

Alexander County Work First Plan



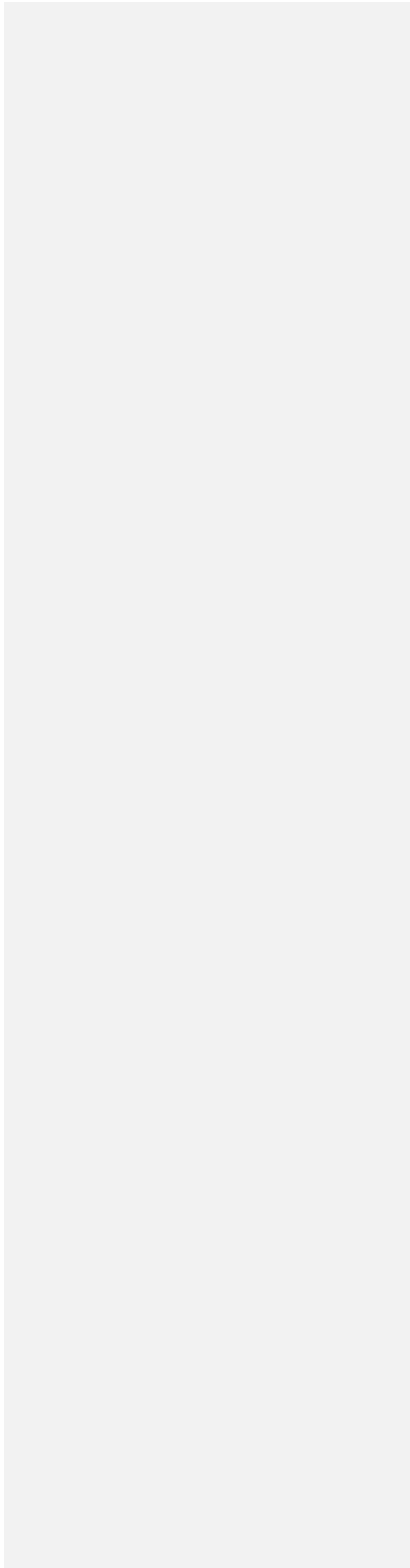
Fiscal Years 2009 – 2011

Submitted by:
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I. Conditions within the County

Alexander County has continued to experience high unemployment over the past 2 years and unfortunately this trend is expected to continue.

According to information released by the Employment Security Commission for July 2008, unemployment increased in all of the state's fourteen Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba MSA had the second highest unemployment rate in the state, 8.6%, in July 2008.

Historically, the majority of jobs were in manufacturing. Most of those jobs paid a living wage and offered insurance coverage for the family. The creation of new jobs has not kept up with the rate of jobs lost. Many of the newly created jobs do not offer full time employment paying an adequate wage and also do not offer the opportunity for health benefits.

Transportation continues to be a huge barrier for many Work First families. There is no public transportation except the limited transit provided through the [Western Piedmont Regional Transportation Authority](#).

Child care resources for non traditional hours such as second and third shift continue to be a need.

In essence the major barriers for low income families in our county continue to be:

- Lack of available jobs
- Minimum wage jobs with low advancement potential
- Lack of public transportation
- Low educational attainment
- Limited child care resources for non traditional hours
- Affordable and safe housing
- Availability of health care, especially dental
- Language barriers for some recipients

While DSS staff will continue to give attention to each of the barriers, this plan will focus on employment and transportation.

II. Planning Process

A. Planning Committee:

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners appointed twenty individuals to assist the DSS staff in developing the plan for the 2009-2011 Biennium. Those members participating in the planning process and groups they represent are:

