



CP State

COMPLIANCE & QUALITY
CONNECTIONS
CONFERENCE 2025

**Inaugural
CQCC Annual Awards**

**April 29, 2025
Saratoga Springs City Center**

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CORPORATION

Congratulations to our winners!

EXCELLENCE IN COMPLIANCE AWARD

Donna Loveland

Arc of Onondaga

EXCELLENCE IN QUALITY AWARD

Jose J. Rivera, Jr.

Cerebral Palsy Association of Nassau County, Inc.

IMPACT AWARD

Queens Centers for Progress

Excellence in Compliance Award



**Donna Loveland
Chief Compliance & Quality Officer
Arc of Onondaga**

Through this award, The Arc New York and CP State acknowledge the vital role that compliance professionals play in advancing the mission of not-for-profit providers of services and support to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This is the first year we are presenting an award to a compliance professional who exemplifies the highest commitment to ethics and creating a culture of compliance. Nominations were submitted from providers around New York State and were selected by the Quality and Compliance Connections Conference Planning Team.

Donna Loveland has been working in Human Services since 1995 and has spent the last 25 years supporting people with disabilities at Arc of Onondaga. After graduating from SUNY Oswego, Donna began working with teenagers in need of mental and behavioral health services for several years. In 1999, Donna began her career at Arc of Onondaga where she worked in various day treatment, day habilitation, and residential supervisory positions. Donna transitioned to the Assistant Executive Director for Quality and Compliance in 2013 overseeing quality, compliance, HIPAA, incident management, and staff development. In 2021, Donna became the Chief Compliance and Quality Officer for both Arc of Onondaga and The Arc, Oneida-Lewis, providing oversight and guidance to both chapters in these areas. Donna is an active member of the Arc New York Compliance Professional Standards Workgroup.



Donna has always defined compliance as “more than just billing,” emphasizing that it is ensuring the agency acts with integrity and in an ethical manner. She emphasizes that everyone in the agency is responsible for ensuring compliance and makes what is possibly the driest subject and tries to make it interesting and entertaining.

As a way to promote a culture of compliance, Donna developed the “Paws to Remember Compliance” program. The program includes a calendar with compliance related sayings linked to photos of employees’ pets, agency “paws” swag and monthly reminders about compliance. The program was noted as a positive way to incentivize compliance in the Bonadio Compliance series. This program has been adopted at both Onondaga as well as Oneida-Lewis.

Whether it is playing “compliance jeopardy” for annual training or conducting contests for reducing/minimizing documentation errors, Donna strives to make these topics accessible for all employees, cultivating an environment where employees are not afraid to acknowledge errors and strive to improve their work. For Donna, compliance is more than billing, it is about providing the best possible services to the people the agency supports in an ethical, thoughtful manner.

“As a former compliance officer (if one is every really a former compliance officer), there is no one I have more confidence in to create and maintain a solid compliance program and culture of compliance. Donna’s work and her approach to compliance are commendable and serving of the Excellence in Compliance Award.”

**– Ellen Gutmaker, Executive Director,
Arc of Onondaga**

“Donna puts her heart and soul into her important responsibilities. Her deep commitment to the people Arc serves reflects her moral and ethical standards as a person, not merely as Chief Compliance Officer.”

– Christopher R. Mason – Chairman, Arc Onondaga Compliance Committee & 2nd Vice President, Arc of Onondaga Board of Directors

Donna takes the lead in all agency-wide compliance initiatives. When the regulations governing compliance programs were significantly revised, she completed the revisions to the agency’s policies. Donna also took the time to revamp a number of policies, reducing redundancies, and developed and/or adapted tools to monitor whether or not the agency has an effective compliance program.

In defining “agency compliance initiatives”, the focus tends to be on corporate compliance. However, compliance is defined as OPWDD regulatory compliance as well. Both Onondaga and Oneida-Lewis

chapters underwent full agency reviews. Donna developed a shared spreadsheet that was used to organize responses and documents in all areas of the review. This was an effective and efficient tool and system, not only to keep our staff organized and on task, but also for the DQI surveyors to use. This tool has been shared and used by at least three other chapters.

Donna goes above and beyond as she manages a great deal of work between two chapters and has developed tools and systems to enable her to stay on top of it. She has created and maintains a solid, effective compliance program. Donna does not believe in doing just the minimum – while perhaps 60% is sufficient to demonstrate an effective compliance from the OMIG’s perspective, that would never be enough for Donna.

Donna is also frequently used as a resource by her peers locally as well as throughout the state. More than one member of leadership has stated that Donna is the one employee they want to impress.

“Donna truly embodies excellence in compliance in all her endeavors, and we are fortunate to have her in our field and within the Arc New York community.”

– Karen Korotzer – CEO, The Arc, Oneida-Lewis Chapter

Excellence in Quality Award



Jose J. Rivera Jr.
Director of Quality Assurance /
Corporate Compliance Officer
Cerebral Palsy Association of Nassau County, Inc.

