



Quality Assurances ACCREDITATION REPORT

Skills Development Services, Inc.

704 South Washington St., Tullahoma TN 37388

Jane Edwards, Executive Director



CQL Team: Peg Ezell, Lead Quality Enhancement Specialist
Latrese Johnson, TN DIDD Accreditation Team

Review Dates: August 31- September 3, 2021

Organizational Contact Name: Jane Edwards, Executive Director

OVERVIEW OF CQL QUALITY ASSURANCES ACCREDITATION

CQL Accreditation promotes excellence in person-centered services and supports that leads to increased quality of life. It's about continuous improvement. CQL Accreditation facilitates organizational development in person-centered services and supports and personal quality of life outcomes.

CQL's Quality Assurances Accreditation is grounded in over 50 years of CQL leadership and peer-reviewed research. We focus on the critical elements that lead to increased quality of life for people.

This first on-site accreditation visit focused on:

- **Health, Safety, and Human Security, as evidenced by your organization's alignment with, and monitoring of, the *Basic Assurances*® (BA)**
Alignment with, and monitoring of, the *Basic Assurances*® ensures accountabilities for the fundamental and non-negotiable requirements for all human service providers. The visit focused on systems and practices and their effectiveness from the perspective of those supported by the organization.
- **Supporting personal quality of life as measured by the *Personal Outcome Measures*® (POM)**
Personal Outcome Measures® interviews demonstrate the linkage between personally defined quality of life and excellence in person-centered services, highlighting the importance of gathering and utilizing this data in planning and making change at both the individual and organizational levels.

For additional information, please refer to the following attachments and manuals:

- *Basic Assurances*® Manual
- *Basic Assurances*® assessment results
- *Personal Outcome Measures*® Manual
- *Personal Outcome Measures*® Summary Report
- *Basic Assurances*® Plan
- *Personal Outcome Measures*® Plan (if applicable)

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

Skills Development Services, Inc. has provided CQL with the following information regarding its mission and vision and a brief organizational profile of the organization's services and supports.

The Vision of the Agency

Successfully Developing Self-reliance through Innovation.

The Mission of the Agency

Supporting members with Knowledgeable staff by Innovation, Listening, Learning and Supporting.

Skills Development Services, Inc. began in 1978 as the result of a merger between Coffee County Skills Living Center and Coffee County Skills. These programs chartered in 1962 and 1972 respectively were developed to provide residential and day training services to people with developmental disabilities. Since these beginnings, Skills has expanded from the original programs of twelve adults and a group home serving six children to one of the larger community-based agencies in middle Tennessee.

Skills currently supports 154 individuals in three counties .

Skills is a non-profit corporation chartered by the State of Tennessee and governed by a Board of Directors whose members serve on a voluntary basis. A twelve member Board is made up of individuals from all three counties.

Skills continues to change and develop. The purpose of supporting individuals with developmental disabilities to become and remain as independent as possible is our most prevalent focus.

ORGANIZATIONAL CERTIFICATION

To be eligible for accreditation, CQL requires compliance with all local, state, and federal regulations. Additionally, evidence of ongoing data collection and analysis of assurances of health, safety, and human security is required.

Prior to the on-site accreditation activities, Skills Development Services, Inc. certified that it complies with all required local, state, and federal regulations relevant to the supports and services it provides, including:

- Licensing and certification requirements; and
- Sanitation/fire and safety codes; and
- Reporting compliance for incidents, abuse, and/or neglect; and
- Any other that may apply

Skills Development Services, Inc. affirmed that there are no current open or unresolved issues related to:

- Outstanding fiscal or legal sanctions
- Non-compliance with regulations
- Licensing exceptions
- Unfavorable third-party reviews
- Significant abuse, neglect, mistreatment, or exploitation or other circumstances being investigated by external entities
- Local, state, or federal entities investigating abuse, neglect, or other circumstances
- Any related circumstances that require a plan of correction to remain licensed, certified, or funded
- Outstanding negative publicity

Skill Development Services, Inc. confirmed that the organization has:

