

PERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MEMBERS PRESENT

October 20, 2008
OTHERS PRESENT

Johnny Myrl Lunsford, Chairman
Jimmy B. Clayton, Vice-Chairman
Kyle W. Puryear
Larry H. Bowes
Larry E. Yarborough, Jr.

Heidi N. York, County Manager
C. Ronald Aycock, County Attorney
Faye T. Fuller, Clerk to the Board
Brenda B. Reaves, Deputy Clerk to the Board

The Board of Commissioners for the County of Person, North Carolina, met in regular session on Monday, October 20, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners' meeting room in the Person County Office Building.

Chairman Lunsford called the meeting to order. Commissioner Clayton led in prayer and Commissioner Bowes led the Pledge of Allegiance.

DISCUSSION/ADJUSTMENT/APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Puryear, **seconded** by Commissioner Bowes and **carried** to approve the agenda as presented.

INFORMAL COMMENTS:

Jim Senter, 41 Pot Luck Farm Road – Spoke in opposition to the Bio-Agro Defense Lab proposed to be built in Butner – Lab presents a threat.

Katherine Span – Urged the Board to adopt a Resolution in opposition to the Bio-Agro Defense Lab to protect the community.

Amanda Garrett – Register of Deeds - Thanked the Board and Manager for the excellent job done in relocation of the Register of Deeds and Tax offices.

David (last name inaudible) – Information from the N. C. Department of Commerce has been misleading taxpayers as to what benefits from the Bio-Agro Defense Lab will be to the citizens.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Bowes, **seconded** by Commissioner Puryear and **carried** to approve the minutes of the October 6, 2008 meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Clayton, **seconded** by Commissioner Yarborough and **carried** to approve the following Administrative Reports: Emergency Services, Inspections Department and Public Library. Commissioner Yarborough stated he would like to see a longer range trend report on building permits and inspections.

COMMENTS ON BIO AND AGRO-DEFENSE LAB:

Ms. Joanne Howerton – Lewis Winstead Loop Road appeared before the Board and asked that they vote against the bio-lab due to possibility of diseases for which cures are unknown at this time. She stated that the North Carolina and National Grange is opposed to the facility.

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Yarborough and **seconded** by Commissioner Puryear to allow comments on the Bio-Agro Defense Facility.

Commissioner Yarborough stated he was neither for nor against the facility. He said he did not feel there was no upside in Person County getting involved in the fight between Granville County, the State of North Carolina, and the Department of Homeland Security. Any action taken by this Board will have no influence on the Department of Homeland Security. However, it may have some effect on the opinion of the members of the NC Department of Commerce and Person County does count on the NC Department of Commerce to help create jobs in the county.

A SUBSTITUTE MOTION was made by Commissioner Clayton, seconded by Commissioner Bowes to oppose the Bio-Agro Defense Lab using his former Resolution.

Commissioner Puryear raised a point of order that no copy of the resolution was included in the packet. He said he did not think it was appropriate to vote on a matter without having the document to review.

The **Substitute Motion failed by a 3/2 vote**. Those voting in favor of the Substitute Motion were Commissioners Clayton and Bowes. Those opposing the Substitute Motion were Commissioners Yarborough, Puryear and Lunsford.

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF THE 2009-2011 PERSON COUNTY WORK FIRST PLAN:

DSS Director Beverly Warren appeared before the Board to request approval of the County's 2009-2011 Work First Program. She explained that the plan was reviewed and revised by the Work First Planning Committee appointed by the Commissioners on September 2, 2008.

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Puryear, **seconded** by Commissioner Yarborough and **carried** to approve the 2009-2011 Person County Work First Plan as presented.

**Person County
Work First County Plan
For 2010-2011**

**Submission Date of Original Plan:
October 31, 2008**

**Contact Person: Beverly Warren, Director
Person County Department of Social Services
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Roxboro, NC 27573**

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I. Conditions within the County

A. Current Realities for Low Income Families

- The 2006 estimated population of Person County is 37,341 with a labor force of 19,558. There are 14,085 households in the county and the annual median income is \$37,159.00. According to the Economic Development Office, the county's textile jobs that were lost have been replaced with other areas. The outlook for the next three years for jobs is good, with new business projects coming and other local businesses expanding. There are jobs available and soon to be created for people with a

high school diploma and good work habits, but the outlook for jobs for people with poor work histories, low skills, lack of education, and other barriers is not good.

- 12.7% of the County's population receives Food and Nutrition Services (Food Stamps) and 18% receive Medicaid.
- The unemployment rate in Person County was 8.6% as of July 2008, according to statistics from the Employment Security Commission. The unemployment rate rose steadily for several years, from an annual average of 4.4% in 2000 to a high of 7.7% in 2003. For 2007, the annual average was 6.5%. This has had a major impact on Work First clients, especially people with poor work histories and no high school diploma.
- Person County is a rural county with little public transportation. Out of town travel is costly due to rising gas prices and lack of inter-county commuter transportation. The Person Area Rural Transport System (PATS) is the only form of public transportation within Person County. PATS provides transportation for participants. Due to the rising gas prices, PATS fees for transportation have increased, making this service unaffordable for most. Department of Social Services provides assistance to Work First clients as part of their employment plan. DSS has a mini-van used exclusively by Work First staff, and staff also uses other agency vehicles when needed. Gas vouchers and reimbursement for travel expenses for gas or rides with other people are also offered.
- Child Care is available at 12 registered centers and 27 homes. DSS staff and the Parent Specialist at the Partnership for Children work with participants to identify safe and affordable care. Child Care funds are available to help with the cost of care. DSS rarely has a waiting list for these funds. Before and after school care is available countywide, and during the summer, parents may receive assistance with childcare at a few school locations based on the countywide need. The Recreation Department runs a summer camp for children, but Child Care funds cannot be used for this program. There is little childcare available for sick children as well as limited slots for second and third shifts or weekend care. The county has an Infant and Toddler Center but infant care is currently at a premium as the need for infant care has increased.
- Even though there are several public and subsidized housing projects in the county, there is a shortage of safe and affordable housing in the county. Low-income families find themselves waiting an average of three months for available subsidized apartments. The families may have to wait for up to a one year period for housing assistance through Section 8. Often, Work First clients have had to move in with family members and friends in order to keep a roof over their heads. While families generally are not literally 'homeless' some find it necessary to move from place to place regularly.
- Several industries have closed within the last few years and others have experienced many layoffs. The employees at these plants have been absorbed into the workforces at other places, thereby filling jobs that may have gone to Work First clients had there been no shutdowns.
- Services addressing substance abuse and mental health problems are available locally, even with the dismantling of the Mental Health system on the state level. However, there have been frequent changes in providers and local staff available for clients. The Qualified Professional in Substance Abuse (QPSA) position, which coordinates the identification and treatment needs for recipients of Work First and which is co-located within the DSS one day a week, was vacant for almost 10 months. Even though there has been a screener available, the contact from the on-site QPSA is far more effective in communicating the needs of clients.
- Person County's high school graduation rate of 75.3% exceeds the State average of 69.9%, and the dropout rate is 5.29%.

B. County Plan Issues

1. Characteristics of the current Work First cases:

- In August 2008, there were 156 Work First cases with 22 of those being Benefit Diversion cases.
- 74 cases were 'child-only', with a grandparent being the primary caregiver in most of those cases.
- 69 cases contained one parent and 13 were two-parent cases.
- 95 cases have 1 child per case; 45 cases have 2 children; 13 cases have 3 children.
- 15 cases have countable income, with 7 of those having unearned income rather than wages.
- The average monthly payment is \$216.00.
- 9 cases include an incapacitated parent.

