

ACCREDITATION PROGRAM



Ensuring Excellence for our Clients

FIMC agencies created the medically tailored meal intervention over 40 years ago in community. The FIMC Accreditation Program synthesizes decades of quality provision into a standard for the field that ensures fidelity to the model. This standard is central to scaling equitable access to this lifesaving intervention across the country.

The Value of Trusted Standards

The Food Is Medicine Coalition (FIMC) Medically Tailored Meal (MTM) Intervention Accreditation Criteria and Requirements (ACR) ensures that all FIMC-accredited MTM agencies provide the same level of service. Regardless of location, size, or number of clients and meal plans catered for, all FIMC-Accredited agencies prepare and provide a high quality medically tailored meal intervention that meets the needs of clients living with severe, complex, or chronic health condition(s).

FIMC Accreditation provides verified credibility for an organization's operations and the MTM intervention the agency provides. It signals to the community, policy makers, healthcare partners, and most importantly - clients - a level of service that can be trusted.

Benefits:

- Ensures fidelity to the high quality MTM intervention regardless of location, size, or number of clients and meal plans catered for.
- Central to scaling and equity of access across the nation.
- Provides verified credibility for an organization's operations.

The Accreditation Standard is Divided into Eight Pillars:

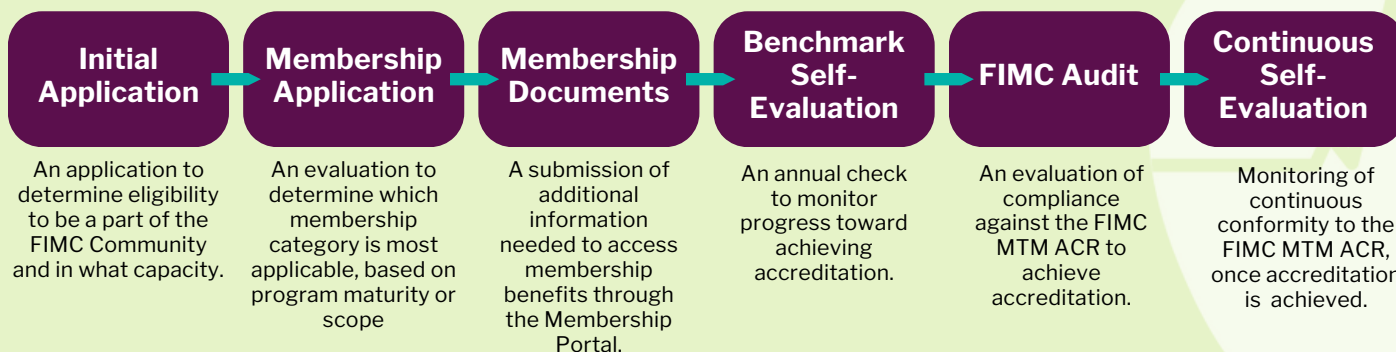
1. General Requirements
2. Fully Integrated Registered Dietitian Nutritionist(s) (RDN)
3. Client Referrals, Eligibility, Intake and Disenrollment for MTM
4. Nutrition Care Process Intervention: Medical Nutrition Therapy, Nutrition Counseling and Nutrition Education
5. Medical Tailoring Following the FIMC Clinical Committee Guidelines
6. Food Safety
7. Community-based Volunteer-supported Services
8. HIPAA Compliance

Leading the Field:

FIMC agencies are known for the impressive research outcomes our nutrition programs produce. These results are only possible with nutritious food, community connection and a client-centered approach – all of which the FIMC MTM ACR codifies and offers to the field as a guidebook for meeting community needs.

The Accreditation Process:

The Membership and Accreditation Programs are dependent on one another. There are six steps to achieving Membership and, eventually, Accreditation. Steps 1, 2, 3 lead to membership, Steps 4, 5 lead to accreditation, and Step 6 is post-accreditation. At each step in the process, there is appropriate review and approval by FIMC. All agencies interested in accreditation must, at minimum, complete steps 1 and 2 to evaluate for readiness of a FIMC Accreditation Audit. Access to Step 1. Initial Application is available on the FIMC website, fimcoalition.org.



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Frequently Asked Questions



How long does it take to become an Accredited MTM Agency?

Every agency will have different timelines based on when they enter FIMC Membership and/or meet accreditation requirements. An organization applying for Membership and Accreditation as a non-Accelerator Program graduate will have one year from membership approval to become accreditation ready, and two years from membership approval to undergo a FIMC Audit and become accredited.