- Current external monitoring reports and responses for all services and supports provided
- Current external monitoring reports and responses for all licensed buildings while also meeting all required safety and compliance standards
- Clear policies that state the procedures for meeting local, state, funding, and federal requirements
- Current plans of correction showing all outstanding issues have been (or are being) addressed

PROCESS

CQL, in collaboration with Skills Development Services, Inc., facilitated a variety of activities as part of this accreditation process, which includes:

- **Organization Self-Assessment**
The organization completed and submitted an in-depth self-assessment of organizational systems and practices related to *Basic Assurances*® prior to the on-site accreditation visit.
- **Off-Site Meetings**
The organization's leadership team participated in two planning calls before the on-site accreditation.
- ***Basic Assurances*® Validation**
CQL facilitated a rigorous assessment of the organization's systems and practices related to *Basic Assurances*® through a variety of on-site activities including but not limited to: document and policy reviews, targeted interviews, site visits, focus groups, and *Personal Outcome Measures*® interviews.
- ***Personal Outcome Measures*® Focus**
CQL focused on the organizational implementation of *Personal Outcome Measures*® on an individual and systemic level. Completed during the accreditation visit were interviews, focus groups, and data reviews.
- **Plan Development**
CQL presented findings outlining current *Basic Assurances*® and *Personal Outcome Measures*® alignment. The organization subsequently developed a plan to enhance these areas based on results. Accreditation is awarded based on the development of this plan, acceptance of the plan by the lead reviewer, and maintained based on the implementation of said plan.
- **Next Steps Discussion**
CQL facilitated discussion of the integration of these plans into the organization's strategic plan, and other organizational initiatives and any additional resources needed, as well as ongoing reporting and collaboration activities required for continued accreditation.

✓ RESULTS & FINDINGS

BASIC ASSURANCES®

Basic Assurances® address the provision of safeguards put into action from the person's perspective. *Basic Assurances®* requires policies and procedures or systems; one determines the effectiveness of the system in practice or the implementation of the policy, person by person. These assurances are not statements of intent; instead, they are the essential, fundamental, and non-negotiable requirements.

CQL determined that **39/46** indicators for *Basic Assurances®* are currently present for Skills Development Services, Inc.

Attached to/with this document is a summary of the *Basic Assurances®* report, which includes complete details.

F1a – The organization implements policies and procedure that promote people's rights. (System)

- Update current policy and procedure to reflect the organization's due process practices.

F1b – The organization supports people to exercise their rights and responsibilities. (Practice)

- Use the rights assessment to deepen understanding of people's understanding of and capabilities to exercise rights. Identify what rights are most important to each person and the level of supports needed to exercise them.
- Expand educational and self-advocacy opportunities for people.

F1d – The organization upholds due process requirements. (System & Practice)

- Establish an independent body (HRC) at the local level to ensure that due process is provided for all rights restrictions.

F4a – The organization implements policies and procedures that define, prohibit, and prevent abuse, neglect, mistreatment and exploitation. (System)

- Update current policy and procedures to include a clear definition of all types of abuse, neglect, mistreatment and exploitation.

F7e – The organization treats its employees with dignity, respect and fairness. (System & Practice)

- Provide staff at all levels with opportunities to provide input regarding benefits, pay, staff schedules, recruitment and retention incentives.
- Team building between day program and residential staff.

F10a – The organization monitors Basic Assurances®. (System)

- Develop and implement policy and procedures for monitoring BAs.

F10b – A comprehensive plan describes the methods and procedures for monitoring Basic Assurances®. (System & Practices)

- Develop format that includes the ability to measure key elements related to all nine BA factors. Must have goals, actions to be taken, responsible parties, elements to be measured, monitored and analyzed.

