



CARF
Survey Report
for
Futures Explored, Inc.

CARF INTERNATIONAL

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Organization

Futures Explored, Inc.
3547 Wilkinson Lane
Lafayette, CA 94549

Organizational Leadership

Dean Evans, MIS Coordinator

Survey Dates

February 17-19, 2010

Survey Team

Sheri McCann, M.S., Administrative Surveyor
Sally M. Ogren, LSW, Program Surveyor

Programs/Services Surveyed

Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job Development
Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job Supports
Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job-Site Training

Governance Standards Applied

Previous Survey

March 7-9, 2007
Three-Year Accreditation

Survey Outcome

Three-Year Accreditation
Expiration: April 2013



SURVEY SUMMARY

Futures Explored, Inc., has strengths in many areas.

- There is an enthusiastic and involved board of directors that clearly understands its policy-making roll and is consistent in its support of the organization. The involvement extends to all levels of the staff members. In fact, the board president attends all new staff orientation meetings. He is there to give the history of the organization and to ensure that all new staff understands the mission and the values of Futures Explored.
- Communication within the organization is outstanding. Staff members receive a newsletter called *A View to the Future* each month with their paycheck. This newsletter is directly from the executive director. It is informative and, especially during this fiscal crisis, has given staff members confidence that the organization will survive and prosper.
- Futures Explored has an excellent relationship with funding sources and an outstanding reputation in the community.
- The performance appraisal system includes input from all levels of the organization. Through SurveyMonkey, staff members, persons served, and board members have access to providing feedback to the staff member who is being evaluated. Evidence was present in a variety of performance appraisals of this process up to and including the executive director. The ability of staff members and persons served to have this kind of input can only serve to improve the services being given and the performance of the staff members being evaluated. It would seem that it would also have the effect of empowering the staff members and the persons served.
- The risk management program is extensive. It is clear throughout this very comprehensive system that the organization is very aware of the dignity of risk for all individuals, including the persons served. The risk management policy begins with the quote, “Elimination of all risk is to eliminate all dignity.” It is this kind of attitude that fosters growth and development at all levels of the organization.
- There is an extremely active and involved safety committee that meets on a regular basis and comprehensively reviews all aspects of the health and safety systems, policies, and procedures. Minutes are available that clearly demonstrate the depth of the commitment to safety and to the well-being of the persons served.
- The human resource department has developed systems that promote meticulous recordkeeping and a commitment to hiring and retaining excellent staff members. Personnel policies are designed to inform and are clear and concise.
- There is an outstanding training program for staff members that is comprehensive and organized to ensure that there is continued attention to the growth and development of the employees. The human resource manager keeps meticulous records and works with the supervisory staff to ensure that staff members at all levels of the organization have the skills to provide excellent service to the persons served.

- The technology plan includes work on developing a portal for persons served on the website that would include a voice reading program and accessible buttons. It would feature information about benefits in understandable language and is scheduled to have a social networking program for the persons served. This attention to the needs of the persons served is evident in all areas of Futures Explored and is a clear strength of the organization.
- Because of budget cuts in the state of California, Futures Explored was forced to suspend its involvement with the College of Direct Support. It has, however, begun the development of its own online training program. Through the management information system coordinator, classes are being developed that will include training in the major competencies and will allow staff members to move to different levels of mastery. There is a dedication to ensuring that all staff members are well trained and have all of the skills to provide the best possible service to the persons served.
- The organization promotes a culture of dedication and genuine caring among the staff members. The executive director inspires and energizes the staff members to advocate for and with persons with disabilities at every opportunity, to develop innovative services, to find new ways to promote community inclusion and integration, and to support the development of employment opportunities for individuals served.
- The organization strongly supports the advocacy efforts within the state, as well as in local communities, to develop and maintain needed services for persons with disabilities. These efforts not only support individuals to advocate for themselves, but have also involved individuals with disabilities speaking to legislators to promote an understanding of the needs of people with disabilities in an era of budget cuts and service reductions.
- The organization has earned a reputation as a solid, person-centered service provider that operates with integrity and efficiency while remaining flexible and open to new projects and services. The development of businesses that employ persons with disabilities such as the Nifty Thrift Shop and Huckleberry and the pursuit of opportunities such as Project Search and collaborations with community colleges have created an array of services for persons with disabilities that open up new possibilities for success.

