcome driven
- Minimizes risk and liability
- Provides access to a network of high-performing organizations and programs
- Creates efficiencies
- Emphasizes supervision
- Focuses on best and evidence-based practice
- Improves customer satisfaction through consistent management practices, qualified and trained staff and client involvement in service planning and performance quality improvement systems
- Protects reporters of suspected misconduct through the implantation of a Whistleblower Policy
- Ensures an equitable work environment that is supportive of organizational productivity, diversity, and stability

For Donors/Funders:

- Validates that high quality services are being delivered
- Guarantees sound financial practices
- Confirms the efficient operation of an organization
- Confirms the implementation of policies that prevent fraud and mistrust
- Ensures that risk management protections are in place