



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Division of Social Services

325 North Salisbury Street • Mail Service Center 2406 Raleigh • North Carolina 27699-2406
Courier # 56-20-25

Michael F. Easley, Governor
Carmen Hooker Odom, Secretary

Sherry S. Bradsher, Director
(919) 733-3055

July 3, 2006

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES

SUBJECT: WORK FIRST RE-DESIGN REGIONAL FORUMS

North Carolina's TANF program, Work First helped reform a fragmented welfare system into a system that focuses on employment and self-sufficiency. Work First in NC has been a success; and we want to continue to serve families in need by ensuring safety, permanency, well-being, and self-sufficiency. The service needs of our population have changed; for example, 65% of our caseload consists of the child-only population. In order to meet the needs of North Carolinians, it is time to examine the strengths and challenges of our current TANF program and move forward with recommendations.

The Family Support and Child Welfare Services Section of the North Carolina Division of Social Services recognizes the value of a collaborative approach and understands that in order to better serve families, input from a varied group of partners is crucial to developing appropriate policy and shaping service delivery.

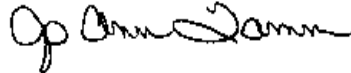
A series of eight regional forums will be held across the state to solicit input from local DSS's and our community partners in the redesign of Work First in NC. The forums are an opportunity to make recommendations to shape Work First employment/eligibility programs in NC with the understanding that as a state agency we are not able to alter federal legislation. Serving families and ensuring safety, permanency and self-sufficiency is a community issue and requires a collaborative approach. Several key stakeholders have been identified and should be invited to the regional forums: families and youth receiving Work First Family Assistance, businesses and business leaders, local civic groups, local religious groups, Workforce Development Boards, educational institutions, child care providers, transportation providers, elected officials, non-profit agencies, local government agencies and staff (Vocational Rehabilitation, LME's, Domestic Violence Agencies, DSS partners including Medicaid, Child Support, and Food Stamps).

County DSS staff have the responsibility of inviting important stakeholders within your community. A sample letter is provided in this mailing. The meetings are from 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. During these forums, state staff will facilitate discussion between agency and community members around specific topic areas.

Information and recommendations gathered during the forums will impact any legislative recommendations made by the Division of Social Services. We look forward to receiving a wealth of information from the experts in your community. The participation of family members is crucial and every effort should be made to ensure attendance of former and current Work First recipients.

Questions about the forums should be directed to your Work First Representative or Candice Britt, Special Projects Coordinator, at (919) 733-7831.

Sincerely,



Jo Ann Lamm, Chief
Family Support and Child Welfare Services Section

[WF Redesign Schedule Attachment 1](#)
[County Template Attachment 2](#)

JAL:cb

cc: Sherry Bradsher
Family Support and Child Welfare Services Managers
Work First Program Representatives
Children's Program Representatives
Local Business Liaisons

FSCWS-41-06