

COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION

Maximizing Accreditation's Impact

We at the Council on Accreditation (COA) know that the accreditation process requires a significant investment of resources for organizations. Our goal is to alleviate pain points and make the experience even more intuitive, meaningful, and relevant, all while increasing efficiencies, maintaining rigor, and adding value.

With that in mind, we are excited to announce some enhancements to our accreditation standards and processes with our 2020 Edition! COA continually evaluates what we offer to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our accredited organizations and the communities they serve. We achieve this through continuous feedback from our organizations, reviewing best practices within our service areas, and ensuring that our standards are aligned with and grounded in comprehensive research.

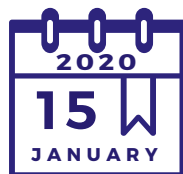
WHAT IS OUR GOAL?

To **increase the impact of accreditation** by focusing COA's standards and processes on those practices and activities that will have **the greatest effect on the people and communities COA-accredited organizations serve**, while ensuring that our mission-driven organizations are **equipped to meet changing operating environments and the evolving needs of their clients**.

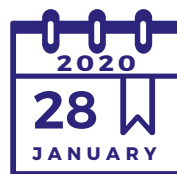
WHO IS AFFECTED?

All private, public, and Canadian organizations.

WHEN IS IT HAPPENING?



Standards will be officially released on COA's website/portals.



Standards assignments begin.

WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN IMPLEMENTED?

We have been busy setting the stage for the arrival of our 2020 Edition. To-date we have:

- Updated COA's Exemption Policy (May 2019) to exclude programs that will close within 6 months of the Site Visit from the accreditation review. That way, organizations can direct resources to the programs that are central to their mission.
- Updated the Generic Services Summary Supplement (GSS) policy to allow organizations to opt-in or out of the GSS for applicable programs. Organizations can now prioritize their services and direct their time and resources towards activities that have the greatest impact on the people and communities they serve. Since releasing the updated policy in June 2018, 52 organizations have opted-out of completing GSS, for a total of 94 eligible programs.
- Retired four Private service sections in Q4, 2018: *Guardianship Services for Minors, Advocacy Services, Immigration Legal Services, and Primary Care Services*.

WHAT'S CHANGING IN OUR STANDARDS?

31%

Reduction in the amount of AM/SDA self-study evidence

30%

Reduction in the number of Administration and Management/Service Delivery Administration (AM/SDA) standards

20%

Reduction in the amount of Service section self-study evidence

17%

Reduction in the number of Service standards

We have refocused our standards by:

- Clarifying and strengthening the connection between Administration and Management (AM) standards and effective, mission-driven organizations (i.e. What role does each department play in achieving an organization's mission?). Our aim is to create a greater focus on the standards that promote an impactful, mission-driven culture and equip organizations to meet the needs of their clients.
- Reducing the number of standards and evidence to allow organizations to commit more time and resources to those practices that have the greatest impact on clients and their ability to be an effective, sustainable, and mission-driven organization.
- Incorporating a new Core Concept on Logic Models into every service section to guide organizations to think systematically about:
 - » The client outcomes they hope to achieve
 - » The ultimate impact each of their programs is intended to have
 - » How the program will utilize its assets and resources to achieve its goals

HOW DID WE DO IT?

To achieve the goal of maximizing the impact of our accreditation process, we:

- Surveyed organizations and peers for feedback on our process
- Relied on the effectiveness domains, which was our internal way of organizing what research was out there on effective organizations
- Eliminated or combined redundant standards within and across sections and reorganized similar content whenever possible
- Minimized Interpretations
- Moved research notes into the Reference List for each section
- Eliminated redundant evidence or documentation requests from across the various stages of the accreditation process

We also made targeted changes to the evidence required to address identified pain points for both volunteers and organizations, including:

- Removing all narratives
- Removing requests for “descriptions of services” from the self-study evidence
- Minimizing requests for meeting minutes and clarifying the quantity that is needed when appropriate
- Standardizing how we ask for training documentation
- Revising language for On Site activities to: “Interviews May Include” and standardizing list of interviewees
- Standardizing how we ask for information on caseload or workload
- Removing requests for documentation of legal compliance
- Eliminating Data Sheets from the service sections except where they may be provided as an optional resource for reporting information when desired
- Simplifying the upload process to reduce the amount of time this process takes

WHAT'S CHANGING IN OUR PROCESSES?

We have also made some updates to our processes to make them even more intuitive and relevant.

- We refined the suite of Service Standards to better align with COA's mission. This included:
 - » Retiring one Private service section in January 2020: *Child Protective Services*
 - » Retiring eight Canadian service sections in January 2020: *Adult Protective Services, Disaster Recovery Case Management, Opioid Treatment, Wilderness and Adventure Based Therapeutic Outdoor Services, Youth Justice Case Management, Youth Justice Day Services, Child Protective Services, and Community Change Initiatives*
 - » Retiring six Public service sections in January 2020: *Financial Education and Counseling Services, Primary Care Services, Wilderness and Adventure Based Therapeutic Outdoor Services, Experiential Education Supplement, Refugee Resettlement Services, and Immigration and Legal Services*
- We revised the standards update process from ongoing/monthly updates to semi-annual updates. This means that organizations will have to commit less time and resources to monitoring update information on the website and MyCOA portal. This new process will roll out with the revised standards in January 2020.
- We expanded the categories of Fundamental Practice (FP) standards to include practices that promote organizational effectiveness. Beginning in January of 2020, FP categories will include Health and Safety, Client Rights, and Organizational Effectiveness. The definitions of those are as follows:



Health and Safety

Practices that promote the health and safety of personnel and service recipients. Health in this context is defined to include more immediate health concerns such as ensuring access to proper medical care. It is not intended to apply to longer term health or wellness topics such as healthy eating or exercise, although exceptions may be made when such practices are central to the goals or desired impact of the program.



Client Rights

Practices that promote privacy, confidentiality, respect, self-determination, and equitable treatment.



Organizational Effectiveness

Practices central to the development of impactful and sustainable organizations. This category establishes the critical relationship between essential management functions (e.g. hiring, supervision, and staff development) and an organization's ability to have a positive impact on the people and communities they serve.

- The discontinuation of focused accreditation in January 2020 due to the relief and improved focus on clients/mission that will be provided by the updated standards.

PLUS: LAUNCH OF THE HUMAN SERVICES BENCHMARKING INITIATIVE

In January 2020, COA will launch our human services benchmarking initiative as a function of our Maintenance of Accreditation (MOA) process! This will allow COA-accredited organizations to contextualize and measure their performance using benchmarks from peer organizations across the United States and Canada. This exciting new service will collect and aggregate 16 measures of organizational health and sustainability across five performance domains.

Accredited organizations will receive a custom benchmarking report comparing their performance, using non-identifiable data, against a custom subset of COA-accredited peer organizations. More details will be released in January 2020.

THANK YOU

Thank you for continuing to be a part of the COA community, especially if you were one of those who provided some of the valuable feedback that led to these 2020 enhancements. We hope that you are as excited about them as we are.

Want additional information? Have any questions? If you are an in-process or accredited organization, please reach out to your Accreditation Coordinator. If you are seeking accreditation with us for the first time, please contact Joe Perrow at jperrow@coanet.org.