

**CARF Accreditation Report
for
STAR Center, Inc.
Three-Year Accreditation**



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About CARF

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

The accreditation process applies CARF's internationally recognized standards during an on-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

STAR Center, Inc.
1119 Old Humboldt Road
Jackson, TN 38305

Organizational Leadership

Dave Bratcher, President

Survey Date(s)

August 14, 2017–August 15, 2017

Surveyor(s)

John F. Dean, B.S., M.S., M.S.-Rehab Admin, RN, Administrative
Ruth C. Jackson, M.R.A., CRC, Program

Program(s)/Service(s) Surveyed

Assistive Technology Supports and Services

Previous Survey

Three-Year Accreditation
September 8, 2014–September 9, 2014

Accreditation Decision**Three-Year Accreditation**

Expiration: August 31, 2020

Executive Summary

This report contains the findings of CARF's on-site survey of STAR Center, Inc. conducted August 14, 2017–August 15, 2017. 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, STAR Center, Inc. demonstrated substantial conformance to the standards. STAR Center has dedicated leadership and well-trained staff members who provide quality services on a daily basis. The staff members seek to aggressively address the assistive technology needs of persons served. Everyone in the organization is dedicated to the persons served and the responsibility to address the needs of the referral sources. A wide variety of stakeholders, including persons served and referring counselors, applauds the organization for its responsiveness to their needs and its willingness to be creative in its approach to the rehabilitation process. The organization is clearly committed to utilizing CARF standards in its overall improvement activities and its desires to further strengthen its provision of services. STAR Center is encouraged to continue its commitment to persons with disabilities who are in need of its services by maintaining its focus on creative and energetic approaches to the rehabilitation process.

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

STAR Center, 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 STAR Center, Inc. was conducted by the following CARF surveyor(s):

- John F. Dean, B.S., M.S., M.S.-Rehab Admin, RN, Administrative
- Ruth C. Jackson, M.R.A., CRC, 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 STAR Center, 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):

- Assistive Technology Supports and Services

A list of the organization's accredited program(s)/service(s) by location is included at the end of this report.

Representations and Constraints

The accreditation decision and survey findings contained in this report are based on an on-balance consideration of the information obtained by the surveyor(s) during the on-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 STAR Center, Inc. demonstrated the following strengths:

- The organization benefits from the stable, supportive, mission-driven leadership of its board. Many board members have served for numerous years, some since the organization's inception. The board's composition includes representation from professional specialties representative of the local community, including public education, government, local industry, and family members of the persons served. Board members are actively involved in decision making and both short- and long-term planning as well as promoting the interests of the organization in the local community and beyond. The organization appears to have acted vigilantly and rapidly with regard to financial stewardship and strategies to maintain fiscal solidity in a volatile and rapidly changing environment as well as a strong, bottom line focus on the organization's excellent service, safety, and efficiency. There appears to be open and clear communication between the governing body and the organization's leadership.
- Leadership, management, and direct support staff members are personally and professionally committed to the organization's mission and values. Many of the staff members have considerable tenure at the organization, which has contributed greatly to the continuity of services. The corporate culture is

characterized by openness and good rapport, with a team approach to planning and decision making. The board and leadership are commended for their excellent financial stewardship and comprehensive planning, which have enabled the organization to maintain financial health and growth despite the challenges experienced by other organizations at the state and national levels. Both board and leadership are forward thinking and community minded.