In the following areas Futures Explored demonstrates exemplary conformance to the standards.

- Not only is there input from the individual being evaluated during the performance appraisal system, but the organization has also developed forms for peers; persons served; and, in the case of managers, people supervised to have input. There is evidence that this system is used regularly. In fact, performance appraisals at all levels of the organization benefit from input from other sources. This is a practice that is egalitarian and can only serve to improve performance and therefore the quality of services rendered.
- The organization is commended for its genuine and continuing support for systems advocacy activities for individuals with disabilities. There are many ways in which advocacy is provided and taught to persons served so that speaking up for themselves is usual and expected and therefore effective.
- The organization is commended for the variety of employment options it has developed for persons served. Further, the longevity of many of these individuals in their jobs is a testament to the quality of the supports offered to employers and individuals served. Careful job matching

and attention to the needs and desires of individuals served help to ensure success. In addition, the organization has developed a network of colleagues and service providers who share information on job openings whenever possible, widening the options for individuals served.

Futures Explored should seek improvement in the areas identified by the recommendations in the report. Consultation given does not indicate nonconformance to standards but is offered as a suggestion for further quality improvement.

On balance, Futures Explored is an excellent organization that makes the needs of the persons served primary. The board of directors, leadership, and staff members strive for excellence in all of their programs and services. They have made conformance to the CARF standards a part of their daily routine, and it is clear that they will continue to do so in the future. There are exceptional people at all levels of the organization, and these people will ensure that the standards of excellence are maintained.

Futures Explored, Inc., has earned a Three-Year Accreditation. The board, leadership, and staff are congratulated for their outstanding work and commitment to excellence. The organization appears well able to weather the continuing economic storms across the country and in the state of California. Futures Explored is encouraged to continue its conformance to the CARF standards and the quest for improvement.

SECTION 1. ASPIRE TO EXCELLENCE[®]

A. Leadership

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations identify leadership that embraces the values of accountability and responsibility to the individual organization's stated mission. The leadership demonstrates corporate social responsibility.

Key Areas Addressed

- Leadership structure
- Leadership guidance
- Commitment to diversity
- Corporate responsibility
- Corporate compliance

Recommendations

A.4.d.(2)

There are policies and written procedures on waste, fraud, and other wrongdoing. There are no time frames to initiate an investigation in these policies and procedures. It is the organization's practice to initiate investigations within 24 hours of any allegation. It is recommended that this practice be included in the written procedure.

A.5.a.

A.5.b.

Since the last survey, the organization has written a corporate compliance policy. Through an oversight, this policy has not been submitted to the board of directors for adoption, and the policy remains in draft form. It is recommended that the corporate compliance policy be adopted by the board of directors that includes a formal resolution that authorizes the establishment of the compliance program. Because the policy has not been submitted to the board for approval, it is also recommended that a staff member be designated as the organization's primary point of contact.

Consultation

- There is an outstanding code of ethics that is comprehensive and well designed. The personnel and other stakeholders are trained in the code. It might be valuable for the organization to publicize its code in newspaper articles, newsletters, and other appropriate media outlets in order to inform the public about the value systems and commitment to excellence.
- The organization might consider revising the policy and procedure on waste, fraud, abuse, and other wrongdoing to be more specific. The current policy could be broadly interpreted and might result in the staff members not fully understanding the areas for compliance with the policy.

