

Virginia Association of Recovery Residences

WRITING GUIDE

Organization Policies & Procedures



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The *Organization (staff) Policies & Procedure* packet covers the policies and procedures that a recovery residence organization, their staff, and volunteers operate in accordance with. The content of your organization's policies and procedures must comply with the NARR and VARR Standards to achieve certification. While policies listed below outline what VARR requires at a minimum to meet the standards, organizations may have additional policies.

These policies and procedures can also act as a basic staff manual. For example, this will give a new staff member or volunteer a basic template of how the recovery organization operates.

This writing guide is intended to help an organization write their policies in line with the NARR Standards and is also the checklist upon which VARR staff will review an organization's policies and procedures for certification.

The following checklist are the policies and procedures that are needed to meet the NARR and VARR Standards at a minimum.

Policy & Procedure Checklist

- Mission Statement
- Vision Statement
- Code of Ethics
- Non-Discrimination Policy
- Organization / Resident Work Policy
- Overdose Procedure
- Resident Records Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Good Neighbor Policy
- Contested Drug Screen Policy
- Resident Rights
- Staff Directory
- Peer Leader Roles & Responsibilities
- Community Resources

Policies & Procedures

with reference from the NARR 3.0 Standards & VARR Standards

Below is a list of all policies and procedures required for the *Organization (staff) Policies & Procedure* packet, and how they relate to the NARR 3.0 Standards and VARR Standards. They briefly describe the appropriate verbiage, what is needed and why. This will help an organization when drafting the policies and procedures from scratch and will give a basic template of where to start.

Mission Statement - NARR (1, A.1. a.)

Must identify the recovery organization's commitment to the population that is being served and at a minimum includes "persons in recovery from a substance use disorder (SUD)."

- Recovery residence organizations serve a priority population of persons with SUD. If your organization accepts persons who do not have a substance use disorder, you're your model would not meet NARR Standards.

Vision Statement - NARR (1, A.1. b.)

Pertains to an individual recovery organization's vision. While a Mission Statement describes what an organization does, the Vision Statement outlines what an organization hopes to achieve. The vision statement must be consistent with NARR's Core Principles:

- Operate with integrity
- Uphold residents' rights
- Be recovery-oriented
- Use peers to staff and govern
- Create a healthy recovery environment
- Provide a home-like experience
- Inspire purpose, cultivate community, and be a good neighbor
- Promote health and safety

Code of Ethics - NARR (1, A,2. i.)

Adapt VARR's Code of Ethics. This is for staff and volunteers. Adapting VARR's version creates formality in all VARR certified recovery organizations.

- This document will be provided by the VARR staff.
- An organization's Code of Ethics will be read and signed by all those associated with the residence, to include operators, staff and volunteers.

Non-Discrimination Policy - NARR (1, A,2. d.)

This policy should reaffirm an operator's commitment to nondiscriminatory practices.

- It needs to include a statement attesting to compliance with nondiscriminatory state and federal requirements.

Organization/ Resident Work Policy - NARR (1, A. 2. g.) & (1, A,2. h.)

First, an operator needs to determine if they are willing to enter into paid work arrangements with a resident. If the answer is no, then this policy should simply state that the operator "doesn't enter into work agreements with residents".

If the operator enters into agreements with residents to do paid work, there are standards an operator must uphold. An example of a paid work agreement may be "an operator allows a resident to cut the grass in exchange for compensation". This ensures the resident is treated fairly and paid fair wages when doing "paid work". The policy must state the following:

- Work performed by a resident must be completely voluntary
- If work is refused there must be no consequences for declining
- Residents who accept work are not treated more favorably than other residents
- All qualified residents are given equal opportunity for available work.

- 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.

Overdose Procedure – NARR (2, F.19. a.) & (2, F.19.d)

This policy should outline the following:

- Verify that Naloxone (Narcan®) is accessible in a recovery residence and has some type of overdose and emergency procedure posted in a conspicuous location in the residence.
- How an operator orients new residents on the location and use of Naloxone in an emergency
- Articulate how staff should respond to an overdose
 - What are the protocols for when an active overdose is occurring?
 - What are the protocols for how a resident is treated after an overdose?
 - Who are the overdoses reported to? (ex: staff, emergency contact, etc.)
- **Operators are required to post a sign in each residence how residents should respond to an overdose and who to contact.

Resident Records Policy – NARR (1, B,6. a.) , (1, B,6. b.) & (1, B,6. c.)

This policy outlines how an operator handles and protects a resident’s information. This ensures residents’ records are “secure with access limited to authorized staff.” Must include the following:

- A statement that attests to compliance with “applicable confidentiality laws”
- Protects resident and community “privacy and confidentiality”
- Describe how resident records are stored and secured
- Should outline how residents will be notified if any of their personal information and/or records are breached, leaked or compromised. This should include a process timeline.

Social Media Policy – NARR (1, B,6. C.)

A policy addressing staff use of professional and/or personal social media.

- It should address protecting resident and community privacy and confidentiality
- Include verbiage that addresses being “mindful and respectful” on social media platforms as it could be a “reflection of the [recovery organization’s name]
- For staff – it’s important to note the confidentiality of residents in their use of social media

Good Neighbor Policy – (R) - NARR (4, J,30. a.), (4, J,30. b.), (4, J,30. c.), (4, J,31. a.) & (4, J,31. b.) There is a *Good Neighbor Policy* in both the *Organization Policy & Procedure*, as well as the *Resident Intake Packet (Handbook)*. For staff it needs to address the following:

- Expectations around general Good Neighbor rules and expectations for residents: designated smoking areas, loitering, noise, offensive language, parking, cleanliness of property, etc.
- Protocol for receiving and handling neighbor complaints
- Expectations for orientating residents on how to greet, interact with neighbors and what to do if a resident receives a complaint from a neighbor

Contested Drug Screen Policy – NARR (2, F,16. c.)

This policy addresses the treatment of a resident and protocols for when a resident contests the results of a drug screen. Sometimes a resident will contest a drug screen on grounds that are valid (i.e. false positive) and sometimes they don't. Either way, there needs to be a policy in place for what occurs when a drug screen is contested.

- What options are provided for a contested drug screen? (ex: re-take drug screen, lab confirmation, etc.)
- While a drug screen's results are being contested, how will a resident be treated until the results are finalized? (i.e. what rules are they on, consider the safety of the resident, etc.)

Resident Rights – NARR (1, B,5. a.)

Resident rights are also located in the *Resident Intake Packet*. It is important for staff to understand the rights of the residents they serve.

Staff Directory –

List of staff members, their titles and general duties. Staff positions are guided by written job descriptions.

Peer Leader Roles & Responsibilities – NARR (1, D,12. a.) (3, G,21, c.)

Written criteria and guidelines explaining expectations for peer leadership and mentoring roles

- Descriptions include position responsibilities and **lived experience** requirements

Community Resource Directory – NARR (3, G,21, a.) & (3, G,22, b.)

Resource directories, written or electronic, are made available to residents.

- Resource lists can be quite lengthy. For this list, include the major resources your organizations uses (the foundation of your organization's resource directory) so that staff can be familiar with them. This resource list will be displayed in the physical recovery residence.
- Staff and/ or resident leaders educate residents about local community-based resources