- 35% of the children included in cases are 3 years old or less so that child care will be needed if the parent finds a job.
- 41% of the adults are under age 25.
- Reasons for applying for Work First are diverse with some families moving to North Carolina from another state; some moving here from within the state; domestic violence; loss of job; loss of other income; having a new baby; and separation from spouse or boyfriend being the most common.
- Of the adults in the current caseload, 47% have a high school diploma or GED; 42% do not have either; and 11% have some level of post-high school training.

2. Key Issues Identified and Addressed in the Planning Process

- Many Work First cases have more than one absent parent which creates multiple child support cases. In the current IV-D caseload, there are 174 total Work First cases. 100 cases have child support orders, and 58 of those cases have had a support payment in the preceding six months. Because of regulations, the State of North Carolina retains child support paid to be used to repay public funds expended for the Work First grant, so in those 58 cases, the amount collected was, on average, less than the Work First payment. In the current IV-D caseload there are 74 Work First cases that do not have a court order for support and other cases do not have an open child support case for a variety of reasons, such as death, incarceration, disability, good cause and so forth.
- Since 42% of the current recipients do not have either a GED or a High School diploma, assisting them with completing one or the other is a high priority in providing more job opportunities and a greater chance of securing a higher-paying job. Good resources are available locally for WF participants to work independently in a computer lab, classroom setting, or parent group toward completion of a GED, but attendance is poor even with DSS efforts to remove all barriers. Comparatively, attendance is the main reason for High School dropouts (53.2%) in the State.
- The High School drop out rate in Person County is 5.29%, slightly about the state average of 5.24%, necessitating collaboration with the public schools and provision of supportive services to teenage Work First parents to assist with the successful completion of their secondary education.
- Transportation for job opportunities outside the county is limited, unreliable and unaffordable.
- The local unemployment rate remains high, and the low-skilled, less educated Work First participants with other identified barriers compete with an available workforce that is more qualified, able and experienced.
- Lack of motivation, appropriate behavior, and good decision making practices are a problem at many levels with some Work First participants who do not meet participation requirements.

II. Planning Process

A. Planning Committee

Beverly Warren, Director, Person County Department of Social Services
 Angeline Brown, Person County DSS Board Member
 Judith Casseday, Person Industries
 Sylvester Clay, Faith Community
 Janet Clayton, Person County Health Department
 Jimmy Clayton, Person County Commissioner
 Shavonne Davis, Work First Recipient
 Annette Hampton, Safe Haven
 Roy Holler, owner, McDonald's
 Russell Knop, Person Counseling Center
 Theresa Long, Adecco
 Gerald Lunsford, Person Area Transport System (PATS)
 Wanda Rogers, Person Industries
 Roxie Russell, Employment Security Commission
 Debbie Smith, Person County Board of Education
 Angela Webb, Piedmont Community College
 Vickie Winters, Vocational Rehabilitation

Heidi York, County Manager

DSS Advisory Staff:

Judi Akers, Services Program Manager

Jill Coleman, Work First Income Maintenance Caseworker

Gean Gentry, Income Maintenance Program Manager

Barnabas Jay, Social Worker

Grethel Miranda, Employment Services Social Worker

Ginger Moore, Work First Income Maintenance Caseworker

Pam Wood, Work First Employment Services Supervisor

B. Public Comment

The public comment period was from September 26, 2008 through October 3, 2008. Copies of the Plan were available at the Person County Department of Social Services, the County Manager's Office and on Person County's website. Additionally, the Commissioners offer a public comment period at the beginning of each Commissioners' Meeting and did so on October 20th when the Plan was presented to them. No comments were received.

C. Planning Development

The Person County Work First Planning Committee was appointed by the Person County Board of Commissioners on September 2, 2008. The people appointed represent a cross-section of the county and the agencies and organizations that the Work First program staff has worked with over the years. Their knowledge of programs and resources available in the county has made them a strong resource for our clients. The planning meeting was held on September 19, 2008 and 19 people, including DSS staff, attended. A review of Work First activity in the county over a period of years was discussed. An analysis of the characteristics of the current clients was presented to familiarize the committee with the population being served. The Plan, which had been sent in advance, was reviewed and comments from the Committee were incorporated. Additionally, an upcoming Work First Demonstration Grant was described which is called 'Work First Benefits', and it will change the way Work First monthly checks are issued. WFB works the way 'Pay After Performance' works now for able-bodied two-parent families. All families subject to work activities will receive their check only if they complete their weekly hours for an entire month. The monthly check will be issued and will be for the preceding month, much as salaries are paid after work is done. There was discussion and questions from the attendees about mutual concerns and problems and the issues facing clients, especially the WFB demonstration grant. The key issues to be addressed in the plan were identified and there was a discussion about strategies for solutions and resources, including two new initiatives described by the representative from Orange-Person-Chatham Mental Health which will benefit those with substance abuse problems. After the Planning Committee met, the DSS resource staff met to review the ideas presented and follow up on them.

The Plan was approved by the Person County Board of Social Services at their meeting on September 24, 2008 and was adopted by the Person County Board of Commissioners on October 20, 2008.

III. Outcomes and Goals for the County

A. Statewide Work First Goals

1. Employment.

- Active participants must be involved in a minimum of 35 hours per week of work-related activities, if determined able to participate, including job readiness, job search, vocational training at Community Colleges, work experience, education, community service or employment immediately upon approval of becoming active with Work First Family Assistance. Program activities are reviewed every two weeks and reported monthly.
- Referrals are made to Employment Security Commission (ESC), Mental Health, Vocational Rehabilitation, Safe Haven, Piedmont Community College, Person County Re-entry Partnership, Person Industries or other agencies as determined appropriate. Counselors from the programs at

these agencies make a joint decision concerning treatment or continued active participation in job search/job readiness, education, training, and employment activities. Decisions are incorporated into the Mutual Responsibility Agreement, Part II (MRA). All active cases are staffed monthly.

- Employment Services staff provides referrals, services, coordination and follow-up services to participants placed or seeking services through temporary agencies as well as ESC and other employment and training providers.
- Financial counseling is available to assist participants transitioning from a monthly welfare check, Food Stamps, Medicaid, subsidized child care and subsidized housing to weekly and bi-weekly pay checks which must cover many of the former public assistance areas.
- Budgeting, money management, employee benefits counseling, life skills, and other services are provided on an on-going basis.
- Individual counseling is provided to assist newly employed workers in dealing with changing attitudes, expectations, and family dynamics.
- Opportunities for funding are pursued to maintain a job developer to organize and manage paid and unpaid work experience sites, complete job assessments, and facilitate appropriate placement for participants. The job developer organizes, tracks, and provides follow-up services for Work Experience placements and helps the participant plan to successfully carry out their Work Experience responsibilities.
- Encouragement and support is given to any organizations that are providing family and/or financial literacy programs.
- Maintenance of multiple GED computer labs will help participants with different learning abilities select the educational environment that best serves them.
- The development of a “Life Skills Coach” resource using previous, successful Work First participants and/or other experienced community people to work individually with participants to help them carry out their MRA goals, adjust to a job placement, and manage their family and financial responsibilities is a best practice project to pursue.

