



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

Economic Independence Section • 325 North Salisbury Street
2420 Mail Service Center • Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-2420
Courier # 56-20-25

Michael F. Easley, Governor
Carmen Hooker Odom, Secretary

Pheon E. Beal, Director
(919) 733-3055

February 26, 2002

Re: Work First Applicant Survey Results - November/December 2001

Dear County Director of Social Services:

Attention: Work First Supervisors and Program Administrators

The Division and the Economic Independence Section are appreciative of your assistance in completing the Work First Application surveys during the months of November and December 2001. We have conducted a preliminary review of the data, incorporated the results for each month in an Excel spreadsheet that will be e-mailed to each county department of social services, and have shared the findings at the most recent Economic Independence Advisory Group, Economic Services Committee, and Employment Programs Committee meetings. The Excel documents include several "sheets" that incorporate results from each county by alpha, counties by teams, team/state totals, average percentage that a characteristic or causal factor appeared, and "other" causal factor information.

As an attachment to this letter, we are including the Excel spreadsheets "State Average Percentages" and "Team/State Totals" that reflect data by teams to include the percentage that a particular characteristic or causal factor appeared as a percentage of the overall number of applications. Some trends can be determined from these documents, as reflected by the shading of data element cells. Another document is also attached that compiles the application, characteristic, and causal factor totals by count and percentage in a table format.

While it is difficult to determine consistent patterns across the state in a number of areas, some conclusions can be made. The percentage of applicants seeking assistance due to quitting a job or being fired is significant (often due to other factors, such as lack of availability of child care for a sick child, medical factors, family crisis, no transportation, etc.), as is the percentage of applicants affected by inability to find a job, lack of education or work experience, lack of child support orders or collections, and transportation barriers. A significant number of applicants moved into a particular county from another county, state, or country. A high number of applicants are affected by numerous characteristics or causal factors.

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We will continue to analyze the data in an effort to evaluate potential impact on resources and service delivery, to better network with partner agencies for services, and to be better able to respond to inquiries about caseload growth and dynamics. We encourage you to continue to analyze the data from your county in order to more effectively serve individuals seeking services or assistance. The data imply that more emphasis may be needed on services provided through intake and assessment, benefit diversion, intense and supported job search at application, more intense work with Child Support Enforcement, transportation providers, and employers, etc.

The Employment Programs Committee voted to complete the statewide survey again in June and November 2002 in order to assess caseload dynamics at six-month intervals for the remainder of this calendar year. It was suggested that the survey category "Lost Job-Quit/Fired" be separated into two categories. We will send a letter in May and October 2002 regarding the June and November 2002 application surveys.

We encourage you to also utilize your Work First Representative as you assess the implications for service delivery in your county. Also, please contact your Work First Representative should you have any questions regarding this letter, the attached data, or the forthcoming complete application survey results.

Sincerely,

Wilbert R. Morris, Chief
Economic Independence Section

WRM/WJ
Attachments (5)
EI-7-2002