



## **BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM PERFORMANCE**

**Reporting Period: January 1, 2016 -December 31, 2016**

### **Background**

AbilityFirst utilizes an *Outcome Management System* to analyze information and measure program effectiveness, efficiency and level of satisfaction regarding the provision of services. AbilityFirst implements services based on outcomes identified by the individuals served, the organization's management team, referrals and funding agencies, family/care givers, and business customers. The *Outcome Management System* data is collected monthly, quarterly, and annually to measure and evaluate the programs to assist with achieving the desired objectives. Input from customers and stakeholders is compiled and analyzed to determine trends and actions and help improve the quality of services by implementing changes. AbilityFirst strives for continuous quality improvement for our services and programs. On an annual basis, results and suggestions for improvements are reported via a *management report* and used in an organization-wide strategic and financial planning process

### **Executive Summary**

The mission of the Business and Employment Services program is to provide job training and employment for individuals with developmental disabilities for the purpose of gaining independence and leading full and productive lives. AbilityFirst operates three distinct and parallel social enterprises: 1) assembly and fulfillment services (work centers); 2) secure document shredding; and 3) staffing services (individual placement and group employment). The purpose of each social enterprise and the Business and Employment Services Program is to provide resources for job training and employment for individuals with developmental disabilities. It is our vision that through employment, individuals with developmental disabilities will be able to fully participate in their communities, with the potential of leading full and productive lives.

By offering several different avenues of employment and job training, either in the work center setting, group placement or individual placement, AbilityFirst is able to customize the work experience based on the individual's ability, skills and personal preferences. Likewise, each employment option can serve as a progressive next step towards attaining individual community employment and individual career goals.

The Business and Employment Services program adheres to procedures and regulations in accordance with Title 17 (California Code of Regulations), individual Regional Center policies and Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) regulations and standards. The programs are also accredited by the *Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)*. The primary funding sources for these two programs are from Regional Centers and the Department of Rehabilitation. Business and Employment Services continues to make

important strides and contribute greatly to the overall mission of AbilityFirst. During the 2016 calendar year, several events impacted the services offered by our employment services division and work center programs:

1. *The newly launched Employment Facilitation Services* program (EFTS) expanded services to include the Lanterman Regional Center catchment area. During 2016, we served over 86 referrals. Out of this 86, only 37 individuals completed the assessment process, 26 of the 37 individuals transitioned into Supported Employment to begin their job search. During 2016, Supported Employment successfully transitioned 17 individuals into community integrated employment – with a 68% success rate.
2. Supported Employment placements exceeded the targeted goal of 48 for the fiscal year. The final result was 84 (which is 73%, or 35 more placements), exceeding the targeted goal. This success rate is due to on-going relationships with employers, better training systems in place, tenure of job developers, staff incentives, and an expanded focus on placement activities by Job Developers. In addition, a strong contributing factor in the success and growth of the Supported Employment Services Division was the skills, dedication and commitment of Eddie Zhang, Director of Supported Employment and his team.
3. Work Center participants transitioning out of work centers to community employment: The program was able to successfully transition four (4) work center clients into community employment, one of which transitioned into a full-time position with benefits.
4. AbilityFirst staff began to educate parents and caregivers of participants at our work centers regarding general information about the CMS final rule (also called HCBS settings final rule) and possible alternative service models.
5. Minimum Wage in the City of Pasadena and Los Angeles were increased to \$10.50 per hour in July 2016. The statewide minimum wage use increased to \$10.50 in January 2017.
6. Shredding Services experienced a decline in growth due to turnover in the sales manager position in November 2016. As a result, shredding services only managed to achieve a 5% growth in sales, and failed to meet the projected budget by 11% for the calendar year.
7. Average placement days from intake to placement increased to 85 days (compared to 45 days in 2015). The Department of Rehabilitation made some changes to the “case opening” process in 2016, which in turn created a delay in job placement procedures.

## **Business & Employment Services Business and Employment Services Accomplishments**

### **2016 survey results for WC, SE and Business Services**

In 2016, *Business and Employment Services* demonstrated a marked improvement in participant and stakeholder satisfaction results with services. Participants, family/caregivers and referral counselors who expressed satisfaction with AbilityFirst services increased by 13% overall, with 93% expressing well “above average” responses. Survey participation by caregivers and referral counselors increased by over 55 %.

- 96 respondents from *family and care provider surveys*
  - 39 respondents from *referring agencies survey*
  - 218 respondents from *client workers survey*
1. 90.91% of the respondents rated the effectiveness of the AbilityFirst program met the needs of the consumers “good to excellent”.
  2. 97% of the respondents rated the overall quality of services provided by AbilityFirst “good to excellent”.
  3. 98% of the respondents rated the overall safety of the AbilityFirst program “good to excellent”.

## **Supported Employment**

- Developed a new program to conduct more comprehensive pre-employment activities with San Gabriel Pomona Regional Center, and proceeded to market the same program to Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center participants in late 2016, resulting in additional referrals and placements.
- Provided services to 279 individuals. This is an increase of 6.5% compared to the prior year of 262.
- Supported Employment maintains a 67% job retention for individuals with developmental disabilities. This is a 4% increase from the prior year.
- The average wage for clients in an Integrated Community Employment setting is \$10.52 per hour. This average exceeds the statewide minimum wage increase of \$10.00 that went into effect on January 1, 2016. Several local municipalities have also increased minimum wage to \$10.50.
- Supported Employment staff placed 84 individuals with disabilities into community jobs.
- The Supported Employment division provided \$846,878.09 in *wages and benefits* to supported employees, representing a 15.41% increase from the previous year (*\$733,775.04 wages and benefits for 2015*).

## **Work Center Services:**

- Served 150 individuals in the works centers (Pasadena Work Center and the L. L. Frank Work Center).
- The average daily attendance (ADA) by participants improved by 7% across the board.
- Work Center Services provided \$517,162.80 in participant wages, representing an 19% increase from the previous year (*\$435,330.03 for 2015* )
- The merging of the Pasadena Work Center and L. L. Frank Work Center under one Director allowed both work centers to share the workload, and optimized storage areas in both facilities to better utilize facility space. In addition, Peter Yoou successfully transitioned several key subcontract customers (Do a Dot Art, Bongo Ties, Royal Green Oil) from the Weston Work Center closure, to the existing work centers. These combined actions resulted in an increased revenue of 18.8% from the previous year.