- The organization is commended for its excellent disaster recovery plan. The plan is comprehensive and addresses a multitude of potential situations as well as an in-depth review of the actions the organization needs to take. Among the many situations addressed are power loss, networking capabilities, heating and air, and damage recovery.
- Techniques and procedures used for hiring, checking backgrounds, orienting, and training personnel seem to effectively prepare staff members for their responsibilities.
- STAR Center is commended for building constructive relationships with many service providers in the region. The end result is the enhanced quality and scope of services for all parties involved.
- Overall, there is a close connection among the various administrative plans. The organization's leadership clearly understands the relationship among the plans and how they impact the organization.
- The organization informs potential persons served of the availability of services, and generally there is no wait time for services.
- A college student did not think that she could succeed at college without the equipment, training, and support she has received from STAR Center. Her father echoed the praise. A person served referred by the VA said he was happy with the service he received from wonderful people. A person running an enterprise for persons who are blind has recently expanded his business and attributes much of his success to the support he has gotten over the years from the organization's staff members. A young man said that STAR Center has saved his life. He reported he could do nothing independently until he received a variety of assistive technology devices and training. Now, he has opened a not-for-profit organization to give back to the community.
- A representative of the VA said that many veterans are unable to travel to Memphis so it is very beneficial for the VA to refer them to STAR Center in Jackson.
- The vocational rehabilitation representative appreciates the services offered by STAR Center and said that the staff members' response time is very quick and the persons served always benefits from the services.
- STAR Center covers a large geographic area and welcomes persons served to come to the center or the staff members will willingly go to their home or local community to provide services.
- Many staff members have worked for STAR Center for a long time. The team seems to work together cooperatively with the benefit of the persons served as the primary focus.

Opportunities for Quality Improvement

The CARF survey process identifies opportunities for continuous improvement, a core concept of “aspiring to excellence.” This section of the report lists the sections of the CARF standards that were applied on the survey, including a description of the business practice area and/or the specific program(s)/service(s) surveyed and a summary of the key areas addressed in that section of the standards.

In this section of the report, a recommendation identifies any standard for which CARF determined that the organization did not meet the minimum requirements to demonstrate full conformance. All recommendations must be addressed in a QIP submitted to CARF.

In addition, consultation may be provided for areas of or specific standards where the surveyor(s) documented suggestions that the organization may consider to improve its business or service delivery practices. Note that consultation may be offered for areas of specific standards that do not have any recommendations. Such consultation does not indicate nonconformance to the standards; it is intended to offer ideas that the organization might find helpful in its ongoing quality improvement efforts. The organization is not required to address consultation.

When CARF surveyors visit an organization, their role is that of independent peer reviewers, and their goal is not only to gather an 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
- Leadership guidance
- Commitment to diversity
- Corporate responsibility
- Corporate compliance

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

Consultation

- The organization presently has a very sizable governing body that meets quarterly. It is suggested that the organization research the optimal size for its board of directors and possibly make some changes. The preponderance of its board is from the same county, although the organization has a large footprint of multiple counties. It is suggested that the organization's governing body include representatives from these other areas.

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

- Strategic planning considers stakeholder expectations and environmental impacts
- Written strategic plan sets goals
- Plan is implemented, shared, and kept relevant

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

- Ongoing collection of information from a variety of sources
- Analysis and integration into business practices
- Leadership response to information collected

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 all legal/regulatory requirements

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

- Budget(s) prepared, shared, and reflective of strategic planning
- Financial results reported/compared to budgeted performance
- Organization review
- Fiscal policies and procedures
- Review of service billing records and fee structure
- Financial review/audit
- Safeguarding funds of persons served

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

- Identification of loss exposures
- Development of risk management plan
- Adequate insurance coverage

Recommendations

1.G.1.a.(3)

Although the organization identifies corrective measures in general terms, the identified measures provide little functional guidance in the correction of the problem areas. It is recommended that the organization implement a risk management plan that includes identification of how to rectify identified exposures.

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

- Inspections
- Emergency procedures
- Access to emergency first aid
- Competency of personnel in safety procedures
- Reporting/reviewing critical incidents
- Infection control

Recommendations

1.H.13.a.(1)

1.H.13.a.(2)

1.H.13.b.(1)

1.H.13.b.(2)

1.H.13.b.(3)

Although safety inspections conducted by external authorities are in place, it was not evident that health issues were addressed. Comprehensive health and safety inspections should be conducted at least annually by a qualified external authority that result in a written report that identifies the areas inspected, recommendations for areas needing improvement, and actions taken to respond to the recommendations.

1.I. Human Resources

Description

CARF-accredited organizations demonstrate that they value their human resources. It should be evident that personnel are involved and engaged in the success of the organization and the persons they serve.

