



COMMUNITY RESIDENCE HANDBOOK

**A Guide for Family Members &
Care Providers**



Dear Family Member/Guardian,

On behalf of Arc of Onondaga, we would like to welcome you to the extended group of caregivers and friends making up the Community Residence Program. We hope you will be able to use this handbook as a helpful resource while your loved one makes the transition into life at a community residence.

As involved advocates and family members ourselves, we encourage you to participate as fully as possible in the ongoing life in a community residence home. You will have the good fortune of working with a committed and caring staff. Speaking from our own experiences, however, nothing can replace the kind of loving and involved advocacy that only you can provide. Visit the community residence. Attend review meetings. Keep informed about what's happening. Let others see you, meet you, and understand how much you care.

Our hope is that this handbook will answer many of your questions and, more importantly, inspire you to get involved with all of us as we work for a high quality of life in each of the community residences.

Sincerely,

The Community Residential Services Committee

Names and Phone Numbers of Committee Members:

Mary Salibrici	<i>Family (Committee Chair)</i>	425-9870
Frederick Brissette	<i>Parent</i>	622-3532
Carol Bullard	<i>Parent</i>	437-5684
Mary Carol Fisher	<i>Parent</i>	476-5637
Paul Graig	<i>Parent</i>	699-6250
Sharon Moran	<i>Parent</i>	476-1026
Judy Navin	<i>Residential Team Leader</i>	425-7278
John Powers	<i>Parent</i>	446-0985
Amy McMurray	<i>Assistant Director of Residential Services</i>	575-8180
Barbara French	<i>Director of Residential Services</i>	476-7441

Introduction to the Community Residential Services Program

Welcome to Arc of Onondaga, a chapter of NYSARC, Inc. Since 1951, Arc of Onondaga has been providing services for children and adults with Mental Retardation and other Developmental Disabilities. The agency started with a small group of parents who were desperate for educational and social services for their children. The goal was to improve the lives of their children and involve them in their community.

Over the decades, the agency has grown to become the largest private, nonprofit provider of services in Onondaga County in the field of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities. Serving over 1,000 individuals and their families, we provide people with as many opportunities as possible to live a successful and productive life. Services provided include: Horizons Clinic, day treatment, day habilitation, senior retirement, residential, early intervention, pre-school programs, service coordination, recreation, family support, vocational training and various employment opportunities.

It is the mission of Arc of Onondaga to help individuals with Mental Retardation and other Developmental Disabilities achieve their fullest potential for independence and inclusion in the community. To this end, we provide opportunities for education, supportive living, employment, health service, advocacy and family supports.

Arc of Onondaga's Community Residential Services Program strives to ensure that the people we serve are living in a home - not just a house - with the opportunity to mature, grow and learn the skills necessary for successful living in the community. Trained staff will support and assist each individual to become integrated into his or her community, develop support systems with non-disabled individuals and grow to his or her highest potential. The program promotes the 3IP philosophy of individu-

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alization, inclusion, independence and productivity. It is our intent to make a lifetime commitment to individuals who live in our homes, if that is what the person desires and if we can continue to effectively meet their needs.

This handbook is designed to provide you with information on our program and the services available to you and your family member. It is very important that open communication occurs between the parent/guardian/ correspondent and our residential staff. This will enable us to address problem areas and work towards achieving goals.

Life in a Residence

All homes and supported apartments within the Residential Program are considered transitional in nature as residents are encouraged to live in settings allowing for the highest level of independence attainable, while providing the appropriate supervision and assistance. Therefore, staffing patterns are based on the needs of the residents at each site. All sites have a Residence Coordinator who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the home and supervises the Skills Instructors (direct care workers) assigned to his or her particular site. Trained relief Skills Instructors are utilized to cover the leave time of regular staff. Services provided by staff may include, but are not limited to, the following: life skills training, self-care, community awareness, nutritional management, socialization, recreation, transportation, and general support and advocacy.

