



Recovery Residence Quality Standards

(Last updated: October 7, 2015)

Recovery residences provide a spectrum of living environments that are free from alcohol and illicit drug use with a focus on peer support and connection to other recovery services and supports. All recovery residences are founded on Social Model Recovery Philosophy and have existed in the United States since at least the mid-1800s. Today, the National Alliance for Recovery Residences (NARR) has identified several different types, known as the 4 Levels of Support. They range in the type and intensity of services they provide, which cost effectively matches individual needs with a continuum of support.

In 2011, NARR drew from the intelligence of the Association of Halfway House and Alcoholism Programs (AHHAP), which was founded in the 1960s, from several regional recovery residence organizations that had been in existence for decades, and from experts in the field of recovery to develop the first national recovery residence quality standards. Under the 2011 standard, NARR Affiliates certified over 2,500 recovery residences across the United States, which represented approximately 25,000 recovery beds. In 2013, NARR merged with AHHAP and by 2015, had recognized affiliate organizations in 20 states. State affiliates are responsible for certifying recovery residences that meet the national standard. At its 2014 Best Practices Summit, NARR began the process of reviewing and revising the national standard with several goals in mind. The standard should:

1. Promote fidelity to the model – Over time, changing markets, policies, and funding have diluted the recovery residence model. Currently, health reform, justice reform and housing choice initiatives are driving market change. As stakeholders look to recovery residences to generate more cost effective outcomes, mechanisms must be in place to ensure the model is implemented in a way supported by outcomes, theory, research, and practice.
2. Be more educational – More than defining what we do as recovery residences providers, audiences should understand why we do it.
3. Be more measurable – Providers applying for certification and the state affiliates who are evaluating their applications should have an objective means of determining whether they meet the standard as well as a clear road map to quality improvement, if they do not.
4. Empower choice – Peers, families and funders need a better way of understanding what choices in recovery residences are available to them, what to expect from an experience in a quality recovery residence, and how they know if they receive what they are paying for.

In the pages that follow, you will find the 2015 NARR Standard, which was ratified on October 7, 2014

Domains	Principles	Quality Standards (click on the links below to navigate the document)	I	II	III	IV
Administrative and Operational	Operate with integrity	01. Are guided by a mission and vision	✓	✓	✓	✓
		02. Adheres to legal and ethical codes	✓	✓	✓	✓
		03. Are financially honest and forthright	✓	✓	✓	✓
		04. Collect data for continuous quality improvement	✓	✓	✓	✓
		05. Operate with prudence	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Uphold resident rights	06. Communicate rights and requirements before agreements are signed	✓	✓	✓	✓
		07. Promote self and peer advocacy	✓	✓	✓	✓
		08. Support housing choice	✓	✓	✓	✓
		09. Protect privacy	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Are recovery-oriented	10. View recovery as a person-driven, holistic and lifelong process	✓	✓	✓	✓
		11. Are culturally responsive, congruent and/or competent	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Are peer staffed and governed	12. Involve peers in governance in meaningful ways	✓	✓	✓	✓
		13. Use peer staff and resident leaders in meaningful ways	✓	✓	✓	✓
		14. Maintain resident and staff leadership based on recovery principles	✓	✓	✓	✓
		15. Create and sustain an atmosphere of recovery support	✓	✓	✓	✓
		16. Ensure staff are appropriately trained and credentialed			✓	✓
		17. Provide support staff supervision			✓	✓
Recovery support	Promote health	18. Encourage residents to own their own recovery	✓	✓	✓	✓
		19. Inform residents about community-based supports	✓	✓	✓	✓
		20. Offer recovery support services in informal settings	✓	✓	✓	✓
		21. Offer recovery support services in formal settings			✓	✓
		22. Offer life skills development in formal settings			✓	✓
		23. Offer clinical services in accordance with State law				✓
	Provide a home	24. Provide a physically and emotionally safe, secure and respectful environment	✓	✓	✓	✓
		25. Are alcohol and drug-free environments	✓	✓	✓	✓
		26. Are cultivated through structure and accountability	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Inspire purpose	27. Promote meaningful daily activities	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Cultivate community	28. Create a “functionally equivalent family”	✓	✓	✓	✓
		29. Foster ethical peer-based mutually supportive relationships between residents and/or staff	✓	✓	✓	✓
		30. Connect residents to the local recovery community	✓	✓	✓	✓
Property and Architecture	Promote recovery	31. Create a home-like environment	✓	✓	✓	✓
		32. Promote community	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Promote health & safety	33. Promote home safety	✓	✓	✓	✓
		34. Have an emergency plan	✓	✓	✓	✓
Good neighbor	Are good neighbors	35. Are compatible with the neighborhood	✓	✓	✓	✓
		36. Are responsive to neighbor complaints	✓	✓	✓	✓
		37. Have courtesy rules	✓	✓	✓	✓