- Darrell Robertson County Commissioner and DSS Board
- Norris Keever DSS Board

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| • Caryn Brzykcy | DSS Board |
| • Benjamin Patterson | DSS Board |
| • Cindy Sellers | DSS Board |
| • Karen Hoyle | Mental Health Board |
| • Leanne Whisnant | Public Health Board |
| • Dr Jeff Peal | Alexander County School System |
| • Denise Elder | Ch. of Commerce/Business Community |
| • Dana Robertson | Employment Security Commission |
| • Ingrid Townsend | Domestic Violence Resource Center |
| • Steve Eaton | Partnership for Children (Smart Start) |
| • Debbie Hollingsworth | Christian Crisis Center |
| • Camilla Sterling | Alexander Co. Transportation |
| • Linda Graham | Catawba Valley Comm. College |
| • Henry Steele | Vocational Rehabilitation |
| • John Alspaugh/Sharon White | New River Mental Health/ QPSA |
| • Loretta Bryant | Goodwill Industries |
| • Susan Johnson | Valley Nursing Center |
| • Jim Hamilton | Smoky Mountain Center |

In addition to the above named individuals, DSS staff including Work First, Child Welfare, Child Support and Administration has been involved in the process.

B. Public Comment:

The plan was made available to the public from September 22 through October 3, 2008 by placement in the public library, county administration, the local DSS and on the county web site. Media, including the local newspaper, informed the public of this availability and requested response and input be submitted to the DSS Director for consideration.

C. Planning Process:

The County Commissioners voted to remain a Standard County on August 4, 2008. Community Partners were contacted on August 6, 2008 to request their participation and to schedule a meeting date. DSS staff met on August 20, 2008 to discuss suggestions for the new plan and to prepare for the upcoming meeting with our Community Partners.

Meeting with community Partners and staff was held on August 26, 2008. Current conditions within the county were discussed. Strategies for the 2009-2011 plan were identified. The time line for a public comment period of September 22 through October 3, 2008 with Commissioner Approval for October 6, 2008 was approved by the committee.

III. Outcomes and Goals for the County

The NC Division of Social Services, in consultation with the county department of social services and county board of commissioners, will establish acceptable levels of performance by counties in meeting the following six Work First goals:

A. Statewide Work First Goals

The Work First Program is committed to family centered practice and the six principles of partnership in its policies and practices. All involvement with any family will reflect these principles:

1. Everyone desires respect.
2. Everyone needs to be heard.
3. Everyone has strengths.
4. Judgments can wait.
5. Partners share power.
6. Partnership is a process.

By using the partnership principles and the Work First Assessment of Strengths and Needs, the Work First Case manager will be better prepared to work collaboratively with families, assisting them in assessing appropriate resources that address their needs, utilize their strengths, and move them toward employment. These principles are demonstrated with our child only families through a variety of services. See Page 14, Section 10.

1. Employment. *Self-sufficiency will be realized primarily through the employment of Work First clients.*

Alexander County will assist * Work First recipients through job placement per fiscal year. (* to be determined by the state)

2. Meeting Federal Participation Rates. *Active participation in federal countable work activities will lead to full time employment.*

Alexander County will maintain an "All Parent" participation rate of 50% as prescribed by Federal Law. Participants must average 40 hours per week or more in allowable activities or employment to be counted. The county will seek to maintain a Two-Parent Participation rate of 90%. In those households, parents are required to be involved in countable activities 55 hours per week.

Alexander County's Participation Rates for the past 12 months:

| | | | |
|---------|-----|---------|-----|
| 10-2007 | 68% | 11-2007 | 75% |
| 12-2007 | 85% | 01-2008 | 83% |
| 02-2008 | 73% | 03-2008 | 75% |
| 04-2008 | 42% | 05-2008 | 78% |
| 06-2008 | 89% | 07-2008 | 88% |
| 08-2008 | 64% | 09-2008 | N/A |

3. Providing Employment Services. *Active participation in intensive employment services for all families is necessary in order to meet the participation rate and to ensure families are served adequately before the end of five years. One measure of success in Work First is the percentage of families who are subject to the work requirement that counties are assisting with job preparation and job placement.*

The state's goal for the county is to provide employment services to 80.00% of "All-Parent" families and 100% to Two-Parent households.

4. Staying Off Welfare. *Efforts to reduce welfare rolls, help adults find jobs, and increase self-sufficiency are undermined when families return to welfare. Families leaving Work First because of a job are tracked to determine if they return to cash assistance.*

The county will provide sufficient retention services to reach or exceed the state prescribed goal.

