



Family Education and Resource Center (FERC)

A program of the Mental Health Association of Alameda County
7200 Bancroft Ave., Suite 269, Oakland, 94605
Phone: (510) 746-1700 / Fax: (510) 746-1701

Two (2) Family Advocate Positions Available

THE PROGRAM

The Family Education and Resource Center ('FERC') is a new and innovative family/caregiver-centered program that provides information, education, and support services to family/caregivers of children, adolescents, transitional age youth, adults, and older adults with serious emotional disturbance or mental illness living in all regions of Alameda County. These services are provided in a culturally competent manner, reaching out to people of various ethnicities and language groups.

The FERC is a component of Alameda County's Community Services & Support plan, funded with Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) dollars and operated by the Mental Health Association of Alameda County (MHAAC) under contract with Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services. In addition to providing outreach, education and support to family/caregivers of people with mental illness, the FERC facilitates input and feedback to Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services decision makers at all levels about the important roles family/caregivers play in supporting their loved ones and about the experiences and needs of family/caregivers. The FERC works closely with County and contract agencies to promote a family/caregiver perspective and toward the goal of creating a more family/caregiver and consumer driven system of care.

FERC programmatic components include: (1) a warm line; (2) education, training and support for family/caregivers; (3) a resource center; (4) assistance with AB-1424; (5) support for the development of family leadership; and (6) collaboration with other MHSA-funded programs.

FERC's main office is located in Oakland; Satellite offices are located in Hayward, Livermore, Oakland and Fremont. FERC currently has an annual budget of \$1 million.

Essential Duties

Under the supervision and guidance of the Lead Family Advocate, Family Advocates' duties may include, but are not limited to the following:

- ❖ Assist family members / caregivers in navigating the complex mental health system of care in Alameda County
- ❖ Support family members/caregivers by phone or by in-person consultation
- ❖ Provide a full range of information, support, encouragement, advocacy, and referral to appropriate community resources, and related services in order to assist the family/caregiver in coping effectively with immediate and/or long-term situations.
- ❖ Attend, facilitate and/or support family/caregivers ' self-help groups, existing family support groups and family peer support efforts.
- ❖ Document key components of calls and activities (database, logbooks, etc)
- ❖ Actively participate in liaison role with key partners such as NAMI affiliates (attend meetings, coordinate trainings, etc)
- ❖ Active involvement in community outreach (e.g. table at health faires, schools, and other public venues, etc)

Examples of other duties, as assigned

- ❖ Build and maintain collaborative working relationships within the behavioral healthcare system, including community agencies and organizations in order to further mutual service system improvement goals.
- ❖ Offer, coordinate or facilitate inservices on topics or areas of identified need and/or areas of expertise, once developed
- ❖ Effectively represent and advocate for the family/caregiver perspective within the community and mental health system.
- ❖ Identify, recruit, and mentor family members who wish to take leadership roles to represent diverse family/caregiver interests at administrative and policy-making levels.
- ❖ Answer information and referral "warm line" as needed

Qualifying Experience:

Current or previous experience as a family member/caregiver responsible for, or closely involved in the treatment of, an individual having an emotional disturbance or mental illness (child or adult), whether biologically related or not.

Personal Knowledge/experience of:

- ❖ The family/caregiver experience.
- ❖ The issues associated with having a family member with a serious emotional disturbance or mental illness as well as the physical, psychological, and emotional stressors which often accompany this experience
- ❖ Advocating on behalf of a family member (child or adult) to obtain services and/or assistance.

Ability to:

- ❖ Inform, train, support and empower family/caregivers.
- ❖ Empathize with family/caregivers and be aware of the difficulties they are experiencing; particularly in crisis situations.
- ❖ Understand and maintain the confidentiality of protected health information.
- ❖ Understand and articulate the cultural and socio-economic factors affecting behavior patterns as well as understanding-the needs and difficulties faced by ethnically and socio-economic diverse family/caregivers.
- ❖ Work effectively and responsibly away from the FERC main office and with minimal direct supervision.
- ❖ Communicate effectively; orally and in writing.
- ❖ Support, recognize, accept, and understand-socio-economic and cultural factors in the provision of mental health services. (moved here from 'essential duties' and edited 'social')

Desirable or Highly Desirable (but not required) Qualifications:

- ❖ Familiarity with the mental health service system in Alameda County (highly desirable):.
- ❖ Direct/personal experience navigating the mental health system as the family/caregiver of a child, adolescent, young adult, adult, or older adult.
- ❖ Bilingual and/or bicultural (highly desirable); reflecting the communities we serve.
- ❖ Familiarity with the National Alliance on Mental Illness ('NAMI') and/or CA United Advocates for Children and Families.
- ❖ Graduate and/or trainer of the NAMI Family to Family Education Program or other NAMI signature educational and/or support program or the United Advocates for Children's EES Training.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE IS PASSIONATE ABOUT MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM OF CARE, IS SERVICE-ORIENTED, AND A NATURAL TEAM PLAYER.

Other Requirements:

Must have a motor vehicle available for daily use, possess a valid California drivers license, carry vehicle liability insurance with at least \$100,000/\$300,000 limits, and have an acceptable motor vehicle report, as determined by MHAAC's insurance broker.

Hours of Work: This is a full-time position. M-F 9-5. Some evenings and weekends.

Salary: \$3,485.52 per month (DOE). Employee benefits include vacation and sick leave and employer-paid health/dental insurance.

To apply: Secure an application by downloading it from the FERC website at www.askferc.org (click on 'Employment Opportunities'), or by calling the FERC at (510) 746-1700 or by picking it up at the FERC main office located at 7200 Bancroft Ave., Suite 269, Oakland, 94605. Office hours are Monday thru Friday 9am-5pm. Please be sure to provide a fully completed application; resume is desirable. Fax: 510-746-1701.

Deadline: Applications will be accepted until the positions are filled.