Through this award, The Arc New York and CP State acknowledge the vital role that quality assurance and improvement professionals play in advancing the mission of not-for-profit providers of services and support to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This is the first year we are presenting an award to a quality assurance and improvement professional who exemplifies dedication to continuous improvement of quality of services and their work environment. Nominations were submitted from providers around New York State and were selected by the Quality and Compliance Connections Conference Planning Team.

Jose J. Rivera Jr. has over 40 years of experience in the field of developmental disabilities. A graduate of the City College of New York, his dedication to improving the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities is deeply personal. As the brother of a former Willowbrook Class member, Jose's advocacy is fueled by his family's story, which is featured in the documentaries *Unforgotten: Twenty-Five Years After Willowbrook* and *The Path Forward: Remembering Willowbrook*. This sparked his lifelong commitment to ensuring quality care and services for individuals with developmental disabilities.

In addition to his career, Jose has played a key role in advocating for the creation of the Willowbrook Center for Learning, a memorial project dedicated to preserving the history of Willowbrook State School. Through his career and advocacy, Jose continues to champion the rights and well-being of individuals with developmental disabilities, leaving a lasting legacy in the field.

"I cannot overemphasize the value the Board places on the need for quality in all we do, and the contribution Jose has made and continues to make daily in the Agency's ability to deliver the highest level of quality for everyone who works at the Agency, or lives in one of residences, or participates in any of our programs. In Jose Rivera, we have an individual who is committed to and delivers quality each and every day."

– Jerome M. Poller, President, Board of Directors,
CP Nassau



Jose Rivera's lifelong advocacy, his unwavering commitment, personal experience, and passion for teaching and improving the lives of individuals with disabilities makes him an irreplaceable figure within CP Nassau and beyond.

As a young boy, Jose did not know when his brother Luis was born that advocating for individuals with disabilities and, in turn, for better conditions at Willowbrook, would become a lifelong commitment and journey. He frequently tells the story of advocating for his brother, fighting with doctors and translating the doctor's high-tech medical jargon to his Spanish speaking mother. He further reports that he was rarely taken seriously by any of the doctors, but he would gather up his courage to tackle another conversation, another battle, another day of advocacy due to the love he had for his brother.

Jose says people are always first over paperwork. He demanded a person-centered approach way before person-centered planning was ever coined as a philosophy by OPWDD. The passion that Jose has for teaching comes from the heart and he wants to teach new staff and reinforce with existing staff so we do not repeat the same mistakes, to never go back to Willowbrook.

Jose has also been the Agency's Corporate Compliance Officer for almost 2 decades. He becomes familiar with the OMIG's Rules and Regulations, interprets them for all relevant parties, including but not limited to the Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, and vendors to ensure compliance. Jose attacked this part of his job in the same professional manner, with honesty and transparency. Jose is well respected, and his reputation is beyond reproach.

Jose is well sought after in New York State for his expertise and his advocacy. He is part of the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic, and Asian Legislative Conference, Alliance of Long Island Agencies and Corporate Compliance Committee.

Jose is now reflecting on his future and considering how many more years he wants to work. He views the Governor's commitment to transform the former Willowbrook State School into a Center for Learning as a meaningful gift – not just for himself, but for many others. This milestone has also inspired him to take the next steps in fulfilling a long-held dream.

As he reflects on his future, Jose is inspired to fulfill a long-held dream – to compile his notes, memories, documents, and other artifacts into a book that captures his experiences and advocacy. He hopes to educate future generations, ensuring that the rights of individuals with disabilities continue to be protected for years to come.

"Mr. Rivera exemplifies excellence in all that he does. His leadership, dedication to compliance, and commitment to fostering a positive work environment make him highly deserving of this award. It is a privilege to advocate for him and to see his tireless efforts recognized."

– **Tracy Doxey**, Assistant Director of Quality Assurance, CP Nassau

"Jose's role at CP Nassau has required a unique blend of technical skill, diligence, and deep empathy for the population the organization serves. His experience in Quality Assurance has ensured that services provided to those with disabilities meet the highest standards, and he has played an integral part in fostering an environment of safety, respect, and opportunity for all individuals in the program."

– **Mary Fleisch**, Member, CP Nassau Board of Directors

Impact Award



Queens Centers for Progress
Terri Ross, Executive Director
Queenscp.org

Through this award, The Arc New York and CP State recognize a not-for-profit agency that has created a positive impact in quality and compliance work, both at the agency level and through sharing solutions with others in the field. This is the first year that this award is being presented. Nominations were reviewed by the Quality and Compliance Connections Conference Planning Team, with The Queens Centers for Progress selected at the 2025 recipient.

Queens Centers for Progress was founded in 1950 as United Cerebral Palsy of Queens by a group of parents who needed therapy and educational services for their children with cerebral palsy. As the children grew, they began offering vocational services, including facility-based training workshops. The agency expanded and they constructed their first fully dedicated building.

