

**CARF Accreditation Report
for
StepStone Family & Youth
Services

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 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

StepStone Family & Youth Services
11214 Professional Park Drive
Louisville, KY 40291

Organizational Leadership

Anita Bean, Senior Director of Quality Support
Jeffrey Hardin, Regional Director

Survey Number

187127

Survey Date(s)

January 15, 2025–January 17, 2025

Surveyor(s)

Kimberly Luse, EdD, RT(R), Administrative
Bruce Rafuse, Program
Deana Fisher, MSW, LMSW, Program

Program(s)/Service(s) Surveyed

Foster Family Services
Outpatient Treatment: Integrated: SUD/Mental Health (Adults)
Outpatient Treatment: Integrated: SUD/Mental Health (Children and Adolescents)

Previous Survey

October 25, 2021–October 27, 2021
Three-Year Accreditation

Accreditation Decision

Three-Year Accreditation
Expiration: November 30, 2027

Executive Summary

This report contains the findings of CARF's site survey of StepStone Family & Youth Services conducted January 15, 2025–January 17, 2025. 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, StepStone Family & Youth Services demonstrated substantial conformance to the standards. StepStone provides behavioral health services to adult, child, and adolescent clients in Louisville, Kentucky, that include outpatient treatment and foster family services. The organization's many strengths include its strategic planning process, its financial planning and management practices that have resulted in clean external audits year after year, its performance measurement and management system, and its culture of continuous quality improvement. The organization's facilities are conducive to the treatment and services it provides. Foster parents and other stakeholders expressed satisfaction at the highest levels with StepStone and its services and staff members. In particular, they described the quality of services provided as being excellent and praised the organization's practice of going above and beyond typical expectations to successfully place child-age clients with foster parents. There are opportunities for improvement in the testing of the organization's procedures for business continuity/disaster recovery. Within the foster family services, there are opportunities for improvement in ensuring comprehensiveness in the releases of information, clarifying the policy on the use of restraint, and updating the written procedures for medication disposal. Leadership and staff members conducted themselves with transparency during the survey and were receptive to the consultation provided.

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

StepStone Family & Youth Services 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 StepStone Family & Youth Services was conducted by the following CARF surveyor(s):

- Kimberly Luse, EdD, RT(R), Administrative
- Bruce Rafuse, Program
- Deana Fisher, MSW, LMSW, 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 StepStone Family & Youth Services 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):

- Foster Family Services
- Outpatient Treatment: Integrated: SUD/Mental Health (Adults)
- Outpatient Treatment: Integrated: SUD/Mental Health (Children and Adolescents)

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 StepStone Family & Youth Services demonstrated the following strengths:

- StepStone is commended for the care it has taken to create beautiful and functional workspaces. The organization is also complimented on maintaining a nurturing environment that is inclusive and guided by trauma-informed care.
- The program locations in Richmond, Bowling Green, and Louisville are large and warm spaces that create a positive and supportive atmosphere for clients. Well decorated, the locations reflect the child-age clients served and are inviting spaces for them and their foster parents.
- The spaces within StepStone's locations that are utilized for therapy are well equipped and situated to provide a confidential and supportive environment for clients. The techniques and theories utilized are current, practical, and trauma informed.

