



BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

Reporting Period: January 1, 2017 -December 31, 2017

Background

AbilityFirst utilizes an *Outcome Management System* to analyze information and measure program effectiveness, efficiency and levels 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 to help improve the quality of services by implementing those 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 with the goal of fostering greater independence, choice, and community engagement. Currently, 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. As part of the natural evolution of our programs toward a *person-centered* model, and the increasing emphasis on community-based employment for individuals with developmental disabilities, we are transitioning away from the structured work center model to one based on an individual's interests, goals, and abilities. Those efforts continued and accelerated during 2017. We plan to close the work centers by early 2020, three years before the effective date of the new Federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) regulations regarding home and community-based services (HCBS). For the next 20 months, we will operate the work centers with ongoing incremental reductions in contracted work while facilitating participants' transitions to integrated settings through continued development of individual *person-centered plans* (PCPs), exploratory and discovery activities to help individuals identify their interests and goals, identification and stewardship of mainstream community resources, and continued refinement of program design and staffing.

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 contributes greatly to the overall mission of AbilityFirst. During the 2017 calendar year, several events impacted the services offered by our Employment Services Division and Work Center programs:

1. AbilityFirst received grants to modify services or programs to ensure compliance with the HCBS rules. The grants addressed the following areas affecting the Business and Employment Services Program:
 - AbilityFirst staff began to focus and train in *Person-Centered Thinking and Planning*, which helps individuals to focus specifically on their interests along with a support team of staff and family that helps the individual define and accomplish their dreams and goals. *Person-Centered Thinking* (like other person-centered approaches) is based on the values of independence, rights, choice, autonomy and opportunities for integration. The process incorporates a set of values, skills and tools that provide an agenda for a person along with input from those who know the person best, resulting in a plan that is optimal for the individual's future. The focus is on what is important to the individual, how they wish to live, and the introduction of changes that will move them towards their aspirations.
 - Hiring a job developer to assist work center clients in transitioning into competitive integrated employment positions. This resulted in four individuals placed into community employment in 2017.
2. AbilityFirst successfully implemented the *Paid Internship Program* offered through the Department of Developmental Services. The program provides individuals the opportunity of time-limited employment at various community businesses to gain work experience and skills for future employment. We developed 22 internship positions, seven of which resulted in job offers.
3. AbilityFirst implemented the *Student Services Paid Work Experience*, a new collaboration with the Department of Rehabilitation which offers paid internships for students age 16-24 years of age.
4. We successfully passed the CARF survey with continued accreditation for three more years.
5. AbilityFirst assisted 67 individuals into community employment. Some of these success stories on the placements of individuals into community employment were featured in several regional center and State Council of Disabilities newsletters.

Business & Employment Services Accomplishments

Satisfaction Surveys

- On the quality of services, 90% of client workers, 95% of care providers, and 100% of referring agencies rated the program as “good to excellent”.
- On the safety of services, 83% of client workers, 100% of care providers, and 100% of referring agencies rated the program as “good to excellent”.
- 94% of clients, 100% of care providers and 95% of referral agencies said they would recommend AbilityFirst to a colleague, family or friend.

Supported Employment

- Provided services to 319 individuals. This is an increase of 14% compared to the prior year of 279.
- Assisted 67 individuals with disabilities to obtain jobs in integrated settings at an average wage of \$11.25 per hour.
- Achieved 72%, 90-day job retention for individuals with developmental disabilities. This is a 7% increase from the prior year.
- Provided \$785,642.37 in wages to supported employees.

Work Center Services:

- Served 155 individuals in the work centers (Pasadena Work Center and the L. L. Frank Work Center).
- Hired a dedicated position to facilitate *person-centered* plans for participants in both work centers.
- Trained staff at both work centers in *person-centered thinking*.
- Supported 22 individuals in creating their *own person-centered* plans, marking the pathway to future employment or community engagement.
- The average daily attendance (ADA) by participants increased by 2.3% across the board.
- We transitioned 9 participants to other programs based on their *person-centered plan*. (4 – Supported Employment, 3 - DiscoverAbility, 2 - College to Career).
- Work Center Services provided \$369,547.47 in participant wages, representing a 16.8% decrease from the previous year. This reflects our intentional reduction in the number of contracts, as we move towards a transition from the work center model.