✓=required; ®= strongly recommended

Administrative and Operational Domain

Core Principle: Operate with integrity

01. Are guided by a mission and vision

Applied to Levels

As evidenced by:

I II III IV

- .01 ☐ A written mission statement that corresponds with NARR's core principles as stated in this document
- .02 ☐ A vision statement that corresponds with NARR's core principles as stated in this document

✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

02. Adheres to legal and ethical codes

As evidenced by:

I II III IV

- .01 ☐ An affidavit that attests to complying with non-discriminatory state and federal requirements.
- .02 ☐ Marketing materials, claims and advertising that are honest and substantiated as opposed to:
- False or misleading statements or unfounded claims or exaggerations;
 - Testimonials that do not really reflect the real opinion of the involved individual;
 - Price claims that are misleading;
 - Therapeutic strategies for which licensure and/or counseling certifications are required but not applicable at the site; or
 - Misleading representation of outcomes.
- .03 ☐ Prior to the initial acceptance of any funds, the operator must inform applicants of all fees and charges for which they will be, or could potentially be, responsible. This information needs to be in writing and signed by the applicant.
- .04 ☐ The operator must maintain accurate and complete records of all resident charges, payments and deposits. A resident must be provided with a statement of his/her personal charge and payment history upon request.
- .05 ☐ The operator must disclose refund policies to applicants in advance of acceptance into the home, and before accepting any applicant fees.
- .06 ☐ Staff must never become involved in residents' personal financial affairs, including lending or borrowing money, or other transactions involving property or services, except that the operator may make agreements with residents with respect to payment of fees.

✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

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|-----|---|---|---|---|---|
| .07 | ☐ Policy and procedure that ensures refunds consistent with the terms of a resident agreement are provided within 10 business days, and preferably upon departure from the home. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|

03. Are financially honest and forthright

As evidenced by:		I	II	III	IV
.01	☐ Identifying the type of accounting system used and its capability to fully document all resident financial transaction, such as fees, payments and deposits	✓	✓	✓	✓
.02	☐ Policy and procedure for disclosing to potential residents their financial obligations, including costs for which they might become liable, such as forfeiture of any deposits and fees as a result of prematurely leaving the home	✓	✓	✓	✓
.03	☐ Policies about the timing of and requirements for the return of deposits, if financial deposits are required	✓	✓	✓	✓
.04	☐ The ability to produce clear statements of a resident's financial dealings with the operator (although it's not a requirement that statements be automatically produced)	✓	✓	✓	✓
.05	☐ Policies and procedures that ensure the follow conditions are met, if the residence provider or a staff member employs, contractors or enters into a paid work agreement with residents: ▪ Paid work arrangements are completely voluntary. Residents do not suffer consequences for declining work. Residents who accept paid work are not treated more favorably than residents who do not. ▪ Paid work for the operator or staff does not impair participating residents' progress towards their recovery goals. ▪ The paid work is treated the same as any other employment situation. ▪ Wages are commensurate with marketplace value, and at least minimum wage. The arrangements are viewed by a majority of the residents as fair. ▪ Paid work does not confer special privileges on residents doing the work. Work relationships do not negatively affect the recovery environment or morale of the home. Unsatisfactory work relationships are terminated without recriminations that can impair recovery.	✓	✓	✓	✓

