

**POSITION:****EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR****ORGANIZATION:****ORGANIZATION  
BACKGROUND:**

The Family Service Agency of the Central Coast (FSA) is a quite remarkable nonprofit organization providing since 1957 an array of respected behavioral health services in Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Benito counties. The range of services includes counseling for children, adults, couples, and families; suicide-prevention, a 24-hour suicide and crisis hotline and outreach service; mental health support to victims of child sexual abuse and their allies, and to women and their families dealing with cancer; peer counseling to elders living independently and, friendly visitors and emotional support to care facilities residents. Centered in Santa Cruz, with regional services to a population of more than 800,000 residents, in a coastal and agricultural area known for its recreational and educational amenities, including two State university campuses, and its environmental values and quality-of-life, this invaluable organization offers to the exceptional chief executive officer an extraordinary opportunity for gratifying leadership.

Executive Director David Bianchi announced his retirement in May, marking 35 years of distinguished institution-building that has seen one transformation after another in the evolution of the Family Service Agency. A much-loved and respected leader, David's iconic contribution will be celebrated in part by the opportunity of his successor to build on David's legacy. Among the distinctions enjoyed by FSA, and certainly key achievements in David's legacy, is the unusually long tenure of its staff, the dedication and energy of its armies of volunteers, and its notable history of rigorous financial management resulting in balanced budgets, significant liquid stabilizing reserves, and adaptability to the vicissitudes of a turbulent environment, including the pandemic of recent years. The next Executive Director of FSA will enjoy the enviable opportunity to build on this legacy.

The Board of the Family Service Agency, ideally comprised of 7-9 actively engaged members, is currently at 6. The Board is fully committed and unusually long-term in service. Staff numbers 35-45, about one-third of whom are full-time. More than 400 volunteers significantly amplify FSA's reach. The annual budget of FSA has been consistently close to \$2 million, but is projected as growing considerably to \$2.5 - \$3 million in the current and following fiscal year, as new funding will dramatically increase suicide-prevention services. Volunteers serving on "Friends Committees" support fundraising for two distinct programs, as does the work of the Daisy Auxiliary operating the "Daisy Store," complemented by support from local foundations and government. Historically, thanks to long-term scrupulous financial management, unrestricted rainy-day or program expansion reserves have grown to over \$700,000 despite the 2008 recession and the current pandemic. A recent Board-driven initiative to encourage planned giving has resulted in the establishment of two \$50,000 endowment funds expected to seed future efforts.

Family Service Agency programs include:

- Suicide-Prevention, which is being greatly expanded currently to implement "988" services as one of 13 regional California hotlines, evolving from a staff-supported volunteer cadre to a much larger volunteer and staffed program;
- Senior Outreach, recruiting and managing volunteers to develop contact relationships with and support to seniors living independently in the community;
- I-You Venture, organizing visits by volunteers who plan activities and offer supportive relationships to residents in senior and assisted living facilities;
- WomenCARE, organizing volunteers who offer supportive services to women managing and/or surviving from cancer and their families;
- Survivors Healing Center, organizing volunteers and paid facilitators to provide support to survivors of child sexual abuse;
- Daisy Auxiliary/Daisy Store, the preeminent all-volunteer upscale women's resale clothing store, located near Santa Cruz in Capitola, dedicating all net proceeds to the general support of FSA.

It is notable that among the examples above, except for Senior Outreach and the Daisy Auxiliary/Daisy Store, every one of these programs existed at one time as a small and independent project agency whose leaders became persuaded that their work could be perpetuated better under the auspices of a larger organization with a more-inclusive mission – and their choice was Family Service Agency. To the credit of FSA, FSA has accepted six agencies through mergers over the past 35 years. The success of these and others in this diverse array is a credit to today's FSA. Overseeing these programs, supporting their varying missions and roles, providing staff oversight and support, and promoting their proud battalions of volunteers is a signature accomplishment, and will be an exciting challenge to the next Executive Director.

In addition to the programs above is the Counseling Services program, employing staff, volunteers, and supervised clinical interns in providing individual and group counseling at sliding scale rates emphasizing affordability to middle and low-income clients. These behavioral health services, addressing the challenges to individuals and family systems, were the founding reason and origin of FSA and reflect the commitment of the organization to promote mental health in every way possible. The mission and values of FSA are reflected in this core counseling programs and infuse all other FSA services.