5. Job Retention. *Families who leave Work First for employment and continue to be employed 6 to 12 months after leaving the program show evidence of keeping their income and increased job stability, which impacts a family's well being. This measure will be based on the number of responsible adults that leave Work First Family Assistance for employment who are still employed at 6 and 12 month intervals following termination.*

Achievement of state-wide goals of 60% retention at 6 months and 50% at 12 months for the county will be attempted.

6. Benefit Diversion. *The most successful outcome possible is for an applicant to avoid the need to become a recipient.*

The county will meet or exceed the state prescribed goals for provision of Benefit Diversion. The goal for FY 2009 is ___* families. * (to be determined by the state)

B. **County Developed Outcome Goals** Alexander County will provide no service goals other than those mandated and those listed optional components listed below under Section V.

IV. Plans to Achieve the Outcomes and Goals

A. Activities

The following activities will be utilized in assisting the agency to meet the federally mandated goals:

| Activity | Provider | Location |
|----------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| Job Readiness Skills Class | Goodwill Industries | ESC Office |
| Parenting Classes | Alexander Co. Partnership for Children/DSS/Alexander Co. Schools | Alexander County Head Start |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Vocational Rehab Activities | Vocational Rehab. | DSS or Hickory Office |
| Employment Assessment | DSS, ESC, VR Family Care Center | DSS, ESC, Family Care Ctr |
| Job Search | DSS, ESC | DSS, ESC |
| Vocational Education | CVCC | CVCC Alexander and/or Hickory Campus |
| Jobs Skills Training | CVCC, ESC/GOODWILL | CVCC, Alexander and/or Hickory Campus, ESC |
| Education (GED, High School, ESL) | CVCC Alexander Central | CVCC or Alex. Schools |
| Work Experience | DSS | Various Work Sites |

B. Supportive Services

The following supportive services will be offered in conjunction with the above activities in order to meet goals:

| Service | Provider | Location |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| Substance Abuse Counseling | Smoky Mountain Center | Smoky Mountain Center DSS—private provider offices |
| Child Care Subsidy | DSS/Partnership for Ch. | DSS Office |
| Family Violence Services | Domestic Violence Resource Center and/or Family Violence Prevention Services | DVR Center Family Viol. Prev. Ser. |
| Emergency Assistance | DSS Christian Crisis Center | DSS Christian Crisis Center |
| Transportation | DSS, WPRTA Transportation Services, Private Providers | DSS, WPRTA |
| Success for Families | DSS | DSS |

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V. Administration

A. Authority

Alexander County will operate the Work First Program through the Department of Social Services as a “Standard” County.

B. Organization

The Work First Program in Alexander County has undergone significant changes during the past year. These changes were made to better serve recipients and also to incorporate the Multiple Response System objectives.

Eligibility determination, employability assessment, and employment services are provided by a single case manager. These case managers are a part of a family eligibility team made up of Work First and Family Medicaid. These staff members are supervised by an Income Maintenance Supervisor.

Collaboration between Work First and CPS is insured by requiring each CPS and Work First worker to verify all services being received within the agency each time a new case is opened.

Emergency Assistance services are performed by a employment case manager located in the Work First Team. This team is supervised by an Income Maintenance Supervisor.

All day care services including Work First and CPS are performed by a staff person located on a Work First Team which is supervised by an Income Maintenance Supervisor.

C. First Stop

The Employment Security Commission is the deliverer of job placement services for the Work First Program in accordance with GS 108A-29. As such, individuals seeking to apply or reapply for Work First cash assistance and who are not exempt from work requirements shall register with the First Stop Employment Assistance Program. Individuals, if not exempt, must present verification of registration at the time of applying for Work First assistance and shall not be approved until verification is received. Verification can also be determined on line by DSS caseworkers. A Memorandum of Understanding, designating the ESC as the provider of First Stop assistance, is attached as an addendum to this plan.