04. Collect data for continuous quality improvement

As evidenced by:		I	II	III	IV
.01	Procedures that collect resident's demographic information	✓	✓	✓	✓
.02	Procedures that collect, evaluate and report accurate process and			✓	✓

outcomes data for continuous quality improvement

05. Operate with prudence

As evidenced by:	I	II	III	IV
.01 ☐ Legal business entity documentation e.g. incorporation, LLC documents or business license			✓	✓
.02 ☐ Documentation that the owner/operator has current liability coverage and other insurance appropriate to their level of support	✓	✓	✓	✓
.03 ☐ Written permission from the owner of record to operate a recovery residence on the property			✓	✓
.04 ☐ Policies and procedures that ensure that background checks are conducted on all staff, including volunteers that have direct and regular interaction with residents.		®	®	✓

® Strongly recommended

Core Principle: Uphold resident rights

06. Communicate rights and requirements before agreements are signed

Applied to Levels

As evidenced by:	I	II	III	IV
.01 ☐ A process that ensures residents receive an orientation on agreements, policies and procedures prior to committing to terms.	✓	✓	✓	✓
.02 ☐ Written resident's rights and requirements (e.g. House Rules and grievance process) posted in common areas	✓	✓	✓	✓
.03 ☐ Written resident agreement that includes: - Services provided - Recovery plan including a move-in (i.e. goals and objectives) and move-out (i.e. contingency) plan - Financial terms	✓	✓	✓	✓
.04 ☐ Resident documents that fully disclose policies regarding possessions (personal property) left in a home.	✓	✓	✓	✓

07. Promote self and peer advocacy

As evidenced by:	I	II	III	IV
.01 ☐ Grievance policy and procedures, including the right to take unresolved grievances to the operator's oversight organization	✓	✓	✓	✓
.02 ☐ Policy and procedure for identifying the responsible person(s) in	✓	✓	✓	✓

charge to all residents

08. Support housing choice

As evidenced by:	I	II	III	IV
.01 ☐ Applicant screening policies and procedures provide current residents a voice in the acceptance of new members.	✓	✓	✓	✓
.02 ☐ Policies and procedures that promote resident-driven length of stay	✓	✓	✓	
.03 ☐ Policies and procedures that defend residents' fair housing rights	✓	✓	✓	✓

09. Protect privacy

As evidenced by:	I	II	III	IV
.01 ☐ Policies and procedures that keep resident's records secure, with access limited to authorized staff only	✓	✓	✓	✓
.02 ☐ Policies and procedures that comply with applicable confidentiality laws	✓	✓	✓	✓

Core Principle: Are recovery-oriented

10. View recovery as a person-driven, holistic and lifelong process

Applied to Levels

As evidenced by:	I	II	III	IV
.01 ☐ Documenting that residents participate in the development of their recovery plan including an exit plan and/or lifelong plan.	✓	✓	✓	✓
.02 ☐ Documenting that the operator cultivates alumni participation.	✓	✓	✓	✓

11. Are culturally responsive and competent

As evidenced by:	I	II	III	IV
.01 ☐ Policies and procedures that identify the priority population, which at a minimum includes persons in recovery from substance use but may also include other demographic criterion.	✓	✓	✓	✓
.02 ☐ A staffing or leadership plan that reflects the priority population's needs.	✓	✓	✓	✓
.03 ☐ Documented cultural responsiveness and competence trainings that are relevant to the priority population.		®	✓	✓

