



***CALDWELL COUNTY
WORK FIRST BLOCK GRANT PLAN
FOR SFY 2007 - 2009***

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I. CONDITIONS WITHIN THE COUNTY

Caldwell County has faced a large number of layoffs and plant closing in manufacturing, primarily furniture and textiles for the past few years. The unemployment rate went from 7.5% in 2004 to, to 8.2% for calendar year 2005. From January thru August in 2006 it has averaged 7.2%. In 2004, there were 2 reported furniture manufacturing plant closings and 4 major layoffs that totaled 370 people. In 2005, there were 7 reported closing and 2 major layoffs. This totaled 2 textile plants, 3 furniture plants, and 2 grocery stores that closed. There were also 2 furniture plants that had major layoffs. In total, 930 individuals lost their jobs. The first 8 months in 2006 does not look any better. So far 1,113 individuals have lost their jobs due to furniture manufacturing import competition. Not surprisingly economic recovery has been slow in Caldwell County compared to most areas of the state, given its heavy base of manufacturing jobs, which are going away. In 2002, 49% of the jobs in Caldwell County were manufacturing. In 2006, the number of manufacturing jobs have reduced to 26%.

Food Stamp cases continue to rise reflecting the economy. The 3,360 households receiving food assistance in July 2004 has grown to 4,186 in July 2006. With no job or lower available hours, families are seeking food assistance in numbers not before seen.

Yet, despite a lagging economy, Work First cash cases have dropped and remained at a reduced level, from 433 families in 1998 to 135 families in 2004 to 128 in 2005. We believe this reflects the intensive community effort put forth to assist custodial parents to find jobs and the willingness of employers to hire Work First recipients, who have strong supports to maintain employment.

With income decreasing, the need for child support assistance will grow as will child care assistance to allow parents to work. Demands for services to promote employment and child safety based on the demographic, are likely to grow.

Strong efforts led by the County Commissioners and Economic Development Commission are focusing efforts on the old and new – expansion – attraction of manufacturing enterprises as well as increasing tourism and promoting the county as a retirement destination. From January 1, 2006 thru September 28, 2006 there are 164 new Corporations in Caldwell County with 10 or more employees. The County Commissioners themselves have sponsored a job fair and are investigating new avenues of growth of the job base. They hired a Washington lobbying group to ensure that the county maximizes its opportunity to attract grant funding that will help stabilize the economy and help the community transition to a new era in which the community will not be as dependent on the textile and furniture industries but there is a concerted community commitment to successfully move to a new economy. The week of October 23, 2006 is Industry Appreciation Week. The County is holding a resource fair on October 26. This will be a great opportunity for Work First staff to network and meet new employers in the county and explain the benefits of hiring a Work First participant.

The past year has seen an upswing in children taken into custody as a result of abuse/neglect. The number of children in agency custody was at a three year high in July 2004, despite on-going commitment to family centered practice principles and multiple response approaches. Staff is doing more to address prevention of children coming into care under Multiple Response but, nevertheless, more children are entering. Given the level of effort giving to prevent out of home placement, we are left to conclude that the stressors in families are growing and resulting in more children needing protection. It is hoped that new techniques and strengthened community partnerships will help us turn this trend.

Necessity is sometimes the “mother of invention” and perhaps this aptly describes the community at this point in time. There are many economic challenges that require integrated community responses now to assure Caldwell is a good place to work and live in the future. A well-conceived Block Grant plan outlines strategies that will contribute to the “prosperity, permanence, safety, and well-being” of a segment of the community that affects the whole.

NOTE: Above ESC data was obtained from the Employment Security Commission website at <http://www.ncesc.com/>, The Labor Market Information Division of the Employment Security Commission, and <http://eslmi40.esc.state.ns.us/ThermaticLAUS/clfasp/CLFSAAYResults.asp>)

II. PLANNING PROCESS

A. Planning Committee

For the Planning Committee members appointed by the Board of County Commissioners of Caldwell County please see the Appendix 1.

B. Public Comment

The plan was placed in the public Library, the County Office building, and on the county website for review between October 17 and October 24, 2006.

C. Planning Process

The Board of Commissioners of Caldwell County unanimously voted to request Electing Status for the Work First Program for fiscal years 2007-2009 at their August 21, 2006 meeting. (Please see Appendix 2 for the minutes and Appendix 3 for the designation letter.) At this time they appointed a task force to develop a plan for applying Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant funds. With the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, which was signed into law on February 8, 2006 significant state changes have been made and more are forthcoming. Due to this, our fifth planning process

changed from years past. We fine tuned how DSS administers the funds and programs for the clients, and enhanced joint efforts between DSS and our community resources.

On September 26, 2006 the Task Force met and reviewed our current plan, and articulated our proposed plan. A total of 20 volunteers and 11 staff developed the plan. For the agenda and minutes to the Work First Block Grant Planning Meeting, please see Appendix 4.

The proposals and plan were approved on September 26, 2006 with authorization to submit the plan to the County Commissioners on October 16, 2006.

III. OUTCOMES AND GOALS

A. Statewide Work First Goals

State Work First Goals for Caldwell County are those provided by the State for Fiscal Year 2005-2006. What they will be in 2006 – 2007 is indeterminate, of course, at this time. The *proposed* State goals for FY 2006-2007 is all that has been published to date and they are:

1. Adults Entering Employment	22
2. Meeting ALL Parent Participation Rate	50%
Meeting TWO Parent Participation Rate	90%
3. Providing ALL Parent Employment Services	80%
Providing TWO Parent Employment Services	100%
4. Benefit Diversion	81
5. Remaining Off Work First For Employment	90%
6. Employment At 6 Month Retention	60%
Employment At 12 Month Retention	50%

B. County Developed Outcome Goals

1. GOAL: EXPAND ECONOMIC LITERACY TRAINING TO ALL ADULT RECIPIENTS AND CARGIVERS WHO'S INCOME IS AT OR BELOW 200% OF THE POVERTY INCOME LEVEL.

DOCUMENTATION:

- (A) Referral to Economic Literacy will be documented on the online calendar.
- (B) Case record, Mutual Responsibility Agreement, and Case Plan

will reflect the referral.

