



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 31 state affiliates across the country, and 10 more in development.

WVARR activities include:

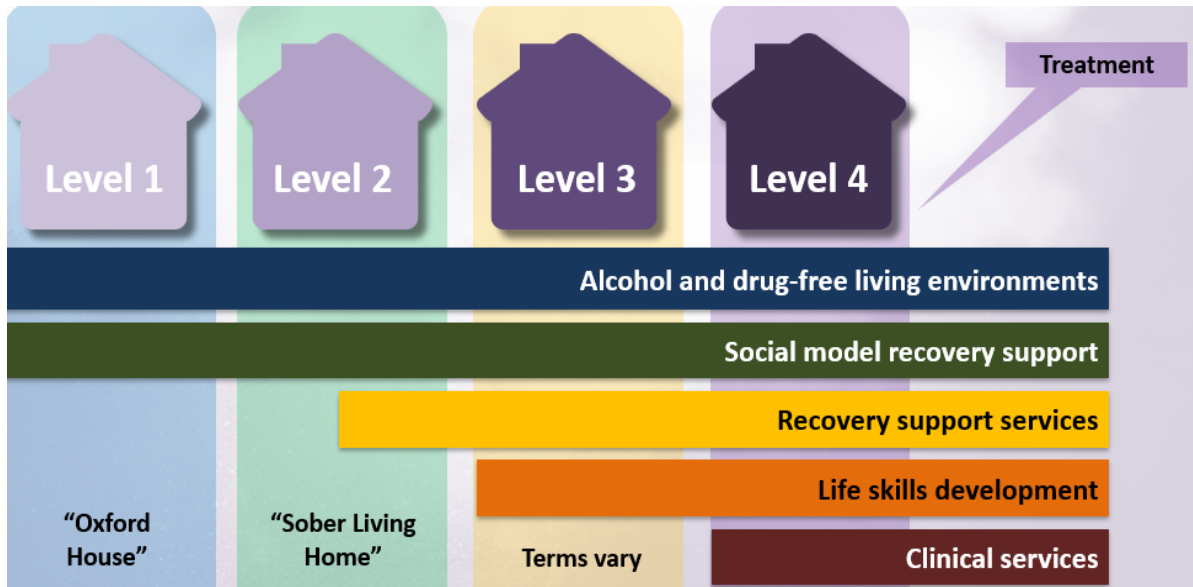
- Implementing recovery residence certification based on NARR standards.
- Disseminating a list of certified residences to relevant stakeholders.
- Facilitating a process for filing and responding to grievances (complaints) about recovery residences.
- Training and educating recovery residence operators and staff.
- Training and educating the public about recovery residences.
- Hosting monthly open calls for recovery residence operators and staff.
- Conducting the first-ever statewide capacity assessment of recovery residences.
- Developing processes to collect, monitor, and assess data from and about the recovery residence community, including resident surveys and outcomes.
- Providing guidance and funding recommendations to state agencies.
- Collaborating with the NARR board and other NARR affiliates to ensure best practices are shared and followed.
- Supporting the recovery and recovery housing community through advocacy and outreach.
- Collaborating across diverse sectors and professions to ensure that people with substance use disorders are treated with dignity and respect and are able to access the highest quality care and support possible to achieve and maintain long-term recovery.

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 Care, or 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?

In accordance with federal fair housing laws, 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 does the certification process entail?

An overview of the certification process is [available on our website here](#). The full certification process is outlined in the [WVARR Certification Preparation Packet](#).

The certification review process will take place in the following steps:

- (1) The provider will complete a pre-application through the Certemy portal hosted on the WVARR website.
- (2) Once the pre-application is completed, the residence is assigned a Certification Reviewer who will contact the applicant by phone to ensure the applicant's eligibility and answer any relevant questions.
- (3) The applicant will be given access to the full certification application on Certemy portal and will upload all relevant and specified documentation within the portal.
- (4) WVARR staff will review all required administrative documentation that has been submitted and will provide the applicant with a Policy Review Report that outlines all required changes or modifications required to progress.
- (5) WVARR staff will conduct structured interviews with the residence operator, key staff, and residents.
- (6) WVARR staff will conduct an on-site inspection of each physical property owned by the provider.
- (7) WVARR staff will develop a Quality Improvement Plan for the applicant which will include all required changes and recommendations related to compliance with NARR standards and Code of Ethics.
- (8) The applicant will have 20 business days to respond to the Quality Improvement Plan via one of three options: providing documentation of the completed indicators; demonstrating compliance without completing the indicators; or providing an action plan for completing each indicator.

The specific requirements for each domain are listed in the [NARR standards](#). For a more in-depth review of the NARR standards, check out NARR's recently released [Compendium Guide](#). 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 necessarily dictate what a residence's specific policies should be; we require:

- (1) that the residence maintains a policy for each area specified in the NARR standards;
- (2) that policies are written, documented, and well communicated to the residents/ staff;
- (3) that policies are safe, relevant, and appropriate for the population the home is serving.

Certification is based on four primary domains:

(1) Administrative Domain: The residence should maintain written 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 address resident health and safety, financial expectations, programmatic expectations, living accommodations, resident grievances, and drug and alcohol screening.

(2) Recovery Support Domain: Resident activities should emphasize the spirit of recovery and support recovery community engagement. Residents should be encouraged or required to participate in recovery-oriented activities, like 12-step and mutual aid meetings, peer recovery meetings, clinical and mental health support, and other pro-social forms of recovery engagement.

(3) Physical Property Domain": Each residence should be safe, structurally, sound and in good repair. The residence should be comfortable, promote a home-like atmosphere, and encourage social engagement and peer-to-peer interaction (social model recovery).

(4) The Good Neighbor Domain: The residence community should be "good neighbors!" The residence leadership should be proactive to ensure the residence and residence community (staff, residents, volunteers, etc.) become an integral part of the community or neighborhood. The residence should maintain policies and procedures related to parking, smoking, and communicating with neighbors. Residents should be well acquainted with resources in their communities.

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

Yes! WVARR maintains an up-to-date [directory of certified residences](#) on our website here. You can also [use our map tool](#) to locate a certified residence by individual search criteria (gender, county, etc.) www.wvarr.org/certified-program-list

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?

WVARR has four full-time employees: an executive director, assistant director, and two full-time Certification Staff Reviewers. The WVARR Board of Directors is comprised of members from each GASCUUD region in the state who maintain experience and expertise related to addiction and recovery. To learn about WVARR's Board of Directors, [visit our website](#) at www.wvarr.org