D. Child Care

Alexander County recognizes that child day care services are essential to success in securing and maintaining employment for Work First families. Child Care funding through the state subsidized program and through Smart Start is currently sufficient to meet the demand for services. There are no children at present on a waiting list. If demand exceeds our designated allocation, TANF funds, subject to availability, will be utilized to pay for day care subsidy for families currently receiving cash benefits or former recipients who need child day care to remain employed.

Current local policies established by the Social Services Board prioritize the use of subsidy monies for child day care as follows:

1. Children whose parents, foster parents, or other responsible adult needs child care to seek or maintain employment;

2. Children in need of child care to support child protective services in order to remain in their own homes;
3. Children whose parents, foster parents, or other responsible adult needs child care to attend school or job training activities that lead to employment;
4. To meet the developmental needs of children whose emotional, cognitive, social or physical development is delayed or at risk of delay; and
5. To support child welfare services for families that need day care to prevent or remedy problems that may result in the neglect or abuse of children, to prevent foster care placement, to support family reunification, and to provide support in times of crisis.

TANF funds may be used to extend child day care services when eligibility for regular subsidy expires due to extended need for Job Search activities.

E. Transportation

Transportation is a major problem and barrier to Work First families in Alexander County. There is no public transportation except for limited transit provided through the [Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority](#). They do provide Human Service Transportation, but cannot provide consistent daily transportation to and from employment for our Work First recipients.

DSS plans to explore the possibility of enrolling volunteers to assist Work First clients in daily transportation to and from Work Experience sites. This could be a group share effort if enough volunteers can be obtained.

Many recipients of cash assistance own a car, but not normally one that is sufficient to provide reliable transit to and from work. Therefore, TANF funding is provided for car repairs when financially logical. Maintenance, repairs, supplies such as tires, and insurance can be provided if by doing so; the recipient can obtain and maintain employment.

Mileage reimbursement is available at [\\$.23](#) a mile to support job search activities and to maintain employment for current and former recipients up to a maximum of \$150 per month, in accordance with state approved policy. Transportation services are determined “non-cash-like” assistance by federal regulations and therefore do not impact the former recipient’s time clock for lifetime benefits. Use of DOT funding is available and utilized prior to Work First funds for former recipients.

It is estimated that \$5,000 in Work First Block Grant funds will be spent annually to support transportation needs of Work First families.

F. Substance Abuse Services

As part of the Work First-Substance Abuse Initiative, Substance Abuse Services of Smoky Mountain Center provides a [Qualified Professional Substance Abuse Counselor \(QPSA\)](#) who will conduct initial substance abuse assessments for the Work First population. Each adult applicant included in the Work First grant will be screened by the Work First intake staff for substance abuse utilizing the Audit-Dast form provided by the State. For those applicants who screen positive, the applicant will be referred for further assessment to the Qualified Professional Substance Abuse Counselor (QPSA) who will be responsible for a full assessment that includes an in-depth clinical interview and the use of a state approved assessment tool, the SUDDS IV. If the applicant is identified as having a substance abuse problem, the QPSA begins the treatment planning process with the applicant, a record is opened and treatment services begin. The Community Employment Case Manager or the QPSA may provide ongoing case management services to the recipient, a decision made jointly.

The plan for treatment includes several options, depending upon the severity of the participant's disease. Those include:

1. 13 Session Group designed for those who have only a substance abuse diagnosis and are in only the early stages of addiction.
2. 24 Session Group designed for those with middle stage symptoms of substance dependence.
3. Intensive Group meetings designed for persons experiencing chronic substance dependence symptoms. Participants meet two or three times per week and are expected to attend self-help groups on other days.
4. Non-hospital Medical Detoxification Services
5. Inpatient Treatment
6. Halfway House Placement – a structured living environment designed for participants leaving treatment or intensive outpatient programs but who need extra support to stay drug free.

When a Work First participant becomes non-compliant with treatment, DSS is notified. At that time, the individual is removed from the budget unit and a protective payee is assigned to the family. The participant continues to be eligible for Medicaid. Benefits will be fully reinstated once the participant complies with the treatment plan for thirty consecutive days.

