



CARF
Survey Report
for
Opportunity Center,
Inc. an affiliate of the
ServiceSource
Network of Programs

Organization

Opportunity Center, Inc. an affiliate of the
ServiceSource Network of Programs
3030 Bowers Street
Wilmington, DE 19802

Organizational Leadership

Cynthia Sterling, Director Employment Services
Dennis Dapolito, Executive Director

Survey Dates

May 18-20, 2009

Survey Team

Marcy A. Nelson Hadley, M.S., Administrative Surveyor
Sherry L. Cain, M.S., Program Surveyor

Programs/Services Surveyed

Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job Development
Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job Supports
Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job-Site Training
Employment Services: Employee Development Services
Employment Services: Employment Skills Training Services
Employment Services: Organizational Employment Services

Governance Standards Applied

Previous Survey

May 1-3, 2006
Three-Year Accreditation



Survey Outcome

Three-Year Accreditation
Expiration: June 2012

SURVEY SUMMARY

Opportunity Center, Inc. an affiliate of the ServiceSource Network of Programs has strengths in many areas.

- The organization has an excellent safety program. Drill checklists prompt those conducting the drill to attend to the environmental and procedural factors that identify drill issues. Attentive follow-up actions to issues identified are routinely done.
- The infection control policy stands ready to deal with routine contagious disease and pandemics. Increased threat levels prompt the staff members to increase precautions, such as reducing large group meetings in favor of web conferences or teleconferences, increased surface disinfecting, examination of appropriateness of cleaning products, and all usual universal precautions.
- Critical incident reporting and accident and “near-miss” reporting are well used for trending to avoid injury. These data are used for training and to make environmental changes.
- The organization has placed great value on the men and women who deliver services to persons with disabilities through the Employer of Choice Initiative. New leaders are nurtured through mentoring and management training. This ensures that the organization is fed with qualified internally developed talent when succession becomes necessary. Performance evaluation is done in conjunction with peer review and self-assessment. A well structured, merit-based compensation program ensures that outcomes are delivered.
- The organization takes staff development seriously. Initial training and ongoing annual training are well developed, are provided in a variety of ways, and use innovative mediums. Staff members are allowed to develop skills through training that will assist the person to grow in his or her career path. A system of tuition reimbursement is also available.
- Since the last accreditation survey, the organization has hired a new executive director. Under his leadership, with a well-seasoned and dedicated staff and with support from the network, he has moved the organization toward the goal of business development. With increased financial strength, long-held values of community employment rather than center based have become a positive outcome for willing persons served.
- The organization is recognized for its excellent marketing tools. Publications are highly professional and clearly improve the public image of the organization and enhance the community view of persons with disabilities. Board reports, Microsoft® Office PowerPoint presentations, and internal reports are proudly covered with the pictures of capable individuals with disabilities. Even the most tedious statistical report points everyone back to the mission of the organization.
- The local director for the network board is seriously committed to the success and advancement of the organization. It is clear that his effort is vision driven and locally grown. The organization has well-instilled enthusiasm and dedication, and he is an excellent representative to communicate its needs and champion its successes.
- The organization has embraced the concept of assistive technology as it relates to the organizational employment setting. Workflow, adaptive devices, and good common sense are used to ensure that those who work are reasonably accommodated and their work is enhanced.