® Strongly recommended

Core Principle: Are peer staffed and governed

		Applied to Levels			
12. Involve peers in governance in meaningful ways		I	II	III	IV
As evidenced by at least one of the following:					
.01	☐ Some rules are made by the residents that the residents (not the staff) enforce	✓	✓	✓	✓
.02	☐ A resident council or process is in place that ensures resident's voices can be heard	✓	✓	✓	✓
.03	☐ The resident council has a voice in the governance of the home	✓	✓	✓	✓
13. Use peer staff and leaders in meaningful ways		I	II	III	IV
As evidenced by:					
.01	☐ Residents' responsibilities increase with their length of stay or progress in their recovery.	✓	✓	✓	✓
.02	☐ Staffing or leadership plan that formally includes a peer component	✓	✓	✓	✓
.03	☐ Written job description and/or contracts for peer staff and leaders			✓	✓
14. Maintain resident and staff leadership based on recovery principles		I	II	III	IV
As evidenced by:					
.01	☐ A home staffing or leadership plan that includes current residents and where possible, former residents that model recovery principles	✓	✓	✓	✓
.02	☐ Leader and/or staff job descriptions and selections are based in part on modeling recovery principles	✓	✓	✓	✓
15. Create and sustain an atmosphere of recovery support		I	II	III	IV
As evidenced by:					
.01	☐ Integrated recovery support in the daily activity schedule	✓	✓	✓	✓
.02	☐ The schedule includes formal and informal opportunities for staff and resident interaction in support of recovery	✓	✓	✓	✓
16. Ensure staff are trained or credentialed appropriate to their level		I	II	III	IV
As evidenced by:					
.01	Written staffing or workforce development plan		®	✓	✓

.02	Certification and verification policies and procedures			✓	✓
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17. Provide supportive staff supervision

As evidenced by:	I	II	III	IV
.01 Policies and procedures for supervision of staff	®	®	✓	✓
.02 Ongoing skills development, oversight and support policies and procedures appropriate to staff roles and level of support	®	®	✓	✓

® Strongly recommended

Recovery Support Domain

Core Principle: Promote health

18. Encourage residents to own their recovery

Applied to Levels

As evidenced by:	I	II	III	IV
.01 ☐ Policies and procedures that encourage each resident to develop and participate in their own personalized recovery plan (Person-driven recovery)	✓	✓	✓	✓
.02 ☐ Policies and procedures that encourage residents to make their own outside appointments	✓	✓	✓	✓

19. Inform and encourage residents to participate in a range of community-based supports

As evidenced by:	I	II	III	IV
.01 ☐ Staff and/or resident leaders that are knowledgeable about local community-based resources	✓	✓	✓	✓
.02 ☐ Resource directories or similar resources are readily available to residents	✓	✓	✓	✓

20. Offer recovery support in informal social settings

As evidenced by:	I	II	III	IV
.01 ☐ Staffing plan that corresponds to the delivery of this service	✓	✓	✓	✓
.02 ☐ Traditions, policies or procedures that foster mutually supportive and recovery-oriented relationships between residents and/or staff through peer-based interactions	✓	✓	✓	✓

21. Offers recovery support services in formal settings

As evidenced by:	I	II	III	IV
.01 ☐ Weekly schedule of recovery support services recognized by the respective NARR Affiliate organization.			✓	✓
.02 ☐ Weekly schedule of recovery-oriented presentations, group exercises, and activities			✓	✓
.03 ☐ Staffing plan that corresponds to the delivery of this service			✓	✓

22. Offering life skills development services in a formal setting

As evidenced by:	I	II	III	IV
.01 ☐ Weekly schedule of formal life skills development services or classes			✓	✓
.02 ☐ Staffing plan that corresponds to the delivery of this service			✓	✓

23. Offer clinical services in accordance with State law

As evidenced by:	I	II	III	IV
.01 ☐ Weekly schedule of clinical services available to residents across all phases, if multiple phases are used				✓
.02 ☐ Staffing plan that corresponds to the delivery of this service				✓

Core Principle: Provide a home

Applied to Levels

24. Provide a physically and emotionally safe, secure and respectful environment

As evidenced by:	I	II	III	IV
.01 ☐ Policies and procedures, such as applicant screenings, that establish the home's priority population and cultivate physically and emotionally safe environments for discussing the needs, feelings and sustaining recovery-supportive connections.	✓	✓	✓	✓
.02 ☐ Policies that promote resident determined lengths of stay that support health and safety of the household/community	✓	✓	®	®