B. Governance

Principle Statement

The governing board should provide effective and ethical governance leadership on behalf of its owners'/stakeholders' interest to ensure that the organization focuses on its purpose and outcomes for persons served, resulting in the organization's long-term success and stability. The board is responsible for ensuring that the organization is managed effectively, efficiently, and ethically by the organization's executive leadership through defined governance accountability mechanisms. These mechanisms include, but are not limited to, an adopted governance framework defined by written governance policies and demonstrated practices; active and timely review of organizational performance and that of the executive leadership; and the demarcation of duties between the board and executive leadership to ensure that organizational strategies, plans, decisions, and actions are delegated to the resource that would best advance the interests and performance of the organization over the long term and manage the organization's inherent risks. The board has additional responsibilities under the domain of public trust, and as such, it understands its corporate responsibility to the organization's employees, providers, suppliers, and the communities it serves.

Key Areas Addressed

- Ethical, active, and accountable governance
 - Board composition, selection, orientation, development, assessment, and succession
 - Board leadership, organizational structure, meeting planning, and management
 - Linkage between governance and executive leadership
 - Corporate and executive leadership performance review and development
 - Executive compensation and other financial matters
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

C. Strategic Integrated Planning

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations establish a foundation for success through strategic planning focused on taking advantage of strengths and opportunities and addressing weaknesses and threats.

Key Areas Addressed

- Strategic planning considers stakeholder expectation and environmental impacts
 - Written strategic plan sets goals
 - Plan is implemented, shared, and kept relevant
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

D. Input from Persons Served and Other Stakeholders

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations continually focus on the expectations of the persons served and other stakeholders. The standards in this subsection direct the organization's focus to soliciting, collecting, analyzing, and using input from all stakeholders to create services that meet or exceed the expectations of the persons served, the community, and other stakeholders.

Key Areas Addressed

- Ongoing collection of information from a variety of sources
 - Analysis and integration into business practices
 - Leadership response to information collected
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

E. Legal Requirements

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations comply with all the legal and regulatory requirements of federal, state, provincial, county, and city entities.

Key Areas Addressed

- Compliance with all legal/regulatory requirements
-

Recommendations

E.2.b.

E.2.d.

There is a written procedure for guiding staff members in responding to subpoenas and investigations. The procedure does not include responding to search warrants and other legal actions. The organization is urged to include these areas in the written procedure.

F. Financial Planning and Management

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations strive to be financially responsible and solvent, conducting fiscal management in a manner that supports their mission, values, and annual performance objectives. Fiscal practices adhere to established accounting principles and business practices. Fiscal management covers daily operational cost management and incorporates plans for long-term solvency.

Key Areas Addressed

- Budget(s) prepared, shared, and reflective of strategic planning
 - Financial results reported/compared to budgeted performance
 - Organization review
 - Fiscal policies and procedures
 - Review of service billing records and fee structure
 - Financial review/audit
 - Safeguarding funds of persons served
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

Consultation

- The organization reports that it apprises the persons served of the financial state of the organization through the website. The information on the website is from the annual audit and might be difficult for persons served to decipher. It is suggested that the organization consider including financial information in the newsletter for persons served in an abbreviated and understandable format.
 - Due to the current financial crisis in the state of California, the organization has not been able to replace the individual who was managing financial operations. The executive director has taken on these responsibilities. Although the finances are in good shape and all policies and procedures are being followed, it is suggested that, once the financial crisis is over, the organization consider adding a chief financial officer position to ensure that the vision is effected and the funding is available to do so.
-

G. Risk Management

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations engage in a coordinated set of activities designed to control threats to its people, property, income, goodwill, and ability to accomplish goals.

Key Areas Addressed

- Written risk management plan
 - Adequate insurance coverage
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

H. Health and Safety

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations maintain healthy, safe, and clean environments that support quality services and minimize risk of harm to persons served, personnel, and other stakeholders.

Key Areas Addressed

- Inspections
 - Emergency procedures
 - Access to emergency first-aid
 - Competency of personnel in safety procedures
 - Reporting/reviewing critical incidents
 - Infection control
-

Recommendations

H.5.c.(6)

H.5.c.(7)

The organization has no mechanism to identify essential services in the event of an emergency and therefore is unable to ensure that there is a continuation of essential services. It is recommended that Futures Explored develop a process to identify the essential services and ensure that these services continue in the event of an emergency.