Key Areas Addressed

- Adequate staffing
- Verification of background/credentials
- Recruitment/retention efforts
- Personnel skills/characteristics
- Annual review of job descriptions/performance
- Policies regarding students/volunteers, if applicable

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

1.J. Technology

Description

CARF-accredited organizations plan for the use of technology to support and advance effective and efficient service and business practices.

Key Areas Addressed

- Written technology and system plan
- Written procedures for the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in service delivery, if applicable
- Training for personnel, persons served, and others on ICT equipment, if applicable
- Provision of information relevant to the ICT session, if applicable
- Maintenance of ICT equipment in accordance with manufacturer recommendations, if applicable
- Emergency procedures that address unique aspects of service delivery via ICT, if applicable

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

- Communication of rights
- Policies that promote rights
- Complaint, grievance, and appeals policy
- Annual review of complaints

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

- Written accessibility plan(s)
- Requests for reasonable accommodations

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

1.M. Performance Measurement and Management

Description

CARF-accredited organizations are committed to continually improving their organizations and service delivery to the persons served. Data are collected and analyzed, and information is used to manage and improve service delivery.

Key Areas Addressed

- Information collection, use, and management
- Setting and measuring performance indicators

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

1.N. Performance Improvement

Description

The dynamic nature of continuous improvement in a CARF-accredited organization sets it apart from other organizations providing similar services. CARF-accredited organizations share and provide the persons served and other interested stakeholders with ongoing information about their actual performance as a business entity and their ability to achieve optimal outcomes for the persons served through their programs and services.

Key Areas Addressed

- Proactive performance improvement
- Performance information shared with all stakeholders

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

Section 2. Quality Individualized Services and Supports

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.

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.K. Assistive Technology Supports and Services (AT)

Description

By providing an array of assistive technology services, which may be specialized to a specific population, an organization assists the persons served in making informed decisions and choices to increase access to or participation in employment options, education, independent living, interdependence, and/or inclusion in the community. Services reflect the latest knowledge in the field.

Services and supports may include assisting persons served in the assessment, evaluation, selection, acquisition, use, support, design and fabrication, follow along or follow up, modification, or maintenance of an assistive technology device; providing or arranging for training; providing information about referrals for and observations and trials of assistive technology devices; and/or exploring alternative strategies. Training is an important component of services and supports because assistive technology is often abandoned if persons have not been properly trained in its use.

Strategies for accommodation may include the use of assistive technology applications in:

- Communication
- Community living
- Employment
- Environmental control
- Mobility, orientation, or destination training
- Education and training
- Activities of daily living/independent living
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Meeting other needs as defined by the persons served

Assistive technology services and supports may be provided by an organization as part of its service delivery program, by a department within an organization, or by an organization with the sole purpose of providing assistive technology services. Services are provided by personnel who practice only in their area(s) of competency.

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

- Increased independence.
- Increased community access.
- Participation of the persons in the community.
- Increased employment options.
- Increased wages.
- A flexible, interactive process that involves the person served.
- Individualized, appropriate accommodations.
- Decreased family or caregiver support.
- Timely services and reports.

Key Areas Addressed

- Informed decisions and choices about assistive technology devices
- Increased independence and community inclusion

Recommendations

4.K.3.e.

Persons and/or families served should participate in making informed decisions about their assistive technology services, including expected timelines of services.

4.K.12.a.

4.K.12.b.

Although an exit form has been created, no person served has exited the program since the form was created. When a person exits services, a summary report should contain a description of the assistive technology services provided and approximate training time and identification of potential future assistive technology needs and recommended implementation plan.

Consultation

- It is suggested that the affiliations of the organization and staff members be mentioned on the website and in printed brochures.
- It is suggested that the variety of possible funding sources, including scholarships, be listed boldly before the private pay information so prospective persons served realize there may be alternative sources of payment for services.
- STAR Center might consider posting the newest technology changes on its website or do a newsletter or an email blast to all current and former persons served. Former persons served might see something that could be beneficial to them and return for services.

Program(s)/Service(s) by Location

STAR Center, Inc.

1119 Old Humboldt Road
Jackson, TN 38305

Assistive Technology Supports and Services