



## **SCARR Certification Handbook**

# Welcome!

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We are glad your organization has decided to pursue SCARR certification. As a SCARR-certified program, you demonstrate to your clients, residents, residents' families, referral partners, and community at large that you uphold the highest national standards for recovery housing. As such, we expect SCARR-certified organizations to take on a leadership role in South Carolina—modeling what excellence in recovery housing looks like, and inspiring others to raise the standard of care across our state.

This handbook serves as a comprehensive guide and resource throughout your certification process. We believe it addresses most questions that may arise during the process, and we suggest you read it thoroughly before beginning. We ask that you are confident your organization can meet the requirements and standards before submitting for certification. While this handbook provides a thorough review of the documentation requirements and the on-site inspection, it may not address questions or circumstances specific to your local municipality or individual needs. If you have questions about zoning law, insurance coverage, or other legal concerns, we encourage you to speak with an attorney or insurance professional.

In partnership with the Fletcher Group, SCARR operates a virtual training center. It is accessible to anyone and everyone on our website by using the following link: <https://scarronline.org/learning-center/>. We require that you view the opening series of videos under the heading *“Want to know more about starting a recovery residence?”* in conjunction with a thorough examination of this handbook.

Lastly, SCARR is an affiliate of the National Alliance of Recovery Residences (NARR), and utilizes the standards created by NARR as its guiding document for certifying Recovery Residences in South Carolina. Please review the NARR standards [here](#).

SCARR is committed to supporting you during this process. If you find that this handbook does not provide an answer to your certification question, please reach out to SCARR Director of Operations, Rob Teter, at [rteter@scarronline.org](mailto:rteter@scarronline.org). Thank you for your commitment to strengthening recovery housing in South Carolina and for creating environments where individuals in recovery have the opportunity to thrive!

With gratitude,

The SCARR Staff and Board

# SCARR Policies on Certification

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## 1. Recovery-Housing Requirement

SCARR's mandate is to certify recovery housing. Transitional housing that is not recovery-oriented—such as homelessness shelters, domestic violence shelters, youth shelters, reentry housing, assisted living, or other temporary housing that does not provide a recovery program—is beyond our scope. We realize that many recovery housing programs serve specific populations, and that is ok! At minimum, your organization must require that residents remain sober and engage in recovery-oriented activities, programming, or support as a condition of residency.

## 2. All Facilities Must be Included

SCARR has an “all or none” policy for all facilities, properties, and homes that are part of your organization. We cannot certify some houses and not others. We are giving your entire organization a SCARR certification, and therefore will need access to every property you operate. If you add additional properties within your annual recertification period, please reach out to SCARR Director of Operations, Rob Teter, at [rteter@scarronline.org](mailto:rteter@scarronline.org) to have your new property certified.

## 3. Certification Requires Ongoing Compliance

SCARR certification is not limited to meeting standards on the day of inspection. Certified organizations are expected to remain in compliance with SCARR standards throughout the annual certification period. SCARR may conduct audit or grievance-related inspections without advance notice to verify continued compliance.

## 4. Certification Does Not Replace Legal or Regulatory Compliance

SCARR certification does not constitute approval of an organization's compliance with zoning, building codes, fire codes, licensing requirements, insurance requirements, employment law, or other local, state, or federal laws. Each organization remains responsible for determining and maintaining compliance with all laws and regulations applicable to its residences and operations.

# Know Before You Apply

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Please read the following information thoroughly to make sure you are prepared to begin the certification process:

- **SCARR currently uses One Step for certification management.** After clicking “apply here” on the SCARR website, enter your organization’s details, and make sure to click “add facility” if you have more than one property. We will reach out to you after we receive your details to begin the document submission process.
- **Please use the email address of the person who will be uploading your documents in the “admin/management contact” field.** “Form request” emails, with links to upload documents, will go to this email address. Invoices for your certification fees will also go to this email address.
- **Do not email your documents to SCARR staff.** We only accept documents via One Step, and we cannot upload them for you. Emailing your documents to SCARR staff will delay certification.
- **SCARR certification requires basic computer literacy.** If you require help creating and uploading documents, or navigating One Step, we suggest you ask for help from someone in your organization. SCARR staff does not have the ability to help with technical support. See below for some helpful tech support contacts, if needed.
- **One Step technical support:** [customers@onestepsoftware.com](mailto:customers@onestepsoftware.com)
- **SCARR Learning Center technical support:** [LC@fletchergroup.org](mailto:LC@fletchergroup.org)