- (C) Verification of attendance will be provided to each worker from the facilitator.
- (D) Performance evaluations will be completed at the end of each class.

2. GOAL: ENSURE ACCESS TO ALL NEEDED AND AVAILABLE SUPPORT SERVICES ESSENTIAL FOR THE FAMILY TO ACHIEVE SELF-SUFFICIENCY

DOCUMENTATION:

- (A) Completed holistic family assessment will be in the case record.
- (B) Screen referrals to community resources, services under 200% of poverty, or Benefit Diversion for appropriateness prior to applicant going onto the welfare roles.
- (C) Documentation of referrals to all resources identified as needs will be documented in the case narrative.

3. GOAL: INCREASE EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF ALL WORK FIRST PARENTS

DOCUMENTATION:

- (A) Completed holistic family assessment will be in the case record.
- (B) All adult recipients must be enrolled in and satisfactorily attending appropriate education enhancement classes if they do not have a high school diploma or GED, unless there is good cause.
- (C) Documentation will be in the case narrative.

4. GOAL: STRENGTHEN EACH PARENT OR CAREGIVER'S PARENTING ABILITY.

DOCUMENTATION:

- (A) Copy of Referral to age appropriate parent education class will be in the case record.
- (B) Performance evaluations from the class instructor will be in the case record.
- (C) Referral will also be listed on instrument to track activities related to electing plan goals.

5. GOAL: INCREASE POTENTIAL FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS OF ALL WORK FIRST SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

DOCUMENTATION:

- (A) Case narrative will reflect regular contact with the school.

- (B) Case narrative, Mutual Responsibility Agreement, and case plan (if applicable) will reflect the staffing that occurs when tardiness or absence is an issue. Steps to resolve the issue will be listed.

6. GOAL: PROMOTE FAMILY STABILITY WITH CHILD SUPPORT BY MAKING IT MANDATORY FOR FOOD STAMP, MEDICAID, EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE, AND CHILD CARE CASEWORKERS TO EXPLAIN OUR AGENCY'S ROLL REGARDING CHLD SUPPORT AND THE \$25. PROCESSING FEE.

DOCUMENTATION:

- (A) When appropriate, record will reflect child support process, and benefit has been explained.

7. GOAL: ASSURE ALL APPROPRIATE REFERRALS AND APPLICATIONS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED WITH IMMEDIATE ASSESSMENT OF ALL "INCAPACITATED" OR "NEEDED IN THE HOME" APPLICANTS/RECIPIENT.

DOCUMENTATION:

- (A) Copy of completed holistic assessment will be in the case record.
- (B) All long-term "f" and "i" coded caretakers will be referred to Success for Families at Risk case staffing.
- (C) Record will reflect Mutual Responsibility Agreement on steps towards self-sufficiency by employment or steps towards obtaining disability benefits will be listed.
- (D) All long-term "f" coded caretakers will be referred to Vocational Rehabilitation for assessment.
- (E) All work First applicants/recipients claiming a disability may be referred to doctor of county's choice for further evaluation. .

IV. PLANS TO ACHIEVE THE OUTCOMES AND GOALS

A. Activities

All activities will be provided by D.S.S. staff in the D.S.S. facility unless otherwise noted in the activity description. Specific activities will be listed for each goal and should be evident as to how they support the achievement of the goal.

1. GOAL: EXPAND ECONOMIC LITERACY TRAINING TO ALL ADULT RECIPIENTS AND CARGIVERS WHO'S INCOME IS BELOW 200% OF THE POVERTY INCOME LEVEL.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Referrals will be made by Work First, Emergency Assistance, Food Stamp, Family Medicaid, Child Care, Child Support (when appropriate), and Children's Services staff.
2. Worker will enroll person on appropriate online calendar.
3. Classes are currently being taught on the campus of Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute. The CCC & TI staff persons use the curriculum developed by DSS.
4. Case record, Mutual Responsibility Agreement, and Case Plan will reflect the referral.
5. The participant will complete a pre-test and post-test.
6. Attendance Notification will be given to each worker by the facilitator via e-mail.
7. Performance evaluations will be completed at the end of each class.

2. **GOAL: ENSURE ACCESS TO ALL NEEDED AND AVAILABLE SUPPORT SERVICES ESSENTIAL FOR THE FAMILY TO ACHIEVE SELF-SUFFICIENCY.**

Activities:

1. Holistic family assessment completed.
2. Referrals made to all identified needed resources.
3. Make referrals part of Mutual Responsibility Agreement to ensure recipients utilize identified needed resources.
4. Utilize Success for Families at Risk for all long-term incapacitated or needed in the home caretakers after application approval, regardless of the number of hours on their 60-month time clock.
5. Provide transportation and child care as needed and as funds are available.
6. Provide work related clothing, tools, etc. as needed and as funds are available.
7. Kinship Care Assessments will be completed on all child only cases at review. If warranted and appropriate, Consent Custody Transfers may be completed to help provide permanence for the child.
8. Termination Prevention Team Meetings may be held when a Work First case is terminating and there is no other income in the home. Caretakers are given the opportunity to request a scheduled meeting to discuss their financial situation with their Work First Case Manager (Human Services Coordinator), and a Child Services Social Worker Supervisor. The goal is to determine how the caretaker and family will maintain a household with no income.

3. **GOAL: INCREASE EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF ALL WORK FIRST PARENTS.**

Activities:

1. Holistic assessment will be completed and in the case record.
2. All adult recipients must be enrolled in and satisfactorily attending appropriate education enhancement classes if they do not have a high school diploma or GED, unless there is good cause.
3. Adult recipients will provide weekly proof of attendance.

4. GOAL: STRENGTHEN EACH PARENT OR CAREGIVER'S PARENTING ABILITY.

Activities:

1. Referral will be made to age-appropriate parent education class and a copy will be in the case record.
2. DSS contracts with Parents As Teachers for birth to school age instruction and Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute for Parent Education Classes for school age children.
3. Parents As Teachers meets with the family in their own home or at the Family Resource Center. CCC & TI conducts the Parent Education Classes at the J.E. Broyhill Civic Center.
4. Facilitator will notify the attendees for that class to the appropriate worker.
5. Mid-term and end of term evaluations are completed by the facilitator and passed to the Work First caseworker to place in person's case record.

