



Families First 2023 Annual Report

Mission Statement: Families First Counseling Services of Iowa is dedicated to the process of partnering with families today to help foster growth and success tomorrow

Values: Dignity, Integrity, Service Competence

Dignity: Families First Counseling Services of Iowa (Families First) values the dignity of all individuals and seeks to establish and maintain positive relationships with its clients in order to reinforce the self-worth of each person. Families First employees will work to enhance the clients' capacity for self-determination and provide therapy and skills to allow each individual to become a healthy and productive member of our society

Integrity: Families First places an emphasis on behaving in a trustworthy manner that is consistent with the ethical standards of the National Association of Social Workers. Our employees are expected to act in a manner that demonstrates that he/she is honest, responsible, and respectful.

Service: Families First places service to those in need of assistance above the needs of the agency. We believe in treating the individual and not the symptom and are dedicated to do our best to serve our clients.

Competence: Families First is dedicated to providing opportunities for personal growth and development as well as ensuring that its employees practice within their areas of competence. Families First provides opportunities for trainings to assist in meeting the requirements for continuing education.

Operating Highlights

- ❖ Families First strategically responded to the Department of Health Human Services Child Welfare Family Centered Services contract needs and expanded our scope of reach for service delivery in the Eastern Service Area. Families First now holds four (4) DHHS FCS contracts and serves 57 of the 99 counties in the State of Iowa, expanding the agency to more than 255 employees.
- ❖ Families First continues to align the agency with the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) federal legislation. In addition, Families First Executive Team has strategically positioned themselves onto statewide committees, boards and work groups to influence FFPSA service delivery practices throughout Iowa's Child Welfare System.

- ❖ Families First engaged in a year-long Rapid Culture Engagement Initiative aimed at improving the employee experience at Families First in Onboarding, Work/Life Balance and Supervision for enhanced employee retention rates.
- ❖ Service integration and multi-disciplinary team practices were developed to help create stronger and more comprehensive service integration practices within the agency.
- ❖ Families First continues regular agency wide leadership training to coach and develop the next generation of leaders by enhancing technical and adaptive skills.
- ❖ Families First expanded our professional capacity by adding a Certified Hope Trainer to our training team, expanding our ability to ensure all employees are trained in foundational trauma elements and the impact of hope science on well-being.
- ❖ Families First expanded Solution Based Casework certification across FSS/IS, Supervisors and Directors in all service areas by 150% in 2023, improving our staff certification numbers to more than 60 certifications with six (6) certified Trainers.
- ❖ Successfully completed SafeCare reaccreditation in 2023 and helped develop and implement consistent statewide training videos in partnership with Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- ❖ Families First restructured our Integrated Health Home Program to achieve better workflow efficiencies and effectiveness in response to IHH audits and MCO feedback.
- ❖ A Peer-to-Peer Mentor Program was implemented to help reduce organizational turnover while enhancing employee onboarding, training, and team dynamics within the first 90 days of employment.
- ❖ Families First hired an internal IT position to support the agencies expanding technology needs.
- ❖ Families First continued our commitment to providing Evidence Based Practices/Programs (EBP) to those we serve. Families First received accreditation in SafeCare, outlining the highest degree of model fidelity for program implementation and proficiency. Furthermore, Families First became a leader in Iowa for implementation excellence for Solution Based Casework, certifying over 60 employees and developing six SBC Certified Trainers.

Employee Engagement Survey Results

Positive Feedback

Staff highlighted agency strengths through our annual employee engagement survey:

- 97.93% of employees find their work with FF to be meaningful and purposeful
- 95.83% of FF employees feels the agency values and recognizes equity, diversity & inclusion for our employees and those we serve
- 97.24% of employees enjoy working with their teams
- 96.55% of employees are proud to work for FF
- 96.2% of employees are inspired by the mission, vision and values of the agency
- 95.85% of employees believe FF fosters a work environment culture that is comfortable and supportive
- 95.86% of employees believe their work challenges them and aids in their professional growth
- 95.80% of employees feel their Supervisor is invested in their success
- 92.25% of employees would recommend FF as an employer to their family/friends
- 93.01% of employees believe the FF Executive Team is invested in and contributes to the culture and culture initiatives of the agency

In 2023, we focused our efforts around improving the overall employee experience at Families First, beginning with onboarding, extending to work/life balance, all while ensuring quality supervision practices are occurring with regularity. Employees across the organization engaged in our Rapid Culture Engagement Initiative, identifying Culture Champions and inviting our employees across all service lines and departments to be a part of the change initiative.

Staff members are afforded opportunities for personal and professional growth through agency-sponsored in-service training, new hire orientation/training; conferences, workshops, and other staff development activities. In addition, the implementation of the Peer Mentor Program provides adequate emotional support, a culture of connectedness and hands on coaching/mentoring during the 1st 150 days of employment. The Peer Mentor Program has helped Families First create a culture of transformational community learning and leadership development that has shown to reduce turnover and improve employee retention. Clinical staff members are expected to strive to be licensed and/or certified within their own professional discipline. Employees are encouraged to seek higher education in their area of discipline, and the agency supports ongoing education by aligning opportunities for professional growth with essential trainings through the Supervision process.

During quarterly regional meetings, employees are recognized for years of service and presented with a certificate and years of service gifts. Employees are also recognized for service excellence and partnership, highlighting success stories from across our Service Areas and programming. Supervisors are recognized on a monthly basis for their leadership skills and are presented with a “Supervisor of the Month” award, highlighting their contributions and achievements within the organization.