2. Meeting Federal Participation Rates

- Work First Family Assistance staff notifies Employment Services staff immediately of Work First Applications and provide information about the employability of new participants. Prior to approval of an application Work First Family Assistance staff notifies Employment Services Staff.
- All Work First applicants are scheduled during the Intake interview to attend a Work First Employment Services orientation for a thorough explanation of the Employment Services program requirements, community resources available, and the consequences for non-compliance with the program. Orientation attendees write a Mutual Responsibility Agreement planning their individual goals for scheduling 35 hours per week of work or work-related activities. Initial assessments on work history, abilities/skills, barriers, education, household composition and support are completed to assist the Social Worker with expediting appropriate services and referrals once the application is approved. Any applicants who have good cause for missing orientation after application have an individual orientation or may schedule for the next orientation available.
- Participants coded as F (incapacitated) or I (needed in the home to look after an incapacitated person) have a modified MRA that is monitored monthly. Participants must provide an updated medical form filled out by appropriate medical provider every three months to monitor progress toward employment.
- Participants coded S (single custodial parent of a child under age six months exempted from active participation) receive an explanation of their option to remain as S code or come off S code and work toward employment. The social worker or income maintenance caseworker clarifies the effect on the time clocks. Orientation is scheduled the last month of exempt status to ensure client can start participating in activities the month after exemption status ends.
- Progress towards goals, attendance, and quality of participation is assessed every two weeks with the social worker and other employment and training providers if indicated on the MRA II.
- Employment Services staff use the Employment Services Management Report available from the State to monitor participation rates and to ensure that all data entered into the State system is correct. These reports are checked monthly to identify problem areas. Use of reports from the

State XPTR program and queries from the Data Warehouse Program are used to monitor accurate keying for the Client Participation Record (DSS-6908). Particular focus includes the Numerator and Denominator reports.

- Employment Services staff meet weekly to discuss the progress of cases and to monitor effective social work practice with each case. Staff from both parts of Work First meet at least monthly as well to share updated information about current cases.
- As staffs in either Work First Family Assistance or Employment Services learn of information which would affect the status of a case, they communicate either by telephone, by e-mail, or in writing to ensure that any action needed is taken promptly.
- Participants who are identified as having medical, mental or substance abuse problems, which impact their ability to get and keep a job, are referred to the appropriate agency for services. For people with long term, severe problems, Employment Services social work staff assist with and/or follow up on an application for Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/Social Security disability.
- Participants whose medical problems are less severe are assessed to determine if there is an area in which they can work and achieve success. People whose disabilities are short-term are regularly followed and documented to expediently assist with services when they are able to go to work.
- Emphasis on establishing work experience sites for immediate placement of participants (particularly with an assessed barrier) is crucial to the success of participation and development of good work skills and habits.
- A Life Skills Coach can support and educate the participant on planning to successfully meet their daily work activity requirements, retaining a job, and managing family responsibilities.
- The above stated strategies apply to all approved Two-Parent households.

Participation Rates for the Past Twelve Months

Aug 2007	Sept 2007	Oct 2007	Nov 2007	Dec 2007	Jan 2008	Feb 2008	Mar 2008	Apr 2008	May 2008	Jun 2008	July 2008
26%	17%	27%	20%	16%	7%	39%	27%	19%	31%	29%	29%

3. Providing Employment Services

- The DSS Work First staff has identified a number of resources to assist in providing needed education, training, and employment services to place participants in full-time employment.
- The Work First Employment Services social workers use assessment reports to assist with matching knowledge, skills and abilities of participants to available jobs as people who can be matched to a job in an area in which they already have an interest and experience increase the likelihood of job retention.
- All applicants are referred to Work First Employment Services (WFES) at the time of the application. Adult heads of households are assessed for job readiness by review of agency records and a screening interview. The Mutual Responsibility Agreement (MRA), Part II, is prepared with the participant, indicating required activities and hours of participation. Available assessment tools are used to assist in the preparation of the MRA II. If the available tools are not sufficient, the Work First staff can design their own. Childcare referrals are made for participants in need of childcare referral and application takes place at orientation. Applicants have the option of utilizing transportation services provided by Community Social Services Assistants (CSSA's).
- Participants identified as having a substance abuse problem are referred to the Qualified Professional for Substance Abuse for assessment, evaluation and recommendations.
- When identified as a domestic violence victim, participants are immediately referred to Safe Haven (our local Domestic Violence agency) to assist them in receiving services to enable them to work.
- After initial assessment, clients identified as needing Job Readiness training are referred to classes taught at Piedmont Community College, DSS, or local agencies. A participant identified as needing a GED is referred to Piedmont Community College for testing and then to the appropriate classroom settings. These class hours may be used towards hourly requirements. Countable work activities are scheduled to compliment class schedule to ensure participation.
- Clients who appear to have medical or mental problems or other work rehabilitation needs are referred to Vocational Rehabilitation and/or Person Industries as appropriate for assessment and evaluation lasting up to three months to determine what their capabilities are, to allow for job

sampling and job coaching, and to work toward job placement. Person County DSS has a contract with Person Industries for payment of services to non-VR eligible clients. There is frequent contact between Employment social workers and the CSSA's to intervene early in case of transportation or child care problems while attending PI.

- The Employment Services staff maintains information about services, assistance, and programs to assist low-income workers.
- At times, adult Work First clients say that they either cannot start a job or they have to miss work because of problems that their children are having at school. In order to help address this area, Work First staff, both in Income Maintenance and in Employment Services, talk to clients at assessment, reviews, and other contacts to identify any school problems and to refer the child to the appropriate person in the school system for help in addressing the problem.
- Work First staff utilizes, as appropriate, the policy dealing with suspending the 24-month State clock in situations involving family violence and post-secondary education.
- To serve teen parents, social workers meet with significant school personnel, family members and most importantly, the participant to identify support services needed and a plan of action to assist with the successful completion of a High School Diploma.
- Orientations and newsletters serve as a method of educating applicants regarding WFES requirements and supportive services (such as transportation and Child Care Subsidy) to begin the process of assessing work interest, experience and barriers and to write a Mutual Responsibility Agreement. A bonus to orientations are the visits from staff representing the Human Resources Center Career Readiness Program and The Person Industries Work Experience Program to inform participants of the services they offer and the availability of applications to distribute to parents to enroll all children ages birth to pre-kindergarten in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library in the county.
- CSSA's plan a weekly schedule to transport participants to local and out-of-county job fairs, employers, and ESC Offices helping them search, apply for, and interview for jobs. Their frequent contact with participants in the field is a valuable means for social workers to verify and document the activities of, to identify particular needs of, plan services for, and establish rapport and communication with participants on a regular basis.
- Planning, organization, tracking, and follow-up services by CSSA's support the work experience placements and life skills training sessions and thus, result in strengthening the participant's ability to succeed with Work First participation and eventual employment.

4. Staying off Welfare

- The Employment Services staff assists the participant in developing a plan for transportation and child care which includes provision for backups for each in the event the primary method is interrupted.
- Employment Services staff assists clients with post-employment budgeting, transportation funds as needed, support with handling difficult situations at work, finding a better job, child care subsidy, and referral to other services as needs are identified.
- Through the use of our 200% funds, short term services are offered to former clients who are identified as at risk for losing their jobs. Examples of services provided are car repairs and maintenance and insurance payments, travel reimbursement, rides provided by the local transportation system, gas vouchers or our CSSA's.
- DSS staff identifies and assists with services and skills training needed for advancement in jobs.
- Staff is committed to work toward the development of local financial literacy sessions for participants, Benefit Diversion, and 200% cases to help adults transition from public assistance to earnings and benefits from employment. In working with our population, staff has observed the difficulties, both financially and emotionally, that people experience when they become independent of governmental assistance.

