



WVARR

West Virginia Alliance of Recovery Residences

1. What is WVARR?

The West Virginia Alliance of Recovery Residences (WVARR) was established in 2018 in partnership with the WV Office of Drug Control Policy and the Bureau of Behavioral Health. WVARR is the state affiliate of the National Alliance of Recovery Residences (NARR). In 2011, NARR established best-practice standards and ethical principles applicable to recovery residences nationwide. NARR only designates one affiliate per state to carry out their processes and has 35 state affiliates across the country (WV was the 32nd).

WVARR has been tasked with:

- Implementing recovery residence certification based on NARR standards
- Disseminating a list of certified residences to relevant stakeholders
- Facilitating a process for filing and responding to grievances (complaints) about recovery residences
- Training and educating recovery residence operators & staff
- Training and educating the public about recovery residences
- Advocating on behalf of the recovery residence community

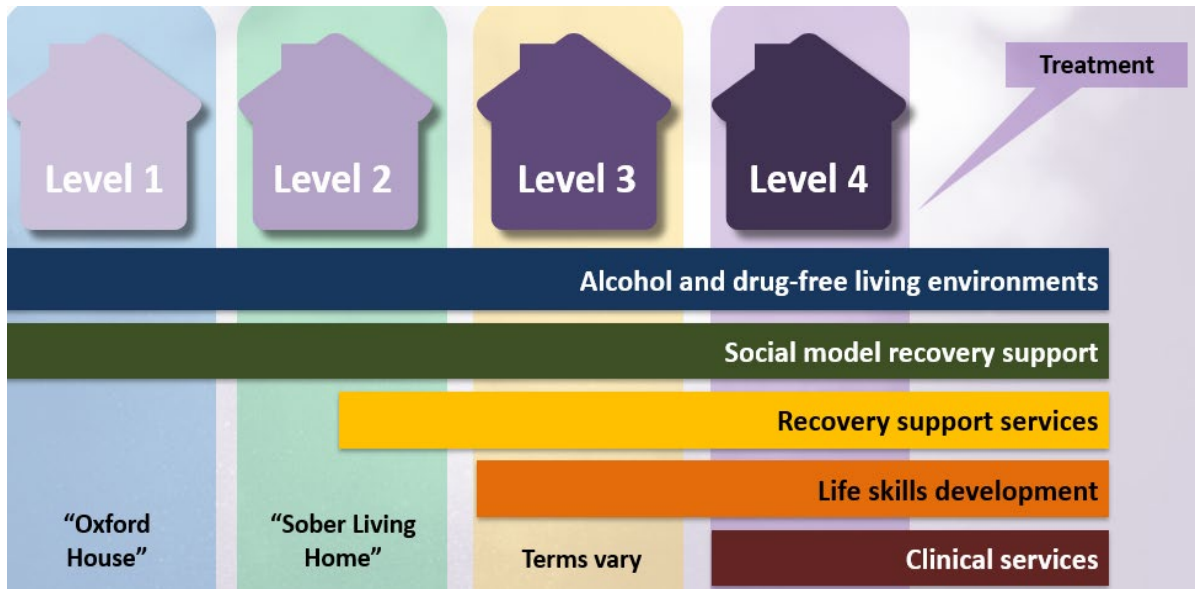
2. What is a Recovery Residence?

“Recovery residence” is a broad term describing a sober, safe, and healthy living environment that promotes recovery from alcohol, drug use, and associated problems. Many thousands exist in the United States that vary in size, organization, and target population. At a minimum, recovery residences offer peer-to-peer recovery support with some providing professionally delivered clinical services all aimed at promoting, long-term recovery. The purpose of a recovery residence is to **provide a safe and healthy living environment to initiate and sustain recovery**—defined as abstinence from alcohol and other non-prescribed drug use and improvement in one’s physical, mental, spiritual, and social wellbeing. Skills developed while living in a recovery residence will continue to support the residents’ recovery as they transition to living independently and productively in the community.

3. What are Recovery Residence Levels of Care?

Recovery residences are divided into four Levels of Support based on the type as well as the intensity and duration of support that they offer. Services provided span from peer to-peer

recovery support (all recovery residences) to medical and counseling services (recovery residences offering higher levels of support). The NARR Standards define minimum services for each Level of Support, but additional services may be provided at each level.



