

ACCREDITATION FOR OHIO PCSAs

Developed by

Public Children Services Association of Ohio
(PCSAO)



PCSAO

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What is the Council on Accreditation (COA)?

- A national accrediting body founded in 1997 by CWLA and ACF
- COA accredits over **1,600** public and private agencies in the areas of Child Welfare, behavioral healthcare, and counseling Services



What is Accreditation?

- A formal acknowledgement from COA that agency services are delivered according to nationally recognized standards of best practice
- A commitment to continuously improving services that agency provides to clients
- A process to help identify organizational strengths & weaknesses related to quality of services
- A designation that denotes professional expertise in the field and competent service delivery
- A measurement tool providing external validation that agency delivers quality services to clients and community

Accreditation is NOT a goal in itself, it is obtained so that agency services to clients are continuously improved.



Why Should Your Agency Seek Accreditation?

◆ Public Value:

- ★ Public understand the value of accreditation
- ★ Public expects that important services are provided according to accepted standards

Q: Would you feel confident in the quality of services being offered by a hospital or a university that wasn't accredited?



Why Should Your Agency Seek Accreditation?

◆ Rule vs. Best Practice Standards:

- ★ OH PCSAs operate according to rules which define only minimal acceptable standards
- ★ Communities do not want services that just meet minimum standards
- ★ Agency should be pursue “best practice” with regard to serving clients

Accreditation ensures that agency policies and procedures are evaluated against nationally accepted standards of best practice.



Why Should Your Agency Seek Accreditation?

◆ **Accountability:**

- ★ Accreditation increases agency accountability to community & shareholders
- ★ Accreditation demonstrates agency's commitment to providing high quality services
- ★ Accountability translates into higher public confidence
- ★ Public confidence is important when agency asks public to "invest" in a levy

Accreditation clearly communicates that the agency is accountable to the public.



Why Should Your Agency Seek Accreditation?

Other Benefits:

- ★ Accreditation confers a measure of professional prestige to the agency
- ★ Accreditation brings respect from community shareholders and fellow agencies

The process brings all units and departments to together with a focus on improving service delivery

Why is now a good time to seek accreditation?

Other Benefits:

ODJFS is offering.....80% reimbursement for the costs of become accredited



Benefits of Becoming Accredited

1. Benefits for Agency Leadership

Accreditation is a commitment to put the needs of the clients first.

Q: Our agency has done many things to improve services, aren't we already putting the needs of children and families first?

A: Accreditation means that the agency has followed specific steps related to service delivery. Fore example:

- The agency has sought and obtained client and shareholder feedback
- The agency has acted to integrate feedback into its policies and procedures.
- Policies and procedures are formalized, communicated and understood throughout the agency



Benefits for Agency Leadership:

2. Management Information System

- ★ **Supports the collection of data to support decision making** (i.e. calculation of service delivery costs versus actual or potential revenues)
- ★ **Supports continuous quality improvement** (makes agency MIS system more accurate and reliable)
- ★ **Improves ability to meet federal, state, and grantor reporting requirements**



Benefits for Agency Leadership:

3. Community relations

Accreditation provides external validation that agency staff have professional expertise in the field and operate in accordance with accepted standard of practice.

Improved accountability demonstrates to the community

- ★ Effective agency leadership
- ★ The agency is a trustworthy steward of public resources
- ★ Agency services and procedures are evaluated using nationally accepted standards



Benefits for Agency Leadership:

4. Organization Development

Accreditation supports a clear mission that defines how the agency will enhance services to the community.

The accreditation process helps to:

- ★ Guide organizational development
- ★ Promote the adoption of effective policies and procedures
- ★ Support financial management and public accountability

The accreditation process serves as an ideal continuation of agency strategic planning efforts.



Why Is Accreditation Right For Our Agency?

Risk Management

- Provides a solid risk-management strategy
 - ★ Work place or in the work environment
 - ★ Building/structure
 - ★ Worker safety
 - ★ Case management activities
 - ★ Record keeping
- The agency is better prepared during emergency situations or during the course of business
 - ★ Personnel
 - ★ People served
 - ★ Facilities



Why Is Accreditation Right For Our Agency?

Financial Management

The accreditation process improves the agency's accountability to the public.

- Improved accountability translates into increased public confidence (important for levies)
- Promotes sound financial practices in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting



Why Is Accreditation Right For Our Agency?

Ethics

Accreditation supports adherence to high standards of ethical conduct with regard to:

- Fiscal procedures and responsibilities
- Personal gain
- Potential conflict of interest



Why Is Accreditation Right For Our Agency?

Organizational Structure

Accreditation assures an effective and functional structure for governing the agency including:

- Monitoring risks which may expose the organization to liability
- Evaluating the Executive Director or Director



Why Is Accreditation Right For Our Agency?