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 is based on the number of responsible adults that leave Work First Assistance.

- Employment Services Staff are encouraged to have contact with former clients within 3-6 months after leaving the program to identify any problems and develop a corrective plan to meet needs. This includes identifying and helping to arrange, if needed, area resources to eliminate the problem.
 - In follow-up contact with clients and from contacts with Work First staff from other areas, staff seeks ways to provide incentives for former Work First participants to assist them in maintaining employment.
6. **Benefit Diversion.** The most successful outcome possible is for an applicant to avoid the need to become a recipient. Financial Intake workers are exploring Benefit Diversion with all applicants, since Benefit Diversion can, in some situations, better meet the family's needs. It also removes the family from ongoing assistance status and does not count as months of assistance on the time clocks.

B. County Developed Outcome Goals

In addition to goals set by the state, Person County DSS will focus on areas that we see as beneficial to the participants served as well as to the program itself:

- **Increasing the number of General Equivalency Degrees earned.** Piedmont Community College, the Person County Partnership for Children, and Person County DSS have developed GED Labs at different sites and times to address different learning styles, environmental needs, and self-discipline issues for Work First Participants. We see an increasing need for GEDs for better employment opportunities and therefore plan to continue these labs. DSS staff identifies barriers affecting attendance to develop new resources needed to assure successful completion of a GED.
- **Increasing the number of paid and unpaid Work Experience sites across the county.** This will have a positive impact on the All Families Participation Rate and give the participants a better chance to improve their skills and employability.
- **Providing comprehensive Vocational/Social/Familial Evaluations at WFFA approval for efficacy of movement toward employment.** Evaluations from trained and experienced staff at an accredited work rehabilitation program can assist the Social Workers with early identification of participant strengths and weaknesses in regards to work abilities. Mutual Responsibility Agreements can incorporate recommendations from the evaluator concentrating immediately on work activities that can promptly lead to successful employment.
- **Improving the follow-up services currently being provided to participants who have gone to work and left the program.** More frequent contact and supportive services will improve the chances of the participant staying employed.

Success in all of the above can be measured and seen through improvement of our county's Participation Rate. The first two goals are measured by looking at the number of GEDs earned and the number of paid and unpaid Work Experience Sites established. Shorter periods of need for WFFA should assess the effectiveness of initial evaluations in regards to moving participants into jobs quicker. Follow-up and retention services make a difference in the outcome of the State Goals of Job Retention and Staying off Welfare.

IV. Plans to Achieve the Outcomes and Goals

A. Activities

The following agencies, programs and services are among those available within the county to assist families and individuals. Most services are provided at the agency sites. Periodically, workshops are held at various sites in the community to increase accessibility of the information for all individuals. The resources offered by these agencies assist clients not only with their job readiness skills but by also providing family life skills, education, and support. Various agencies have collaborated to provide adult GED education, work experience coordination, comprehensive work evaluations, and follow-up services. The agencies are as listed below:

Child Care Resource and Referral

Information, training and support services for parents, child care providers, businesses and industries as related to child care needs for children of all ages
Child Care training and educational programs and speakers
Emergency child care funds

Christian Help Center

Clothing closet and cash assistance (for specific work-related clothing needs)
Emergency Food and Shelter Assistance

Child Day Care Subsidy at DSS

Community Child Protection Team

Community resource identification, advocacy, and case reviews

Community Corrections Center

General Equivalency Diploma
Human Resource Development Program
Substance Abuse Counseling

Cooperative Extension

Educational programs such as time management, stress management, nutrition
“Bucs” program to teach money management
4-H YES Program

DARE Program

Substance abuse counseling through the schools and the Sheriff’s Department

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Assessment and evaluation for physical and mental disabilities
Education and training
Job development, placement and follow-up
Job training/job coaching
Supported employment
Transitions services from school to work

Employment Security Commission

Employment counseling
Jobs Information System (JIS) job listings
Labor Market Information
Job Link Career Center
Job Connector
Career Resource Center
On-line Job Search
Work related fax machine
Work related phone
Resume software
Workforce Investment Act (WIA)

Early Intervention and Family Services Learning Center

Day Care for developmental and special needs children and for typically developmental children

Person County Food Pantries

Food assistance to needy families

Guardian Ad-Litem Program

Health Department

Adult Health Screenings
Baby Love Program
Child Service Coordination Social Worker or Nurse to work with children under age 3 at risk for physical or developmental delay
Community Services Team providing support to day care centers and homes
Family Planning services including choices of birth control and physical examinations
Health Check/Health Choice outreach to assist families with medical appointments for children
Immunizations tracking for infants and children
Lead Screening Program for children age 1 year for elevated blood levels

Maternity Care Coordinator services to pregnant and postpartum teen parents and women during baby's first year
Maternity Care services for pregnant women
Maternity Outreach Worker (MOW)
Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program for pregnant women and for children under age 5

Learning Connections

Resource and educational programs for families and child care providers

Person Area Transportation System

Regular routes for in-county transportation for work and day care rides
In and out-of-county routes for medical appointments

Person County Recreation, Arts, and Parks

Summer youth enrichment programs
Summer Day Care Camps

Person County Partnership for Children

Provide Smart Start funding and monitor service delivery for a variety of programs and services for children under age 6 (preschool age) offered by other agencies in the county including DSS, Health Department, Cooperative Extension, and so forth.

Adults and Children in Education (A GED program for adults held at the Head Start/More at Four Preschool site which includes Motherread/Fatheread, Life Skills, and Parenting classes in the curriculum.)

Community Services Team (Registered Nurse, Child and Family Therapist, and Early Childhood Specialist)

Dolly Parton Imagination Library

Smart Start Child Care Subsidy

Parents as Teachers and Motherread/Fatheread

Dancing with Diversity

Partners in Literacy

More at Four

Person County Schools

Before and after School Day Care and summer care

Challenge Program- for students needing additional nurturing

Drop-Out Prevention counseling/Mentoring

GED referrals to PCC for students who drop out of the public school system

Head Start for children ages three through four

Person County Learning Academy – for students in middle and high schools who do not function well in a larger school setting

Pre-K class for four year olds with educational needs

Pre-school class for children ages 3-5 with developmental delays

Save Our Students for at-risk students

Occupational course of study

Technical Preparation – advanced certifications for students in career and technical education

Child and Family Support Team Initiative

Futures for kids

Huskins/Dual Enrollment with Piedmont Community College

Mental Health Services

Triumph offers a comprehensive array of services including: diagnostic assessment, person centered planning, community support, psychiatric services, outpatient therapy, intensive in-home program, substance abuse services, psycho-social rehab, assertive community treatment teams, and well/illness management recovery group.

Freedom House Recovery Center provides a full range of recovery based services and supports for individuals with an array of needs. Their services include detoxification, facility based crisis services, short and long-term residential rehabilitation, intensive outpatient, diagnostic

assessments, and community support.

Carolina Behavioral Care is a multi-disciplinary clinic providing a full range of psychiatric and mental health services. Their services include psychiatric services, substance abuse services, counseling and psychotherapy services, psychological testing services, and child and adolescent services.