Arc of Onondaga provides each resident with room and board. Bedrooms are either single or double occupancy and fully furnished with a bed, dresser, nightstand, and closet space. Every effort will be made for a resident to have his or her own bedroom. There is no guarantee, however, that this will always be the case. When absolutely necessary, a resident may have to change rooms and/or share a bedroom. This will be dis-

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discussed with the resident and family members before a change occurs. Individuals are encouraged to personalize their bedrooms and bring items from home or purchase personal stereos, radios, TVs, etc. They will be included in choices regarding decorating, curtains, bedspreads, room color, etc. The Residential Program also provides bedding, towels, cable TV service, and basic health and beauty supplies. Specialty personal items such as make up, cologne or hair coloring will be purchased by the individual. At the time of admission, an Admissions Agreement is reviewed that specifies exactly what the agency pays for and what the individual will pay for out of personal funds. Three nutritionally balanced meals per day are provided. Individuals are included in meal planning and preparation as much as possible. All menus are reviewed by a registered dietician, and when needed, special diets are developed. Staff are trained regarding these diets. In addition, a nurse monitors the implementation of special diets. Snacks are also available unless prohibited by dietary restrictions. Individuals may also purchase their own snack items, as permitted by individual diet.

Leisure-time activities will be encouraged and assistance provided as needed. Each month an activity calendar is planned at each site with input from the residents. The phone, TV, stereo and recreational equipment in general living areas of the residence will be accessible to all.

An individual's religious preferences will be respected and every effort will be made to allow a person to participate to the extent desired in his or her chosen place of worship. However, due to the varied needs and preferences of the people living at each site, it may not be possible to transport each person to his or her chosen place of worship every week.

The Residential Division views each consumer as an adult who possesses, to the greatest extent possible, the same rights and privileges as any other adult. While there may be times that a person's rights, activities and/or possessions may need to be limited in some way, we do not do this without a behavior management plan written by a licensed

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psychologist and approved by our Behavior Management Review Committee. Occasionally, family members may request that staff limit an individual's activities or possessions for behavioral reasons [For example, not allow a person to participate in an evening activity because his or her behavior was unacceptable earlier in the day]. Our staff are trained that they can not do this based on a family member's request, but only if it is part of an approved Behavior Management Plan. We make every effort to include involved family members in the planning process for each person we serve. However, individuals who are their own legal guardians may request that information not be shared with family members and we must abide by their wishes.

Arc of Onondaga's Community Residential Program provides a smoke-free environment for our residents. Individuals who wish to smoke must do so in designated areas.

Every effort is made to meet the needs of individuals who reside in Arc of Onondaga homes so that they can maintain their placement. However, there are certain conditions that may necessitate discharge. These conditions, which are included in the Admission Agreement, include the following:

- Failure to meet the self-preservation requirements for the specified residence. [*i.e., Inability to evacuate within the allotted amount of time during a fire drill*] The requirements for your family member's residence will be explained to you during the pre-admission meeting.
- Long-term chronic health care needs requiring skilled nursing level of care.
- Chronic behavior which demonstrates inability to abide by house expectations and program requirements necessitating a change in the level of residential care.
- Endangering the safety and well being of others in the home.

Should discharge from an Arc of Onondaga home become necessary, the person's treatment team will work with you to ensure necessary referrals are made for more appropriate services.

Arc of Onondaga is committed to providing quality services to our consumers and their families. At times, issues or concerns may arise that you feel need to be addressed. Arc of Onondaga values your opinions, cares about your concerns and welcomes your input as this helps us to continually improve our services. We also provide avenues to identify staff training needs, develop or revise policies, and points out areas of unmet need. Each issue or concern is a great learning experience for the agency.

If you have an issue or concern or feel that Arc of Onondaga has failed to provide a safe, secure quality program at your family member's residence, please do not hesitate to contact the Residence Coordinator or the Residential Team Leader, at 425-7278, or the Assistant Director of Residential Services at 575-8180.

If you are not satisfied with how your concern is addressed, please contact Barbara French, Director of Community Residential Services at 476-7441, ext. 136.

