

Community Review

The Community Review is a process of structured program self-assessment and subsequent independent review performed by a knowledgeable panel of trained community volunteers. The review informs DHHS on how well aligned a program's service delivery is with the Department's missions and objectives.

The review is not a performance or financial audit, nor is it a program evaluation or in depth Quality Service Review (QSR). Instead, it provides a perspective of service delivery from the community or client's perspective.

Who are Community Reviewers?

Reviewers are knowledgeable of the health and human service field and reflective of the diversity of Montgomery County. Review opportunities are open to residents who volunteer for service. The team comprises three to four reviewers supported by the PACS coordinator throughout the entire process.

Reviewers are not employees but people from the community who receive specialized orientation and training to prepare for the review.

How does it work?

The process begins with a program self-assessment by staff. The program manager and staff collaboratively examine standards in six sections and provide supporting evidence area as to whether the program aligns with the standard or strategy.

Reviewers examine the self-assessment tool and other program-related documents, interviewing staff and customers and observing program service delivery on the ground. Working with program staff, reviewers identify strengths and best practices which could be transferable to other programs. Recommendations for improvements where they might be needed are also documented.

Findings are summarized in a report that is presented by reviewers to the Department's Director, senior management and program staff. A plan of action and timeline are developed for findings or recommendations, as appropriate.

What is Reviewed?

A structured multi-section instrument with a rating scale and criteria is used to facilitate the review process. Programs are evaluated based on their alignment with the mission

and guiding principles of DHHS: effective and equitable service delivery; accountability; capable and engaged workforce; service delivery transformation and collaborative partnerships.

Programs are also reviewed on how successfully they meet objectives in line with goals in the Department's Strategic Plan Roadmap, such as equitable service delivery.

What is the value?

Community Reviews serve as a quality review process that helps staff to assess services with community input, to ensure service delivery is effective and equitable. The review gives community members the opportunity to learn about the array of programs offered in Montgomery County.

The reviews also serve to identify programs that may need a more formal evaluation or a Quality Service Review (QSR).

PACS monitors progress of the recommendations and reports results to the DHHS Director and the Senior Leadership Team, at regular intervals.

Interested in becoming a reviewer?

Contact the Montgomery County Volunteer Center at (240) 777-2600 or visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/volunteercenter/

Community Review Quick Facts

- ▶ 140 Community Reviews completed since 1999
- ▶ An average of 20 recommendations are reported per review
- ▶ 69% of recommendations partially or fully implemented within 18 months (FY15-FY16)
- ▶ More than 50 volunteer reviewers have participated to date

