



# Reading the Standards

## ***Understanding the Standards***

The current version of standards includes both the standards applicable to all programs as well as the standards specific to each individual program. They are broken down as follows:

### **Generic Standards**

The Generic Standards apply to all programs and cover the areas of Leadership and Governance, Financial Management, Information Management, Evaluation and Quality Improvement, Ethics, Rights, Health and Safety, Administration and Management, and Service Delivery.

### **Program Specific Standards**

These standards address specific program areas such as Staff Qualifications and Training, Supports, Well-Being and Facility. These are grouped further into three areas:

- **Community Based Programs** (such as Drive Programs and Supervised Visit Programs)
- **Home Based Programs** (such as Family Support Programs and Youth Work Programs)
- **Residential Based Programs** (such as Crisis Nursery Programs and Shelter Programs)

Each program that applies for accreditation through CAC must choose at least one Program Specific Designation, though a program may choose to have multiple program specific designations.

### **Optional Designations**

A program may choose to utilize the Optional Standards to achieve one or more designation and become classified as an Aboriginal or Culturally Specific Program, Addiction Program, Children with Special Needs Program, Intensive Treatment Program or Employment Enhancement Program. Choosing an Optional Designation is at the discretion of the program and is not required to achieve accreditation. If an Optional Designation standard is found to be similar to one in the Program Specific Standards, the standard in the Optional Designation section will have precedent and will be the standard to which the program will be held.

## ***Understanding the Symbols***

### **Numbers and Dots**

Standards can vary in length and may be comprised of a single statement or a number of components. Standards with multiple facets are preceded by either:

- Numbers (1,2,3, etc.) – indicate that each point of the standard as well as included subsections (a,b,c, etc.) are required to achieve compliance. If one or more parts of the standard are found to be non-compliant, the whole standard is marked non-compliant.



- Dots (•) – indicate examples. Dots can be found in both standard descriptions as well as the standard itself. If found in the description it will list a series of examples and if found in the standards it will include a statement of ‘some or all’. Compliance is not dependant on having all of the examples indicated by the dots included.

## Indicators

Below every standard are indicators outlining the evidence the team is required to assess in order to comply with the standard. The indicators are:

- **Policy** – There is an organizational or program policy that addresses all aspects of the standard. Policies are the written basis for operation and provide guidelines for decision making.
- **Procedure** – These are the directions for daily operations that are conducted within the framework of policies and include detailed step-by-step outlines to accomplish specific tasks.
- **Narrative** – A descriptive statement outlining how the standard is being met within the organization. Narratives are short – less than half a page in length and may be presented in a point-form format.
- **Document Review** – Specific documents are identified to be reviewed as part of the pre-site meeting or on-site review (for example, the mission statement, organizational charts, goals and objectives, etc.).
- **Interviews** – Senior management, supervisors, program staff, volunteers (the Board and direct service volunteers), contractors and/or service professionals, and students are interviewed as to their practice. Persons served are interviewed as to their experience within the program. It is expected that practice and experience are congruent to program policy and procedure. The interview questions are available on the Accreditation Support Network (ASN) and may be used for training purposes prior to the on-site review.
- **File Review** – Current staff, volunteers, contractors and/or service professionals, students, and persons served files are reviewed on-site to assess compliance. Only those records and documents identified within the standards need to be seen by the peer review team. A random selection of closed files are included in the review.
- **On-Site Observation** – The team observes and assesses the practice on-site.

On the following page we have provided example of a standard along with a description of the different sections. If you have any questions about reading or interpreting the standards, please contact our office at 1-888-222-1248 or 780-424-4498.