H.7.d.(10)

H.7.d.(11)

The written critical incident procedure does not include biohazardous accidents or the unauthorized use of licit or illicit substances. The organization is urged to include these events in its critical incident system.

Consultation

- The particular incidents that must be recorded are found in many different procedures. It might be easier for staff members to understand what they are to report on if all of the various incidents to be documented were in the same procedure.
-

I. Human Resources

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations demonstrate that they value their human resources. It should be evident that personnel are involved and engaged in the success of the organization and the persons they serve.

Key Areas Addressed

- Adequate staffing
 - Verification of background/credentials
 - Recruitment/retention efforts
 - Personnel skills/characteristics
 - Annual review of job description/performance
 - Policies regarding students/volunteers, if applicable
-

Recommendations

I.5.d.(4)(a)

There are goals set for the individual being evaluated each year during the annual performance appraisal. These goals are not reviewed in the next appraisal. It is recommended that the organization track goals and assess achievement of these goals at the time of the next annual appraisal.

Exemplary Conformance

I.5.d.(3)

Not only is there input from the individual being evaluated, but the organization has also developed forms for peers; persons served; and, in the case of managers, people supervised to have input. There is evidence that this system is used regularly. In fact, performance appraisals at all levels of the organization benefit from input from other sources. This is a practice that is egalitarian and can only serve to improve performance and therefore the quality of services rendered.

J. Technology

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations plan for the use of technology to support and advance effective and efficient service and business practices.

Key Areas Addressed

- Written technology and system plan
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

K. Rights of Persons Served

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations protect and promote the rights of the persons served. This commitment guides the delivery of services and ongoing interactions with the persons served.

Key Areas Addressed

- Communication of rights
 - Policies that promote rights
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

L. Accessibility

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations promote accessibility and the removal of barriers for the persons served and other stakeholders.

Key Areas Addressed

- Written accessibility plan(s)
 - Status report regarding removal of identified barriers
 - Requests for reasonable accommodations
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

M. Information Measurement and Management

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations are committed to continually improving their organizations and service delivery to the persons served. Data are collected, and information is used to manage and improve service delivery.

Key Areas Addressed

- Information collection, use, and management
 - Setting and measuring performance indicators
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

N. Performance Improvement

Principle Statement

The dynamic nature of continuous improvement in a CARF-accredited organization sets it apart from other organizations providing similar services. CARF-accredited organizations share and provide the persons served and other interested stakeholders with ongoing information about their actual performance as a business entity and their ability to achieve optimal outcomes for the persons served through their programs and services.

Key Areas Addressed

- Proactive performance improvement
 - Performance information shared with all stakeholders
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

SECTION 2. QUALITY INDIVIDUALIZED SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

A. Individual-Centered Service Planning, Design, and Delivery

Principle Statement

Improvement of the quality of an individual's services requires a focus on the person and/or family served and their identified strengths, abilities, needs, and preferences. The organization's services are designed around the identified needs and desires of the persons served, are responsive to their expectations, and are relevant to their maximum participation in the environments of their choice.

The person served participates in decision making, directing, and planning that affects his or her life. Efforts to include the person served in the direction or delivery of those services are evident. The service environment reflects identified cultural needs, practices, and diversity. The person served is given information about the purposes of the organization.

Key Areas Addressed

- Services are person-centered and individualized
 - Persons are given information about the organization's purposes and ability to address desired outcomes
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

Exemplary Conformance

A.16.b.

The organization is commended for its genuine and continuing support for systems advocacy activities for individuals with disabilities. There are many ways in which advocacy is provided and taught to persons served so that speaking up for themselves is usual and expected and therefore

effective. Among them are supporting individuals to advocate on behalf of organizations serving individuals with disabilities, involving individuals with disabilities in speaking to legislators about funding needs, and promoting participation in groups and activities that support systems advocacy.