® Strongly recommended

25. Provide an alcohol and illicit drug-free environment

As evidenced by:	I	II	III	IV
.01 ☐ Written and enforced policies and procedures that address:	✓	✓	✓	✓

- Alcohol and/or other prohibited drug-seeking or use;
- Possession of hazardous and other prohibited items and associated searches;
- Drug-screening and or toxicology protocols; and
- Prescription and non-prescription medication usage and storage consistent with the Level of Support and relevant state law

26. Are cultivated through structure and accountability

As evidenced by:	I	II	III	IV
.01 ☐ Written resident rights, requirements, agreements, social covenants and/or "House Rules"	✓	✓	✓	✓
.02 ☐ Requirements and protocols for peer leadership and/or mentoring policies that foster individual and community accountability	✓	✓	✓	✓

Core Principle: Inspire purpose

27. Promote meaningful daily activities

Applied to Levels

As evidenced by:	I	II	III	IV
.01 ☐ A weekly schedule of the typical resident's activities	✓	✓	✓	✓
.02 ☐ Are residents encouraged to (at least one of the following):	✓	✓	✓	✓
▪ Work, going to school, or volunteer outside of the residence community (Level 1, 2 and some 3s)				
▪ Participate in mutual aid or caregiving (All Levels)				
▪ Participate in social, physical or creative activities (All Levels)				
▪ Attend daily or weekly programming (All Levels)				
.03 ☐ Person-driven recovery planning & peer governance	✓	✓	✓	✓

Core Principle: Cultivate community

28. Create a "functionally equivalent family" within the household

Applied to Levels

As evidenced by meeting at least 50% of the following:	I	II	III	IV
.01 ☐ Residents are involved in food preparation	✓	✓	✓	✓
.02 ☐ Residents have control over with whom they live	✓	✓	✓	✓
.03 ☐ Residents help maintain and clean the home e.g. chores	✓	✓	✓	✓
.04 ☐ Residents share in household expenses	✓	✓	✓	✓
.05 ☐ Family or house meetings are held at least once a week	✓	✓	✓	✓

.06	☐	Residents have access to the common areas of the home	✓	✓	✓	✓
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29. Foster ethical, peer-based mutually supportive relationships between residents and/or staff

As evidenced by:			I	II	III	IV
.01	☐	Policies and procedures that encourage residents to engage one another in informal activities and conversation	✓	✓	✓	✓
.02	☐	Policies and procedures that encourage staff to engage residents in informal activities and conversations	✓	✓	✓	✓
.03	☐	Policies and procedures that coordinate community gatherings, recreational events and/or other social activities amongst residents and/or staff	✓	✓	✓	✓

30. Connect residents to the local (greater) recovery community

As evidenced by at least 50% of the following for levels 2 through 4 and at least 1 for level 1s:			I	II	III	IV
.01	☐	Residents are informed of or linked to mutual aid, recovery community centers, recovery ministries recovery-focused leisure activities and recovery advocacy opportunities;	✓	✓	✓	✓
.02	☐	Mutual aid meetings are hosted on site and there are typically attendees from the greater recovery community	✓	✓	✓	✓
.03	☐	The recovery residence helps participants find a recovery mentor or mutual aid sponsor if they are having difficulty finding one		✓	✓	✓
.04	☐	Participants are encouraged to find a recovery mentor or mutual aid sponsor before leaving the recovery residence	✓	✓	✓	✓
.05	☐	Residents are formally linked with the community such as job search, education, family services, health and/or housing programs		✓	✓	✓
.06	☐	Residents engage in community relations and interactions to promote kinship with other recovery communities and goodwill for recovery services		✓	✓	✓
.07	☐	Sober social events are regularly scheduled (each participant can attend at least one).		✓	✓	✓

