



Comparison of Programmatic and Organizational Accreditation

COA offers two types of accreditation for child and youth development entities (programmatic and organizational). Organizational accreditation can be implemented in two formats (standard and extended review):

- **Programmatic Accreditation:** Each program (site) is reviewed and accredited independently of other programs and its parent organization.
- **Standard Organizational Accreditation:** The organization as a whole is reviewed and accredited. The review includes a percentage of the programs that the organization operates in the site visit.
- **Extended Review Organizational Accreditation:** The organization as a whole is reviewed and accredited. The review includes all of the programs that the organization operates in the site visit.

Consider the following steps to determine which type and format best suits your organization’s needs.

STEP 1: Identify the goal(s) that pursuing accreditation can help you to accomplish

The first step in thinking about how accreditation can best support your organization’s goals is to consider why you are interested in becoming accredited. In our experience, programs and organizations seek accreditation for many reasons, including:

- **Compliance** – meeting the requirements of an overseeing entity.
- **Quality Assurance** – having a method of internal review that is bolstered by the endorsement of an external party, often to secure or maintain the support of a funding entity.
- **Quality Improvement** – participating in a process that identifies opportunities for growth through a structured reflection, action-planning and evaluation cycle.
- **Systems Alignment** – creating shared expectations, language, processes, and standard of programming throughout an organization.

STEP 2: Assess your goals and available resources to the available accreditation options

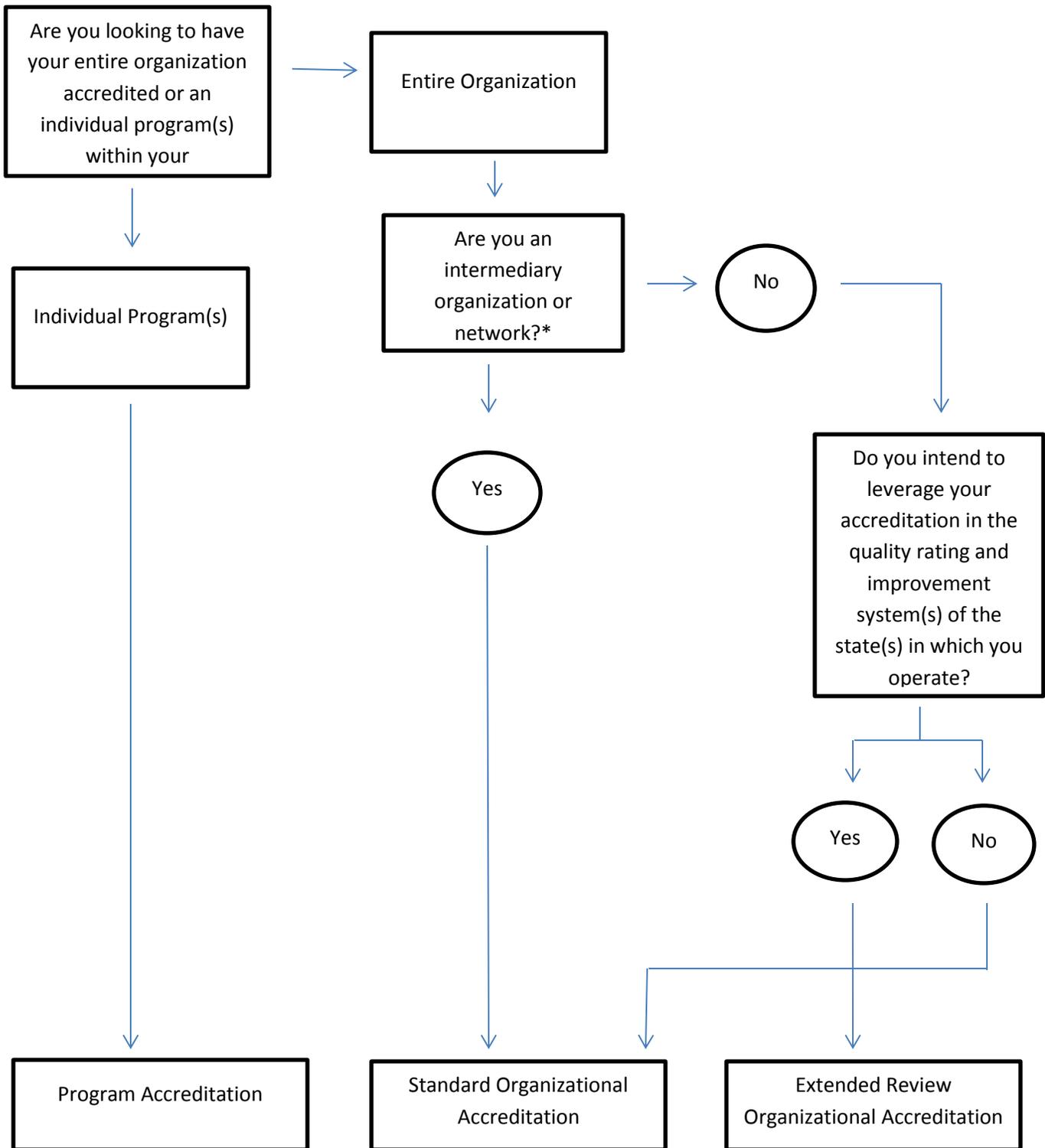
The goals outlined in Step 1 are not mutually exclusive, but they may be best achieved by using one type and format of accreditation over another. Additionally, each type of accreditation may have a different time investment, scope of review and applicability in state-based Quality Rating and Improvement Systems.

	Programmatic Accreditation	Standard Organizational Accreditation	Extended Review Organizational Accreditation
Which goals are best supported by each type of accreditation?	Compliance Quality Assurance Quality Improvement	Compliance Quality Assurance Quality Improvement Systems Alignment	Compliance Quality Assurance Quality Improvement Systems Alignment
How long is the process?	9 – 12 months	12 – 18 months	12 – 18 months
Who is accredited?	Each program is accredited independently of each other and the parent organization	The parent organization	The parent organization and each program that is reviewed
How long is the entity accredited?	4 years	4 years	4 years
Am I eligible for inclusion in State QRIS Systems?	Yes, if the state accepts accreditation and COA is a recognized accrediting entity ¹	Only if the state, accepts accreditation, does not require all programs to be individually reviewed, and COA is a recognized accrediting entity	Yes, if the state accepts accreditation and COA is a recognized accrediting entity

¹ See our [Recognition Report](#) for a list of states where COA is currently recognized.

STEP 3: Choose the type and format that best suits your organization's needs

Consider using this decision tree to tie together your considerations.



* Intermediary organizations/networks are defined as organizations that provide oversight, training, and coordination to child and youth development programs in a geographic area – typically, a city.