



CARF
Survey Report
for
Linking Employment
Abilities & Potential

Organization

Linking Employment Abilities & Potential (LEAP)
2545 Lorain Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44113

Organizational Leadership

Melanie Hogan, Executive Director

Survey Dates

February 2-4, 2011
February 23-24, 2011

Survey Team

John L. Bloor, Administrative Surveyor
Christine A. Camene, Program Surveyor
Sherry O. Becker, M.A., CRC, CPRP, Program Surveyor

Programs/Services Surveyed

Community Services: Assistive Technology Supports and Services
Community Services: Centers for Independent Living
Community Services: Comprehensive Benefits Planning
Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job Development
Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job Supports
Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job-Site Training
Employment Services: Employment Transition Services

Previous Survey

January 28-29, 2008
Three-Year Accreditation



Survey Outcome

Three-Year Accreditation
Expiration: February 2014

SURVEY SUMMARY

Linking Employment Abilities & Potential (LEAP) has strengths in many areas.

- The organization has a quality dedicated board of directors. They have clearly defined their role with the organization. Committees are active, and board members are involved in the numerous activities that LEAP sponsors.
- A dedicated and skilled executive director provides leadership to employees. She has worked with the board of directors and other stakeholders to expand services and enhance the vision of the organization.
- The organization is commended for the transition from Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry (LMM) during the past two years. LEAP is now handling its own finances, human resources, technology, etc. It has leased and remodeled a new office and program space.
- LEAP has a very positive reputation in the community. Stakeholders speak highly of the quality of services that are provided, the ability to meet individuals' service needs, and the willingness to expand services.
- LEAP has a strong, vibrant history rooted in the Independent Living Movement. It has remained true to the vision of the founding director, and programs and services are grounded in the Independent Living Movement philosophy.
- LEAP has several long-term employees who provide a resource of continuity in service delivery to persons served as well as the ability to relate the history and original vision of the founding staff and board. These long-term employees keep those principles true even with the ongoing growth and expansion of the organization.
- Many key staff members are individuals with disabilities building a peer support structure to individual service delivery. Persons served are able to see how they can be successful by the example of the staff providing their services.
- Leadership works with other disability service providers to develop strong grassroots advocacy partnerships to improve services for persons served across the state.
- LEAP staff is trained in understanding the principles of the Independent Living Movement philosophy and using those principles in all services provided to persons served.
- Staff members are proactive in finding ways to educate policymakers on the benefits of services provided from a community-based versus institutional setting.
- The majority of the staff, management, and board have personal experiences living with a disability and are able to use that to promote and drive the organization's mission and strategic goals.
- LEAP has developed an effective training curriculum of classes for persons served to learn various skills related to independent living. This approach allows the person served to learn in a classroom setting with other people who have the same needs and build in a peer support structure to the training component.

- Many of LEAP's programs, such as Quantum Leap, are developed with ongoing input from persons served. In the Quantum Leap program, all activities offered in each six-week session are based on the feedback and requests from the previous session's evaluations.
- LEAP's certified benefits specialists are highly skilled and knowledgeable regarding benefits available to persons served and how various factors such as returning to work will affect the benefits they receive. Staff keeps up to date on changes in Social Security Administration (SSA) rules regarding benefits through ongoing trainings and current literature.
- The benefits specialist who works primarily with persons served seeking to apply for Social Security Insurance (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) has a very high success rate in assisting persons served with receiving approval from SSA for financial benefits.
- Several staff members at LEAP are trained on how to support persons served with identifying and receiving benefits they are eligible for online through The Ohio Benefit Bank.
- LEAP has experienced many changes during the tenure of this accreditation, but it is complimented for its successful efforts to manage dramatic change while maintaining focus on its mission. Staff members are recognized for their ability to capitalize on opportunities presented by the downturn in the economy to diversify funding streams.
- LEAP employs dedicated staff members who tirelessly search for opportunities and jobs that match and advance consumers' dreams. The genuine, mutual respect observed between persons served and staff in all services provides a solid foundation for meeting the educational, employment, and training challenges individuals may face during their tenure with the organization.
- LEAP is commended for its commitment to innovative services and continuous quality improvement. Staff members are currently working to learn and incorporate emerging best practice strategies like Griffin-Hammis Associates, LLC's customized employment and vocational rehabilitation public and private partnerships employability elevators into their existing practice models. Additional efforts and willingness to embrace change to improve the quality and outcomes of services set LEAP apart from other providers in Northeastern Ohio.
- LEAP has a strong reputation in the community. The active participation of staff members in the communities served fosters valuable networks and support. These advocates regularly leverage their social capital to enhance opportunities for persons served.
- LEAP enjoys great relationships with the employers and job-site staff. There is evidence of strong team spirit and camaraderie that greatly contributes to the efficiency of operations, quality of services, and positive outcomes.

In the following area Linking Employment Abilities & Potential demonstrates exemplary conformance to the standards.

- LEAP's Job Link and High School-High Tech programs provide exemplary transition services that facilitate valuable connections between the student's educational system, area businesses, and an employment service provider. Early connections with students, their families, and educators result in the formation of meaningful relationships that provide a solid foundation for effective collaboration. Two projects noted during this survey process capture the innovative spirit and enthusiasm that permeates LEAP's transition services.

Linking Employment Abilities & Potential should seek improvement in the areas identified by the recommendations in the report. Consultation given does not indicate nonconformance to standards but is offered as a suggestion for further quality improvement.

On balance, LEAP provides quality services and is highly regarded by people receiving services and other stakeholders. The organization is under the direction of a well-organized administration and board of directors. Over the past year, the organization has made a successful transition from another corporation that was providing accounting, human resource, and technology support. The transition has allowed LEAP to build its own capacity and enhance the services provided. The board of directors has increased its involvement with LEAP, which will help the organization in the long term. Employees think very highly of the mission and the direction of the organization.

Linking Employment Abilities & Potential has earned a Three-Year Accreditation. The organization is well run by dedicated and caring employees, leadership, and board members who work enthusiastically to serve the needs of consumers and are recognized for the efforts they have made in the pursuit of international accreditation. During the tenure of this accreditation, the organization is encouraged to use its resources to address the opportunities for improvement recommended in this report and to use the CARF standards as a guideline for continuous quality improvement.