5. GOAL: INCREASE POTENTIAL FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS OF ALL WORK FIRST SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

Activities:

1. Monthly list will be given for school age appropriate children to the school system to verify school attendance.
2. If tardiness or absences are an issue, a staffing will occur with the Work First case manager (Human Services Coordinator), School Social Worker, Children Services Social worker, if applicable, and parent(s) to help resolve the issue.
3. Steps will be listed on their Mutual Responsibility Agreement to help resolve the issue.

6. GOAL: PROMOTE FAMILY STABILITY WITH CHILD SUPPORT BY MAKING IT MANDATORY FOR FOOD STAMP, MEDICAID, EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE, AND CHILD CARE CASEWORKERS EXPLAIN OUR AGENCY'S ROLL REGARDING CHILD SUPPORT AND THE \$25 FEE.

Activities:

1. Each Food Stamp, Medicaid, Emergency Assistance and Child Care caseworker must explain the Child Support

Program, the process and the \$25 fee, when applicable, to the caretakers.

2. Each caseworker will notate discussion and response.
3. If it is a Medicaid case, the fee is waived and the caseworker will make an immediate referral if applicant/recipient so desires.
4. Others will be referred to the Child Support Office.

7. GOAL: ASSURE ALL APPROPRIATE REFERRALS AND APPLICATIONS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED WITH IMMEDIATE ASSESSMENT OF ALL "INCAPACITATED" OR "NEEDED IN THE HOME" APPLICANTS/RECIPIENT.

Activities:

1. Cover letter and medical is sent to doctor specified by the applicant/recipient. Emphasis is given on what the person CAN DO as opposed to what they cannot do.
2. All long-term "F" and "I" coded caretakers will be referred to a Success for Families staffing regardless of the number of months they have on their 60-month time clock.
3. All referred to Vocational Rehabilitation must complete an application AND comply with all recommendations.
4. All Work First applicants/recipients claiming a disability may be referred to doctor of county's choice for further evaluation. The person must comply with all recommendations.

B. Supportive Services

All supportive services will be provided by D.S.S. staff in the D.S.S. facility unless otherwise noted in the service description.

(1) CHILDCARE

- (A) Priority is given to Work First participants in receiving child care subsidy assistance. They are never subject to a waiting list.
- (B) As available, funds will be designated to provide for sick childcare for families with no other sick childcare option.
- (C) Childcare is provided for parents and other caregivers attending parenting classes.

(2) TRANSPORTTION

- (A) As needed, transportation is provided for all employment-related activities: job search, work experience and employment.
- (B) Support applicants/recipients in maintaining their own vehicle by providing resources for repairs, insurance and fuel.

- (C) As needed, transportation is provided to day care for applicants/recipients' children.
 - (D) As needed, transportation is provided to parent education classes by education provider.
 - (E) As needed, transportation will be provided to caretakers attending substance abuse and/or mental health meetings.
 - (F) When the demand is too great for DSS staff to transport, DSS contracts with Howard's Yellow Cab.
- (3) **SUCCESS FOR FAMILIES AT RISK COMMUNITY TASK FORCE**
- (A) Made up of staff from the county's health department, community college, school system, employment security commission, chamber of commerce, Smart Start, vocational rehabilitation and others; this group meets several hours monthly with designated Work First families.
 - (B) Each agency commits its resources as needed for Work First families and the commitment is stated on the Mutual Responsibility Agreement.
- (4) **JOINT CASE STAFFING AND PLAN WITH ANY WORK FIRST FAMILY ALSO RECEIVING SERVICES FROM CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES.**
- (A) All recipients are screened for services in child welfare and the child welfare social worker is contacted on all cases currently open in child protective services.
 - (B) Work First and Children's Services staff are mandatory collaterals for joint cases.
 - (C) As often as possible, joint plans are used to ensure every party is aware of expectations for the family and every party's commitment.
 - (D) There is a mandatory staffing within 30 days of completing a Work First application. Those present may include the family and anyone working with the family.
- (5) **ECONOMIC LITERACY TRAINING**
- (A) To accommodate parents/caregivers' schedules, both morning and evening classes are scheduled each week.
 - (B) Formal curriculum is used that covers all areas of family budgeting, how to maximize resources, achieving home ownership, using Earned Income Tax Credit, etc.
- (6) **JOB SEARCH COACH**
- (A) Assists applicants/recipients with developing generic job application and resume.
 - (B) Coaches applicants/recipients in interviewing skills and appropriate attire.
 - (C) Provides transportation to potential job sites. It is the goal to take the person to at least 7 places a day to place an application.

(7) CLOTHING

- (A) The local domestic violence shelter home for women provides access to their abundant clothes closet for all needy applicants and recipients.
- (B) Priority is given for funds to purchase any special clothing or small equipment needed for employment.

V. ADMINISTRATION

A. Authority

The Caldwell County Board of County Commissioners has delegated authority to the Caldwell County Department of Social Services to administer the Work First Program and operationalize the Electing County Plan. The Board of Commissioners understands its legal responsibility to insure that the plan is successfully executed.

B. Organization

Work First Case Managers (Human Services Coordinator IIs) have blended duties and blended caseloads. They determine eligibility plus do the employment social worker part. They take and process applications, and then maintain the case. Their caseloads consists of child only cases, employment, incapacitated and/or needed in the home, "s" exemption cases, and services under 200 % of the Poverty Income Level. One case manager also has the Work First Services recommended Multiple Response mutual cases.

At intake the case managers complete a holistic family assessment to determine what supportive services or referrals to community partners may be needed. Since Work First is not an entitlement program, taking a Work First application and having someone go on the welfare roles are evaluated last. Community referrals and programs within the agency are explored for every case. Once approved, a home visit is scheduled within 7 days to those that will be in the employment piece of the program. During the home visit an employment assessment is completed listing the family strengths and any possible barriers they may have.

