



SURVEY OUTCOME
Three-Year Accreditation

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

March 7–9, 2007

Survey Team

Pat L. Steele, Administrative Surveyor
Susan E. Dlouhy, M.R.C., CRC, LPC, 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 3–5, 2004
Three-Year Accreditation

Survey Outcome

Three-Year Accreditation
Expiration: April 2010



SURVEY SUMMARY

Futures Explored, Inc., has a long history of providing quality services to individuals with disabilities. It has strengths in many areas.

- The organization receives superb leadership from its energetic and creative executive director. He has assembled and developed a very effective management team that focuses on innovation and achieving results. The leadership of Futures Explored provides the organization with vision and direction.
- Staff members are respectful of the individuals served and are attentive to their needs. The longevity of many staff members throughout all levels of the organization is a good indication of their commitment to improving the lives of persons with disabilities. They work hard on a daily basis to ensure that persons served have choices and opportunities in their lives. The enthusiasm and energy level of staff members are strengths of the organization.
- A strong and dedicated board of directors is commended for its commitment to the mission of the organization. Board members represent a wide range of expertise and influence in the community. The board has taken a balanced approach to exercising its fiduciary responsibilities, ensuring that personnel have the resources required to meet the needs of persons served while the organization still retains its fiscal strength.
- Futures Explored enjoys a strong relationship with its funding and referral sources. The organization's ability to develop and modify services based on the needs of the individuals served and to produce positive outcomes for so many individuals has created a very positive service environment.
- The organization is heavily engaged in advocacy efforts to improve the funding climate for services for persons with disabilities. The leadership that Futures Explored has provided in this endeavor has been crucial, and the organization is commended for its efforts in this regard.
- The management team of the organization is dedicated to continuous quality improvement. This is best evidenced by the performance measurement system for the supported employment program. A variety of efficiency and effectiveness measures are in place, which help staff members determine strengths and needs in the program. A detailed analysis is completed that assists the organization in enhancing service access and improving performance.
- The unique employment needs of each person are addressed in the individual plans. The job support plans provide specific objectives that are developed to guide the job coaches in the delivery of support services and help the individual maintain employment.
- Competent and caring job coaches provide consistent, regular follow-along in order to help individuals maintain their community jobs.
- The employment services director is complimented for her commitment to finding the "right job" for each person in her caseload. Excellent job matches result in job satisfaction for persons served and high retention rates for the organization.
- The organization acquired vocational training and employment three years ago, expanding its services into the Sacramento area. Futures Explored has successfully merged its philosophy of person-centered supports into the acquired company. Employers, persons served, and staff

members note a visible difference in the quality of services since the acquisition, particularly in the areas of staff training and retention. The organization is further complimented for successfully transitioning its paperwork, processes, and policies to the Sacramento location.

- The Nifty Thrifty Store in Lafayette serves as an employment site for individuals as well as an income producing venture for the organization. The store manager's knowledge of resale goods and antiques has allowed the organization to expand into Internet sales through eBay®. The store is clean with an appealing layout. It is also located close to other retail locations in the downtown area.

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

- The organization has developed an extensive and thorough technology plan that complies with and even transcends the areas called for in the CARF standards manual.
- Futures Explored has developed and maintains a model safety program that ensures that staff members and persons served work in healthy environments.
- Commendation is extended to the organization for the leadership it provided throughout its service area in helping community organizations develop procedures for a variety of potential emergency situations.
- To enhance the skills and knowledge of its staff members, Futures Explored has created an extensive staff development and growth program, which provides a variety of educational and training offerings in a myriad of subjects. This is a well-designed program that other organizations would do well to emulate.
- A comprehensive written succession plan is in place that ensures continuity of leadership in the event of a planned or unplanned departure of the executive director. This plan is quite detailed and, if needed, should assist the organization in managing the associated risks of an unplanned leadership vacancy.
- Futures Explored is commended for addressing the individual vocational needs of persons served with a wide variety of jobs and employment options. The types of jobs included childcare, clerical, customer service, library aide, and veterinary assistant. Even in traditional settings such as food service, individuals were working in nontraditional jobs. Individuals have the option to work in supervised enclave settings, mobile work crews, organization-owned retail stores, and individual placements.

Futures Explored should seek improvement in the areas identified by the recommendations in the report. Suggestions given do not indicate nonconformance to standards but are offered as consultation for further quality improvement.