Person County Library

Adult reading program
Children's Story Time
Gallery available for meetings/classes
Theme Boxes

Person Family Medical Center

Dental Services
Medical and health care services

Person Industries

Job evaluation
Job assessment
Job training
Job coaching
Job sampling
Work Experience Coordination
Work Experience Site
Employment and Training Program

Person Industries provides employment and training services including assessment, job readiness training, job coaching, and job sampling to Non-Vocational Rehabilitation eligible participants. They offer job development and job placement to participants who demonstrate that they are ready to work. Person Industries will present written goal plans and monthly progress notes for each participant to the WFES social worker. They will provide individual programming for up to 3 months. Person Industries will make available Worker's Compensation Insurance and Liability Insurance coverage to the participants during their in-house programming period. They will also arrange monthly staffing with WFES staff and program participants.

Piedmont Community College

Adult Basic Skills
Bridges to Success, a job training program for occupational training for youth aged 16 and up
General Equivalency Degree
Human Resource Development
Job Retention classes
Job Readiness classes
Skills Training
EMERGE
Career Start
Job Search on the Internet
Workforce Investment Act (WIA)
Career Exploration
Keyboarding for the Job Seeker
Computer Skills Training for the Job Seeker
Computer Empowerment
Key Train
Career Readiness Certificate

Pregnancy Support Center

Counseling services
Referrals to other resources
PROPEL – training in job related computer skills

Probation and Parole (Adult and DJJ)

Safe Haven

Counseling and other services for victims of domestic violence
Work Experience Site
Jumble Store

Very Important Parent (VIP)

VIP offers in-home parenting services and support groups for families.

B. Supportive Services

The Work First Employment staff works with the client in evaluating and assessing needs that must be met to obtain or maintain employment. Once identified, the worker provides or identifies resources in the community to address these needs. Some of the services available include:

- Referring for Child Day Care Subsidy to help families with the cost of day care services while performing Work First Activities and/or working.
- Assisting with the arrangement and payment of transportation through the issuing of gas vouchers, provision of monthly reimbursement checks, the use of the Community Social Services Assistants, transportation provided through Person Area Transportation System or other transportation resources as appropriate.
- Maximizing the transportation time staff spends with participants by discussing and providing one page handouts on relevant work topics (e.g. punctuality, appearance for an interview, decision making, how to apply for a job, etc...) at an optimal teachable moment.
- Assuring clients are well equipped for the job by assisting in the purchase of small items required on the job such as uniforms, tool sets, etc.
- Working with Safe Haven to provide funding needed to help families escape an environment of domestic violence to one of safety.
- Providing support and educational resources to help families transition from public governmental assistance to independent family income and benefits.
- Operating a computer lab at the agency to help participants write a resume and interview follow-up letters, search for available jobs for which they qualify, and complete applications for jobs.

Piedmont Community College staff administers pre-tests to determine which of the three GED sites are conducive to client's successful completion of GED program. PCC provides day and evening classes to allow clients to learn in a classroom environment. Person County Department of Social Services and Piedmont Community College offers computer labs available for client's independent work during day and evening hours. Day classes are offered at the local Head Start pre-school through Partnership for Children twice a week during the school year. Participation in this program allows parents to interact with their children in the Motherread/Fatheread program (supporting literacy) and to learn life and parenting skills taught by local community agencies.

The Workforce Development Center (Human Resources Development/WIA Program) has developed a life skills course as a part of their Career Readiness Program covering important topics such as job readiness, communication, effective parenting, good health and nutrition, problem solving, money management and stress management to help participants prepare for the challenges of full time employment.

Social Services has contracted with Person Industries to provide staff from an accredited work rehabilitation facility to perform comprehensive evaluations with a follow up report including recommendations for WF participants. This evaluation process will give the WF participant an opportunity to identify their interest, attributes, family roles, and barriers, and Social Services staff information to build upon their strengths. Doing so will provide the partners with the power to move forward in the right direction.

V. Administration

A. Authority

Person County is a Standard County, and as such, authority for the administration of the Work First program rests with the Department of Social Services.

B. Organization

Person County DSS houses Work First Family Assistance in the Income Maintenance section and Work First Employment Services in the Services section. Each section has a Program Manager and the two areas each have a supervisor. All agency programs are located in the same building and all staff members have access to email and voice mail to aid in communication. Information about specific areas follows:

1. Intake for Work First is handled in the Income Maintenance area with a primary intake worker and backups assigned each day. After the Intake worker initiates an application, it is assigned to a processing worker to complete the determination of eligibility. During the processing period, adult applicants who will be included in the payment are required to attend an Orientation session with Employment Services within 12 days of the date of application unless they are exempt from participation, and to register with First Stop at the Employment Security Commission.

2. Emergency assistance is handled through Service Intake for short-term assistance with a number of emergencies, such as food, utility cutoffs, transportation, to name a few. There is also a required Emergency Assistance program, funded with TANF monies, which is described in Section VI. Clients are referred to Service Intake by any staff who identifies a need for assistance.

3. Employability assessments are completed by the two Work First Employment Services Social Workers; they are initiated at orientation and completed at the first two week visit. This is an opportunity for the client, as well as the social worker, to look objectively at the strengths as well as barriers to employment and to develop a plan to address any identified need. Some of the issues addressed during this assessment include the client's attitude towards work, any emotional or physical problems, past work history, as well as educational goals achieved. Possible barriers to work such as lack of transportation, the need for child care during working hours, any past or present court involvement, child support needs, or any other areas that may be identified during the assessment are addressed.

4. Employment Services are provided by our Work First Employment Services Social Workers. These professionals work with and refer participants to existing resources and work with agencies in the community to develop other resources when needs arise. Objectives that the staff hopes to achieve include:

- Arranging for more Job Readiness meetings with Work First participants to address areas where skills need to be improved as well as provide a means for people in similar situations to come together for support. Role-playing can be used as a tool to address such issues as how to dress for an interview and other ways of presenting yourself in a positive light to prospective employers.
- Working closely with Employment Security Commission in the Job Link Career Center and having staff located at their office for at least a half a day the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month.
- Referring clients to established unpaid work experience sites.
- Participating in community development of resources relevant to the Work First goals and plans.
- Preparing WF participants for the transition from public assistant to work (budgeting, health insurance, transportation expenses, childcare, housing, 200% retention services).
- Educating other agencies and the public on WF policy and goals.

5. To support the work of the social work staff, Person County Department of Social Services has two Community Social Services Assistants (CSSAs) who devote 100% of their time to the Work First Program. These workers' office space is located in the same area as the social work staff, which improves communication of the accomplishments as well as problems encountered in working with the clients. These workers assist participants by providing transportation to prospective job sites, schools and other

training sites, Employment Security Commission and private employment agencies for job search and completing applications and to meet child care needs. In addition, the CSSAs work with the participants to provide assistance in identifying possible job sites as well as being available to assist in conducting in-house sponsored training and orientations. While transporting participants, CSSA's discuss life skills topics with them. They are a valuable means of having weekly contact with recipients, enhancing the ability of the program to verify and assess the activities and progress of individual cases.

6. Eligibility determinations are completed by Work First Income Maintenance Caseworkers for both applications and reviews. There are two caseloads, including cases transferred to Transitional Medicaid due to earnings.