Procedures for administration of this program are detailed in the Memorandum of Understanding attached to this plan as an addendum.

G. Family Violence Option

It is recognized that family violence is a factor that imposes a substantial barrier to individuals maintaining employment. We recognize that imposing work

requirements on some spouses or mates also presents a risk to families who are experiencing violence as a pattern of behavior. As a result, we will provide for the Family Violence Option in the administration of the Work First Program. Intake staff will screen for possible family violence in order to direct the recipient to needed services. The participant who evidences violence in the home will be offered an in-depth assessment through qualified domestic violence counselors/providers in the county. The purpose of the assessment is to evaluate the applicant/recipient's situation and to determine services needed, as well as the extent to which the violence is an impediment to self-sufficiency. Care will be taken to assure that requirements imposed by the agency will not place the APPLICANT/RECEIPIENT in a position to be further victimized.

The Domestic Violence Resource Center provides this assessment at no charge to the agency. Services are provided by two local providers, depending upon the preference of the APPLICANT/RECEIPIENT. DSS will have no funding to support services such as housing, relocation, or legal assistance, except through TANF EA, Crisis Intervention, or other state funding. The state has funded an average of \$13,864.00 for 2008/2009. Counseling will be provided through the DVRC at no charge.

County policies are available to provide procedures for dealing with victims of Family Violence.

H. Maintenance of Effort (MOE)

All services activities provided in the area of Work First Employment and Child Protective Services are funded with MOE until that money has been expended. At that time the county reverts to the utilization of Federal Monies. Activities include: TANF Emergency Assistance, transportation and Supportive Services to enable recipients to find and maintain work; school supplies, tuition, fees; participation expenses; retention services; child welfare allowable staff activities.

I. Child Welfare Services

The county will use TANF funds of approximately \$172,577 to fund allowable activities in Child Welfare Services. This amount is based on previous years' experience.

Americans with Disabilities:

The two significant elements of Section 504 and Title II of the ADA are:

Individualized treatment and effective and meaningful opportunity.

Individualized treatment means that individuals with disabilities should be treated

on a case-by-case basis and not on stereotypes and generalizations. Further, individuals should be afforded the opportunity to benefit from Work First in the same manner as those individuals who do not have disabilities.

Our agency will ensure access to employment programs for qualified individuals with disabilities through the provision of appropriate services; adopt methods of administration which do not discriminate against and ensures equal access and opportunity to qualified individuals with disabilities; and modify policies, practices, and procedures to provide equal access that allows qualified individuals with disabilities to participate and benefit from employment programs unless doing so would fundamentally change the program or cause undue hardship .

To ensure that individuals with disabilities have equal access to employment programs, the Work First Case Manager would first assess the participant's specific abilities and limitations. At the conclusion of the assessment, the Mutual Responsibility Agreement should reflect the strengths of the participant and include activities such as VR assessment and evaluation to ensure the participant receives necessary services through the Work First program. Functional Evaluation Assessments will also be used to identify areas that need to be addressed.

VI. Emergency Assistance

Alexander County will continue to address the emergency needs of families utilizing various resources in the community as well as appropriate \$25,000 of MOE funds to meet the needs of eligible citizens. The county will provide emergency assistance to approximately one hundred thirty three (133) families experiencing a temporary crisis or emergency, if providing this assistance will assure the safety and well being of children residing in the home and the need for on-going assistance is not necessary in order to meet this need. Emergency assistance, not to exceed \$300.00 per family, will be available for families who meet the eligibility requirements.

The following guidelines, as defined by federal/state policy, will be used to determine eligibility for this assistance:

- The family must have a child who lives with a relative as defined for Work First cash assistance and who meets the age limit for Work First Cash assistance.
- Total gross income must be at or below 110% of federal policy.
- Family members must meet the same citizenship requirements as for Work First cash assistance.
- Only short term benefits may be provided. Short term benefits are described as: non-recurring, short-term benefits designed to deal with a specific episode of need; is not intended to meet recurring or ongoing needs; and not extending beyond four months.