Benefits for Agency Staff

■ Roles and Responsibilities:

- ◆ Staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- ◆ Staff receive appropriate training on the organization's policies, procedures, and management practices

■ Participation:

- ◆ Staff are involved and participate in the accreditation process
- ◆ Staff come together to improve services to clients

■ Recognition:

- ◆ Gives staff external validation, build staff moral
- ◆ Staff are recognized internally for their accomplishment & participation in the process



How will an Accredited Agency Better Serve Clients?

Benefits for Clients: Obtaining Services

- Clients can be confident that they are getting quality services through an accredited agency.
 - ★ Agency regularly obtains feedback from clients
 - ★ Client feedback is actively integrated into agency policies and procedures
 - ★ Policies and procedures are clearly communicated, and understood throughout the agency

- Clients participate fully in service delivery, setting and modifying service goals, and making decisions about the services they receive.

- Clients are served in a respectful manner, and a culturally competent service environment.

Q: Our agency works hard to be sensitive to issues of diversity, aren't we already serving clients in a respectful manner?

A: Accreditation means that not only does the agency seek feedback from the diverse clients it serves, it also acts on this feedback and gets evaluated according to nationally recognized standards of quality of service delivery



How will an Accredited Agency Better Serve Clients?

Benefits for Clients: Rights

- Clients have access to services for which they are eligible in compliance with all applicable legal and regulatory requirements.
- Clients are informed of their rights and responsibilities. They are given sufficient information for them to make informed choices about services.
- Clients rights are consistent with legal requirements, their best interests, and the organization's professional judgment.

Q: Our agency is already mandated to provide services in accordance with the rules and laws of the State of Ohio, isn't this sufficient?

A: Accreditation improves the services of the agency beyond the bare minimum compliance requirements in rule and law. It is a movement away from providing services that exceed the minimal requirements, and toward providing services that best fit the needs of clients.



TIPS FOR EXECUTIVES

Tip # 1 Use this presentation to educate shareholders about the value of accreditation.

Tip # 2 Obtaining **Buy-In** is crucial to the process of becoming Accredited

Tip # 3 When discussing accreditation to your Board, bring in a Director from another agency who has become accredited to help you as a Spokesperson. They can provide the voice of experience, share success stories, and help to answer questions. Similarly bringing in Staff person from an accredited agency to share experiences can help you present this to your staff.



AS YOU GO THROUGH THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

- Keep accreditation in the forefront, right out in front of people
- Set many small detailed steps (it's manageable in small bits)
- Give regular feedback about progress
- When someone reaches a goal, celebrate it.
- Don't miss an opportunity to celebrate an accomplishment!
- Employee recognition can be an important part of the process.
- Use e-mails, a newsletter, or website, to recognize even small accomplishments.



RESOURCES

- Council on accreditation
 - Ongoing assistance
 - Website contains standards and many tools for accredited agencies <http://www.coanet.org>
- Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS)
<http://www.state.oh.us/odjfs>
- Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO)
<http://www.pcsao.org>





ACCREDITATION FOR OHIO PCSAs

BUY-IN

■ Get Buy-In

★ Internal Buy-In

The agency governance structure or Board must fully support the plan to pursue accreditation

★ Community Buy-In

- Important shareholders in your community
(County commissioners, Judges, other member of the Family and Children First Council)
- Community Involvement
- Dialogue with the Community



Community Involvement

- ◆ Strategic Planning is a natural marriage with accreditation. The community involvement and input provides a perfect opportunity to pursue the principles of accreditation.
- ◆ How is the community involved in the accreditation process?
- ◆ A stakeholder survey is done as part of the accreditation process
- ◆ The agency distributes surveys to community stakeholders, and the surveys are returned directly to COA. So it might sense for your agency to do preliminary surveys to determine public opinions around service issues.

Sample questions:

- ★ Where your needs met by the agency?
- ★ Did you find our hours convenient?
- ★ What do you think could be improved?



Dialogue with the Community

Make accreditation part of your dialogue when you communicate with important community stakeholders.

Sample Dialogues:

WHAT'S NEW?

Response: "What's new in ___agency?, Well, we are becoming accredited so that we provide the highest level of services to the community. This will show that we are evaluated and accountable in accordance with the highest nationally recognized standards in our field".

WHEN A SHAREHOLDER VOICES SOMETHING NEGATIVE ABOUT THE AGENCY

Response: "That's an interesting point, we are looking at issues like that as we go through the process of becoming nationally accredited. This will help ensure that the agency's services to the community meet the highest accepted standards for quality in our field. I'd be happy to talk to you sometime about your concern, and how we might be able to better address similar situations in the future."