Commendable Systems and Practices

- New hire onboarding and ongoing staff development.
- People access quality health care that is well documented.
- Acute and emergency medical needs are assessed and responded effectively and efficiently.
- Decision-making supports are evaluated, monitored and supported when alternatives are deemed necessary and appropriate.
- People are respected and treated as people first. Homes afford everyone a private bedroom.
- Expanding the employment program is a high priority and community access is the focus of day program activities.
- Investigations are thorough and timely.
- Incident management system provides critical data that ensures the safety, health and well-being of the people receiving supports and services.
- Individualized safety support are in place.
- All environments, furnishing and vehicles meet health, safety and sanitation requirements.

VISITS

There were no site visits during this virtual accreditation visit. Site visits will be conducted on-site during the 12-18 month visit in 2022.

FOCUS GROUPS

Direct Support Professionals:

A focus group was conducted with eight Direct Support Professionals working at a variety of programs in Lincoln, Tullahoma and Bedford counties at Skills Development Services, Inc. Six of the participants provided residential supports and two worked in the day program. Tenure with the organization ranged from four months to twenty-five years.

Highlights:

- The organization's culture is one of family, caring, supporting, learning, and openness.
- A variety of communication strategies are in place to connect staff and share information.
- There are no set rules in the houses other than those that foster respect for one another, staff and housemates, and health/safety of the people in residence.
- Staff receive good training and feel confident and competent in their jobs. Team leaders and long-term staff provide hand on training specific to the people they support.
- Staff have strong relationships with the people they support and advocate on behalf of people as active members of each person's the Circle of Support.

- Restrictions/limitation are not imposed on people without their consent or the consent of the conservator.
- The organization utilizes positive behavior support approaches to manage behavior.
- Case Managers provide staff with support to ensure that people have the best possible health.
- Staff provide the necessary support and resources for people to remain connected to their natural support networks using social media platforms, personal visits, emails, phone calls, and cards. Some people have private phone lines and cell phones.
- Staff are very familiar with how to report incidents and knew about the role of the incident management committee.
- Employee benefit offerings are comprehensive and appreciated. Everyone was provided an employee handbook upon hire. Christmas bonus is nice.
- Strengths of the organization: excellent care; people make choices; and a family environment.

Opportunities:

- Create a greater sense of team among the DSP's and allow for more opportunities to share knowledge and experiences for ongoing learning.
- Evaluate communication strategies for team leaders to enhance consistency and timeliness of messages.
- Strategies to reduce direct support staff turnover. Applicants are hired and do not fully understand the complexities of the job. Consider implementing a realistic job preview and giving direct support staff a role in the recruiting and interviewing process.
- Evaluate system for paid time off, vacation time and sick leave. Staff stated that it was hard to get time off and having to secure their own replacement was difficult and stressful. There is some disparity between what's available to staff working in the day program and those working in the residential program.
- Evaluate current job descriptions for clarity of responsibilities/expectations.
- Make sure that policy and procedures changes are communicated prior to putting the change into practice along with training on procedures.
- Upgrades to computer hardware and software. Provide tablets for the day program.
- Strategies for pay equity between new hire rate and long term staff.

Front-line Supervisors Focus Group:

A focus group was conducted with six Front-line Supervisors working at a variety of programs at Skills Development Services, Inc. on Wednesday, September 1, 2021. Three of the participants were the County Administrators, two Day Program Coordinators and one Team Leader. Tenure with the organization ranged from one month to thirty years.

Highlights:

- The culture of the organization was described as friendly, open, welcoming, listening, risk taking, supportive, trustworthy, eclectic, hands on, and family oriented.
- There is good communication at the supervisory level. The participants rated it a 9-10. A variety of communication methods are in use, everything from phone calls, texts, email, notes and zoom/video chats.
- Management team meets monthly at a minimum. County Administrators have daily and weekly opportunities to meet with Case Managers and Team Leaders.
- The delivery of supports and services focus on people's abilities and not their limitations.
- There is a deep understanding that each person is unique and everyone has thoughts about how they want their life to be. They have dreams and desires.
- The organizational staff is not afraid to try new things.
- Opportunities for community access and employment is an area that continues to expand.
- Program Coordinators and Team Leaders feel supported and are listened too. Their opinion and ideas matter.
- Strengths of the organization are: advocacy; person-centered approaches; people get to travel; people have nice homes and neighborhoods to live in; people and people are realizing their potential.