A strong organizational connection has been created between Work First – Case Managers and Child Welfare Case Managers. In August 2006 Work First joined the Child Welfare team and is under the same Program Administrator. The supervisors meet regularly as a team with the Child Welfare Program Administrator. Case coordination is maintained through joint staffings, feedback from home visits, and inclusion of the Work First Case Manager on "Child and Family Team Meetings" for families as appropriate. The TANF/Child Welfare Pilot ("Joining Hands") has enabled the agency to focus its approach around family centered principles. Being an active partner in the operation of **JobLink** is also insuring good collaboration with the Employment Security Commission.

As the attached Organizational Chart indicates (see [Appendix 5](#)) the Work First Program is supervised by a Social Work Supervisor II who reports to the Child Welfare Program Administrator, who in turn reports to the Agency Director. All agency teams are co-located with the exception of Child Support.

C. First Stop

Employment Security Commission is a key community partner with whom there is a productive, collegial working relationship. Option A will be used to meet First Stop requirements. D.S.S. does not incur any cost for the services provided by Employment Security Commission.

(See Work First/ESC M.O.U. [Appendix 6](#)).

D. Child Care

Child care will be subsidized for families in the following order:

1. Child Protective Service
2. Employed Parents who are:
 - a. Foster Parents
 - b. Work First Participants
 - c. Services Under 200% Participants
 - d. Working Full Time (25 hrs/wk)
 - e. Working Part Time
3. Child Welfare Services
4. Children with Development Delays
5. Other Parents in Education and/or Training Leading to Employment

Children in protective services, foster care, whose parents are Work First Participants, or whose parents are Adolescent Parenting Program participants will not be put on waiting lists.

E. Transportation

Caldwell County is committed that ***transportation will not be a barrier***. A variety of methods will be utilized to accommodate differing needs including transportation by agency vans, taxis, CCATS (Caldwell County Area Transportation System) and individual drivers for job search and employment. In addition, participants driving their personal vehicles will be provided gas vouchers in some situations.

As in other Work First activities, there must be a mutual commitment by both agency and participant to make Work First a successful experience for the participant. In the case of transportation, with the agency's commitment to provide it, the participant must utilize it properly to insure cost effectiveness. Accordingly, persons after two "no shows" for arranged transportation within a 3-month period will be sanctioned, unless there is good cause. The no-show policy starts over with each new application for Work First. There needs to be a valid signed Mutual Responsibility Agreements in the record.

While on Work First Assistance, transportation assistance will be provided as long as it is needed.

In addition a person below 200% of the federal poverty level may apply for TANF service and get transportation assistance assuming eligibility criteria are met and the person is employed. As space on the Job Search Van permits, unemployed applicants can receive transportation on the van. And, if employed this group of recipients may receive other transportation related aids including car repairs and help with payment of auto insurance.

An estimated \$ 41,180 will be used for transportation needs.

F. Substance Abuse Services

As deemed necessary, Work First applicants and/or recipients are referred to Universal Mental Health Services, a local mental health program. We do not have a formal Memorandum of Agreement with Universal Mental Health Services. The Audit/Dast 10 and Behavioral Indicators are used in this process.

Applicants/recipients are offered the opportunity to volunteer to be screened for mental health issues. After screening by the D.S.S. Case Manager (Human Services Coordinator) any needed SA and/or MH referrals are faxed to QPSA along with copy of Audit/Dast 10. The applicant/recipient is to call the Qualified Professional in Substance Abuse cell phone while in the worker's office (if possible) to schedule the assessment appointment. If not possible, the applicant/recipient will be given 10 calendar days to call Universal staff for an appointment. Universal staff will call DSS staff person with appointment time. Assessments and treatment recommendations will be forwarded to the appropriate staff member so this data can be a part of the recipient's Mutual Responsibility Agreement. All non-compliance by recipients will be reported in writing by the QPSA to the DSS staff person the next workday following their non-compliance. DSS will notify QPSA in writing within 10 calendar days of any change that may affect the case. All changes and notifications may be done by telephone call with written follow up for the case record.

G. Family Violence Option

Caldwell County DSS and Shelter Home of Caldwell County have a cooperative relationship. There is representation from DSS on the Shelter Home of Caldwell County board and the Director of the Shelter Home sits on the Child Protection/Fatality team. This involvement keeps the lines of communication open and promotes understanding of both programs. The Shelter Home of Caldwell County provides in-service training for DSS staff and the Shelter Home staff participates in a Community Conference hosted by DSS that promotes awareness of programs offered by DSS as well as other community partners. The Shelter home is a work experience site and helps with clothing for our

recipients from time to time. For the past few years people were so generous to the Shelter Home at Christmas, their staff called for DSS to come get some toys for our families.

At application and each review, the Case Manager (Human Services Coordinator) will screen for domestic violence issues, and should the screening indicate possible domestic violence, the worker will send a referral to Shelter Home within five working days. With the applicant/recipients permission, the worker will make a telephone referral for an immediate appointment. D.S.S.-6969 and D.S.S. 6965 forms will be mailed or faxed to Shelter Home with the top portion completed.

Once the client is interviewed by Shelter Home staff, the assessment report will be returned to the D.S.S. Case Manager within five days of the interview. Based on the assessment, the Work First Case Manager will determine whether or not a waiver is needed within ten working days from receipt of the assessment report. An M.R.A. can then be negotiated.

It should be noted that neither screenings, assessments, nor acceptance of a waiver are mandatory. There is no penalty if the client wishes not to cooperate, except, of course a waiver cannot be granted.

For Work First cash assistance, a joint staffing with Work First staff, Shelter Home staff and Children's Services staff (if appropriate) will be held when someone wants to claim good cause for not cooperating with child support and a decision to grant this cannot be agreed upon.

When domestic violence funds are used, the person is seen by Emergency Assistance staff and then referred to Shelter Home of Caldwell County for a complete assessment and safety plan. These Domestic Violence Funds will be accessed by the Service's Team, First Team and the Shelter Home of Caldwell County staff.

The money will be used to provide the following:

1. Deposits for rent, telephone, electric, etc.,
2. Payment of rent, and utility expenses, and
3. Furnishings for a residence.
4. Other expenses as needed to promote family safety and self-sufficiency.