Those ineligible for EA or who need further assistance to eliminate the emergency will be referred to other community agencies and services such as: County DSS Emergency Assistance, Christian Crisis Center, Salvation Army, Red Cross, Consumer Credit Counseling (when eligible), or to other church and civic benevolent funds.

VII. Services to low income families (under 110% of poverty)

Services to low-income families will be provided but only to provide assistance to families to enable them to continue employment. Families must meet the state/federal required eligibility (as described above for TANF EA) and must only need aid to prevent loss of family income, such as car repair, tools, uniforms, or child care. Maximum benefit per year will be up to \$600.00 per family. The budgeted amount for this service is \$15,000.

VIII. Services to Non-Custodial Parents

Alexander County has chosen not to provide these services.

IX. Exemption from the Work Requirement

Exemption from participation in employment service activity follows the state approved plan with the exception that Alexander County will exempt single parents of children under three months of age from the work requirement. The parent will lose the exemption the month after the child reaches three months of age. Should the parent choose to return to work prior to the end of the 3 month exemption and then decide he/she did not want to return to work at that time the parent could reclaim the exemption.

OPTIONAL PLAN ELEMENTS

X. Innovative County Strategies

Every effort is made by county staff to assist those adults in the caseload that exhibit disabilities that present barriers to employment to receive the services of Vocational Rehabilitation. Individuals applying for Work First who state they are unable to work due to a medical condition will be required to complete a functional evaluation. The evaluation will also be used to identify what barriers the customer may have with regards to employment and to assist them in applying for and receiving disability benefits from Social Security or other federal programs.

Success for Families

Success for Families is a joint local initiative to help Work First Families at risk, those who have substantial and difficult problems such as mental illness, physical disabilities, developmental disabilities, substance abuse problems, and little or no work history. These collaborations are needed more than ever to work with families at risk who have

already exhausted more than 2 ½ years on their Federal five year time limit. Currently, there are ten partnering agencies that meet as needed with these families to look at ways to help eliminate the families' barriers to self sufficiency.

Work Experience Sites

In an effort to assist participants with job skills and hands on training, we have partnered with local employers to put participants in a non-paid work experience where they can learn job skills and possibly earn a permanent position. They are located throughout the county in a wide range of different professions and give the participant a choice of different careers. Currently we have 21 work sites with 45 positions.

Job Developer

The Work First Team has a part time Job Developer who works with the Community Employment Case Managers and clients in developing strategies for overcoming employment barriers and achieving the goals for self sufficiency. The Job Developer also works with local government agencies and local employees to develop work experience sites where clients can be evaluated and trained for future employment.

Work First Child Only Case Manager

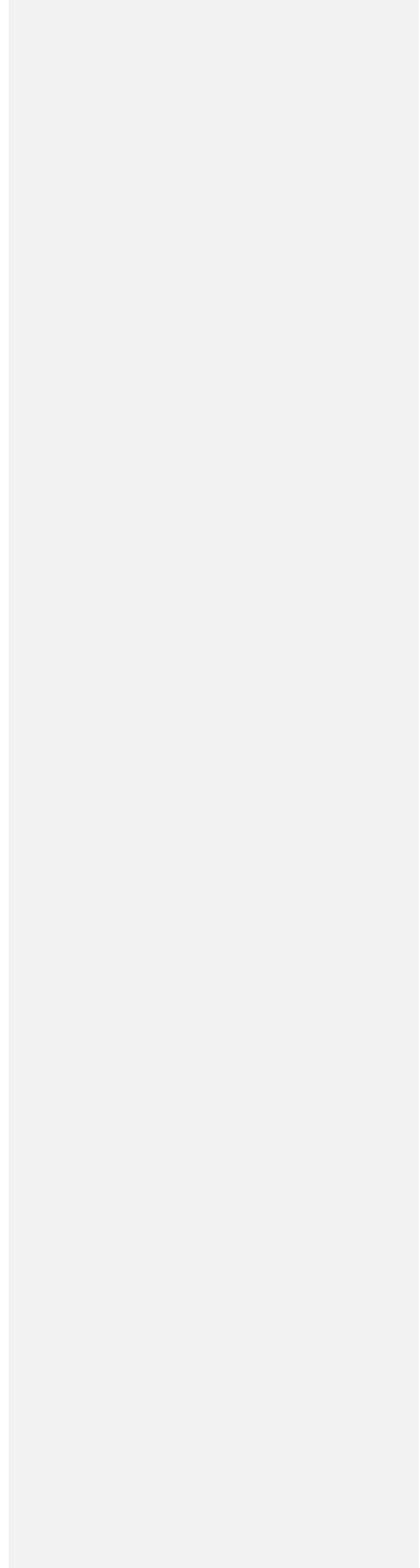
The Employment Case Manager maintains the Work First child only caseload of which we currently have 53 families. Assessment is completed to determine if the placement is appropriate and to assess the child and the family for other services that maybe needed such as day care, children's school supplies, clothing, and special equipment for sports programs, summer camps and medical transportation, etc. In addition to these services, the worker is available to provide services to income eligible families receiving Child Protective Services.

