



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 Buell, Secretary

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

May 17, 2002

**Re: WORK FIRST APPLICANT SURVEY
June 2002**

Dear County Director of Social Services:

Attention: Work First Supervisors and Program Administrators

During the months of November and December 2001 county DSS Work First staff completed a **Work First Applicant Survey** for Work First or Benefit Diversion applicants. An analysis of the information collected during that time period has been shared with counties and with the Economic Services Committee and Employment Programs Committee of the North Carolina Association of County Directors of Social Services.

During that time period, and for several months prior, the state realized a net monthly increase in the overall Work First caseload. At the time, we were very concerned that the overall caseload increase, which endured for six months, would continue. Fortunately, beginning in February 2002, the overall caseload has slightly decreased each subsequent month (through first of the month caseload data for May 2002).

The information you provided was most valuable as we planned for potential impact on resources and service delivery. With clear information regarding applicant characteristics and causal factors, county DSS staff as well as Division staff were better equipped to respond to an increase in requests for information about new applicants from a variety of sources, including social services boards, boards of county commissioners, the media, etc.

At its February 2002 meeting, the Employment Programs Committee voted to request that the survey be repeated in June 2002 and November 2002. Information from surveys at these points of time will provide additional information regarding any significant change in applicant demographics and causal factors for applying for assistance.

Through the use of the attached data collection tool, which can be keyed electronically or manually checked, we are again requesting your assistance in collecting characteristic and causal factor information on individuals for whom your staff completes applications for Work First or Benefit Diversion during June 2002. The survey form provides us with information currently unavailable through our automated systems.

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In addition to the hard copy of this correspondence, a copy will be e-mailed to each county DSS director. The survey form will appear as an attachment. Each worker should complete a separate form and utilize as many forms as necessary; each form collects information for ten applicants. The data collection tool has characteristic/causal factor information on the far left column; the remaining columns are for recording information on up to ten applicants. Please check one of the categories “Single Parent”, “2 Parent Case” or “Child Only “ and as many other factors specific to that individual/case. Information noted on this tool can also form the basis for an enhanced assessment process as your staff begin to work with these families.

We are specifically asking that each worker record information obtained through the interview process when an application for Work First or Benefit Diversion is taken. It is suggested that an individual responsible for central collection of the data collection tool(s) for each worker be identified.

For this survey we are asking that the results of all the individual workers’ survey forms be compiled into one document per county and mailed or e-mailed to Walt Johnson, Assistant Chief, Work First/Local Support by the 10th of July 2002. We sincerely appreciate your willingness to help us collect this most helpful information. Please contact Mr. Johnson by phone at 919-733-7831 or by e-mail at Walt.Johnson@ncmail.net or contact your Work First Representative should you have questions regarding this request.

Sincerely,



Wilbert R. Morris, Chief
Economic Independence Section

WM/WJ
Attachment
EI-14-2002