The criteria are:

1. Services must be nonrecurring, short-term benefits designated to deal with a specific episode of need.
2. Not intended to meet recurring or ongoing needs AND
3. NOT extend beyond four (4) months.
4. There must be at least one child in the home who is under the age of 18 or will graduate high school by their 19th birthday, and meets the Kinship requirement or have legal custody or legal guardianship.
5. Must be a US citizen or "qualified alien" as described in the Work First Manual.

6. Be receiving Work First cash payment, OR
7. Have a gross family income at or below 200% of poverty.
8. Any expense in excess of \$500 will be staffed between the Shelter Home and DSS prior to the expense being paid.

Services will be delivered as follows:

1. DSS Emergency Assistance Staff will determine eligibility.
2. If the client meets the criteria, a DSS Emergency Assistance Staff member will refer clients to the Shelter Home of Caldwell County for a complete assessment and development of a safety plan. The assessment will be completed within 48 hours.
3. Upon completion of the assessment and safety plan, DSS will issue payments for identified need.
4. The Shelter Home of Caldwell County's Executive Director will receive a monthly statement from DSS giving client's name, amount spent, what the money was spent for, and end of month balance.

H. Maintenance of Effort (MOE)

The County will budget funds sufficient to meet the 90% Maintenance of Effort requirement. It is anticipated that MOE funded will be used to fund the activities, staff, and services identified in Appendix 7.

I. Child Welfare Services

Many Work First cases ultimately present themselves as child welfare cases. A major emphasis, therefore, of agency planning is to support organizational changes and practices that support a broader conceptualization of child welfare. While the TANF/Child Welfare Collaborative Project ("Joining Hands" in Caldwell County) now called Family Net, has been de-funded, the practices developed thus far are being institutionalized to insure that child welfare issues *and* family self-sufficiency issues are addressed through all social work interactions with the agency. Having common practices principles (all staff trained in Family Centered Practice), generic processes (front end assessment in Work First and Services; Child and Family Team Meetings) and a common philosophy across programs, accountability is enhanced, both for client/family outcomes and the agency's efforts to support families in goal achievement.

During the past few years the Multiple Response System has been fully implemented in the agency. This approach embraces family support and family-centered services principles which is a "fit" for the agency's overall philosophy. One of the seven strategies includes closer coordination and collaboration with the Work First Program. The connection between the self-sufficiency of families and the safety, permanence, and well-being of children is obvious. Parents who have jobs are in a better position to care for their children. Our Work First and Child Welfare staff

collaborates on developing case plans with families to ensure we are being reasonable in our expectations.

This philosophy under-girds the electing county process as well – our goal is to help families become more self-sufficient in all phases of their lives and thus promote prosperity, permanence and safety for themselves and their children.

Estimate of Work First Block Grant Funds devoted to Child Welfare Services:
\$1,067,070.

VI. EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

Emergency Assistance will be utilized to assist families through unexpected and work-related crisis situations. Emergency situations are evaluated to determine what led to the emergency. For example: loss of employment, missed hours at work because of illness or hospitalization or events beyond the control of the client. The Emergency Assistance will only get the family through the crisis and with the assistance of a social worker, the family can develop a plan to avoid future crisis. Emergency Assistance will be for short-term assistance only and will meet that guideline in that it is:

- Non-recurring, short-term benefits designed to deal with a specific episode of need;
- Not intended to meet recurring or ongoing needs;
- Not extending beyond four months; and
- Meets agency criteria of a true emergency.

Emergency Assistance will be provided using the following:

1. As funds permit, all cases will be assisted at the minimum amount needed to solve the emergency situation. Any amount needed in excess of \$300 must be approved by Program Administrator/Director. Maximum assistance per household per 12 month period will be \$1,000.
2. The family must have a child who lives with a relative as defined for Work First Family Assistance, or has legal custody or legal guardianship, and who meets the age limit for Work First Family Assistance.
3. Total gross family income must be at or below 200% of federal poverty level. The base period for computing gross wages is the month prior to the application for Emergency Assistance, unless a change has occurred in hours, employment, or pay.
4. The types of countable income are the same as for Work First Family Assistance.
5. Client statement can be used to prove citizenship unless questionable. If in doubt, appropriate documentation will be requested.
6. Client statement can be used to prove kinship and living with.
7. Reserve limits will be the same as Work First Family Assistance.
8. If the Emergency Assistance social worker feels the need for a family to apply for Work First before services can be authorized, the Emergency Assistance social worker must confer with a Work First Family Assistance caseworker. If the client is referred to the Work First Family Assistance program, the client must not only

- apply for Work First but also comply with all recommendations, unless there is good cause. Failure to do so will result in denying the Work First application and or termination of the case when non-compliance occurs. Future Emergency Assistance services are contingent upon the above compliance.
9. If there is an active or terminated Work First case that has been sanctioned for non-compliance of the Mutual Responsibility Agreement, they cannot receive Emergency Assistance without Work First social worker recommendation.
 10. All recipients of Emergency Assistance will be required to enter into a Mutual Responsibility Agreement and comply with the conditions listed before further Work First Family Assistance Emergency Assistance or United Way assistance can be received, unless there is good cause. This must include steps they will take to insure future emergencies of the same kind will be avoided. Any future assistance can only be obtained by complying with the conditions stated on the Mutual Responsibility Agreement or by supervisor approval.
 11. During application, a family budget will be completed by the social worker. The family budget must show that the family can maintain ongoing bills once Emergency Assistance is given. If this is not the case, Emergency Assistance may not be appropriate.
 12. All applicants will be referred to Economic Literacy training. Failure to successfully complete the training without good cause will affect future eligibility for Emergency Assistance funds.
 13. Recipients of Work First Family Assistance Emergency Assistance having a child with one or both parents absent from the home must cooperate with child support enforcement. Failure to cooperate without good cause will result in ineligibility for future Work First Family Assistance – Emergency Assistance until cooperation with child support enforcement is demonstrated. The \$25.00 child support fee is waived.
 14. Services provided can include cash assistance paid to vendors, non-Medicaid gas vouchers, and referrals to other agencies.
 15. Services to be provided through Emergency Assistance are as follows, when there are emergency needs:
 - a. Past due rent (must have an eviction notice)
 - b. Utility expenses (must have disconnect notice)
 - c. Deposits for rent and utilities
 - d. Emergency housing for victims of family violence
 - e. Temporary housing for displaced families in a crisis situation
 - f. Food, in extreme circumstances and no other resource is available.
 - g. Prescriptions when not covered by Medicaid
 - h. Relocation due to destruction of housing due to fire or natural disaster
 - i. Medical care if not covered by another program or agency. (MOE funding only will be used for this assistance.)
 - j. Medical needs not covered by Medicare/Medicaid, when financially practical to pay for them.
 - k. Any other requests with approval of Supervisor, Program Administrator and/or Director.