- The organization is commended for its comprehensive and inclusive strategic planning process and documentation.
- StepStone is recognized for the quality of its financial policies and procedures, its apparent financial solvency, and the clean results of external audits year over year. The organization exemplifies excellency within the industry in which it operates.
- The organization is commended for its excellent risk management procedures.
- StepStone is complimented for its human resource's policies and procedures. From recruitment to onboarding and retention, policies and written procedures are in place to ensure that qualified candidates are sourced and, once onboarding begins, new staff members receive comprehensive training that sets them up for success in the workplace. Programs in place, such as The Legacy Program, recognize staff members for outstanding service and support ongoing professional development and maintenance of professional certifications as well as a trauma-informed care culture focused on wholeness, wellness, and positive work/life balance.
- Staff members in each of the organization's offices are dedicated and energetic advocates for the clients. Although StepStone's offices stretch across the state, staff members stay in constant contact with one another to ensure that they all function in the same way.
- The administrators of StepStone provide intensive support to the organization's caseworkers and other staff members. One staff member commented, "This company has had my back through some very difficult life situations. I would never leave."
- There is long tenure among many staff members of StepStone. This is coupled with several new staff members who received effective orientation and were supported throughout the organization's onboarding process. The result is a highly functioning team whose members share a deep level of trust and have created a supportive work culture that promotes a high level of productivity as they work to support the organization's clients.
- Staff members spoke of their experiences working at StepStone as being positive and supportive. Case managers, therapists, licensing staff, and program directors create a team environment that promotes a passion and culture for success. The environment sets a great example for foster parents and clients in the organization's care, which includes the resources and means to provide high-quality services. Job satisfaction among staff members was notably high, and the organization's culture is supportive and understanding of them.
- StepStone is commended for its dedication to provide ongoing education to staff members on the most current evidence-based and trauma-informed treatment. Clients have access to a variety of treatments that assist them to process their trauma and learn to manage their emotions in a manner that is far above that available in most therapeutic milieus.
- The foster care program of StepStone helps child-age clients with severe trauma through the application of successful therapeutic interventions in family settings that would otherwise take place in residential settings.
- The structure and operation of the foster care program of StepStone is strong and based on best practices. The program's solid therapeutic stance in trauma-informed care is evidenced in the organization's policy and procedures as well as in the client records.
- StepStone's new Behavior Health Services Only (BHSO) program in Richmond has been a welcome addition to the community and to the organization. Parents of youth-age clients stated that service delivery includes the option of sessions in which youth are seen at school, which is appreciated by these clients. Another youth who had been working with a therapist who transferred to the organization, reported choosing to relocate to StepStone for treatment. The BHSO program demonstrates a commitment to clients through the provision of a solid therapeutic service, including thorough procedures and documentation based on best practices and current person-centered approaches.

- StepStone enjoys great support and respect in the community and region served. Comments of stakeholders included, "The staff [members] there are so great at circling back around. I never have to worry about following up," "The kids are so lucky to have staff [members] that work so hard to find the best possible fit with a family," "The staff [members] are super-responsive. Even after hours," and "The employees are proactive with looking for solutions to their challenges." Other comments included, "The homes have nothing but good things to say about StepStone," "StepStone always wants the best for the children," "The trauma-informed care approach makes it a great place to work, which in turn makes the employees very productive," and "StepStone is my first phone call."
- Comments of foster parents and clients included, "Step Stone delivers a team approach that supports the homes and children," "Support from staff is timely and responsive and essential to meeting the needs of the children," and "Step Stone was clearly the right choice for organizations with [its] response time and solution-focused communication and approach."
- Foster parents spoke positively about their experiences with the staff members of StepStone. One described the organization's ability to effectively manage crises and implement de-escalation strategies.

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 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, diversity, and inclusion
- Corporate responsibility
- Organizational fundraising, if applicable

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

Consultation

- It is suggested that the leadership team of StepStone utilize CARF's governance standards during the next survey cycle.

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.

Consultation

- It is suggested that StepStone add silent panic buttons to its front desk areas and to pertinent leadership offices.
- The organization is encouraged to add Braille evacuation routing signs to the ones already in place.
- StepStone might consider partnering with local first responders with regard to its active shooter training drills. It is also suggested that the organization develop flip charts summarizing all drills, and that it locate its policies and procedures for easy access in the event of emergency.
- The organization is encouraged to add AED units to its locations.

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.

Consultation

- It is suggested that StepStone implement a quarterly performance appraisal schedule to promote ongoing engagement and the provision of feedback to its staff members.

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

1.J.4.a.

1.J.4.b.(1)

1.J.4.b.(2)

1.J.4.b.(3)

1.J.4.b.(4)

1.J.4.b.(5)

1.J.4.b.(6)

1.J.4.c.