The Family Service Agency is at an inflection point in its development, and the challenges of leadership transition and multi-year change management will enhance this leadership opportunity for the qualified Executive Director. In addition to the considerable challenge of easing into and learning how best to lead an organization that has become so adapted to the leadership of a long-serving predecessor, the next Executive Director must address two programmatic challenges that are current and of high priority:

- The expansion of paid staff and budget to implement the dramatically expanded suicide-prevention program will require close and deft management during a relatively short transition;
- The changing economics of the counseling programs, historically central to FSA's mission, will require entrepreneurial leadership and organization

adaptability. The increase in internet-facilitated therapy has prompted many licensed therapists to work remotely, shifting to private practice, making it economically more difficult for FSA to recruit licensed therapists to a site-based setting, where, in addition to their own counseling, they have supervised paid associates and trainees – eager to accumulate directed-hours toward their licensing requirements – and who have historically augmented FSA staff in exchange for their training and supervision. This tele-health trend, accelerated by the pandemic, has made it more difficult to recruit and retain counseling staff at all levels, has increased personnel and operating costs, and has reduced demand for on-site services. In the absence of innovative operating models that compensate for this trend, counseling services may not continue to be financially viable without enhanced support from non-earned income sources, with special implications for both the entrepreneurial and fundraising abilities of the next Executive Director.

Family Service Agency is an incredibly efficient organization at that organizational budget size that places high demands on its no-job-too-small, 360-degree managing chief executive officer. The Executive Director and Finance Director plus three support staff members essentially manage most administrative and core counseling functions, supported by several long-term direct staff who report to the Executive Director, and a small number of program middle managers, plus clinical staff, interns, and cohorts of volunteers. This CEO-centric organization has achieved its success through the ability of the leader to manage down, up, and out, to earn the trust of a small, long-serving Board, the confidence of diverse volunteers, and the ability to inspire and to capitalize on the devotion to mission of all stakeholders. A successful Executive Director will have the values, skill-sets, energy, integrity, and collaborative management style to perpetuate this successful leadership.

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The Executive Director is responsible for the management and operation of all programs and services provided by the Family Service Agency, for implementing all policy decisions of the governing Board, and for employing and supervising a staff whose dedication and high morale creates a healthy working environment and produces quality of service more than adequate to achieve Board

objectives. S/he oversees the administrative and fiduciary functions of FSA. S/he represents FSA to the community and builds strong relationships with people served, key stakeholders, volunteers, staff, and the Board.

Specifically, the Executive Director:

- Helps determine and ensure, in partnership with the governing Board, that the mission, vision, and values of FSA are carried out.
- Anticipates changing community needs with vision and imagination, initiates long-range strategic and operational planning with the Board and others, and is responsible and accountable for implementation of all such plans.
- Demonstrates a high level of business acumen. Works with the staff to recommend budgets, oversees revenues and expenditures, maintains internal controls and financial discipline, and works closely with the Board and FSA's independent auditor to ensure the financial wellbeing of the organization.
- Embodies an entrepreneurial sophistication and capacity to assess cost-benefits and financial risk that enables FSA to pursue development opportunities for reorganized, new or expanded services, as part of a well-conceived and articulated framework, value-based and strategically-oriented. Is able also to assess the cost-benefits of ongoing programs and, if and when necessary, to make politically unpopular recommendations to the Board when certain program services may no longer be sustainable or justifiable. Above all, s/he must be a visionary with extraordinary capacity to mobilize physical and human resources to implement programs and services.
- Works closely with Board members, community friends of FSA and staff to identify, cultivate, and solicit public funding as well as private sources for charitable gifts in support of the programs of FSA. Increases charitable giving to supplement earned income and to fund operations, capital requirements, and growth at a level appropriate to FSA's needs, present and future.
- Appreciates the power of volunteerism in amplifying the services of an organization, in attracting funding, in increasing community visibility, in enhancing branding, and in building internal morale, commitment, and effectiveness.
- Works closely with all external funding sources and other service providers with shared interests and

promotes inter-organizational partnerships wherever collaboration can enhance such services in the region. Appreciates the value of networking and earns the respect of other agencies through a style of collaboration that places the interests of people served above all else.