VII. SERVICES TO LOW INCOME FAMILIES

In order to prevent dependency and avoid the need for families to become cash assistance recipients, Caldwell County will, *as funds permit*, provide certain services to families under 200% of the Federal Poverty Level as follows:

1. WFFA-EA eligibility criteria will apply
2. Services may include:
 - a. Cash Assistance;
 - b. Transportation;
 - c. Child Care;
 - d. Work related expenses; and
 - e. Referral to other partner resources
3. All recipients of services for families with income at or below 200% of the FPL must enter into a Mutual Responsibility Agreement delineating steps they will take to insure how future emergencies of the same kind will be avoided.
4. Compliance with the conditions stated on the MRA must be met before further services for families with income at or below 200% of the PIL can be received. Non-compliance without good cause can only be obtained by complying with the conditions stated in the MRA or by supervisor approval.
5. As funds permit, the maximum assistance per household will be \$1,000 per 12-month period.

Mandatory Work First recipients will receive priority in receiving assistance followed by Work First Emergency Assistance recipients and then families with income at or below 200% of PIL.

VIII. SERVICES TO NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS

As funds permit, the agency will provide employment services to non-custodial parents of Work First children. Services offered will mirror those provided to Work First cash assistance recipients as allowed by state policy. To be eligible one's income cannot exceed 200% of the FPL.

IX. EXEMPTION FROM THE WORK REQUIREMENT

Single parents may claim their "s" exemption for the first 3 months of a child's life. Once the 12 month lifetime exemption has been exhausted, the parent will be required to participate in the employment program as soon as released from her doctor. Also, if a

parent volunteers to participate in the employment program, he/she may not reclaim the exemption for the same child.

OPTIONAL PLAN ELEMENTS

X. INNOVATIVE COUNTY STRATEGIES

1. **ECONOMIC LITERACY CLASS -**
 - a. All Work First applicants when approved will be referred to the Economic Literacy training. (If the applicant successfully completes the class within 30 days prior to application date, they do not have to repeat the class.)
 - b. All Food Stamp, Medicaid, Child Care, and Emergency Assistance caseworkers are required to make referrals to Economic Literacy Class.
 - c. Child Welfare staff will put on their case plans that the individuals they are working with must attend and complete the class.

2. **CHILD SAFETY AND PERMANENCE -**

Safety and stability are of great importance to the physical and emotional development of children. To promote safe and stable environments for children, this agency has elected to use the following guide:

 - a. All Work First cases that have child welfare involvement are jointly staffed by Work First and child welfare staff. In fact, child welfare staff is mandatory contacts for Work First cases and Work First staff is mandatory contacts for child welfare cases.
 - b. Home visits are made by Work First staff to employment recipients and child-only cases.
 - c. To support permanent stability, legal custody is discussed and kinship care assessments are completed at review with the caretaker of child only cases. If appropriate, Work First staff can help with Consent Custody Transfers to help give permanence for the child and to help if a medical issue arises. The money to assist with this may come from TANF funds.
 - d. Termination Prevention Team Meeting – When a Work First case is scheduled to terminate and there is no other income in the home, a termination prevention letter is sent with the 10-day notice. We allow them the opportunity to schedule a meeting to discuss their financial situation within 5 calendar days. The partners of the termination prevention team meeting include the client, their Work first Social worker, and a child services social worker supervisor. Goal is to determine how client and family will maintain a household with no income.

3. **FRONT-END FAMILY ASSESSMENT –**

By addressing immediately the overall strengths and needs of the entire family and providing resources to meet those identified needs, the likelihood of achieving safety, stability, and self-sufficiency is enhanced greatly for the family.

- a. At each application, the Case Manager (Human Services Coordinator) completes a holistic family assessment and appropriate referrals are made.
4. EDUCATION FOR PARENT(S) AND AGE-APPROPRIATE CHILDREN
 - a. Adult recipients must be enrolled in and satisfactorily attending appropriate education enhancement classes if they do not have a high school diploma or GED, unless they have good cause. Clients must provide weekly documentation of attendance. Non-Compliance will result in a sanction.
 - b. Promote the importance of regular school attendance by all school-aged children receiving Work First cash assistance. Therefore, Work First will coordinate with the school system to review their attendance.
 - c. A staffing will occur between the school (social worker, guidance counselor and/or teacher) and Work First staff on any children identified with attendance issues and a plan of action developed.
 5. UNIVERSAL CHILD SUPPORT

Most citizens believe that parents should be financially responsible for their children. Further, the average citizen may identify any assistance received through a D.S.S. as public assistance whether that assistance is Work First, Food Stamps or child day care subsidy. In our public systems, families receiving Work First are treated differently than Food Stamps or day care recipients. All Work First recipients are required to cooperate with child support enforcement. Food Stamp and day care subsidy recipients are not. We know by obtaining child support we (1) increase income to the family; (2) create certain property rights for children; (3) reinforce the community value of parental responsibility and (4) increase the involvement of absent parents in the lives of their children. Applying this same practice to recipients of Food Stamps and day care would accomplish the same objectives.