Opportunities:

- Additional opportunities for supervisory training.
- On-call rotation system.
- Paid time off for the Team Leaders.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the 12-hour shifts in the residential program.
- Addressing the pay equity issues between new hires and tenured staff.

People Supported Focus Group:

A focus group was conducted with 7 People Supported from Lincoln, Tullahoma and Shelbyville counties at Skills Development Services, Inc on Tuesday, August 31, 2021.

Highlights:

- People Supported felt connecting to their Support Staff.
- People Supported felt respected and well supported by the agency.
- Focus Group participants were overall pleased with their work and activity choices.
- Focus Group participants felt that they are treated with respect by the organization.
- Participants feel they have privacy and are assisted with making decisions, when needed

Opportunities:

- Additional opportunities for education around Rights, Services and Finances.
- Additional opportunities for education around setting and realizing personal goals.
- Provide options for service selection to provide informed choices.
- Include Family when making policy and procedural changes

Family Focus Group:

A focus group was conducted with 5 Family Members of People Supported from Lincoln, Tullahoma and Shelbyville counties at Skills Development Services, Inc on Wednesday, September 1, 2021.

Highlights:

- Family Members were pleased with the services and supports provides by the agency.
- Staff treat the people they support like family
- Strong communication with family
- Loved ones speak highly of the agency
- Community views agency as a great community resource

Opportunities:

- Pay increases for DSP's
- Include Family when making policy and procedural changes
- Educate families on the complaint process

PERSONAL OUTCOME MEASURES®

Personal Outcome Measures® focuses on the choices people have in their lives and serve as a powerful tool for evaluating the quality of life for people. The *Personal Outcome Measures®* enable us to learn about people in new and different ways and can also provide a guide for person-centered planning. In order to achieve Quality Assurances accreditation with CQL, organizations must (1) begin utilizing the *Personal Outcome Measures®* on an individual level for planning and discovery, and (2) collect, aggregate, analyze, and act on data gathered as a result of *Personal Outcome Measures®* implementation.

CQL did not conduct *Personal Outcome Measures*® interviews during this virtual visit. Three interviews were conducted by the TN DIDD certified interviewers prior to the accreditation visit. The average number of outcomes present is 11 and the average number of supports present is 9.66. Areas of strength include People are safe, People use their environments and People live in integrated environments. Areas of opportunity are People are free of ANME, People have best possible health, People are connected to natural supports, People have intimate relationships, People decide when to share information, and People realize personal goals.

Skills Development Services, Inc. is not completing POM interviews using the CQL tool at this time. There was no data available for analysis during the review visit. Training on the 2020 *Personal Outcome Measures*® via an Assessment Workshop is highly recommended. A POM Plan is included with this accreditation report.

See the full *Personal Outcome Measures*® report for details.

NEXT STEPS

Skills Development Services, Inc. is commended and congratulated for achieving accreditation with CQL's Quality Assurances Accreditation methodology and for its ongoing commitment and efforts to exemplify how a singular focus on the lives of people supported leads to making meaningful discoveries about *What Really Matters*.

Basic Assurances® Plan

In order to maintain CQL Accreditation, Skills Development Services, Inc. must submit a plan within 30 days of the on-site accreditation (October 8, 2021), to bring all *Basic Assurances*® indicators into alignment for both system and practice. Any *Basic Assurances*® indicators assessed as NOT PRESENT in either system or practice by CQL requires a plan of alignment. Provided to the organization is a template for this plan.

An assessment of the implementation of this plan will occur during the next accreditation checkpoint with CQL, which will consist of an on-site visit in 12-18 months. Failure to complete, submit or make substantial progress on the approved plan will jeopardize accreditation.

Personal Outcome Measures® Plan

In order to maintain CQL Accreditation, Skills Development Services, Inc. must submit a plan within 30 days of the on-site accreditation (October 8, 2021), which will outline the organization's plan to (1) utilize the *Personal Outcome Measures*® on an individual level for planning and discovery, and (2) collect, aggregate, analyze, and act on data gathered as a result of *Personal Outcome Measures*® implementation. Provided to the organization is a template for this plan.

