

AHCCCS Provider Response to SAMHSA Fidelity Review

Complete the following form in response to the SAMHSA fidelity review process. Your response will be posted on the AHCCCS website.

Date: October 15th, 2025

Name and contact information of provider:

Recovery Empowerment Network

Type of evidence-based practice provider (select one):

	Permanent Supportive Housing
	Supported Employment
X	Consumer-Operated Services
	Assertive Community Treatment

What was your experience with the fidelity review conducted at your agency?

The reviewers work professionally and friendly with staff and members. Those that participated stated they had a positive experience.

What was most helpful about the fidelity review process for your agency? To include members in interviews to learn more real-world skills rather than mock like we have done over the years.

What suggestions would improve the review process? An updated toolkit that reflects modern understand of COS.

Comments from your agency regarding the findings of the review and/or the fidelity report:

2.2.1 We as an organization and with the support of Mercy Care find it concerning to communicate to COS organizations to not participate in justice diversion programs. Members make an active choice to participate in these programs and to insinuate we are “choosing to compromise our therapeutic relationship with our members” by supporting their choice to participate in a process that is overwhelming and often scary to an individual who has not used a diversion program before. These programs aim to reduce recidivism and improve participants' quality of life by connecting them with treatment instead of incarceration. To discourage continued successful interventions to keep our members out of jail is insidious. We started participating in the Maricopa County Court Diversion program starting in 2022 and we lost no points on this topic in 2023 when audited last. This is the wording that was provided during our last review where a point was not taken.

“Some members may be court ordered, and the program will provide attendance records to those members. Some staff do provide certificates of completion to agents of the court when there are signed releases of information. The program is collaborating with a diversion program allowing participants to complete an anger management program to prevent jail time. The program provides members with a certificate of completion as the program does not typically collaborate with those entities.” We request this topic be re-evaluated as the current recommendation is harmful to supporting members' choice and right to have support when choosing to participate in diversion programs.

- 3.6 Spiritual Growth As stated in the Rational we do cultural days where members can request the different cultural and spiritualities to be discussed and learned about for the day. The members choose to celebrate spirituality this way, and they choose the topic of the day. As also stated in Rational, when requested by members space is made available for them. We were deducted a point from this category and the Recommendations stated for us to develop a formal opportunity for members. Which we have. The members chose to call them cultural day and what topic is discussed backed up by the statement in the rational. The second Recommendation is to seek member feedback. However, again the auditors' own rational says we do this already. The only part that applied is to participate with other COSPs to increase this opportunity, however I feel it is unjust to judge an organization on its ability to work closely with another competitor especially on a topic as sensitive as spirituality and faith. The members chose the name of cultural day to represent their spirituality groups.
- 5.2.2 General messaging of COS Fidelity is member choice over anything else but when members do not choose to participate in what the auditors want then we are supposed to somehow force the members to participate while pretending it was member choice. A requirement of 75%-100% of member participation in formal job readiness is an unreasonable expectation with still supporting member choice. As noted in rational, nearly all if not 100% of our members participate in groups and activities that support skill building towards employment. In the recommendations it states to do things like volunteering opportunities which we already do and is listed in the Rational. We have a full peer employment services department that handles all aspects of employment the moment a member expresses interest, and we follow the SAMHSA Fidelity for supported Employment with zero exclusion. We have a full department to help members clear roadblocks to get jobs such as ID, Transcript requests, housing, and any other goal they choose to work on towards their employment or development goals. In 2023 we scored all points for this section, and we have dedicated 3 more staff to these departments since 2023 and started a computer class for skills development and GED support group to help afford more opportunities to individuals. To lose two points in an area where we have put a significant increase in resources and staff to an area that was already considered doing well in 2023 is confusing and to give suggestions of things to increase our score by doing things we are already doing points to a contradiction or a lack of understanding by the auditors. In discussion with Mercy Care they agreed that we should follow our current model as they also prioritize member choice over creating a forced situation as suggested by the recommendations. As an organization we appreciate and utilize productive and useful recommendations but to compromise the ethics of our organization to meet an unreasonable expectation should not be recommended and we are unable to agree with this finding.