

WACOSA

Accessibility Plan Year End Report 2021

Architectural Access

Barrier: There is a sidewalk sinking creating an entryway barrier to DocuShred and Door A at the Annex.

Solution: We will get bids for concrete jacking and complete the project as early as funding and weather permits.

Due date: Summer 2021 – 8/2020 update – the project is postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Responsible persons: Vice President of Quality Assurance & Programs and Facilities & Fleet Maintenance Manager.

Progress/Year End Report 2021: The concrete jacking was completed at all Waite Park facilities in June 2021. It will be continued to be monitored.

Environmental Access:

Barrier: With the COVID-19 pandemic spread our service cohorts must remain separated at all our program sites in order to continue safe service delivery until Minnesota Emergency Orders are rescinded.

August 2020 amended: With the COVID-19 pandemic spread our service cohorts must remain separated at all our program sites in order to continue safe service delivery.

Solution: Any noted assessment of environmental access barriers will be addressed in a timely manner.

Progress/Year End Report 2021: As COVID-19 protocols change WACOSA has adapted to meet those changing guidelines while continuing to provide services to those clients who choose to attend both virtually and in person.

8/2020 – All program sites and spaces have been re-designed to address safe spaces for cohorts of no more than 10 people. All physical spaces have barriers provided, visual cues & directions, PPE available for all and limited visitors as per DHS orders.

Due date: Ongoing during 2021 or until restrictions are lifted

Responsible person: Vice President of Quality Assurance & Programs and team

Progress/Year End Report 2021: WACOSA continues to provide physical spaces that accommodate the changing COVID-19 guidelines.

Attitudinal Access and Financial Access

Barrier: Some clients have had difficulty sustaining employment due to soft skill issues. WACOSA has been very successful teaching soft skills. We have determined over time that, soft skills development is instrumental in helping individuals obtain and retain their employment. At this time, we continue to believe that investing in quality training for staff and clients will lead to increased employment success.

Solution: WACOSA will continue to focus on social and emotional intelligence coaching for all staff to increase our collective skills at supporting all clients to be successful in the soft skills related to community employment settings. We have formed a Top 20 committee of staff to work throughout the year on developing and implementing new activities and curriculum that promote the concepts and skills learned from Top 20 and The WACOSA WAY with all staff and clients.

Due date: Ongoing throughout 2021 with staff and clients.

Responsible person: Vice President of Quality Assurance & Programs/ASD Specialist

Progress/Year End Report 2021: All new staff are trained in Top 20 thinking. We have not had in person committee meetings due to staffing shortages and COVID-19 protocols. Will continue this goal into 2022.

2. Barrier: Funding cuts continue to result in restrictions to days of service and, in some cases, clients are told they are not eligible for services or need to be on a waiting list for services.

Solution: WACOSA is a member of MOHR, an association of community rehabilitation programs and day training and habilitation providers throughout the state. Their goals are to influence legislation for our services and to work cooperatively with DHS around service related standards. In addition to maintaining our membership in MOHR, Steve Howard will maintain his role on the various committees that are specialized in guiding legislative changes for our industries benefit.

WACOSA will also continue to engage local and state legislators by extending invitations to tour and visit with clients and staff at our facilities. We also will continue to engage in self-advocacy activities.

Due date: Throughout legislative session and ongoing throughout 2021.

Responsible person: Executive Director & Vice President of Quality Assurance & Programs

Progress/Year End Report 2021: *Steve Howard, Executive Director, continues to represent WACOSA's financial interests as a member of MOHR and as MOHR board member. He legislatively advocates for continued funding stabilization as part of his integral role.*

WACOSA clients are involved in their own advocacy efforts by participating in Day at the Capital virtually in 2021 and through our "Right On" virtual classes held weekly, as they choose to do so.

Employment and Community Integration Access

Barrier: There is a continued need for employment, particularly center-based contract work.

Solution: WACOSA sales staff will continue to develop new and existing job opportunities with our area business partners in 2021.

Due date: Development of new options is continuous.

Responsible person: Executive Director

Progress/Year End Report 2021: *WACOSA maintains center-based work contracts with multiple business partners as well as community based work sites. At this point we do not have the staff or client resources to increase our work capacity. We have a waiting list of community partners waiting for us to be able to offer our services.*

Communication access

Barrier: We do not have clients who are unable to use our services due to communication barriers. We have worked at increasing staff language skills to assist in growing our Somali population to be able to communicate with staff. We have hired native Somali speaking staff to help train other staff some basic words and cultural expectations. Paperwork is translated into other languages upon request.

Solution: WACOSA will continue to train non-Somali speaking staff on the basics of the language to better enable them to communicate with our Somali clients.

Due Date: On going through 2021

Person Responsible: Vice President of Quality Assurance & Programs

Progress/Year End Report 2021: *WACOSA staff continue to work with community members to speak our client's languages, understand basic words and phrases and teach our Somali speaking client some English words and phrases as well. We will continue these efforts into 2022.*

Technology Access

Barrier: Computers and/or iPads with appropriate communication apps are available at all sites and shifts. All staff and clients have access to computers while at WACOSA in order to complete their work and/or goals. Remote services are implemented for those who choose them and additional technology infrastructure is needed to sustain these efforts.

1/1/2021 – WACOSA received a grant to purchase additional media and technology equipment for all sites and shifts to improve access to remote services and create unique content for ongoing technology needs. The purchase was completed and the implementation and training process began in January.

Due Date: Ongoing training and implementation of technology through 2021.

Person Responsible: Vice President of Quality Assurance & Programs

Progress/Year End Report 2021: *All sites and shifts have been updated with adaptive technology hardware, including computers, tablets, cameras, and other equipment necessary to continuing to offer virtual classes. All staff are trained in the basic use of the equipment with the goal of offering more in-depth training in the coming year.*

Transportation Access

Barrier: We do not have anyone on a waiting list for transportation or accessible transportation. We do have an increase in clients needing supervised transportation from within our service area.

Solution: WACOSA continues to strategize to maximize our transportation resources and will continue to address individual transportation needs as they relate to community employment, self-regulation of behavior needs, access to community activities and other recognized needs.

Due Date: Ongoing assessment of needs through 2021

Person Responsible: Vice President of Quality Assurance & Programs

Progress/Year End Report 2021: *WACOSA continues to offer various transportation options for those individuals attending our facilities.*

Other Identified Needs: There are no other identified needs at this time.

This progress report was completed by Nancy Betts, Vice President of Quality Assurance & Programs and has been reviewed and approved by:

Steve Howard, Executive Director: _____

Date: _____