The plan must outline the steps the organization will take to build their capacity and ability to implement the *Personal Outcome Measures*® effectively. An assessment of the implementation of this plan will occur during the next accreditation checkpoint with CQL with an on-site visit in 12-18 months. Failure to complete, submit or make substantial progress on the approved plan will jeopardize accreditation.

In order to maintain CQL Accreditation, Skills Development Services, Inc. agrees to participate in one additional on-site visit with CQL over the course of the three-year accreditation partnership.

The next on-site checkpoint with CQL will occur no sooner than 12 months and no later than 18 months after the initial on-site visit and will focus on:

- Implementation of *Basic Assurances*® and *Personal Outcome Measures*® plans of alignment
- Stories that illustrate progress and success in people's lives
- *Personal Outcome Measures*® data analysis and learning
- *Basic Assurances*® Factor Ten (Integrated Quality Management)
- Ongoing compliance with local and national regulations and requirements concerning the basics of health, safety, and human security

CQL reserves the right to require an additional visit if progress cannot be validated.

ONGOING ACCREDITATION

Accredited organizations are required to notify CQL | The Council on Quality and Leadership (within 14 calendar days) of changes in the following circumstances and any other event that could potentially put at risk the quality of supports provided to people:

- Change in the executive director/chief executive officer
- Change in ownership or management
- The potential loss of certification, license(s), or funding
- Receipt of citations of Immediate Jeopardy or Conditions of Participations in ICF funded services
- Receipt of any state-specific sanctions related to state licensure regulations
- Addition or deletion of program/service components
- Any changes in the compliance of any building with the requirements of the Life Safety Code or other equivalent code

- Relocation of people receiving services due to fire, flood, or other natural or humanmade disaster, or significant maintenance issues requiring people to re-locate in excess of 14 calendar days.
- Merger or acquisition of another organization in whole or in part
- Criminal charges or conviction of executive leadership including, but not limited to the executive director, chief executive officer, chief financial officer, or their equivalents, and/or board of directors' officers
- Negative publicity regarding the agency or its leadership (board of directors or executive leadership)

Upon notification of such changes, CQL will request additional information that provides evidence of the impact of the change(s) on people receiving services. CQL reserves the option to make an on-site visit to any accredited organization, at the expense of the organization, if CQL determines that the:

- Change(s) significantly or negatively impacts people receiving services
- The information does not sufficiently address the impact
- Organization failed to notify CQL of significant change(s)

CQL will give notice of any such visit/review to the organization's chief executive officer/executive director. The on-site visit will be to determine the impact of organizational change(s) on people receiving services.

CQL reserves the right to discontinue the award of accreditation if the on-site visit results in evidence that determines:

- The impact of organizational change has had a significant and negative effect on people receiving services.
- The organization is no longer able to sustain the commitment to supporting basic health, safety, and human security for people over the cycle of accreditation.
- The organization refuses to undergo an on-site visit.

Since this review was conducted virtually, CQL will be onsite for Visit 2 for at least one day but no more than three. During this visit, we will conduct visits to where people live and work, additional small focus groups, receive an update from your plans, and any other work the Lead QES deems necessary. Please also note that while we may have determined that an indicator was present during the virtual visits, this may change during the onsite visit and additional plans will need to be submitted.

STATEMENTS & SIGNATURES

We, the undersigned, have read the above Executive Summary/Accreditation Report and Accreditation Policies. Skills Development Services, Inc. and CQL | The Council on Quality and Leadership, understand and agree to its contents and Skills Development Services, Inc. and CQL | The Council on Quality and Leadership hereby agree to the expectations and accountabilities outlined and detailed herein.

For: Skills Development Services, Inc.

Jane Edwards, Executive Director

Date

For: CQL | The Council on Quality and Leadership

Katherine Dunbar, Vice President of Accreditation

Date

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