## General Documentation Suggestions

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Before addressing each individual document we require you to submit, here are some general helpful pointers and requests:

- **Be succinct and direct.** For example, a drug testing policy that spreads over multiple pages, is not an easily-understood, digestible policy. In that same vein,

be wary of using generative Ai to write these policies. They are usually far too broad, and have no application to your specific organization.

- **Policy and Procedure documents must be your \*client-facing\* documents!** The documents that clients receive upon intake and orientation should be the same documents that you upload for SCARR review.
- **Once approved, we encourage you to combine your policies and procedures into one comprehensive intake packet.** You can provide this to all incoming residents during orientation. Please wait until all documents have been approved by SCARR before doing this, as you will have to upload them separately for approval.
- **Save each policy in one organized folder.** You will be required to submit updated versions of these documents every year, so we suggest you keep them organized!
- With the exception of your business logo as an image file, **please create and upload PDF files.**

## Required Documents

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The following is a complete list of all documents required with helpful notes and required inclusions. We encourage you to print this out and use it as a checklist!

### ☐ **SCARR Learning Center Certificate of Completion**

- You can download this in the SCARR learning center on our website, after watching the seven-video series *"So you want to be a recovery residence owner or operator,"* and reading this handbook.

### ☐ **Mission Statement**

- Describes the organization's current purpose and activities.

### ☐ **Vision Statement**

- Describes the organization's desired long-term impact and aspirations.

## ☐ Legal Business Documentation (from Secretary of State)

- This should be your “Articles of Organization” or “Certificate of Existence” from the Secretary of State’s office.
- The name of the organization listed on the Articles of Organization must match the name of the organization you are seeking to certify, or include a “DBA” that matches the name of the organization you are seeking to certify. We cannot certify an organization under a different name than appears on your legal business documentation.

## ☐ Organization Logo

## ☐ Insurance Certificate (Listing SCARR as Certificate Holder)

- This should be a Certificate of Insurance (COI) for your **\*commercial liability policy.\*** We assume you or your landlord already has homeowner’s insurance — so we do not collect that. You are running a business, and SCARR requires that you carry a commercial liability policy.
- SCARR must be listed as “certificate holder” on your policy. There is no additional cost to do this. It simply means that we will be notified if your insurance lapses or is terminated. Our mailing address is:  
SCARR, 4711 Forrest Drive, Ste. 3 #226, Columbia, SC 29206.
- SCARR does not dictate the limit or amount of liability coverage you choose to carry. We highly suggest speaking to an insurance professional to discuss your needs.
- If you have multiple properties, all addresses must be listed under the section “Description of Operations.”

## ☐ Written Permission from Property Owner (if renting)

- This should be a letter from the property owner acknowledging that you are using their property as a recovery residence, and giving permission.
- It must include the owner’s contact information
- **Important:** Unless the deed to the home is in your organization’s name, this letter is a requirement. If the business owner(s), a board member, or other affiliated staff or member owns the home and leases it to the organization, we still require this letter from the person or entity that owns the home.

## ☐ Data Collection/Resident Records Policy

- Should include the process and procedures for ensuring resident records are kept secure and confidential, with access limited to authorized staff

## ☐ **Evidence of Accounting System**

- To satisfy this requirement, most organizations submit a screenshot of their accounting software, with confidential resident information redacted. If you are not using a digital accounting software, a written policy addressing how, when, and by what method residents remit rent payments will suffice.

## ☐ **Financial Agreement/Obligations/Services Provided**

- This should include all fees associated with residency in a clear, easy to understand policy, including what services are provided by your organization.
- If there are fees in addition to rent (intake fees, program fees, etc.), they must be included here.
- Dollar amounts must be included. This is how SCARR distributes any active grant funding, and we only honor your written policy. If you need to change or adjust your fees within your recertification period, that is understandable, but you will need to notify us and resubmit your latest financial agreement.