It is recommended that a test of the organization's procedures for business continuity/disaster recovery be conducted at least annually; be analyzed for effectiveness, areas needing improvement, actions to address the improvements needed, implementation of the actions, whether the actions taken accomplished the intended results, and necessary education and training of personnel; and be evidenced in writing, including the analysis.

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

2.A.12.b.

2.A.12.c.

The majority of releases of information reviewed were completed with the specific information requested; however, a blank signed release was noted among foster care case files reviewed. Furthermore, the release of information for foster parents states that it is valid for as long as the individual remains a foster parent. This means that a single release could be good for decades. It is recommended that any release of confidential information consistently be limited to the specific information identified and have a time limitation. This might be accomplished by conducting a more thorough review of each release prior to filing. The organization is encouraged to revise the form it uses for signatures at the next annual foster parent review.

2.A.17.a.

2.A.17.b.(2)

StepStone's foster parent behavior policy indicates that restraint may be used if there is danger to the child or others; however, the organization does not provide training to foster parents in the appropriate ways to use restraint. In addition, conversations with licensing specialists at various sites of the organization gave different answers to the question regarding whether the use of restraint is allowed. The organization is urged to consistently implement a policy that identifies, for each program, how it will respond to unsafe behaviors of the clients and whether or not, and under what circumstances, restraint is used. If the organization decides to utilize emergency physical restraint, it is encouraged to implement policies, practices, and documentation in conformance to the applicable CARF standards for promoting nonviolent practices. Otherwise, it is suggested that the existing policy be revised, as needed, to make it clear that restraint is not used. Furthermore, the organization is encouraged to review its written procedures for critical incidents that specify use of restraint to ensure that they maintain alignment with other related policy and procedures.

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 affect 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

2.C.2.d.

StepStone implements written procedures that address safe disposal. However, in discussions with foster parents it appeared that the organization's policy has changed. It is recommended that the organization implement written procedures that accurately address safe disposal. It is suggested that current policy be revised, as needed, to align with organizational practice.

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 or from remote settings (i.e., the person served and provider are not in the same physical location).

The provision of services via information and communication technologies may:

- Include services such as assessment, individual planning, monitoring, prevention, intervention, team and family conferencing, transition planning, follow-up, supervision, education, consultation, and counseling.
- Involve a variety of providers such as case managers/service coordinators, social workers, psychologists, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, physicians, nurses, dieticians, employment specialists, direct support professionals, peer support specialists, rehabilitation engineers, assistive technologists, teachers, and other personnel providing services and/or supports to persons served.
- 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.
- Be provided via fully virtual platforms.

The use of technology for strictly informational purposes, such as having a website that provides information about the programs and services available or the use of self-directed apps, 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
- Scope of ICT services

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.D. Foster Family Services (FFS)

Description

Foster family services are provided under a contract or agreement for the temporary placement of an individual, regardless of age, in a family setting outside the birth or adoptive family home. Foster family services are provided to a foster family provider to establish and maintain a home on a temporary basis for the person served. The courts may be involved in establishing this relationship.

Foster family services are comprehensive and establish a system of supports and services for the individual, the family of origin when appropriate, and the foster family provider. These services focus on establishing stability in the life of the person served.

Although the "home" is generally the foster family provider's home or residence, it may also be the home of the person served.

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

- Temporary placements for persons.
- Stability in a person's life.
- Appropriate matches of persons with foster families.
- Safe placements.

Key Areas Addressed

- Temporary living situation in a family setting outside the birth or adoptive family home
- Appropriate matches of non-family participants with homes
- Contracts that identify roles, responsibilities, needs, and monitoring
- Needed supports

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

2024 Behavioral Health standards were also applied during this survey. The following sections of this report reflect the application of those standards.

Section 2. General Program Standards

Description

For an organization to achieve quality services, the persons served are active participants in the planning, prioritization, implementation, and ongoing evaluation of the services offered. A commitment to quality and the involvement of the persons served span the entire time that the persons served are involved with the organization. The service planning process is individualized, establishing goals and objectives that incorporate the unique strengths, needs, abilities, and preferences of the persons served. The persons served have the opportunity to transition easily through a system of care.