C. First Stop

Person County Department of Social Services and the Employment Security Commission have signed a Memorandum of Understanding designating the local ESC as the site for Work First applicants/recipients to register for employment. DSS has a long-standing relationship with ESC related to registration and employment referrals for public assistance and Food Stamps. The local ESC office is staffed with a well-trained and motivated group of people who have been very helpful to DSS staff over the years. DSS and ESC have worked out procedures for referrals and feedback through frequent communication and problem-solving. Our Job Link site is located at ESC and one of the Employment Services Social Workers spends one morning every other week there. ESC is centrally located in a recently constructed facility that is easily accessible to clients and which has ample space for job search activities.

D. Child Care

Safe, affordable, and reliable child care is a critical element in enabling Work First participants to become self-sufficient. Person County has 39 licensed child care facilities. Childcare is provided in centers, child care homes, public preschool programs, and public school facilities (for school age children only). 69% of the centers and 48% of the child care homes have a quality star rating at 3 or above with 5 stars as the highest rate. Child care is available for children ages birth to 12 years old. Child care homes offer 2nd and 3rd shift care to approximately 80 children. Around 40 children can be served on the weekends in homes that offer third shift care. Earl Bradsher and Early Intervention have DPI programs to serve 242 children with developmental and/or special needs for ages 3 to 5 (pre-kindergarten age). Infant/toddler care is the most difficult to find and sick care is not provided due to the stringent licensing regulations. The Department of Social Services administers the State and Smart Start Subsidy Programs to assist families with the cost of care. It is rare to have a waiting list for subsidy, meaning that most of the time eligible families can receive help when child care is needed. State Subsidy will also help families who select child care out of the county near the parent's place of employment. All child care facilities must receive approval from the Division of Child Development for payment from the Subsidy Programs.

Work First Staff refers participants to DSS Child Care Staff to apply for assistance with the cost of care and also stresses the necessity of having a plan in place for backup care. Referrals are made to Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R), a Smart Start funded agency, which helps educate parents in choosing quality child care and in locating care. Work First Employment Services staff can take parents to visit day care centers and homes to help facilitate choosing quality day care. They also work with parents to develop specific backup plans for inclement weather, emergencies, and sick child care.

The priorities for child care funds are as follows:

1. Children in the custody of the agency who are in foster care and need child care in order for the foster parent to work or attend school.
2. Children who are part of a Child Protective Services case who can safely remain in their current living situation if child care service is provided.
3. Teen parents attending school.
4. Children of participants in the Work First Employment Services.
5. Children of parents working full-time.
6. Children in need of general child welfare services.
7. Children of parents working part-time.
8. Children of parents in training for employment.

Policy requires that priority be given to children with special needs so the agency sets aside a certain portion of the total funding for subsidy to serve these children so that parents do not have to worry about staying home to meet their needs.

E. Transportation

Work First Employment Services staff assesses the transportation needs, resources, and backup plans of each active participant and works with the client to develop a transportation plan. There is some funding available through the TANF block grant to help current recipients with transportation costs, whether for carpooling, reimbursement for gas expenses or up front gas vouchers, as well as helping with some one-time expenses such as insurance or repairs. There is funding available through the Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP) to help former TANF clients maintain their jobs by assisting with transportation expenses.

Locally, there is limited public transportation available. There are three taxi companies that some clients occasionally use. The main resource for transportation for many people is the Person Area Transportation System (PATS) which is operated by Person County government and has a local transportation coordinator as its director. There are some fixed routes, and fees are charged by the distance from the central office. Parents are required to use their own child safety seats on the PATS vans. Employment Services staff makes referrals to PATS and review the monthly bill for accuracy of payment for authorized services.

The Department of Social Services has a 7-passenger van that is used exclusively by the Work First program. The van runs a regular route weekly taking people to work, on job searches, and to classes at Piedmont Community College and Human Resource Development Center. Staff also uses other agency vehicles daily to transport clients. CSSA's occasionally work before and/or after office hours to provide temporary transportation services to recipients starting a new job.

F. Substance Abuse Services

Work First applicants and recipients are evaluated by Income Maintenance Caseworkers or Employment Services staff to determine if they appear to have a substance abuse problem. Screening tools required by the State, the AUDIT and DAST, are used during interviews. If the scores indicate a substance abuse problem or if behavioral indicators identify a potential problem, the client is referred to a Qualified Professional for Substance Abuse (QPSA) for further assessment. If this assessment indicates that further evaluation is needed, or if treatment is warranted, the QPSA assists with the arrangements. Substance abuse treatment services may include detoxification, inpatient substance abuse treatment, standard outpatient treatment, Intensive Outpatient (IOP) and drug testing for those in treatment, referral to a 12-step group, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, referral to a halfway house, or other resources that can be identified. Additionally, the role of the QPSA has been expanded to include evaluations in Child Welfare cases.

Due to the State-level changes in the administration of the Mental Health providers in Local Management Entities, local services are contracted to private companies. The QPSA position is included in that contract. In the event of a disruption in the contracting process, the local LME will assist with a solution to the screening and assessment process.

The goal of referral and treatment is to provide the client with access to services to assist with the fight against an addiction which blocks the ability to become and remain self-sufficient. The well-being of the entire family is compromised by addiction. DSS and staff at the Mental Health Center work closely to monitor clients who are referred for services and to ensure compliance. Procedures are in place to communicate regularly about clients in treatment and the QPSA maintains close contact with both the local DSS and Mental Health staff.

G. Family Violence Option

In Person County, Safe Haven provides domestic violence (DV) services. The Work First Supervisor has attended Domestic Violence Training from the Division of Social Services, Family Support and Child Welfare Services obtaining resource materials for use by the Work First Staff. Work First staff is encouraged to attend Domestic Violence training to learn to identify and better serve victims. Procedures were worked out for referring applicants/recipients to Safe Haven for screening if domestic violence was identified as a problem and for feedback from Safe Haven. Safe Haven also makes referrals to DSS for Domestic Violence Funding particularly for families whose employment may be disrupted from DV issues. A plan for expending TANF/DV Funds is approved by the DSS Director and Safe Haven Director. The Safe Haven Director can use all the DV funding available to Person County DSS as there is a growing need. Currently Person County has one local shelter. People are also referred to shelters in other counties

as needed. DSS has maintained close contact with Safe Haven when domestic violence services were identified as a need in specific cases. DSS staff is skilled at identifying a DV problem and working with victims who are in denial.

H. Maintenance of Effort (MOE):

Activities Funded with Maintenance of Effort Funds

- Work First (Cash) activities
- Take and process applications for Work First
- Maintain active cases by completing changes and reviews
- Contract with Person Industries for assessment of Work First clients with barriers who are non-Vocational Rehabilitation eligible needing job sampling, coaching activities, and placement
- Work expense funding available for WFES participants and 200% eligible parents to assist with transportation, training, and equipment costs for starting a new job or retaining a job
- Child Protective Services Intake & Screening
- Child Protective Services Investigative Assessment
- CPS Case Management Services
- Foster Care for Children Case Management Services
- Individual & Family Adjustment Services – Counseling to enable individuals to recognize, understand, and cope with problems and conflicts in areas such as household management, consumer affairs, school-related problems, utilizing community resources, as well as other services provided by the agency.
- Service Intake (child-related)

I. Child Welfare Services

Person County has budgeted \$271,537 of the Work First Block Grant to use for Child Welfare Services.