In addition, a grievance procedure will be explained to you at the time of the pre-admission meeting. This procedure provides you with a hierarchy of individuals you may contact if you or your family member objects to his or her placement or to any part of his or her plan of services. This procedure is intended for use when all reasonable efforts to resolve an issue on a lower level have been tried and have failed. You are always encouraged to bring your concerns to the attention of the Residence Coordinator, Program Coordinator/QMRP or Service Coordinator in an attempt to resolve them as quickly as possible.

Expectations of Residents

1. Each person at the community residence is expected to care for their individual belongings to the extent he or she is able.
2. Every individual is expected to be enrolled and actively attending a day program.

EXPECTATIONS

3. It is the expectation that each resident meet his/her monthly fee payments with regularity.
4. Individuals residing at the house are expected to respect the rights and freedoms of others and handle appropriately his or her anger and frustration (no physical violence.)
5. Each individual is expected to assume responsibility for additional bills he/she may incur outside the established services for monthly rent, such as long distance telephone bills. Damages to property will be repaid based on program planning team's determination of understanding of retribution in accordance with OMRDD regulations.
6. Individuals residing in the home are expected to actively participate in training, recreation, socialization, and group experiences to the extent they are able.
7. All people residing in the home are expected to demonstrate joint responsibility for the care of the home.
8. People residing at the home will care for their own personal needs, (bathing, dressing, toileting, eating, grooming) to the extent that they are able.
9. People should clean up after themselves to the extent they are able.
10. People residing at the home will care for their own laundry and care for their own clothing to the extent that they are able.
11. It is expected that individuals will dust, vacuum, change sheets, make their own beds, and put away dirty clothes at least weekly or as needed to the extent they are able.
12. People are expected to make their own lunches for work (if needed) the night prior to work to the extent they are able.
13. People are expected to get up on time for breakfast and be on time for their ride to work/day program on a daily basis.
14. People in the home are expected to let the residence manager or some other staff know when they will be expected to be late.

Clothing and Personal Allowance

Each person receives a monthly personal allowance. The current rate is \$_____ for a person who receives Social Security or Social Security and SSI. A person who receives only SSI will receive \$_____ a month in personal allowance. The term "Personal Allowance" refers to that portion of a person's income that is made available on a monthly basis to every individual residing in an OMRDD certified or operated facility. Whether a person's income is earned (ex: from paychecks) or unearned (ex: from government supplements, bank interest, etc.) or a combination of both, he or she is entitled to keep a portion to spend on items personally desired or needed. Personal allowance money can not be maintained in a joint account under any circumstances. The remainder of his or her income is normally used to offset the cost of his or her care. Each person also receives \$125.00 twice a year (January and July) as a clothing and recreation allowance. This money is to be spent during the 6 months following receipt and before the next \$125.00 is received unless there is documentation that the person is saving for a special item such as a large screen TV or a vacation. If your family member is saving for such an item, be sure to inform the Residence Coordinator and the Finance Office in writing so this money will be allowed to accumulate.

At the time of admission, a determination will be made regarding the person's ability to manage his or her own money. If Arc of Onondaga is Representative Payee for these funds, a savings account will be set up to receive and disburse the funds. A person's Personal Allowance money is available on the first day of each month. The Residence Coordinator will assist each individual in maintaining a ledger, which will reflect all account transactions. Sales receipts are required when a staff member makes purchases for an individual utilizing his or her personal allowance or clothing/recreation funds. If the Representative Payee is someone other than Arc of Onondaga, he or she will receive and disburse the resident's funds. At a minimum, they will be responsible for providing

the resident with his or her personal allowance money at the beginning of each month, and sending the remainder of the SSI check to Arc of Onondaga to be applied towards rent.

If the Program Planning Team has determined that a resident is capable of carrying money, a maximum appropriate amount will be determined. When that amount is dispersed, the individual will sign for the money to indicate that it was received. The individual may spend the money as he or she chooses and receipts will not be required.