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

- Written program plan
- Crisis intervention provided
- Medical consultation
- Services relevant to diversity
- Assistance with advocacy and support groups
- Team composition/duties
- Relevant education
- Clinical supervision
- Family participation encouraged

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

2.B. Screening and Access to Services

Description

The process of screening and assessment is designed to determine a person's eligibility for services and the organization's ability to provide those services. A person-centered assessment process helps to maximize opportunities for the persons served to gain access to the organization's programs and services. Each person served is actively involved in, and has a significant role in, the assessment process. Assessments are conducted in a manner that identifies the historical and current information of the person served as well as the person's strengths, needs, abilities, and preferences. Assessment data may be gathered through various means, including face-to-face contact, telehealth, or written material, and from various sources, including the person served, family, or significant others, or from external resources.

Key Areas Addressed

- Screening process described in policies and procedures
- Ineligibility for services
- Admission criteria
- Orientation information provided regarding rights, grievances, services, fees, etc.
- Waiting list
- Primary and ongoing assessments
- Reassessments

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

2.C. Person-Centered Planning

Description

Each person served is actively involved in and has a significant role in the person-centered planning process and determining the direction of the plan. The person-centered plan contains goals and objectives that incorporate the unique strengths, needs, abilities, and preferences of the person served, as well as identified challenges and potential solutions. The planning process is person-directed and person-centered. The person-centered plan may also be referred to as an individual service plan, treatment plan, or plan of care. In a family-centered program, the plan may be for the family and identified as a family-centered plan.

Key Areas Addressed

- Person-centered planning process
- Co-occurring disabilities/disorders
- Person-centered goals and objectives
- Designated person coordinates services

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

2.D. Transition/Discharge

Description

Transition, continuing care, or discharge planning assists the persons served to move from one level of care to another within the organization or to obtain services that are needed but are not available within the organization. The transition process is planned with the active participation of each person served. Transition may include planned discharge, placement on inactive status, movement to a different level of service or intensity of contact, or a re-entry program in a criminal justice system.

The transition plan is a document developed with and for the person served and other interested participants to guide the person served in activities following transition/discharge to support the gains made during program participation. It is prepared with the active participation of the person served when transitioning to another level of care, after-care program, or community-based services. The transition plan is meant to be a plan that the person served uses to identify the support that is needed to prevent a recurrence of symptoms or reduction in functioning. It is expected that the person served receives a copy of the transition plan.

A discharge summary is a clinical document written by the program personnel who are involved in the services provided to the person served and is completed when the person leaves the organization (planned or unplanned). It is a document that is intended for the record of the person served and released, with appropriate authorization, to describe the course of services that the organization provided and the response by the person served.

Just as the assessment is critical to the success of treatment, the transition services are critical for the support of the individual's ongoing recovery or well-being. The organization proactively attempts to connect the persons served with the receiving service provider and contact the persons served after formal transition or discharge to gather needed information related to their post-discharge status. Discharge information is reviewed to determine the effectiveness of its services and whether additional services were needed.

Transition planning may be included as part of the person-centered plan. The transition plan and/or discharge summary may be a combined document or part of the plan for the person served as long as it is clear whether the information relates to transition or pre-discharge planning or identifies the person's discharge or departure from the program.

Key Areas Addressed

- Referral or transition to other services
- Active participation of persons served
- Transition planning at earliest point
- Unplanned discharge referrals
- Plan addresses strengths, needs, abilities, preferences
- Follow up for persons discharged for aggressiveness

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

2.G. Records of the Persons Served

Description

A complete and accurate record is developed to ensure that all appropriate individuals have access to relevant clinical and other information regarding each person served.