 - a. We therefore will require Food Stamp, Medicaid, Child Care and Emergency Assistance caseworkers to make mandatory referrals to Child Support (discuss with parent/family about child support, it's benefits, the process, etc.) even though the family is not required to accept services.
 6. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
 - a. For Work First cash assistance, a joint staffing with Work First staff, Shelter Home staff and Children's Services staff (if appropriate) will be held when someone wants to claim good cause and a decision to grant this cannot be agreed upon.
 - b. When someone comes in requesting emergency assistance due to domestic violence, the person is referred to the Shelter Home of Caldwell County for a complete assessment and development of a safety plan.
 - c. Upon completion of the assessment and safety plan, DSS will issue payments for identified needs.

7. “INCAPACITATED AND “NEEDED IN THE HOME”
These are families in Caldwell County that have members with serious medical problems and members needed to care for a sick family member. These need to be exempted from work requirements. Ultimately, some of these will be hardship cases in reference to their five-year time clock. On the other hand, experience in Caldwell County has shown that a number of participants shrink from responsibility and use the “incapacitated” status to shield themselves from the necessity to participate. However, once the five-year time clock ends, these people may face difficulty obtaining hardship status. Through a process overseen by our Success Partners, we will take extra steps to insure that the incapacity code is truly reflective of the case situation. Doctors are being briefed on the importance of providing accurate assessments of real functional limitations rather than simply completing a form requesting exemption at the urging of the client.

Within 30 days of approving a case as incapacitated or needed in the home, the family meets with the Success for Families at Risk team to develop a plan of action.

8. EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY ENHANCEMENT
As additional support to insure each Work First able-bodied parents achieve the goal of securing adequate employment the following resources are provided:
 - a. Job Search Coach assists applicants and recipients with dressing for success, interviewing skills, creating a current generic job application and resume. The Job Search Coach also provides transportation to potential employment sites.

XI. SPECIAL ISSUES

As stated earlier, economic conditions are yet to recover from significant changes in the local economy, specifically a loss of manufacturing jobs. Some changes and job losses are permanent. The prognosis for the future is not bright in the short term with the furniture and textile sectors at risk of job losses offshore. While diligent efforts are being made in industry recruitment, marketing county assets, and development of infrastructure (teaching center, new water source impoundment, Wilson Creek Wild and Scenic designation) results are years away. It is therefore possible that Caldwell County could experience an upswing in Work First Cash Assistance cases before economic factors improve and new jobs are created.

Demand for child care assistance will continue to grow based on population growth, stagnant wage growth, and increasing costs of day care services.

XII. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Standard policy will be followed for the following:

1. Age limits for children,
2. Definition of relationships,
3. Who can apply/be included in the payment,
4. Resource requirements (limit and countable items),
5. Rewards, exemptions, and exceptions to requirements

Electing policy:

1. Applicants must meet and cooperate with child support within 12-calendar days of applying for WFFA. Failure to do so without good cause will result in application being denied. Future eligibility is contingent upon complying with child support requirements. For ongoing cases, upon notification of non-cooperation with child support, the case is terminated and future eligibility is contingent upon complying with child support enforcement.
2. Client's statement of age and kinship will be accepted at review unless questionable.
3. Based upon SW recommendation, 16 and 17 year old parents living independently and meeting all other eligibility requirements will be eligible for WFFA and can receive the WFFA check in their own name.
4. There will be no re-openings unless agency error.
5. Standard policy will be followed for countable income with the exception that SSI income is counted.
6. Whenever a single custodial parent or two-parent non-able bodied case becomes a 2 parent able-bodied case, the case is terminated and a Benefit Diversion application will be taken, if applicable. If not applicable, the adult will be added to the case and the payment procedure is changed to pay after performance. Protective payees may be assigned if WFFA or CPS staff deem necessary. (If the state does away with the 2-parent participation rate, Caldwell County will delete this policy.)
7. If applicable, all 2- parent able-bodied cases will be approved as a Benefit Diversion case once they register for first stop, file for UIB, meet with child support and attend Economic Literacy training. The Benefit Diversion case will be certified for 3 months if they comply with the application and the MRA. If they do not comply, the application will be denied. (If the state does away with the 2 parent participation rate, Caldwell County will no longer give Benefit Diversion to 2 parent able-bodied cases. They will be treated as a regular WFFA case).
8. A sanction will make the entire family ineligible for a Work First Family payment for one month or until compliance, whichever is later. When a family in a sanction fails to comply and does not receive a payment for three consecutive months, the county must terminate the Work First Family Assistance case and evaluate for Medicaid.
9. All applicants and age appropriate children when approved will be referred to parent education classes. Failure to complete the classes within 2 months, without good cause, results in a sanction for a minimum of one month or until they comply whichever is longer.

10. When a case is approved as “Incapacitated” or “Needed in the Home” due to a long term illness, it will be referred to Success for Families at Risk case staffing within 30 days. Failure to attend the Success for Families at Risk meeting will result in the case terminating, unless good cause. A minimum of one month of ineligibility will result. Future eligibility is contingent upon attendance at the Success for Families at Risk staffing prior to case approval.
11. All Work First applicants/recipients claiming a disability may be referred to doctor of county’s choice for further evaluation. The person must comply with all recommendations. Failure to comply results in denial or termination of case. Future eligibility is contingent upon compliance with all recommendations. Examples: referral to Vocational Rehabilitation, job searching, work, work experience, etc.
12. All applicants when approved will be referred to the Economic Literacy training. Failure to successfully complete the training without good cause will result in the case being terminated and one month of ineligibility. Future eligibility is contingent upon the completion of the Economic Literacy training. (If the applicant successfully completes the class within 30 days prior to application date, they do not have to repeat the class.)
13. If both quarterly reporting deadlines are missed there will be one month of ineligibility unless there is good cause.
14. After two “no shows” for arranged transportation within a 3-month period, the case will be sanctioned unless there is good cause. The no-show policy starts over with each new application for Work First.
15. The application will be denied if a client does not comply with their MRA unless they have good cause.
16. Work First social workers will complete a front end assessment at application.
17. Benefit Diversion must be repaid if the recipient reapplies and is approved within 12 months following the certification period. No more than 5% will be deducted from the monthly Work First check.
18. Refusal of a job, or quitting or losing a job or work experience without good cause will result in termination. There will be one month of ineligibility.
19. A strength based assessment will be completed at every application.
20. Adult recipients must be enrolled in and satisfactorily attending appropriate education enhancement classes if they do not have a high school diploma or GED, unless they have good cause. Clients must provide weekly documentation of attendance. Non-Compliance will result in a sanction.
21. School attendance - The caretaker must provide proof of school attendance for all school age children at application and review by providing a current report card or attendance summary print-out from the school. Failure to comply with the North Carolina/Caldwell County School attendance policy will result in the Work First check being sanctioned, unless there is good cause. Work First Social Workers verify school attendance with the School Social Workers on a monthly basis. Therefore, it is not necessary for them to call the schools when a Quarterly Report is received.