A number of individuals come to us with community accounts already established and/or have community accounts for depositing their wages. We periodically report asset balances to the Social Security Administration and as long as we know the full extent of each individual's accounts, we can ensure that spend-downs keep balances within the limits of regulations.

The Rental Agreement signed at admission and renewed annually provides that our residential sites are considered Congregate Care Level II, with a set monthly rate. If you turn over the entire SSI check to Arc, we fund the Personal Allowance and then apply the balance to the rent.

If you choose to handle the SSI check yourself, you should issue a check to the individual for the Personal Allowance and a check to Arc for the remainder to be applied to the rent. These checks are due by the third of each month.

Any excess money in community accounts (from wages and/or other income) will be applied to any back rent owed, as will any back payments of SSI (the individual may spend anything left after that).

Circumstances vary from individual to individual; we'll be happy to answer any questions you have regarding your accounts to assure that proper care is provided and your family member's assets are protected.



A person can utilize his or her clothing and personal allowance money as well as any income earned through employment for recreation, vacations, gifts, personal items, etc. However, these funds can not be used for the purchase of items that Arc of Onondaga is responsible for providing. Parents/guardians/family members can also assist the resident in shopping for clothing or personal items. Feel free to ask staff members or the Residence Coordinator if items need replacing. If Arc of Onondaga is Representative Payee, the parent and/or family member will be asked to provide receipts for purchases made with the resident's money. Additionally, a parent/ guardian/family member has the right to review or obtain a copy of the individual's monthly ledger account by contacting the Finance Department.

Burial Arrangements

If families/guardians have made any burial arrangements for the individual, they will be asked to provide documentation of this at the time of admission. If no burial arrangements have been made by the family or guardian, the burial will be by the county. Arc of Onondaga does not pay for burial.

Visitors

Residents are encouraged to invite friends and family members into their home. However, we ask that they communicate this desire to the Residence Coordinator in consideration of other residents and any house plans. Often residences will plan special activities or events with family and friends such as holiday parties, coffee session, dinners or picnics. Home visits or vacations must also be pre-arranged with the Residence Coordinator. While it is advisable to call in advance before visiting to ensure that your family member will be home, it is not required. You should always feel free to stop by the residence if you wish.

Health Care Services

Each resident will have his or her own private physician who will serve as the resident's primary care source. Whenever possible, the Residential Program will maintain the physician relationships that a resident established prior to admission. This designated physician will manage the medical care of the resident. He or she will perform an annual physical and order necessary lab tests, medications, corrective devices, dental services and referrals for other medical/clinical consultations. The Residence Coordinator is responsible for scheduling the annual physical as well as any other medical, dental or other clinical appointments.

The Residential Program also employs Registered Nurses who are responsible for identifying the medical and health care needs of consumers as well as monitoring compliance with medical treatment plans. These professionals develop nursing care plans as needed, monitor the administration of medications, and provide training to direct care staff and managers to facilitate the delivery of required health care services. All staff who administer medications to residents are required to attend and pass a state mandated medication administration course as well as completing three medication pours under the direct supervision of a Registered Nurse before they actually administer any medications. This certification is renewed annually.


Residence Coordinators or Skills Instructors will accompany the resident to medical appointments. Parents/guardians/ family members may request follow-up information from medical appointments, particularly when medications have been prescribed, dosages changed, diagnostic tests ordered, etc. If an emergency occurs, you will be notified immediately.

Planning Meetings

Each individual residing in an Arc of Onondaga residence has a Program Planning Team. This team is composed of, at a minimum, the individual, his or her parent(s)/guardian/ family member(s), Residence Coordinator, Program Coordinator/ QMRP, day program representative and a nurse. Other individuals such as clinicians, direct care staff, employers, job coach, friends or significant others may also be part of the team. On an annual basis a team planning meeting is held to develop a document called the Individualized Service Plan [ISP] for each resident. The ISP is written by the Service Coordinator, with input from the team members. The ISP is a readable and usable written personal plan of services. It summarizes the assistance that an individual wants and needs to achieve his or her personal goals in life. These goals are referred to as the person's "valued outcomes." From the ISP, the Program Coordinator/QMRP will develop a Residential Habilitation Plan. The Residential Habilitation Plan [Res. Hab. Plan] is the blueprint for achieving these valued outcomes. The ISP and the Res. Hab. Plan are designed using a person-centered -planning approach. This approach is based on increasing individualization, inclusion, independence and productivity for the individual.