Key Areas Addressed

- Confidentiality
- Timeframes for entries to records
- Individual record requirements
- Duplicate records

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

2.H. Quality Records Management

Description

The organization implements systems and procedures that provide for the ongoing monitoring of the quality, appropriateness, and utilization of the services provided. This is largely accomplished through a systematic review of the records of the persons served. The review assists the organization in improving the quality of services provided to each person served.

Key Areas Addressed

- Quarterly professional review
- Review current and closed records
- Items addressed in quarterly review
- Use of information to improve quality of services

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

2.I. 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 or from remote settings (i.e., the person served and provider are not in the same physical location).

The provision of services via information and communication technologies may:

- Include services such as assessment, individual planning, monitoring, prevention, intervention, team and family conferencing, transition planning, follow-up, supervision, education, consultation, and counseling.
- Involve a variety of providers such as case managers/service coordinators, social workers, psychologists, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, physicians, nurses, dietitians, employment specialists, direct support professionals, peer support specialists, rehabilitation engineers, assistive technologists, teachers, and other personnel providing services and/or supports to persons served.
- 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.
- Be provided via fully virtual platforms.

The use of technology for strictly informational purposes, such as having a website that provides information about the programs and services available or the use of self-directed apps, 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
- Scope of ICT services

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

Section 3. Core Treatment Program Standards

Description

The standards in this section address the unique characteristics of each type of core program area. Behavioral health programs are organized and designed to provide services for persons who have or who are at risk of having psychiatric disorders, harmful involvement with alcohol or other drugs, or other addictions or who have other behavioral health needs. Through a team approach, and with the active and ongoing participation of the persons served, the overall goal of each program is to improve the quality of life and the functional abilities of the persons served. Each program selected for accreditation demonstrates cultural competency and relevance. Family members and significant others are involved in the programs of the persons served as appropriate and to the extent possible.

3.N. Outpatient Treatment (OT)

Description

Outpatient treatment programs provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services that include, but are not limited to, individual, group, and family counseling and education on wellness, recovery, and resiliency. These programs offer comprehensive, coordinated, and defined services that may vary in level of intensity. Outpatient

programs may address a variety of needs, including, but not limited to, situational stressors, family relations, interpersonal relationships, mental health issues, life span issues, psychiatric illnesses, and substance use disorders and other addictive behaviors.

Key Areas Addressed

- Therapy services
- Education on wellness, recovery, and resiliency
- Accessible services
- Creation of natural supports

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

Section 5. Specific Population Designation Standards

5.C. Children and Adolescents (CA)

Description

Programs for children and adolescents consist of an array of behavioral health services designed specifically to address the treatment needs of children and adolescents. Such programs tailor their services to the particular needs and preferences of children and adolescents and are provided in a setting that is both relevant to and comfortable for this population.

Key Areas Addressed

- Comprehensive assessments
- Services based on needs of child
- Criminal background checks for staff providing direct services

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

Program(s)/Service(s) by Location

StepStone Family & Youth Services

11214 Professional Park Drive
Louisville, KY 40291

Outpatient Treatment: Integrated: SUD/Mental Health (Adults)
Outpatient Treatment: Integrated: SUD/Mental Health (Children and Adolescents)

Stepstone Family & Youth Services - Benton

78 Caky Drive
Benton, KY 42025

Foster Family Services

StepStone Family & Youth Services - Bowling Green

1300 Andrea Street, Suite 204
Bowling Green, KY 42104

Foster Family Services

Stepstone Family & Youth Services - Florence

51 Cavalier Boulevard, Suite 260
Florence, KY 41042

Foster Family Services

StepStone Family & Youth Services - Louisville

11218 Professional Park Drive
Louisville, KY 40291

Foster Family Services

StepStone Family & Youth Services - Morehead

240 Old Viking Drive
Morehead, KY 40351

Foster Family Services

Stepstone Family & Youth Services - Prestonsburg

5230 KY Route 321, Suite 3B
Prestonsburg, KY 41653

Foster Family Services

StepStone Family & Youth Services - Richmond

370 Highland Park Drive, Suite 1A
Richmond, KY 40475

Foster Family Services