On balance, Futures Explored is an organization with high standards, quality, and integrity and substantially conforms to the CARF standards. Its services, personnel, practices, and documentation clearly indicate that these conditions are part of its standard operating procedures and that these conditions will likely be maintained or improved. Futures Explored benefits from the exceptional skills and leadership of its management team, its committed staff members, and the dedicated board of directors.

Futures Explored, Inc., has earned a Three-Year Accreditation. The organization is complimented on this accomplishment. It appears to be well equipped and positioned to meet the needs and challenges of the future and is encouraged to use this survey report and other CARF resources to enhance its continuous improvement efforts.

SECTION 1. BUSINESS PRACTICES

Criterion A. Input from Stakeholders

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations continually focus on the expectations of the persons served and other stakeholders. The standards in Criterion A 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
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Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

Consultation

- Futures Explored collects information from employers regarding the quality of the services it provides. Unfortunately, the number of survey responses it receives is somewhat limited. The organization is encouraged to consider using additional means, such as focus groups, to gather input from these important stakeholders.
-

Criterion B. 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.

Consultation

- In the employment section of its accessibility plan, Futures Explored lists insufficient funding as a barrier to employment for persons with disabilities. This is certainly true, but other barriers to employment also exist. These include transportation, lack of work history, and limited work skills and education. Encouragement is given to the organization to expand the barriers to employment beyond funding and develop solutions to eliminate and/or mitigate these for the persons served.
-

Criterion C. Information Management and Performance Improvement

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. 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

- Information collected, analyzed, and used to address critical customer needs
- Accurate and consistent information collection
- Proactive performance improvement
- Performance information shared with all stakeholders
- Written technology and system plan

Recommendations

C.1.a.(2)

The organization collects information on the needs of persons served, their family members, purchasing and referral agencies, and its own business needs. However, it solicits little to no information regarding the human resource needs of the labor market in its communities. Obtaining and using such input would help position the organization to enhance the employment results it achieves. Therefore, it is recommended that the organization develop a mechanism to obtain this information to ensure that its employment services are relevant to its employment markets. This could be done through a combination of input forums, surveys of employers, and labor market information.

Exemplary Conformance

C.8.

Futures Explored is commended for the outstanding technology and system plan it has developed. This is a detailed and thorough plan that assists the organization to proactively plan and take measures to avoid potential threats and ensures uninterrupted access to services.

Consultation

- The organization currently collects limited demographic information on the persons served, such as disability type, age, ethnic background, and gender. Increased knowledge of the characteristics of persons served could help Futures Explored understand and explain service outcomes and increase referrals and help in organizational planning. It is suggested that the organization include in its collection of demographic information educational level, living arrangements, ability to drive or use transportation, use of government benefits, and previous job history.

Criterion D. 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

- Meaningful communication of rights
- Commitment to diversity
- Policies promote rights of persons served
- Complaint, grievance, and appeals policy
- Annual review of complaints

Recommendations

D.1.a.(1)

Futures Explored has an extensive listing of the rights of persons served in the handbook that is provided to each person served. The concern is that these rights are listed in a written format at a reading level that may not be understandable to all the individuals served by the organization. Thus, it is recommended that the organization expand the listing of rights beyond the written format to include other formats, such as pictures, audiotapes, or videotapes, to ensure that each person has a clear understanding of his/her rights.

Criterion E. Health and Safety

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations maintain accessible, healthy, safe, and clean environments through both external and internal safety reviews and personnel commitment to this philosophy.

Key Areas Addressed

- One annual external inspection
 - Self-inspections twice a year
 - Emergency procedures, including evacuation, tested/analyzed annually
 - Access to emergency first-aid resources
 - Competency of personnel in safety procedures
 - Defined system for reporting/reviewing critical incidents
 - Infection control plan
 - Transportation requirements, if applicable
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

Exemplary Conformance

E.1.

Futures Explored has developed and maintains a model health and safety program that transcends compliance and regulatory requirements and provides work and service environments that are comfortable and clean. Through a combination of external and internal safety reviews, the organization minimizes potential hazards and risks. It is clear that the organization has a strong

commitment to maintaining accessible, healthy, safe, and pleasant environments for persons served and staff members. Commendation is extended to the leadership of the organization and its safety committee for the excellent health and safety program in place at all program sites.

E.4.