XI. Special Issues

With the worsening of the economy and loss of jobs in this and surrounding counties, it is becoming even more difficult to find entry-level jobs that offer work to the unskilled labor market. According to information released by the Employment Security Commission for July 2008 unemployment increased in all of the state's 14 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). However, the Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba MSA had the second highest unemployment rate in the state, 8.6%, compared to 6.4% in July 2006. Efforts are being made to work with the local Community College, the Workforce Development Board, Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development, and the ESC to determine future job market and assist Work First recipients in preparing for the change.

XII – XVI. Applicable to Electing Counties Only

Alexander County is a Standard County.



XVII. Certification

As Chairman of the Alexander County Board of County Commissioners, I hereby certify that the citizens of Alexander County have been given an opportunity to review this plan and design of Work First services for the County and have been given the opportunity to submit comments on this plan and design of these services.

The Alexander County Board of County Commissioners has approved this plan on the ____ day of _____, 2008 as developed by the Work First Planning Committee appointed by the Board of Commissioners.

Larry Yoder, Chairman
Alexander County Board of County Commissioners

The Alexander County Board of Social Services whose members participated in the Planning Committee fully endorses this plan.

Norris Keever, Chairman
Alexander County Board of Social Services

Date: _____

LETTER AGREEMENT
FIRST STOP EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Pursuant to the provisions of G.S. 108A-29(a2), the undersigned parties hereby acknowledge that the point of registration in Alexander County for the First Stop Employment Assistance Program shall be the office of the Employment Security Commission of North Carolina located as set forth below.

Employment Security Commission
606 7th Street SW
Taylorsville NC 28681

By: _____
Dana Robertson, Manager Taylorsville Office
Employment Security Commission of N.C.

By: _____
Karen P. Hoyle, Director
Alexander County Department of Social Services

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT**ALEXANDER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES****and the****SMOKY MOUNTAIN CENTER / DEVELOPMENTAL; DISABILITIES /
SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES**

- I. **INTENT:** This Memorandum of Agreement is entered into by the Alexander County Department of Social Service, hereinafter referred to as “DSS” and the Smoky Mountain Center hereinafter referred to as “Provider”. The Work First Program provides short-term assistance to eligible families to facilitate their movement to self-sufficiency through employment. The objective of this agreement is to reduce substance abuse related barriers to employment for current Work First recipients, applicants and Work First and Food Stamp applicants convicted of a class H or I substance abuse felony offense. The Memorandum of Agreement establishes the responsibilities of the above reference agencies in meeting the objective.
- a. Jim Hamilton, Smoky Mountain Center represented the Provider on the committee responsible for developing the Work First County Plan.
 - b. Karen P. Hoyle, Director of Social Services represented the County Department of Social Services on the committee that develops the Work First Substance Abuse Plan.
 - c. The Provider will assign a QPSA and a QMHP to work with the DSS to provide SA assessments and referrals to recipients in need of substance abuse services and/or mental health issues. The schedule of these counselors will be the agreement of the Provider and the Department of Social Services, with the times best suited for recipients, and may vary to account for the number of referrals and need for consultation and care coordination.
 - d. Primary responsibility for the initial screening will be that of the Department of Social Services; however, the Provider will assist in training, consultation and determination of the need for Provider assessment.
 - e. The Provider will provide substance abuse prevention services for children through the Child Substance Abuse Services staff.
 - f. A Plan of Care will be developed initially by the QPSA and approved by a Provider physician and will be updated as needed by the SA treatment staff, with consultation from the QPSA assigned to the Department of Social Services.