My organization is interested in accreditation, but we may not be ready. How can we learn more?

We have several programs available to provide applicant organizations with the tools to meet accreditation requirements. Our Accelerator Program trains new MTM agencies and our Membership Program helps agencies who are almost in compliance with the ACR, achieve it. Fill out the form at the top of the page to inquire about your organization's eligibility to be a part of the FIMC Community and in what capacity.

If my organization is eligible for accreditation, what happens next?

When an organization is ready for accreditation, per either their completed Membership Application or Self-Evaluation, the organization will undergo a FIMC audit where an auditor will evaluate the organization's conformity with the FIMC MTM ACR. The FIMC Membership and Accreditation Committee will decide on the accreditation.

What is an audit and why is it important to accreditation?

An audit is an evaluation of an organization's performance against the FIMC MTM ACR. During an audit, the auditor will review documentation (e.g., procedures), records (e.g., client files), conduct interviews of personnel and volunteers, and walk through the facility(ies) to observe (e.g., food safety practices in the kitchen). The purpose of the audit is to confirm the organization is adhering to the requirements of the standard. Each organization is evaluated against the same FIMC MTM ACR requirements and auditors follow the same auditing protocol, thereby assuring that all FIMC-Accredited agencies provide a standardized high-quality MTM intervention to clients.

Who runs the Accreditation Program?

FIMC owns the MTM ACR and manages the FIMC Accreditation Program. The FIMC Manager of Membership and Accreditation is responsible for supporting your agency to reach accreditation through evaluating your MTM program, keeping you on track for deadlines, and giving you access to preparedness tools.

How is FIMC ensuring oversight and community input in the accreditation process?

The FIMC MTM ACR was developed by and for communities across America. With health equity front of mind, we utilized colleagues from diverse FIMC Agencies in terms of location, size, and expertise when creating the requirements of the Standard. Policy change, agency and community input, and research outcomes will determine future revisions of the FIMC MTM ACR to ensure it remains the guidebook to delivering the highest quality MTM intervention to all communities.

What happens if my organization does not meet the accreditation standard requirements?

There are different ways that an organization may not meet the accreditation standard requirements.

- **A. Accreditation Timeline:** The FIMC Accelerator and Membership Programs are designed to support agencies toward achieving Accredited status through a variety of technical assistance and capacity building programs and our community of practice. If your agency does not fulfill the timeline allotted to you to meet accreditation requirements during membership, you will lose access to membership benefits and be referred back to the FIMC Community, a group that participates in our field building activities that are open and free to all. Your agency may choose to re-apply for the Membership and Accreditation Program at a later time. Should there be extenuating circumstances, there is a provision to apply for an extension, however extensions are rare and at the discretion of the FIMC Membership and Accreditation Committee.
- **B. Nonconformities to the FIMC MTM ACR:** If your agency meets accreditation requirements, and proceeds with a FIMC audit, the auditor will identify any gaps between the organization's performance and the requirements of the standard. Those gaps are known as "nonconformities." Organizations are afforded the opportunity to correct non-conformities and demonstrate conformity with all requirements, within a definitive timeframe, before an accreditation decision is made. Some agencies may not close their nonconformities and therefore may be ineligible for accreditation.

Why is accreditation only for nonprofits?

The MTM intervention began as a community response to hunger and illness and provision of this lifesaving service - regardless of a client's ability to pay - continues to be predominantly supported by philanthropy across the country. FIMC focuses our energy on supporting nonprofit providers, in order to achieve equity of access across the country. FIMC agencies are deeply rooted in our communities. We created the medically tailored meal model and maintain the nutrition standards for the intervention. We use high quality ingredients, and our expert RDNs and Chefs use the science of layering diets tailored to the needs of each community member. Our meals are delivered free of charge to people with severe, complex and/or chronic illnesses.

Why does accreditation require volunteers?

Our lean and efficient, volunteer-driven model means that FIMC agencies judiciously invest each fundraising dollar for maximum results. The symbiotic relationship of support from the community through donations, volunteerism and creating opportunity in our local economies keeps us tied to the needs of our neighborhoods, responsive to them, and most importantly, trusted.

Why must an agency operate their own kitchen?

Accreditation ensures fidelity to the high quality MTM intervention and is central to scaling and equity of access across the country. All requirements reflect the values of scaling, quality, and control. Agencies must operate their own kitchens to ensure they have direct oversight and control over kitchen operations, including but not limited to food safety, quality ingredients, tailored recipes, and staff/volunteers as outlined in the FIMC MTM ACR.