Commendation is given to the organization's administrative director for the leadership role she played in developing a disaster plan resource guide for providers in the East Bay. This is an impressive document that includes a specific course of action for organizations to take in a variety of potential disaster situations.

Criterion F. 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

There are no recommendations in this area.

Exemplary Conformance

F.4.c.

Futures Explored has developed a comprehensive training and continuing education program for its personnel. The breadth and quality of the training afforded to all staff members are impressive. A recent addition to the program is the College of Direct Support, an online training program that has recently been implemented throughout the organization. The quality and quantity of the training provided not only enhance the skills of staff members, but also communicate to them that the organization is committed to their professional development.

Criterion G. 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
 - Corporate responsibility
 - Corporate compliance
 - Commitment to diversity
-

Recommendations

G.5.

Although Futures Explored receives federal funding, it has not yet developed a corporate compliance policy. It is recommended that the organization create a policy on corporate compliance and that this policy be adopted by the board of directors. In addition, the organization should designate a staff member to serve as its primary point of contact for monitoring and reporting on matters pertaining to corporate compliance.

Criterion H. 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

There are no recommendations in this area.

Consultation

- The organization has developed procedures regarding actions staff members are to take in responding to subpoenas, search warrants, investigations, and other legal actions. It is suggested that the organization include this information in the employee handbook to ensure that staff members have easy access to the procedures.
-

Criterion I. 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
 - Annual review of service billing records, if applicable
 - Review of fee structure, if applicable
 - Annual outside review/audit, if applicable
 - Written risk management plan
 - Adequate insurance coverage
 - Policies regarding safeguarding funds of persons served, if applicable
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Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

Criterion J. 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.

Exemplary Conformance

J.5.b.

Commendation is due the board of directors and the executive director for the development of an extensive written executive leadership succession plan. This plan anticipates a number of scenarios in which the organization could have a leadership vacancy, either planned or unplanned. Plans have been developed in the event of any such vacancy of leadership, and these plans appear to ensure that there is a continuity of leadership no matter the circumstance of the absence. It is clear that the organization's leadership put a great deal of thought and planning into developing this document. The result is that the organization should be able to manage the associated risks of planned or unplanned leadership vacancies.

SECTION 2. QUALITY INDIVIDUALIZED SERVICES

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

A.9.f.

The individual plans address the unique support needs for each individual served. However, the plans do not consistently address the cultural background of the individual. It is recommended that the organization expand the individual planning process to include information about how the individual's cultural background may affect the job development and placement process.

Consultation

- The organization utilizes two different forms to assess the potential health and safety risks in the community, the Client Habilitation Assessment Profile (CHAP) and the Risk Assessment Worksheet. The Risk Assessment Worksheet provides more detailed information about the actions that can be taken to minimize risks. It is suggested that the CHAP be expanded to include this information or that the organization complete the Risk Assessment Worksheet for each individual.
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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.

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.

A. Employment Services Principle Standards

Principle Statement

The standards in this section assert basic practices and capabilities 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

A.1.a.(2)

A.1.a.(10)

The organization provides a thorough orientation to individuals who are entering services, utilizing tours, the individual handbook, and an orientation checklist. However, the information provided to each individual should be expanded to include the training requirements for staff members who provide the services and the disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest. This information could be included in the individual handbook.

Exemplary Conformance

A.10.b.

Futures Explored is commended for addressing the individual vocational needs of persons served with a wide variety of jobs and employment options. The types of jobs included childcare, clerical, customer service, library aide, and veterinary assistant. Even in traditional settings, such as food service, individuals were working in nontraditional jobs. Individuals also have the option to work in supervised enclave settings, mobile work crews, and individual placements.

Consultation

- The wide variety of employment options that are available to persons served is a strength of the organization. It is suggested that Futures Explored celebrate its successes by including information about the types of jobs obtained in the outcomes management report, on the website, and in promotional materials.

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-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 and 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 Supports

Ongoing job support services are activities that are employment-related and needed to promote job adjustment and retention. These services are based on the individual needs of the new employee.

Key Areas Addressed

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

I.4.c.

It is recommended that the job developers maintain an organized system of recording current job openings. This information could be kept in an electronic format and updated regularly or in a notebook with employer information, job openings, work-site analysis, and contact dates.

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

1900 Point West Way, Suite 223
Sacramento, CA 95815

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