Consultation

- When an exit summary report is prepared, it is suggested that the person served or guardian sign the form whenever possible to indicate that he or she has been actively involved in the discharge process.
-

B. Records of the Persons Served

Principle Statement

The organization maintains complete records and treats all information related to persons served as confidential.

Key Areas Addressed

- Complete, confidential records are maintained
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

Consultation

- It is suggested that forms be consistently dated and fully completed or revised, as needed.
-

D. Employment Services Principle Standards

Principle Statement

The standards in this subsection assert basic principles that should be demonstrated by any organization seeking accreditation in the area of employment services.

Key Areas Addressed

- Goals of the persons served
 - Personnel needs of local employers
 - Community resources available
 - Economic trends in the local employment sector
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

SECTION 3. EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Principle Statement

An organization seeking CARF accreditation in the area of employment services provides individualized services to achieve identified employment outcomes. The array of services in this section may include:

- Identification of employment opportunities and resources in the local job market.
- Development of realistic employment goals.
- Establishment of service plans to achieve employment outcomes.
- Identification of resources to achieve and maintain employment.
- Coordination of and referral to employment-related services.

The organization maintains its leadership role in the employment sector of the community by designing and continually improving its services based on input from the persons served and from employers in the local job market, and managing results of the organization's outcomes management system. The provision of quality employment services requires a continuous focus on the persons served and the personnel needs of employers in the organization's local job market.

I. Community Employment Services

Principle Statement

Job Development

Successful job development concurrently uses assessment information about the person seeking employment to target the types of jobs available from potential employers in the local labor market. Typical job development activities include reviewing local employment opportunities and developing potential employers/customers through direct and indirect promotional strategies. Job development

may include facilitating a hiring agreement between an employer and a person seeking employment. Some persons seeking employment may want assistance at only a basic, informational level such as self-directed job search.

Job-Site Training

Job-site training services vary according to the needs of the new employee and the complexity of the job. Training can include assisting the employee with performance on the new job task and helping the person to understand the job culture, industry practices, and work behaviors expected by the employer. It may also include training the employer and coworkers to understand the training methods and accommodations needed by the worker. Job-site training is intensive for the initial orientation of an employee to the job tasks. Job-site training may consist of customizing the job to meet the needs of the new employee and employer, task analysis, counseling, and supports with the intent of leading to natural supports and/or reduced external job coaching. These services are typically not long-term, ceasing after the individual has become stabilized on the job.

Job Supports

Ongoing job support services are activities that are employment-related and needed to promote job adjustment, retention, and advancement. These services are based on the individual needs of the employee with focus on long-term retention of the person in the job after the initial training period.

Routine follow-up with the employer and the employee is crucial to continued job success. Supports are a critical element of the long-term effectiveness of community employment. Support services address issues such as a decrease in productivity of the person served, assistance in training a person to complete new tasks, changes in work schedule or work promotion, adjusting to new supervisors, and managing changes in nonwork environments or other critical life activities that may affect work performance.

Key Areas Addressed

- Integrated employment choice
- Integrated employment obtainment
- Integrated employment retention

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

Exemplary Conformance

I.3.e.

The organization is commended for the variety of employment options it has developed for individuals served. Further, the longevity of many of these individuals in their jobs is a testament to the quality of the supports offered to employers and individuals served. Careful job matching and attention to the needs and desires of individuals served help to ensure success. In addition, the organization has developed a network of colleagues and service providers who share information on job openings whenever possible, widening the options for individuals served.

Consultation

- It is suggested that the organization consider additional ways to assist individuals served to transition to natural supports, when appropriate, and consider a discussion around career planning when reviewing employment options and experiences, as appropriate for the individuals involved.
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PROGRAMS/SERVICES BY LOCATION

Futures Explored, Inc.

3547 Wilkinson Lane
Lafayette, CA 94549

Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job Development
Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job Supports
Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job-Site Training

Governance Standards Applied

Vocational Training and Employment

1029 J Street, Suite 380
Sacramento, CA 95814

Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job Development
Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job Supports
Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job-Site Training