

Approved Accreditation Programs for Community Psychiatric Support and Treatment (CPST) — Comparison Guide

Accreditation Body	Council on Accreditation (COA)	Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)	The Joint Commission (TJC)
Focus Areas	Service delivery and agency management	Program-level accreditation for behavioral health services.	Agency-level accreditation including all services and locations.
Population Coverage	Adult and Youth	Adult by default; Programs that serve youth require special population designation of Children and Adolescents.	All populations; providers must specify services and locations.
DMAS Approved Programs	1. CPST Community – Adult COA Program: Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services 2. CPST Community – Youth COA Program: Youth Psychosocial Services 3. CPST School Setting – Youth COA Program: Youth Psychosocial Services	1. CPST Community – Adult CARF Program: Community Integration or Intensive Family-Based Services 2. CPST Community & School Setting – Youth CARF Program: Outpatient Treatment or Intensive Family-Based Services with Children and Adolescents designation	Providers must list all services and locations. No carve-outs allowed. Standards apply to services in their specific settings.
Application Process	Website/email inquiry → Intake → Coordinator assigned → Standards provided → Portal setup → Self-assessment → Site visit (~8 weeks later)	Providers select applicable programs; must meet general and program-specific standards; field category designation required.	Application valid for 1 year; provider indicates readiness for survey.
Survey Process	Peer reviewers (volunteers) conduct site visits; feedback provided before final decision.	Surveyors assigned based on number of programs, location, and population served; lean survey model. Feedback provided to organization during survey.	Survey scheduled with 30-day notice; duration depends on provider size.

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Average Timeline for achieving Accreditation	12–16 months depending on provider readiness	Varies: Providers must have 6-months conformance to applicable standards prior to the initial accreditation survey and 3-months conformance to applicable standards required for new programs being added to resurveys.	3–6 months depending on provider readiness
Cost Structure	Tiered based on budget; accreditation and site visit fees every 4 years.	Algorithm-based; depends on programs, locations, and number of persons served. No annual fees or dues. No survey post-billing.	Avg. survey fee ~\$3,500 Annual fee ~\$2,000–\$2,645 ~\$10K over 3 years
Flexibility	COA aims to help providers meet standards and avoid denial; provisional accreditation possible.	Providers determine the program(s) they wish to accredit. Every provider is assigned a CARF Resource Specialist to guide them with program selection and to assist them throughout the survey cycle.	All services and locations must be included; no exclusions allowed.
Unique Notes	Collaborative approach; peer reviewers provide feedback before final decision.	Accreditation is at the program level. Surveys are collaborative and feedback is provided to the organization during the survey.	Standards tailored to service setting; covers home and community programs.