## ☐ **Non-Discrimination Policy**

- Consider Fair Housing Act requirements and South Carolina law

## ☐ **Organization/Resident Work Policy**

- Should outline your expectations for residents to secure employment
- Consider a reasonable timeline and any curfew restrictions
- Should include policies and procedures if your organization enters into a paid work agreement with your residents. See [NARR standard A.2.g.](#)

## ☐ **Refund Policy**

- Be clear and insure residents are informed of this policy before entering into a binding agreement

## ☐ **Resident Rights/Rules**

- Consider the rights your residents are afforded as residents and publish them here.
- Consider how your program will operate on a day-to-day basis. Will they participate in chores? Is there a curfew? Is there a mandatory house meeting? Are visitors allowed? These are just a few examples and by no means exhaustive.

### ☐ **Good Neighbor/Courtesy Rules**

- Consider your impact on the neighborhood.
- Include your policies concerning smoking, noise levels, language, and parking, to name a few.

### ☐ **Health Policy/Contagious Disease Policy**

- How will you handle a Flu, Covid-19, or other infectious disease case in the house?
- What preventative measures and notification guidelines should be followed?

### ☐ **Prescription Medication Policy/Procedure**

- Consider how you or your organization or your residents will manage prescription medication, including controlled substances.
- If you require that certain medications remain locked, avoid language like “administer” and “dispense.” Legally, only medical professionals are allowed to do administer and dispense.

### ☐ **Relapse Policy**

- How will you handle residents that have a return to use?

### ☐ **Search Policy**

- How will you handle searching resident rooms and belongings?
- Residents should have the right to be present for any searches.
- What happens if a resident refuses a search?

### ☐ **Drug Testing Policy**

- Please consult the NARR policies on ethical drug testing procedures [here](#).
- At what intervals will drug testing occur and by what method?
- What are the consequences of refusing a drug test?
- If a resident seeks to appeal their at-home test to a laboratory test, is that allowed? At whose expense?

### ☐ **Smoking/Vaping Policy**

- This may have been covered in your good neighbor/courtesy rules, but we encourage you to be specific here about if and where smoking/vaping is allowed, and how to dispose of your cigarette butts. Part of the onsite inspection requires that the exterior of the home is clean and free of cigarette butts.

## ☐ **Grievance Policy/Procedure**

- **Important:** In addition to your own internal grievance policy and procedure, this policy **MUST** include how to file a grievance directly with SCARR. Individuals can file grievances with SCARR on our website at the following link: <https://scarronline.org/file-a-grievance/>

## ☐ **Active Recovery/Community Engagement**

- Expectations for participation in recovery-oriented activities and programming outside of the house should be addressed here. What will you require residents to participate in as a condition of their residency?
- Be specific. "Residents are required to attend a minimum of 3 mutual aid meetings per week and present a signed meeting log at the weekly house meeting" is preferable to "residents must participate in mutual aid meetings."

## ☐ **Recovery Goals/Resident Recovery Plan**

- This should be a guide and a tool for residents to make and track their recovery goals.
- Many programs use a phased system here, whereby residents are granted additional privileges after completing phases.
- It can be self-directed, i.e. SMART recovery worksheets.

## ☐ **Cultivate Resident Community Policy**

- How will your program encourage residents to participate in activities amongst themselves? "Family" meals? House meetings? Weekend outings?

