



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

Pat McCrory
Governor

Aldona Z. Wos, M.D.
Ambassador (Ret.)
Secretary DHHS

Wayne E. Black
Division Director

July 3, 2014

Re: Work First County Planning

Dear County Director of Social Services

Attention: Work First Program Administrators and Supervisors

The Division is officially beginning the Work First Block Grant planning cycle for Federal Fiscal Years (FFY) 2016 – 2019. This letter provides guidance and deadlines for Work First County Block Grant planning.

Electing County Status

Electing Counties are required to submit an Electing County designation form to the Division of Social Services to continue or discontinue their Electing County status each Work First planning cycle. The following counties are presently in Electing County status: Beaufort, Caldwell, Catawba, Lenoir, Lincoln, Macon, and Wilson. All Electing Counties Work First Block Grants are subject to the General Assembly appropriation provisions.

The deadline to return the attached Electing County designation form is by close of business **Monday, August 4, 2014**. The decision must have the support of three-fifths of the Electing County's Board of Commissioners. Designation letters with original signatures must be submitted to the Division of Social Services no later than the established deadline. If the designation letter is provided after the deadline, the Electing County will be re-designated as a Standard County.

Electing County Work First Block Grant Planning

Preparations should begin now in the development of the Work First Block Grant plan for 2016-2019 for Electing Counties. Electing Counties should involve multiple community partners in the planning process for the Work First Block Grant. This is an opportunity for Electing Counties to take advantage of the localized flexibility provided in the Work First program. Current and/or former Work First recipients, employers, childcare providers, child welfare staff, community advocacy agencies, and others may prove to be valuable resources in this planning process.

The North Carolina Families Accessing Services through Technology (NCFAST) automated case management system will not support Electing County policies that differ from Standard County policies as outlined in the Work First manual. The Electing County Work First Block Grant plans are

Economic and Family Services
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due to the Division of Social Services no later than close of business on **Tuesday, September 30, 2014.**

Standard County Work First Block Grant Planning

All Standard Counties will remain in Standard County status for this planning cycle. Standard Counties do not have to return a plan or survey to the Division. In addition, there is not a requirement to have community committee meetings for Work First Block Grant Planning. However, community meetings are encouraged and opportunities to promote mutual understanding of the agencies and/or programs, long-term collaboration, employment, and family centered services.

The current information and/or detailed policy criteria on the below items must be placed on file at the county Department of Social Services by the beginning of each State Fiscal Year (SFY) for Work First program compliance. This will ensure fair and equitable services to all North Carolina citizens and compliance with federal and state regulations. Counties are subject to monitoring findings if current SFY information is not on file.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), contract, or protocol for collaboration, etc. with the below agencies:

- Division of Workforce Solutions (NCWorks Career Centers)
- Local Management Entity
- Domestic Violence Agency
- Vocational Rehabilitation

Local policy for the following services (guidelines specified, payment limits, etc.)

- Benefit Diversion Survey for current SFY
- Emergency Assistance
- Exemption from the work requirement for single parents of children under age one
- Services for low-income families at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level
- Services for non-custodial parents (service optional)
- Transportation

Please see the attached Electing County Work First Planning outline, Electing County designation letter and planning timeline for your reference. If you have questions regarding this information, please email Work.First.Support@dhhs.nc.gov.

Sincerely,



David Locklear, Acting Chief
Economic and Family Services

DL/wf
Attachments (3)

EFS-WF-10-2014