4. How are Recovery Residences governed or regulated?

Recovery residences’ internal governance varies across Levels of Support. Forms of governance range from democratically run by the residents (Level 1) to oversight by licensed professionals (Level 4). External regulation of recovery residences varies from state to state, local government to local government, and model to model. In general, states regulate professional services and local governments regulate health and safety standards. Both state and local government regulation must adhere to federal laws and limitations, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Fair Housing Act (FHA). Some recovery residences accept third party payments, including insurance, HUD, Medicaid, etc. Third party payers define what is reimbursable and the service duration according to mandated standards of quality and practice.

A variety of non-governmental oversight organizations exist at the local, regional, and national level. NARR exists at the national level and partners with other organizations at the regional level. Many states/regions (including WV) have NARR affiliates that maintain policies and procedures for their members that meet the NARR Standard. Certified recovery residences are guided by the NARR standards that established best practices for maintaining the safety and health of the residents, the local neighborhood, and the larger community. NARR-certified recovery residences meet standards addressing safety from an administrative, operational, property, and good neighbor perspective.

5. Do all recovery residences have to get certified?

WVARR Certification is completely voluntary. However, in 2019, the West Virginia Legislature passed [SB 1012](#) which requires any organization or residence wishing to receive

state funding or referrals from state-funded agencies, including the Department of Corrections, to become certified by WVARR.

6. What are the benefits of certification?

Benefits of certification include:

- Following standards & ethics based on nationally recognized best practices
- Provider accountability
- Independent, 3rd party assurance of quality
- Consumer information and protections
- Ability to establish public, consumer, and governmental trust
- Distinguishes “good” operations from the “not so good”
- Provider support & continuing quality improvement
- Training & workforce development
- Integration of recovery residences into larger systems of care
- Access to more diverse funding streams

7. What will the certification process entail?

The certification review process will take place in 4 steps:

(1) The provider will apply for certification through the Certemy portal hosted on the WVARR website (www.wvarr.org) and upload all relevant and specified documentation; (2) WVARR staff will review all required administrative documentation that has been submitted and provide a Quality Improvement Plan when appropriate; (3) WVARR staff will conduct an on-site inspection of each physical property owned by the provider; and (4) WVARR staff will conduct in-person interviews with the operator, key staff, and residents.

Certification will be based on four primary domains:

(1) Administrative review: We're looking for written, documented policies and procedures, ethical practices, consistency, and transparency. All residences should have mission statements, written house rules, admission and discharge criteria, supervision requirements, and policies and procedures that discuss health and safety, living accommodations, resident grievances, and drug and alcohol screening.

(2) Recovery support and recovery-based programming: We want to see that resident activities emphasize the spirit of recovery and support recovery community engagement. Residents should be encouraged or required to participate in recovery-oriented activities, like attending 12-step and mutual aid meetings, peer recovery meetings, clinical and mental health support, and other pro-social forms of recovery engagement.

(3) Creating a "home-like environment": We're looking for safety of the physical property, but also features that promote a home-like atmosphere and encourage social engagement.

(4) The Good Neighbor Policy: This is about being "good neighbors" in terms of things like parking, smoking, and communicating with neighbors, but it's also about ensuring residents are well acquainted with the resources in their communities so they're more prepared when they leave the residence.

The specific requirements for each domain are listed in the [NARR standards](#).

Potential applicants should use the [NARR standards](#) as a guide or an outline (if newly developing). It is important to note that *WVARR will not dictate what a residence's specific policies should be*; we want to know: (1) that residences have a policy for each area specified in the standard, for example: relapse, drug testing, etc.; (2) that policies are written, documented, and well communicated to the residents/ staff; and (3) that the policy is safe, relevant, and appropriate for the population the home is serving. For a more in-depth review of the NARR standards, check out NARR's recently-released [Compendium Guide](#).

8. Are any Recovery Residences in WV currently certified? If not, when might that realistically happen?

No residences are currently WVARR certified. WVARR certification will begin in September 2020.

5. How is WVARR is funded?

WVARR is predominantly funded by the WV Office of Drug Control Policy and overseen by the WV Bureau of Behavioral Health.

6. How is WVARR staffed?

We currently have two full-time employees and two full-time Certification Staff Reviewers. WVARR's Board of Directors comprised of twelve individuals from across the state. The WVARR Board of Directors includes at least one representative from all seven WV GASCUD regions. Eight of our twelve directors are recovery residence operators. Eight identify as people in long-term recovery.