

La Frontera Employment Project Progress to Date – May 2009

Goal #1 - To shift the culture of La Frontera Center (LFC) to embrace the ideal that all people, regardless of diagnosis or level of symptoms, can and should work

Progress/Achievements

- April 07 – Dr. Mark Ragins of the Village ISA in Long Beach presented to LFC medical providers, CMs and supervisors on the importance of employment in recovery from serious mental illness.
- Ongoing – Various articles on employment services and consumer success stories published in both internal and external newsletters.
- Data measured six-months from the baseline on service planning and number of persons employed was presented at LFC's October 2008 Board of Directors' meeting.
- The project team is introducing an "Employment First" philosophy to LFC – employment should be a goal for clients regardless of diagnosis, level of symptoms, housing status, or perception of potential success in employment.

Goal #2 - Increase paid employment of at least 40 hours/month for all persons with SMI currently receiving services at LFC from 18.3% to 50% by the end of 2009

Progress/Achievements

- An internal on-call maintenance crew was developed, targeted to not only provide competitive employment for our clients with trade skills, but also to provide a much needed service to LFC buildings/sites.
- A volunteer program was created to provide consumers with meaningful work practice and resume building. Volunteers work at LFC with our Employment team to assist other clients to find and keep competitive employment. Volunteers are expected to work no longer than six months at LFC and then move into employment within the community.
- March 09 – The Employment Resource Fair was held at LFC's East clinic to showcase for clients available LFC and community resources. DKA, Vocational Rehabilitation, Pima Community College, Pima County One-Stop, Direct Center for Independence and LFC were among those present with more than 40 clients attending.
- LFC's ability to measure progress on this goal has been limited by data collection. It is suspected that case managers may not always update employment data in a timely fashion, which is skewing their numbers. A project to address this issue is being created, and we hope to see a significant change in the numbers once it is completed.

Goal #3 - Ensure that assessment of employment interest (initial, service planning and routine reassessment) is occurring

Progress/Achievements

- April 08 – A [Service Planning Readiness Tool](#) was created to assist case managers in assessing employment readiness and writing clinically appropriate service plan goals.
- April 08-April 09 – The percentage of clients with employment-related objectives on their service plan increased from 39% to 52%.

General Project Achievements

- The Employment Project was presented this year at the national Mental Health Corporations of America (MHCA) in conjunction with the MHCA/SAMHSA Institute of Medicine Quality Improvement Collaborative.
- A team of presenters from LFC was chosen to present at the 10th Annual Summer Institute in Sedona in July 09. The training will focus on how agencies can create their own comprehensive employment team, ways to improve employment outcomes and how to address agency cultural barriers to implementing an "employment first" philosophy.
- The most successful interventions seem to have been in the areas of culture change and service planning. While culture change is fairly subjective, La Frontera staff and leadership have definitely seen that simply making employment more visible, providing training to all levels of staff and setting expectations that case managers will talk to their clients about working can positively affect employment rates. In addition, the Service Planning Readiness Tool became a standardized tool that all case managers utilize when formulating employment-related goals with their clients.