- Understands knowledge management, program evaluation, the usefulness of metrics, and is comfortable with information technology and its broad applications. Appreciates the importance of social media, branding, website design, marketing, and media relations in projecting FSA to the community and all current and prospective stakeholders.
- Represents and is an articulate, informed, persuasive, charismatic advocate of FSA to community stakeholders, government, associations, agencies, and the media. Has the gravitas and charisma to be the recognizable face of a highly-regarded service organization.
- Oversees and approves contracts, maintains an agency-wide standard of operation that sets a high standard with respect to all regulations, and complies with all external reporting requirements. Takes executive responsibility for agency compliance with all applicable non-profit laws, labor/workplace laws, contractual obligations, and donor restrictions, and maintains appropriate internal policies and procedures to ensure such compliance. Manages with such a high level of commitment to accuracy, transparency, and trust – and demands the same from all colleagues – that a well-informed, no-surprises governing Board is never in doubt or concerned about performance or compliance information.

## ***PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS:***

The ideal candidate for Executive Director will have:

- Passion for service, and genuine affection, respect, and compassion for those served by FSA. Embodiment of values, style, and energy that sustain the generosity of spirit that is FSA's hallmark.
- Extensive non-profit experience at the management level, or executive experience in business, government or the professions, with an extensive history of public service as a non-profit board member and/or public official in the field of human services.
- Familiarity with and ease in the culture experienced

by residents of Santa Cruz and California's Central Coast, or, evidence of the ability quickly to adapt to and succeed in this unique community environment;

- Though not essential for the leader who is a quick-learner and has the high level of emotional intelligence found in capable leaders of behavioral health organizations, familiarity with mental health services, and even clinical experience, is preferred.
- Profit and loss experience evidencing a high level of financial acumen and the ability to lead creatively in times of both surplus and financial exigency; entrepreneurial ability appropriate to a rapidly changing and turbulent funding and service environment. Evidence of anticipation of risk, sound judgment in crisis, grace under pressure.
- Ability to move an organization forward day by day in the context of the long view. Experience with successful implementation of plans, making intentions happen, both tactically and strategically, with planning, anticipation of challenges and surprises, monitoring of progress, attentive follow-up of outcomes and implications for next steps.
- Fundraising ability, with the tenacity to pursue the "yes," and the durability to rebound from the "no," fueled by an infectious passion for the work. A sophisticated understanding of how to engage friends, volunteers, and Board in attracting governmental, corporate, foundation, and individual support to provide resources essential to maintain a viable and sustainable business model.
- Highly developed communication skills, and especially the ability to listen and learn. Flexibility to be accessible and present to all constituencies - staff, people served and their families, Board, volunteers, funders, external colleagues, the community, City, State, and Federal policymakers.
- Understand the importance of advocacy, have a demonstrated ability to be the effective voice and face of FSA in the community. Also be dedicated to the role of the leader in advocating for staff and people served, grounded in values of social justice, fairness, appreciation of diversity, and the transcendent value of human dignity.
- Demonstrate the ability to motivate, mentor, and inspire an effective professional and volunteer workforce, to work selflessly and closely, in partnership, and in a position of leadership, with a diverse staff, in a style of respect and collaboration.

The dedication to accessibility that enables staff to feel known and appreciated by their leader. The ability to delegate and avoid micromanagement unless necessary to support or train staff, balanced by a can-do and no-job-too-small readiness; great attention to interpersonal detail with unfailing attention to the big picture. The confidence to lead; the confidence to follow. A sensitivity to the critical importance of inclusiveness and the avoidance of even a hint of favoritism or partiality. The sensitivity to recruit, mentor, reward, and advance talented staff; appreciation of longevity of service; the sound judgment, patience, and confidence to hold staff accountable for their performance and to make difficult personnel changes when appropriate. An understanding of staff needs in an under-compensated professional field and the determination to reward performance and minimize staff turnover as a budget priority.

- An exemplary work ethic, authenticity, robust high energy, persistence, durability, impeccable integrity, a good sense of humor, and the humility that comes with a wise and caring view of the human condition.

**EDUCATION:**

Lifelong learning and/or educational achievement appropriate to the complexity of the position. Advanced degrees in social, clinical, educational or health services, and management or law, are highly desirable.

**COMPENSATION:**

Compensation will be competitive, probably in the range of \$130,000 - \$150,000, negotiable based on experience, plus generous benefits.

Robert M. Fisher, Ph.D., President of Rusher Loscavio Fisher Nonprofit Executive Search (San Francisco Bay Area) is privileged to provide recruitment and leadership transition counsel to the Board of Family Service Agency of the Central Coast. We suggest review of both [www.fsa-cc.org](http://www.fsa-cc.org) and [www.rll.com](http://www.rll.com). FSA values diversity and encourages candidacy to all who are qualified. All discussions with prospects for this position will be treated with *utmost discretion*.

We would be grateful to receive inquiries, expressions of interest, nominations, and applications *in strict confidence* at the following address:

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