Financial Overview

Families First continues to experience continued growth of services, revenue, technology and infrastructure. This doesn't go without “growing pains” or challenges and barriers; however, we possess strength; accountability; forward thinking; resourcefulness; and stability in an effort to maintain our success. We would like to take this opportunity to share and highlight our accomplishments as follows:

- Revenues for 2023 totaled \$18.6 million which resulted in an 8% gain from 2022.
- In 2023 our profit margin finished at 11.6%, an indicator of a financially healthy organization. This can be contributed to an expansion of Child Welfare contracts in the Eastern Service Area and a small increase in reimbursement rates for certain Coaching, Support and Education (CSE) programs. We also had an increase in CSE rates along with an increase in a specific Child Welfare reimbursement with family interactions.
- Our CSE programs continue to experience growth and revenues increased in 2023 by 5 percent (5%). This was due largely to expansion in therapy services and a reimbursement rate in therapy and BHIS services.
- Investing in an EMR software and adding infrastructure in the billing department has proven effective for the agency in electronically collecting revenues. With child welfare services we collect one hundred percent (100%) of all revenues and with CSE services, ninety-five (95%) of revenues. Iowa introduced new MCO'S this year and one in particular, Iowa Total Care, has struggled with processing claims.
- Families First successfully completed our independent audit; two cost reports; Child Mental Health audit; workers compensation payroll audit; and a 401K audit all in good standing with no major concerns noted. We changed over to a new financial system where we submit all income and expenses into our accountant software program which helps us with immediate updates on reports and current Income Statement for the agency
- A Financial Review committee, consisting of organizational Administrators continues to meet regularly to evaluate organizational

health. This provides the Families First Executive Team insight of their programs from a financial perspective. It also allows them an opportunity to recognize challenges/barriers and develop a plan of resolution. As a team we provide oversight of billing and collections. We then send our monthly financials to our CPA firm who reconciles with the bank and our Quicken software program.

Human Resources:

- Monitor and manage Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) Americans with Disabilities (ADA), unemployment claims and worker compensation claims
- Manage employee recruitment and retention. Maintain regular communication with Indeed account representative to identify issues/concerns; develop timely resolutions; enhance platform functions; and review platform changes in an effort to capitalize recruiting and hiring strategies.
- Maintain membership with the National Society of Human Resource Management and Cedar Valley Society of Human Resource Management.
- Built a network of external partners to utilize & share resources; broaden education & training efforts & networking opportunities. Stay abreast of local, state & federal legislation.
- Built a new partnership with HR Connect for administrative oversight of HR policies and procedures.
- Train/educate Supervisors, Directors & Managers on human resource topics. Attend monthly Supervisor meetings.
- Manage the agency's benefits; timely reconcile benefit invoices and schedule payment; and provide assistance, support & direction to employees benefit questions

Administrative and Service Environment

- Continued, ongoing maintenance checks conducted on vehicles and offices
- Continued, ongoing training provided for emergency responses, inclement weather and employee safety.
- Host monthly meetings and provide training for Administrative Assistant support staff

Accreditation & Licensing:

- Committee Chair continues to meet regularly with other PQI Committees and provide input regarding practice/policy as it relates to COA and other Standards.
- Child Welfare biannual audits and biannual self-assessments were completed
- Policies and Procedures Manual and agency Employee Handbook were updated and acknowledged via signature by employees.
- COA 2023 Maintenance of Accreditation Completed
- HCBS 2023 Self-Assessment Completed
- Contracting and credentialing with IME and MCOs completed
- Continued our contract with PMI to credential and bill additional private insurances

- Continue to monitor feedback from all service audits and take to appropriate committees for review and QI measures.

Risk and Prevention:

- The agency is proud to report 0 client grievances filed, and 1 employee grievance.
- There were 0 alleged HIPAA violations which resulted in reporting a violation to the Department of Human Services.
- Training provided included Personal Safety, Documentation training, Trauma Informed Care Part 1 and 2 and Emergency response, incident reporting, grievance and accident reporting training also occurred in 2023. These trainings were held in a group or regional setting.
- The Employee Handbook and P&P were revised and reviewed by our attorney. This was shared in October '23 regionals with all employees.
- Workman Comp claims continue to be higher in dog bites and slips, trips and falls and car accidents. The committee will continue to provide training on these issues for a preventative approach to employee safety.
- Supervisors continue, with the direction of HR, to post the employee rights and responsibilities and OSHA findings.
- The incident report process was updated to ensure ease of tracking.
- Annual claims review meeting occurred with PDCM and benefit review to meeting employee health, vision, dental, and prescription needs.
- Revamped new employee orientation process with emphasis on personal safety and environmental training.

Marketing/Community Engagement:

- As a strategy to retain current employees Years of service awards were presented to staff during our Regional Meetings

We recognized all employees at their:

1 year, 3 year, 5-year, 10 year and

15 years of service.

- We continued to invest our resources in Google and our business Facebook page. We have increased our search ratings on Google to ensure we present at the top of the options given and have continued to share the great work our staff are doing across the state by posting pictures and agency activities.
- We upgraded our Families First web page to highlight our services, staff and to be more interactive and provide opportunities for visitors to utilize links to obtain resources, job postings and office locations/directions.
- Families First continues to establish and maintain partnerships with many local colleges and universities to recruit staff. Attended job fairs and put up fliers on the college job boards.
- Families First does regular radio ads and recordings and this has assisted with community awareness.

- BHIS supervisors\ partnered with several community agencies to increase community awareness of Families First services.