In the early 1970s, in response to the de-institutionalization movement that allowed many people who had been living in developmental centers to move into the community, UCP of Queens expanded their services. Their second center was erected in 1974 and reflected a great increase in the number of adults needing vocational and life-skills training services. In the 1980s, as the people they served aged, and services were added emphasizing community-based recreation and health education for people of retirement age with developmental disabilities.

"The dedication, professionalism, and collaborative spirit demonstrated by QCP's staff embody the very essence of the Impact Award."

– Thomas N. Toscano, Esq.,
QCP Board President

QCP began providing residential services in 1979 with the opening of the Robert T. Groh Residence in Jamaica Estates. In 1989 QCP opened the Bellerose Center which houses a Day Habilitation Program for 150 people and five 10 bed Intermediate Care Facilities for adults with significant disabling conditions. The agency has also opened three Individual Residential Alternative houses in neighborhoods throughout Queens.

QCP continues to provide quality services through their Community Pre-Vocational program which provides over 200 volunteers to organizations in the community and their Supported Employment Program which secures gainful employment for people with developmental disabilities.

Now in its 75th year, QCP supports over 1,200 children and adults on a daily basis and 1,000 families annually. QCP has a staff of more than 400 and an annual budget of approximately \$35 million; funded through governmental sources and private contributions.

Click on the link below to see a video that directly demonstrates the positive quality impact that QCP has made with one of the people they support.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E1AKQ0mj8fl&feature=youtu.be>



QCP is a leader in Quality Improvement – informing, training, and adhering to policies – always doing the right thing, even when nobody was watching. Their audits are free of significant deficits.

QCP has instituted a Mentorship Program designed to work with the agency's directors and supervisors, ensure the agency's core values and Mission are well-known, put in place, and effective – this includes Quality Improvement and Compliance.

QCP's training program is a leader in the field with their Incident Reporting structure being a model to many. They have a respectful and professional relationship with outside agencies, including OPWDD and The Justice Center.

"QCP is a leader in compliance and quality improvement. Running programs 24 hours, 7 days a week, it is inevitable that issues come up. QCP is proactive and has professional, trained staff on-call at all hours to assist with compliance and quality assurance issues."

– **Edward Weiss**, QCP Director of Operations

"I know the agency's continued careful oversight of the staff ensure the residents are happy and living their fullest lives in a safe environment."

– **Margaret MacPherson**, QCP Past Board President and Former Family Member



QUEENS CENTERS FOR PROGRESS
Services for People with Developmental Disabilities

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QUEENS CENTERS FOR PROGRESS

Terri Ross, Executive Director

We are so grateful to be recognized by this prestigious group!

Queens Centers for Progress was founded as United Cerebral Palsy of Queens in 1950 by parents seeking services for their children with Cerebral Palsy. The organization initially operated from a house in Queens, offering clinical services and early childhood education programs to young children in hopes of reducing physical limitations caused by Cerebral Palsy.

As demand for services increased, UCPQ constructed its first building in 1958 which continues to operate as our Apple Preschool and Apple Tree Pre-K Nursery. Our dedicated and experienced staff provides children with a warm and caring atmosphere that promotes learning, bolsters self-esteem and helps children thrive in a place where they can grow and flourish.

By 1974, the agency expanded again to become QCP's Vocational Training Sheltered Workshop. At its height, our Workshop served over 600 people, offering program participants the opportunity to learn work and social skills. This program evolved into the several types of day and vocational programs we have today to include Supported Employment, Community Pre-Vocational Services, Day Habilitation and Services for Seniors. Seventy-eight residents enjoy living in our ICFs and IRAs in a warm home-like atmosphere with their friends, and the kind support of staff who help them flourish. Our Article 16 clinic supports our programs and the community with psychological and social counseling and evaluations performed by skilled and sensitive clinicians.

At QCP, we believe in dignity, inclusion and possibility. Every day, we provide person-centered services that empower individuals with developmental disabilities to live with independence, joy, and connection. We see our services not just as services, but as a calling. Our team is energized by leadership, inspired by advocacy, and measured in human outcomes.

Compliance means adhering to all applicable laws, regulations, internal policies, and ethical standards to ensure a safe, fair, and legally compliant environment for individuals and employees at the organization. To us it means more. We believe it's important to teach and inspire the people we support, so that they can lead their best lives.

Our Director of Quality Improvement and Systems Integration, Ellen Arocho, has inspired us to "Do the right thing, even when no one is watching." With her at the helm, our Quality Assurance team leads staff starting with orientation. They provide structure, guidance and counsel us on how to navigate through the turbulent waters of regulation.

As we move into the uncertain future, it is important that we remind ourselves of our core values and the reasons we came here in the first place. We don't just follow the rules, we do it with a higher purpose. Thank you so much for recognizing our work and our amazing staff.