- g. The Case Coordination Plan for the recipient will be developed by the staff of the Department of Social Services.
- h. Primary responsibility of child care and transportation for recipients receiving substance abuse services will be that of the County Departments of Social Services. However, the Department of Social Services and the Provider will work to ensure that child care and transportation are not barriers to accessing substance abuse services. Since treatment groups and Twelve-Step meetings often occur after 5:00 PM, alternative measures will be needed.
- i. Authorization of the appropriate level of care for recipients identified as requiring substance abuse services will be that of the Provider.
- j. **Joint Responsibilities:**
 - 1. Current Work First recipients, applicants, and Work First and Food Stamp applicants convicted of Class H or I substance abuse felony offenses will be screened by Department of Social Services staff. All Work First adult applicants/recipients may volunteer to be screened for mental health issues. Those found to be in need of assessment will be referred to the QPSA and/or the QMHP. This Provider staff person will either assess their need for treatment and develop a Plan of Care or make appropriate referral to other Provider Staff to access substance abuse, mental health, and developmental disabilities services.
 - 2. The Department of Social Services will utilize the AUDIT and DAST-10 screening tools and the Behavioral Checklist (identified by DMH/DD/SAS) and the QPSA will use an approved clinical assessment guide.
 - 3. The standardized consent form provided by the State Division of Social Services will be utilized to facilitate adherence to regulations concerning confidentiality. All Federal regulations concerning confidentiality will be complied with by both parties.
 - 4. Initial training for staff on the screening process has occurred and ongoing cross training for staff will be provided by Department of Social Services staff and Provider Staff.
 - 5. If referral is needed, the Department of Social Services staff will fax the referral to the Provider at 632-5068.
 - 6. The applicant/recipient will be given 10-calendar days to call the SPA number, 1-800-849-6127 to make an appointment.
 - 7. The Single Point of Access screener will call the Department of Social Services staff person to report the client's appointment time.

- 8. If by the 11th day, the Department of Social Services staff person has not heard from QPSA, the Department of Social Services staff person will call to verify if the applicant/recipient called for an appointment. If the client did not call, and there is not good cause, the application/ongoing case will be denied or terminated whichever is appropriate. The Department of Social Services staff person will notify the Single Point of Access screener if the case is not going to be approved WFFA, but evaluated for Medicaid.
- 9. The Department of Social Services staff will send the client an appropriate notice based on program policy
- 10. The QPSA will notify the appropriate Department of Social Services staff member of the treatment recommended so they can put this on the client's Mutual Responsibility Agreement.
- 11. All non-compliance by recipients will be reported in writing by the QPSA to the Department of Social Services staff person the next workday following their non-compliance.
- 12. Department of Social Services staff will notify the QPSA in writing within 10 calendar days of any change that may affect the case.
- 13. All changes and notifications may be done by telephone call with written follow-up for the case record.
- 14. The QPSA will be available for consultation to staff of the Department of Social Services regarding the referred individual pursuant to the requirement of the Work First Plan.

II. **LIAISON:** For the DSS, Sherry Hart will serve as liaison under this MOA. For the Smoky Mountain Center, Mike Goudlock will serve as liaison under this MOA.

 Thomas W. McDevitt
 CEO, Smoky Mountain Center

 Date

 Karen P. Hoyle
 Director, Alexander County Department of
 Social Services

 Date