



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

Pat McCrory
Governor

Richard O. Brajer
Secretary

Sherry Bradsher
Deputy Secretary for Human Services

January 13, 2016

Dear County Directors:

It is hard to believe that almost five years ago, North Carolina was one of nine states awarded grant funding for a planning year of the *Work Support Strategies* initiative, and one year later, we were only one of six states to be awarded three years of additional implementation funding totaling more than \$1.5M.

For the last four years, through WSS, we have been committed to creating a new service delivery model for local families in need. We knew that such a model would benefit all of the citizens of North Carolina, whether their primary perspective was that of a client, taxpayer, business owner or state official. To do this, we hoped to capture the attention and imagination of many of the state's stakeholders including the federal government, the General Assembly, counties, case workers, citizens and community partners, in order to build a visionary, forward-thinking service delivery system from the ground up.

While we planned for the Work Support Strategies initiative to accomplish nothing less than a cultural transformation across both the county and state levels of work supports administration, we know that we have not yet reached those goals and that there is still work to be done. Although the project formally ended December 31, *the ideas and goals behind WSS will endure*. We will continue to work hard to eliminate duplicative or redundant steps in application and recertification processes; improve coordination among human service benefit programs; support the integration and automation among program-based systems; and eliminate the silo approach to benefit delivery.

What we want most, as the project end draws near, is to thank each and every one of you from the bottom of our hearts for all of your interest, support, participation, commitment, and for asking the hard questions of us —and of each other — every day to validate the path we're headed down. We want to especially thank all of our Directors, our Work Support Strategies Champions, our Policy Subcommittee members, and our state partners for you have done to further the effort in your respective areas. Without you, the project would not have achieved nearly the successes that it has.

We have accomplished a great deal in the last three years, but there is still much to be done. Today we re-strengthened the partnership between the state and counties, and we hope that with your continued support and commitment we can, together, turn the goals, tenets, and drive of WSS into the way North Carolina does business going forward.

Thank you again for all your support for this project and for what you do every day for the citizens across the state.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sherry Bradsher".

Sherry Bradsher
Deputy Secretary for Human Services

www.ncdhhs.gov

Tel 919-855-4800 • Fax 919-715-4645

Location: 101 Blair Drive • Adams Building • Raleigh, NC 27603

Mailing Address: 2001 Mail Service Center • Raleigh, NC 27699-2001

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