- The organization ensures that all persons are paid the federal minimum wage unless a person opts out of the subsidy program. This demonstrates a commitment to the mission by using earned income to demonstrate a living commitment to corporate values.
- Extensive technology policies and procedures are in evidence that demonstrate a high level of technological sophistication. The technology planning done is not only adequate for current use, but also allows and encourages the organization to move forward in achievement and efficiency as technology advances in the future.
- Technology has been effectively used to enhance communication among organizational staff members and individuals at the corporate level. A well-designed intranet is used to host information such as policy and procedures, training information, forms, and employment information.
- Input is obtained on a number of levels. Focus groups, satisfaction surveys, personal meetings, and phone calls are used to collect information, collect input, and create partnerships. As one high level funding source stated, “Maybe they throw all my comments in the trash, but they are the only local provider who actually asks me what I think and what I expect in the future. They know how to develop a partnership. At least they ask!”
- The organization has demonstrated an ability and commitment to tailoring services to community needs. Programs have expanded or have been developed based on those identified needs. An example is the program for seniors and another is the effort and planning being done toward autism services. The organization embraces positive change at all levels, ensuring a vibrant array of services, high level of staff satisfaction, and a thriving organization.
- The organization has a true commitment to providing quality services and the ability and willingness to continually improve. Not only are the CARF standards embraced, they are woven into the fabric of the organization and lived daily.
- The organization is commended for its creativity in developing diverse organizational employment opportunities for persons served. These various contract jobs enable persons with a wide range of disabilities to receive work skills training. For example, the organization has initiated a digital image security contract. This contract required much consultation between the engineers of the company and organizational staff, resulting in needed job accommodations to make the contract successful.
- The dedicated, enthusiastic staff members are passionate about the services provided and are always looking for innovative and cutting-edge programs to better serve the persons served. Staff members are respectful of the individuals served and truly care about assisting them to reach their hopes and dreams.
- The organization is commended for its creativity in developing creative and nontraditional community employment opportunities for persons served regardless of the severity of disabilities. The employment consultants go above and beyond to ensure that good job matches are made and natural supports are in place.
- The organization is commended for the longevity of its competitive job placements. The organization has an 84-percent retention rate due to its effectiveness in using situational assessments and the time spent in making good job matches.

- The organization received a five-year Projects with Industry grant in October 2008. This grant will serve approximately 463 young adults, ages 16 to 25, throughout the state of Delaware in need of career development and job placement services. Special emphasis will be placed on young individuals transitioning from the foster care system and mental health services.
- Through a partnership with the Brandywine School District, the organization has initiated the FrameWORK for Success Program. This innovative program allows students with disabilities who are in their last year of high school to attend work adjustment training and career exploration at the organization. During this first year, six students have participated. The program has been so successful that one student has already been placed in competitive employment, and plans have been made to increase the number of students participating next year. The organization hopes that this program will be duplicated with other school districts as success is demonstrated.

In the following areas Opportunity Center, Inc. an affiliate of the ServiceSource Network of Programs demonstrates exemplary conformance to the standards.

- The organization is commended for the sophistication and depth of the strategic planning and, even more importantly, for the follow-through, monitoring, and outcomes achieved as a result of this planning. The senior management team identifies overarching annual goals and provides a planning template to the organization and the family of affiliates. The organization provides local input and adds local goals to the plan. Although the scope of the entire strategic plan is complex, it can be synthesized into a brief and comprehensible summary.
- The organization is commended for its excellent fiscal planning, management, and reporting. Managers have the opportunity to provide input to plan development and are held accountable for actual performance. A very tight schedule is developed for monthly closing of the books and review of the profit and loss statements. This keeps the focus on reaching and exceeding financial goals.
- The organization is commended for the analysis of all critical incidents that is done annually and more often recording not only accidents and injuries, but also “near misses.” This analysis has resulted in optimal outcomes. Environmental changes have been made to make accidents less likely. Training has been enhanced in areas related to actual hazards. Specific types of accidents and injuries have declined, with savings not just in workers’ compensation costs, but also in reduction in human pain and suffering.

Opportunity Center, Inc. an affiliate of the ServiceSource Network of Programs should seek improvement in the areas identified by the recommendations in the report. Consultation given does not indicate nonconformance to standards but is offered as a suggestion for further quality improvement.

On balance, Opportunity Center has shown a commitment to providing services that are best practice. The CARF standards are embedded seamlessly into everyday practice. The organization has chosen well in affiliating with a larger organization that can specialize in providing the technical assistance needed to grow and thrive. The organization has used excellent business practices toward the accomplishment of a well-defined and dearly held vision. Persons with disabilities are consistently at the center of this mission-driven organization. The organization has shown the willingness and ability to continue to embrace conformance to all the standards.

Opportunity Center, Inc. an affiliate of the ServiceSource Network of Programs has earned a Three-Year Accreditation. This is a significant achievement for everyone involved, including the persons served, their families, staff members, and other stakeholders. The organization is encouraged to use the tenure of this accreditation to implement the recommendations and to maintain the commitment to quality care.