As part of the Residential Habilitation Plan, the Program Coordinator/ QMRP will develop written, formal, measurable objectives to provide the necessary training, supervision and assistance for the individual to learn new skills. The Res. Hab. Plan spells out responsibilities, activities, supports and services required to assist the person in achieving his or her valued outcomes. The Res. Hab. Plan, as well as the ISP, are updated as needed and are reviewed, at a minimum, 6 months after development. A program planning team will meet as part of the six-month review process.

Family members are encouraged to participate in these planning meetings. It is an opportunity to bring concerns and questions to staff for discussion. However, family members should feel free to bring concerns



and questions to the attention of the Residence Coordinator, Program Coordinator/QMRP, Service Coordinator or Program Director whenever they arise. You do not need to wait for a formal review meeting to do so. Communication is a two-way street and it is of the utmost importance that it flows freely in both directions. Even small problems or misunderstandings can become serious if we don't continue to work together to solve them when they first arise.

A final written copy of the ISP and the Res. Hab. Plan will be developed within 30 days of the meeting and will be sent to you. It is useful for future reference.

IMPORTANT CONTACT PEOPLE

Service Coordinator: The Service Coordinator is the person responsible for coordinating an individual's entire plan of services including residential, day program and/or employment and benefits such as Medicaid and SSI. The Service Coordinator is also responsible for making all referrals for clinical services either through Arc of Onondaga's Horizons Clinic or to an outside provider. The Service Coordinator is responsible for running the annual and semi-annual review meetings. If you are unhappy with a service, you are encouraged to try to resolve the matter with the provider of that service (residential, day program, vocational, etc.) However, if this is not successful and/or you would like to find a new service for your family member, the Service Coordinator would be the person to call. Your family member may have a Service Coordinator from Arc of Onondaga, another agency or the DSO (Developmental Services Office). You do not need to receive Service Coordination from the same agency where your family member resides.

Your family member's Service Coordinator is:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Program Coordinator/QMRP: The Program Coordinator/QMRP (Qualified Mental Retardation Professional) works solely for Residential Services.

He or she develops and oversees the residential program plan for your family member. The Program Coordinator/QMRP will be present at annual and semi-annual review meetings. He or she will present the residential information at this meeting and write the Residential Habilitation Plan and the goals/objectives that your family member will be working on. He or she will review your family member's plan of services at least monthly and will oversee the follow-up on any recommendations that are decided upon at the review meeting. If you have any concerns about the Residential Habilitation Plan, the goals/objectives, follow-up to clinical services (such as occupational therapy, dental, physical therapy, speech) or just want to discuss your family member's residential program, the Program Coordinator is the person to call.

Your family member's Program Coordinator/QMRP is:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Residence Coordinator: The Residence Coordinator oversees the day-to-day operation of the home where your family member resides. He or she hires, schedules and supervises staff. The Residence Coordinator will coordinate and ensure staffing for recreational activities, medical and clinical appointments. He or she oversees the daily implementation of the goals that have been developed for each person who resides in the home. If you have any questions or concerns with the daily routine, the staffing or want to schedule a home visit for your family member, the Residence Coordinator is the person to call.

Your family member's Residence Coordinator is:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Additional Contacts:

Barbara French
Director of Residential Services
476-7441, ext. 136

Debra Gallagher
Associate Executive Director
476-7441, ext. 131

Stanfort Perry
Executive Director
476-7441, ext. 125



Arc of Onondaga is a chapter of NYSARC, Inc.
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