## ☐ **Community Resources Page**

- Identify your local community resources that may be helpful to an individual new to recovery and publish them here

## ☐ **Resident Emergency Contact Information**

- Upload proof that you are collecting resident emergency contact information

# On-site Inspection

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## ☐ **Required Postings**

The following policies, procedures, and forms must be posted in a conspicuous, central location in the home:

- ☐ **Grievance Policy**
- ☐ **Grievance Forms** (for clients to use when filing a written grievance)
- ☐ **Resident Rights/Rules**
- ☐ **Emergency Procedure and Contacts** (including staff members)
- ☐ **Community Resources**
- ☐ **Overdose Procedure** (we highly suggest posting this immediately next to your mounted NARCAN case)
- ☐ **Fire Escape plan/map**

## ☐ **NARCAN accessible to all residents**

- Must be in-date and not expired
- We suggest that you keep it in a mounted wall cabinet like [this](#). Otherwise, it may wander off throughout the year.
- We suggest that you post your overdose procedure immediately next to it. This is to ensure the safety of your residents, and protect your organization against liability.

## ☐ **Exterior of residence is in good repair, clean, well-maintained**

- Exterior must be free of trash and fire hazards, including cigarette butts
- Siding, roof and windows must be in good repair and well-maintained
- No boarded windows
- Must have designated smoking area in accordance with your good neighbor policies

## ☐ **Interior of residence is arranged, designed, and furnished as a functioning home**

- Residents should have functional gathering spaces including living and dining areas with appropriate furniture
- Living and dining areas cannot be repurposed as bedrooms or sleeping areas

☐ **Interior of residence is in good repair, clean, well-maintained**

- Furniture should be in clean, free of major stains, and in serviceable condition
- Carpets and rugs should be clean, free of major stains, and in serviceable condition
- HVAC vents must be clean
- No holes in drywall or ceiling
- Window blinds should be in tact, not bent or broken
- Bathrooms should be clean and free of mold and/or mildew

☐ **Minimum of 50 square feet per bed, per bedroom**

- For example, a bedroom with two beds must be at least 100 square feet.
- Includes bunk beds (i.e. 2 bunk beds would require at least 200 square feet, as that is 4 beds total).
- Closet space is not included in the square footage of the bedroom

☐ **Minimum 1 full bathroom per 6 residents**

- Full bathroom includes sink, toilet, and shower

☐ **Bedroom and personal item storage**

- Each resident should have a dresser or half of a double dresser, located inside the bedroom (minimum of 3 drawers).
- Each resident should have a bedside table
- Closet space should include shelving and/or a bar to hang clothing
- We suggest purchasing bed frames that are tall enough to store items underneath.
- Absolutely no mattresses on the floor

☐ **Kitchen and food storage**

- Residents should have adequate space to store their personal food items
- We suggest you consider adding a second refrigerator if you have more than 4 residents.

☐ **Laundry service available to all residents**

- This includes washer AND dryer.
- If your facility does not have washer and dryer, you must provide weekly transportation to and from laundromat, with scheduled and published times.

☐ **All appliances are in safe, clean, working condition**

☐ **Functional, in-date fire extinguishers mounted on every floor**

- Fire extinguishers must be mounted and marked/signed - not under the sink, in cabinets, or on the refrigerator or floor.
- If your property has more than one floor, one must be mounted on every floor.

☐ **Smoke + Co2 Detectors**

In accordance with current residential building code, functional smoke detectors must be:

- Inside every bedroom (not just in the hallway)
- Near the kitchen
- If your property has any gas appliances, a Co2 detector must also be installed in a central location. We suggest getting a combination smoke/Co2 for the unit near the kitchen.

☐ **Inspection log of periodic checks of Smoke/Co2 detectors and fire extinguishers**

- This does not necessarily need to be posted or published publicly in the home (though it can be), but your annual inspection will require that you present documented evidence that someone is keeping up with periodic checks of your fire safety systems.

☐ **Resident Interview**

Every initial and annual SCARR inspection includes an interview with a current resident, at each home (if you operate more than one home). Please ensure that a resident will be available when scheduling your inspection with the SCARR team. We will meet with the resident privately.

- ☐ Do you know where the NARCAN is located and how to use it?
- ☐ Are you aware of the house/program rules and where they are located?
- ☐ Do you know how recurrences/relapses are handled here?
- ☐ Do you feel your recovery is supported here?
- ☐ Do all of the appliances and utilities work here? (HVAC, hot water) If something breaks or stops working, does the staff/owner take care of it within a reasonable time frame?
- ☐ Do you have any concerns about the staff, house manager, or program?