



BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

Reporting Period: July 1, 2014-December 31, 2015

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 sub-contract 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 to help improve the quality of services by implementing changes. The results and suggestions for improvements are reported annually via a *management report* and are 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 as a vehicle for gaining independence and leading full and productive lives. AbilityFirst operates three distinct and parallel social enterprises: 1) value added warehouse services (work activity programs); 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 a means for job training and employment for individuals with developmental disabilities. It is our vision that through employment, individuals with developmental disabilities are able to fully participate in their community and are further enabled to lead full and productive lives.

By offering several different avenues for employment, 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 individual community employment and individual career goals.

The Business and Employment Services program adheres to procedures and regulations in accordance with Title 17 the 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 programs originates from Regional Centers and the Department of Rehabilitation. The Business and Employment Services Program is funded through Federal funding, California fees and sub-contract income in conjunction with fundraising activities. Business and Employment Services continues to make important strides and contribute greatly to the overall mission of AbilityFirst.

In December 2014, the AbilityFirst board of directors voted to move the organizations fiscal year from a July 1 to June 30 to a calendar year effective January 1, 2016; therefore, there was one abbreviated fiscal year from July 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015. This report represents results and activities for the entire 18-month period from July 1, 2014 to December 31, 2015 and will be referred to in this document as the 2014-2015 fiscal year or simply “fiscal year.”

During the 2014-2015 fiscal year, several events impacted the services offered in our employment and work center programs:

1. In 2013 the Paul Weston Work Center property was put on the market for sale because it did not meet the needs of the work program. The plan at that time was to move to a leased building nearby to expand the program. Due to unforeseen circumstances, it took until September 2015 for the property to finally be sold. Meanwhile, in June 2015, the Board of Directors made a strategic decision to limit the organization’s geographical reach to the greater San Gabriel Valley, South Bay and downtown/East and South Los Angeles. AbilityFirst believes this change will help increase operational efficiencies and ultimately lead to better outcomes for the people we serve. As a result, the decision was made to close the Paul Weston Work Center in November 2015 and to no longer offer services in the San Fernando Valley. AbilityFirst staff worked closely with the North Los Angeles Regional Center to assist participants in transferring to other available services. The organization also closed its programs in Orange County.
2. In preparation for the CMS Home and Community Based Waiver final rule (effective March 2019), AbilityFirst has convened a Future Directions Task Force. The role of the task force is to explore different ways to transition the current AbilityFirst Work Center model into a program where all participants are fully integrated and engaged in their community. The task force includes board members, family members, staff, Regional Center representatives and consumers.
3. The California minimum wage was raised from \$8.00 to \$9.00 per hour in July 2015 and to \$10.00 per hour in January 2016.
4. AbilityFirst Document Shredding Services generated 225,000 lbs. of recycled materials and increased resale income of shredded paper by 100% in its first full year of after selling the mobile shredding truck and operating solely facility-based shredding.
5. In September 2015, AbilityFirst launched the Employment Facilitation Training Services Program which provides in-depth assessment, job readiness and career exploration for individuals with developmental

disabilities served by the San Gabriel Pomona Regional Center. The program helps adults with complex needs through every step of the process of job search and placement, and throughout the period of employment. The program takes a person-centered approach and the individual drives the placement process with community employment as final outcome.

Business and Employment Services Business and Employment Services Accomplishments

July 1 2014 to December 31, 2015

In the period of July 1, 2014 to December 31, 2015, *Business and Employment Services* demonstrated a marked improvement in satisfaction for both participants and stakeholders. Survey participation by caregivers and referral counselors increased by over 55 % and the overall satisfaction of AbilityFirst services increased by 13% according to the survey results.

2015 survey results

- 89 respondents from *family and care providers*
 - 39 respondents from *referring agencies*
 - 326 respondents from *participants and supported employees*
1. How do you rate the **effectiveness of AbilityFirst in meeting the needs** of consumers served in the program?
 - a. 95% of family and care providers rated AbilityFirst as good to excellent
 - b. 100% of referring agencies rated AbilityFirst as good to excellent
 - c. 89% of participants rated AbilityFirst as good to excellent
 2. How do you rate the overall **quality of services** of AbilityFirst?
 - a. 100% of family and care providers rated AbilityFirst as good to excellent
 - b. 100% of referring agencies rated AbilityFirst as good to excellent
 - c. 89% of work center participants and supported employees rated AbilityFirst as good to excellent
 3. How would you rate the overall **safety** of the AbilityFirst program?
 - a. 97% of family and care providers rated AbilityFirst as good to excellent
 - b. 100% of referring agencies rated AbilityFirst as good to excellent
 - c. 81% of participants and supported employees rated AbilityFirst as good to excellent
 4. Would you **recommend this program** to a friend or family member?
 - a. 96% of family and care providers say yes
 - b. 100% of referring agencies say yes
 - c. 93% of participants say yes
 5. 98% of participants and supported employees stated they are happy with the services that they are receiving at AbilityFirst.
 6. 97% of customers rated AbilityFirst Business Services as above average or excellent.

➤ **Supported Employment**

- Placed 87 individuals with disabilities into community integrated employment, exceeding our goal by 14%
- Provided services to 262 individuals, representing a 36.5% increase from the previous year 63% individuals hired remained employed after 90 days compared to 42% in the previous 18 month period.
- Average wage for clients in community integrated employment average is \$9.45 per hour
- Average number of days from intake to hire date is 45 days
- Supported employees who worked at AbilityFirst earned \$1,100,662 in wages and benefits, representing a 29.26% increase from the previous 18 month period

➤ **Work Center Services:**

- Served 245 individuals in the works centers
- Participants earned \$591,657.42 in wages, representing an 19% increase from the previous 18 month period
- Assembly and fulfillment revenue increased by 7.9% from the previous 18 month period.