Property and Architecture Domain

Core Principle: Promote recovery

Applied to Levels

31. Create a home-like environment

As evidenced by:			I	II	III	IV
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.01	☐ Furnishing are typical of those found in single family homes or apartments as opposed to institutional settings	✓	✓	✓	✓
.02	☐ Entrances and exits that are home-like (vs institutional or clinical)	✓	✓	✓	✓
.03	☐ 50+ sq ft per bed per sleeping room	✓	✓	✓	✓
.04	☐ One sink, toilet and shower per six residents	✓	✓	✓	✓
.05	☐ Each resident has personal item storage	✓	✓	✓	✓
.06	☐ Each resident has food storage space	✓	✓	✓	✓
.07	☐ Laundry services are accessible to all residents	✓	✓	✓	✓
.08	☐ Working appliances	✓	✓	✓	✓
.09	☐ A staffing plan that provides for addressing repairs and maintenance in a timely fashion	✓	✓	✓	✓

32. Promote community

As evidenced by:		I	II	III	IV
.01	☐ Community room (space) large enough to reasonably accommodates community living and meetings.	✓	✓	✓	✓
.02	☐ A comfortable group area, a living room or sofas, for participants to informally socialize	✓	✓	✓	✓
.03	☐ A kitchen and dining area(s) that encourages residents to share meals together	✓	✓	✓	✓
.04	☐ Entertainment or recreational areas and/or furnishings that promote social engagement	✓	✓	✓	✓
.05	☐ Furniture that is in good condition	✓	✓	✓	✓

Core Principle: Promote health and safety

33. Create a home safety

As evidenced by:		Applied to Levels			
		I	II	III	IV
.01	☐ Affidavit from the owner or operator attesting that the residence meets nondiscriminatory local health and safety codes OR document from government agency or credentialed inspector attesting to the property meeting health and safety standards	✓	✓	✓	✓
.02	☐ Signed and dated safety self assessment checklist which includes ▪ Functioning smoke detectors in the sleeping rooms ▪ Functioning carbon monoxide detectors, if there are gas appliances ▪ Functioning fire extinguishers in plain sight and/or clearly marked locations ▪ Interior and exterior of the property is in a functional, safe and	✓	✓	✓	✓

	clean condition and free of fire hazards	✓	✓	✓	✓
.03	☐ Smoke-free living environment policy and/or designated smoking area outside of the residence.	✓	✓	✓	✓

34. Have an emergency plan

As evidenced by:	I	II	III	IV
.01 ☐ Post emergency numbers, procedures and evacuation maps in conspicuous locations	✓	✓	✓	✓
.02 ☐ Collect emergency contact information from residents and orient them to emergency procedures	✓	✓	✓	✓

Good Neighbor Domain

Core Principle: Are good neighbors

35. Are compatible with the neighborhood	Applied to Levels			
As evidenced by:	I	II	III	IV
.01 ☐ If recovery residence is in a residential neighborhood, there are no external indications that the property is anything other than a single family household typical of its neighborhood	✓	✓	✓	✓
.02 ☐ The property and its structures are consistently maintained	✓	✓	✓	✓

36. Are responsive to neighbor concerns

As evidenced by:	I	II	III	IV
.01 ☐ Policies and procedures that provide neighbors with the responsible person(s) contact information upon request	✓	✓	✓	✓
.02 ☐ Policies and procedures that require the responsible person(s) to respond to neighbor's concerns even if it is not possible to resolve the issue	✓	✓	✓	✓
.03 ☐ New resident orientation includes how residents and staff are to greet and interact with neighbors and/or concerned parties	✓	✓	✓	✓

37. Have courtesy rules

As evidenced by:	I	II	III	IV
.01 ☐ Policies that are responsive or preemptive to neighbor's reasonable complaints regarding ▪ Smoking ▪ Loitering	✓	✓	✓	✓

- Parking
 - Noise
 - Lewd or offensive language
 - Cleanliness of public space around the property
- .02 ☐ Parking courtesy rules where street parking is scarce ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