



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

October 22, 2001

Re: WORK FIRST APPLICANT SURVEY NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2001

Dear County Director of Social Services:

Attention: Work First Supervisors and Program Administrators

Based on first of the month caseload data, we have noted an overall net increase in the Work First caseload in sixty (60) counties since August 1, 2001. From August to September, the overall Work First caseload increased by 1059 cases, the number of two-parent cases increased by 70, and the number of child only cases increased by 135. From September to October, the overall caseload increased by another 89 cases, and a net increase of nine two-parent cases and eight child only cases was noted.

It is certainly our hope that this increase will not develop into a trend, and we know that the net caseload size is affected not only by new approvals but also by the number of individuals leaving assistance. We also realize that counties are working with a Work First population that presents more challenges as they move toward self-sufficiency, therefore remaining on cash assistance for longer periods of time.

Based on our need to plan for potential impact on resources and service delivery should the caseload continue to increase, we need to obtain additional information regarding applicant characteristics and causal factors. We believe with better information about families being served, better decisions can be made regarding program priorities and policy issues. We anticipate that counties and state staff will experience an increase in requests for information about new applicants from a variety of sources, including social services boards, boards of county commissioners, and the media. We have discussed the recent caseload increase and need for additional information at several meetings of county DSS directors and staff within the past few weeks and have reached consensus that pertinent information is critical to overall program management.

Through the use of the attached data collection tool (an electronic version of the tool may be requested), we are requesting your assistance in obtaining characteristic and causal factor information on individuals for whom your staff completes applications for Work First or Benefit

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Diversion during the months of **November and December 2001**. At county option, the data collection may continue beyond December 2001. This will provide us with important baseline information currently unavailable through our automated systems. 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. One of the categories "Single Parent", "2 Parent Case" or "Child Only " needs to be checked for each applicant along with 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.

The completed documents should be mailed to Walt Johnson, Assistant Chief, Work First/Local Support by the 10th of December for the November 2001 information and the 10th of January 2002 for the December 2001 information. 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-22-2001

*OTHER REASON-Please code as APPLICANT #____ and state reason on reverse side.