VI. Emergency Assistance

The Person County Department of Social Services' Emergency Assistance Program (EA) is administered by the Service Intake Unit. The funding source is TANF, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families. EA is used to provide a wide range of short-term assistance to a varied population, which includes people who are not eligible for Benefit Diversion Assistance or other programs to alleviate their emergency, or for whom a combination of programs, including EA, will meet the need. By easing the immediate crisis, long-term dependency may be avoided.

Eligibility Rules

1. Live in NC with the intention of remaining.
2. Be US citizens or qualified aliens in accordance with policy in the Work First manual.
3. Family must include a child who lives with a relative or legal guardian as defined for Work First Family Assistance (WFFA) and who meets the age limit for WFFA, that is, age 17 or younger, or age 18, attending high school, and expected to graduate by age 19.
4. Be in an emergency situation.
5. Meet the gross income limit of 150% of the federal poverty level using Work First rules to determine countable income. There is no asset limit.
6. 'Household' is defined to include all people living together, unless they are roomers or boarders.
7. A household which has had a sanction applied to a Work First grant within the last three (3) years is not eligible for help through the Emergency Assistance program.

Definition of Emergency

1. A crisis situation resulting from a catastrophic illness.

2. Substantial loss of shelter, food, clothing, or household furnishings due to fire, flood, or similar natural or man-made disaster, or a crime of violence.
3. Emergency situation over which there was no control, which left the family homeless, or in immediate danger of eviction or foreclosure.
4. Avoidance of destitution of the child or to provide shelter for the child.
5. Emergency situation which could lead to destitution but which did not arise from refusal to accept employment.
6. Mass emergencies.
7. Loss of a relative who had been responsible for support and/or care of one of the family members.
8. EA cannot be used for a heating or cooling emergency, as there are other funds available.

Verification of Emergency

If the emergency involves an eviction or foreclosure, a written statement from the landlord or mortgage holder is required. If the emergency is a utility cutoff, the cutoff notice from the utility is the verification.

Evaluation of Emergencies

1. Evaluate whether or not the situation is actually an emergency or a request to improve the family’s living standard.
2. Explore with the applicant whether he or a member of the assistance unit will have income that can be used to meet the emergency.
3. Ask the applicant what steps he has taken to alleviate the emergency.
4. Evaluate whether or not the family has experienced a sudden change that led to a decrease in income.
5. Evaluate whether or not the applicant created the emergency.
6. Explore to see if the applicant has history of being in a crisis situation.
7. Has the emergency placed a child at risk of being deprived of basic necessities?
8. Will providing EA prevent recurrence of the emergency?
9. Are there other community resources which can be used?
10. Are there other alternatives?

Benefits Available

Eligible families can receive a maximum of \$250.00 in a 30 consecutive day period within 12 months. If \$250.00 plus any other resources available will not resolve the problem, then the household is not eligible for EA. All payments are made in the form of vendor payments with authorization forms for county-issued checks.

Types of Assistance

1. Rent or mortgage.
2. Utility bills.

150% of Poverty Level (Effective March 1, 2008)

No. in family	1	2	3	4	5
Max. Inc.	\$1300	\$1750	\$2200	\$2650	\$3100

(For family sizes exceeding 5, see the Federal Poverty Level chart in the Medicaid Manual.)

VII. Services to Low Income Families (under 200% of poverty)

Person County provides services to families at or below 200% of the poverty level. If the family is a former Work First recipient and needs services to assist with remaining off public assistance, non-cash-like services will be offered. Services will also be provided to families involved with Child Protective Services and non-work first recipients who meet income eligibility criteria (at or below 200% of the poverty level), and who are in need of transportation assistance and/or retention services. To encourage recipients to work diligently toward self-sufficiency, an effort will be made to limit these services to four months. A monetary limit on the amount that will be spent on these services to each family is established per fiscal year to ascertain that all income eligible applicants are served.

VIII. Services to Non-Custodial Parents

Person County is not currently providing services to non-custodial parents.

IX. Exemption from Work Requirement

In accordance with the amendment by the General Assembly giving counties the flexibility to make changes in the work requirements for single parents of children under age one, Person County DSS will adhere to the following plan:

- There is a maximum of six months of exemption per child, not to exceed the lifetime limit of 12 months per individual.
- This exemption is tied to the age of the child, based on the child's month of birth. The exemption ends on the last day of the month in which the child becomes six months old. For example, if a single parent applies for Work First Family Assistance and her child is 3 months old, she will be eligible, at that time, for only three months of exemption. When the child turns six months old, WFFA staff will change her Work Registration Code to the appropriate code, thus ending the 6 months "S" code exemption.
- If a single parent of a child under age one is working and loses that job, he or she may elect to reclaim the "S" exemption as long as the child is still under six months of age and he or she has not exhausted the lifetime limit.
- Work First Employment Services staff tracks each case to ensure that the six-month limit is administered fairly to all who are eligible to claim the exemption.
- For parents eligible for "S" code who lose the exemption in conjunction with imposing a child support sanction, the parent can reclaim the "S" code once cooperation with child support takes place and if the child is still less than 6 months of age.

X. Innovative County Strategies

Staffing

In order to open lines of communication in working with Work First clients, a staffing of all Work First cases in which an adult is included in the payment is conducted monthly. Included in this meeting may be staff from Child Support, Child Care Subsidy, Work First Employment Services, Child Protective Services, Qualified Professional in Substance Abuse Program, Work First Income Maintenance Caseworkers, and Community Social Services Assistants (as available). When a client is involved with several workers for different reasons, it is recognized that sometimes the client will discuss a Work First issue or change with one worker and not the others. It may be a situation where one part of the agency staff receives information of a situation that may affect eligibility and progress toward self-sufficiency, but the participant is withholding that information and has not discussed the situation with other workers. During the staffing, the DSS staffs can update each case and work appropriately toward eligibility and self-sufficiency hopefully keeping the client from experiencing fraudulent situations or unnecessary use of their time clocks. These sessions have helped staff inform recipients of their Work First case situation and the choices that they can make to use the program efficiently.

Specialized Group Approach to Provision of Services

The Social Workers and CSSA's are identifying the specific needs of the general Work First caseload and are planning training sessions on specific work related topics to provide pertinent information to and to practice skills with them while at the same time helping participants set and meet MRA goals. The staff can assess the strengths to build upon and the weaknesses to address with recipients from their participation and performance in the sessions. These sessions are a respectful way to build rapport and a working relationship with the Work First participants as well.

Contracted Work Experience Coordinator

Utilizing Demonstration Grant funding, DSS developed a contract with Person Industries (a certified work rehabilitation program) to provide a Work Experience Coordinator. The Work Experience Coordinator established paid and unpaid work experience sites with Person County employers for placement of Work First participants. This Coordinator built positive relationships with local employers in order to maintain long lasting partnerships and also directly and frequently supervised participants' progress and employers' satisfaction. The final year of Demonstration Grant funding for this strategy ended May 2009; therefore, Social Services will seek alternative funding sources to continue Work Experience to help participants who validly state that it is difficult to get a job without skills and employer knowledge of their work habits.

Pay for Performance (At the time of the Plan writing, this demonstration grant project is in the process of being implemented and it will be completed prior to the effective date of this plan.)

Using the Demonstration Grant funding, DSS implemented a strategy providing monthly WFES support staff within the agency for collecting documentation of countable work activities and tabulating properly verified work activity hours for each participant (All Families) to justify the release, or issuance to the client, of a monthly cash assistance check. A weekly staffing session updated Social Workers on each participant's progress and need for services. A monthly report of completed and scheduled hours for each participant was given to the WFES social workers by the 5th day of the month following the month of performance in order for the check to be released no later than the fifteenth of each month. The WFES Social Workers reviewed each case to approve or deny the release of a check. For approval of the check release, the participant was required to perform and properly verify the scheduled hours for each countable work activity as recorded on the most recent MRA or verify good cause for not meeting the scheduled hours. 'Good Cause' is defined as a disability or incapacity [physical or mental] of the caretaker as substantiated by a doctor's statement, disability of a child or family member substantiated by a doctor which requires the caretaker to remain at home and provide care, a family crisis or change including, but not limited to, the death of a spouse, parent, or child, a lack of child care, or other unique circumstances as determined by the county Board of Social Services or its Designee which prevents the Work First participant from obtaining or retaining employment. Otherwise, the check was not released. The support staff carried out the data entry requirements for release of a check and answered participant's questions regarding the release of a check or referred participant to the proper social worker if unable to address the questions. This strategy simulated the work world and taught the participant about employer expectations and supervision. Hopefully, it offered incentive to participate fully as well.

Payment for successful completion of work activities will be provided to two parent families when this plan takes effect unless Work First Policy changes to include all families.

Vehicle Maintenance

DSS requested special project funding offered by the Department of Transportation to assist working parents (eligible 200% services recipients) with maintaining their vehicles for job retention purposes. This will involve developing a maintenance schedule and budget for each participant. This project will prepare participants for efficient care of their vehicles which will consequently present better gas mileage, less need for repairs, extended car life and result in reliable transportation.

Contracted Evaluation Services

Through the Demonstration Grant funding, a contract was established with Person Industries to provide staff to perform comprehensive evaluations for WF participants in order to build upon the strengths of and recommendations for each participant identified by staff from an accredited work rehabilitation

facility. This evaluation process offered the WF participants an opportunity to identify their interest, attributes, family roles, and barriers. Doing so provided the partners with the power to move forward in the right direction.

DSS Computer Lab

Computers previously purchased through Demonstration Grant funding provide participants the opportunity to participate in a supervised and assisted job search and job application environment and/or work towards obtaining their GED independently.

XI. Special Issues

Person County is a rural county with a large urban county on the southern border. The community previously has worked with displaced factory workers from a textile mill that closed recently. The Economic Development Office has announced the interests of other industries in locating to our County using vacated industrial buildings; however, no firm commitments are made as yet. Even though there are higher paying jobs available outside the county, with long-distance transportation being a problem for many Work First participants, it may prove difficult to access those jobs without affordable and reliable transportation resources.

Many of the adults included in current Work First cases have multiple barriers to becoming self-sufficient. Of the adults, 42% do not have either a GED or a high school diploma. Others have medical, mental, criminal or substance abuse problems, which impact their ability to get and keep a job. With these problems, employers do not consider these adults as good prospects, and therefore, their chance of getting and keeping a job becomes even more complex. Adding to that difficulty is the problem created by people who get a reputation for unreliability. In a small town where employers know each other and communicate regularly, people with poor work ethics can run out of chances for getting jobs due to their past performances. Although 57% of the current Work First cases have Child Support orders in place, only about 48% of those have had payments within the past six months. That money, of course, is retained by the state to repay Work First funds, but the impact of the payment rate would not be good for families after they leave Work First.

XII. through XVI. Not applicable; for Electing Counties only

XVII. Certification

This Plan was approved by the Person County Board of Commissioners at their meeting on October 16, 2006.

Date: October 20, 2008
Johnny M. Lunsford, Chairman
Person County Board of Commissioners

Memorandum of Understanding

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 Person 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
145 Weeks Drive
Roxboro, NC 27573-4529

Employment Security Commission of North Carolina

By: _____
Roxie Russell, Manager of the Person Office

By: _____
Beverly Warren, Director, Dept. of Social Services

Date Signed: _____

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH WELL FEES:

Health Director, Janet Clayton informed the Board that due to additional mandated water sampling requirements, the Board of Health approved an increase in well permit fees and a new well repair permit fee to help offset the cost of the sampling requirement. In accordance with NCGS 130A-39(g), The Board of Health requests the approval of the Board of Commissioners to implement the proposed new fees as listed below:

	<u>Current Fee</u>	<u>Requested Fee</u>
New Well Permit	\$225.00	\$300.00
Replacement Well Permit	125.00	200.00
Well Repair Permit	-0-	75.00

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Yarborough, **seconded** by Commissioner Puryear and **carried** to approve the Environmental Health Well fees as presented by the Health Director.

BUDGET AMENDMENT

Upon a motion by Commissioner Yarborough, and a second by Commissioner Puryear and majority vote, the Board of Commissioners of Person County does hereby amend the Budget of the General Fund(s) on this, the 20th day of October 2008, as follows:

<u>Dept./Acct No.</u>	<u>Department Name</u>	<u>Amount</u> Incr / (Decr)
<u>EXPENDITURES</u>		
	<u>General Fund</u>	
	Public Safety	10,963
	Transfer to General Fund	71,447
	<u>Special Revenue Fund</u>	
	Capital Reserve for Schools	71,447
	<u>Airport Fund</u>	
	Vision 100 Grant 47.9.1	43,067
<u>REVENUES</u>		
	<u>General Fund</u>	
	Other Revenues	10,963
	Fund Balance Appropriated	71,447
	<u>Special Revenue Fund</u>	
	Transfer from General Fund	71,447
	<u>Airport Fund</u>	
	Vision 100 Grant 47.9.1	43,067

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

- ▶ Sunday, October 26th, the School Bus garage dedication will be held – Chairman urged Board members to attend
- ▶ Attended Board of Education on October 9th relative to ¼ cent sales tax referendum which will be placed on the November 4th ballot – Informed the Board of Education that Board of Commissioners were in support of ¼ cent sales tax.
- ▶ Since County is implementing cost cutting measures, Chairman would like to see Board of Education doing likewise.

MANAGER’S REPORT:

- ▶ November 17th is Local Government Day – Meeting to be held at the FEMA Shelter
- ▶ Early Voting – There have been 1,645 ballots cast in the first two days
- ▶ Airport Commission will meet at 2:00 p.m. today
- ▶ Strategic Planning session for Schools to be held on Friday

COMMISSIONER REPORTS/COMMENTS:

Commissioner Puryear – Commented he had received a number of phone calls regarding how much money the county has saved by renting the Human Services Building. Asked that the Board direct the County Manager to follow up with feedback on the cost savings.

Commissioner Bowes – The Human Services building was not renovated during the some of the current Board’s administration. It is an asset to the County.

Commissioner Yarborough –Recommend that schools cut and prepare for lean budget. Agreed to serve on the Board of Education Strategic Planning Committee. Felt that the Human Services building was the worst deal this government ever negotiated.

Commissioner Clayton – After reviewing all options, the decision was made to renovate the existing Wal-Mart building instead of borrowing \$10 million to building a facility. It was intended to save taxpayers money.

Board needs to be aware that there are many watershed issues coming before the Legislature within the next year.

Chairman Lunsford – The County Manager is planning for a Board retreat soon and all the issues and concerns expressed by Board members will be discussed at that time.

ADJOURNMENT:

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Puryear, **seconded** by Commissioner Bowes and **carried** to adjourn the meeting at 9:46 a.m.

Faye T. Fuller, CMC
Clerk to the Board

Johnny Myrl Lunsford
Chairman