22. Single parents may claim their “s” exemption for the first 3 months of a child’s life. Once the 12 month lifetime exemption has been exhausted, the parent will be required to participate in the employment program as soon as authorization is given from her doctor. Also, if a parent volunteers to participate in the employment program, he/she may not reclaim the exemption for the same child.
23. Each adult budget unit member can receive the Job Bonus if the following criteria are met:
 - 1.) The employment is new or there is an increase in hours;
 - 2.) The employment is expected to be permanent; **and**
 - 3.) The employment is expected to be a minimum of 25 hours per week.
24. Standard policy will be followed for payment levels with the exception that a Work First check cannot be issued less than \$50. (If the amount is \$.01 to \$49.99, the family is ineligible for a Work First check.
25. A Kinship Care Assessment will be completed at the first review on child only cases when applicable.
26. Standard policy will be followed for time limits and extensions with the following two exceptions: the 24 and 60 month time limits also apply to undocumented citizens and Benefit Diversion counts towards the 60-month time limit.
27. ESL is required to all undocumented citizens, unless there is good cause. Failure to attend ESL classes will result in terminating the case.
28. The Family Cap rule will be applied to include receiving from other states.
29. For Benefit Diversion, CAP children are not included in the payment amount.

XIII. COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS

Caldwell County will follow standard Work First program policy and OPT OUT OF THIS WORK PROVISION.

XIV. APPEALS PROCESS

Caldwell County will utilize a three-person panel appointed by the Caldwell County Board of Commissioners to hear all second level appeals. This panel will include a D.S.S. Board Member, a County Commissioner, and a citizen-at-large.

XV. REVIEW PRIOR TO EXPIRATION OF TIME LIMITS

Caldwell County will follow standard Work First program policy.

XVI. FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

Caldwell County anticipates the following spending for the items specified:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| (1) Benefit Diversion | \$ 72,500; |
| (2) Work First Cash | \$ 332,500; |
| (3) Work First Services | \$ 1,662,186; |
| (4) Maintenance of Effort | \$ 546,172. |

Caldwell will maintain the required 90% MOE as an Electing County. Any savings this may have generated will have been reinvested in Child Welfare since 1999. The local strategy will be to reinvest any cash savings in other services to support the goals of TANF including Emergency Assistance, Transportation, and various contracted services to families under 200% of Poverty. The above numbers reflect this reinvestment.

Please see the Appendix 7 for funding information.

XVII. CERTIFICATION

For the certification please see the Appendix 8.

WELFARE REFORM TASK FORCE

	Name						
1.	Deborah Ashley						
2.	Martha Adkins						
3.	Captain Jeff Stafford						
4.	Becky Barlowe						
5.	Michael Bradshaw						
6.	Pam Robinson						
7.	Terry Crump						
8.	Debbie Eller						
9.	Andrea Lytle						
10.	Rev. R. Dale Fisher Board Chair						
11.	Sue Land						
12.	Deborah Teeters						
13.	Ms. Ervil Anderson						
14.	Sharon White						
15.	Sarah Eckard						
16.	Susan Moseley						
17.	Joyce Edwards						
18.	Lisa Abel						
19.	Sharon Johnson						
20.	Cecilia Hicks						
21.	Rhonda Howell						
22.	Mattie Patterson						
23.	Frances Fox						
24.	Metaleen Thomas						
25.	Walter Land						
26.	Ronald Roukema						

27.	Faye R. Higgins						
28.	Alden Starnes						
29.	Herb Greene						
30.	Dr. John Thuss						
31.	Tim Sanders						
32.	Judge Brady						
33.	Denise Michaud						
34.	Henry Steele						
35.	Joey M. Reynolds, Chief of Police						
36.	Donna Bean						
37.	Jennifer Robson						

Department Of Social Services
Department Of Social Services Board
Caldwell County Commissioners

CALDWELL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

ITEM #: I2

DATE: 8/21/06

FROM: Bobby White, County Manager

SUBJECT: Approval to Continue Electing County Status for Caldwell County DSS

REQUESTED BY:

Public Hearing	Yes	No	X	Properly Advertised	Yes	No
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BACKGROUND

In previous years, Caldwell County has requested and been designated as an electing county in terms of our DSS operations. Staff is now making the Board aware of the need to take formal action concerning continuation of this electing county status.

The Caldwell County DSS Board has discussed this item in great detail and has voted unanimously to recommend Commissioners formally approve a request to continue the electing county status.

During the meeting, DSS staff will lead a presentation concerning the Work First program as well as its linkage to the electing county item.

Attachments: Yes

Staff Recommendation: Board of Commissioners formally approve the request to continue the County's designation as an electing county.

TO: Joyce Edwards, Sharon Johnson, Sam Yearick, Finance Department
 FROM: Kathy Myers
 DATE: August 24, 2006
 MEMO #: 2604

During the meeting on August 21, 2006, Caldwell County Commissioners took official action to approve continuation of the electing county designation for Caldwell County. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Caldwell County, North Carolina**Request for Standard or Electing Status for the Work First Program**

The Board of Commissioners of Caldwell County voted on August 21, 2006 to request [] **Standard** or [] **Electing** (Check one) Status for the Work First Program.

The vote was 5 for and 0 against (at least two-thirds in favor).

Jay R. Higgins
Commission Chair Signature

8-29-06
Date

The primary contact person for our Work First Block Grant planning process will be:

Name: Sharon Johnson
Position/Title: Work First Supervisor
Address: 1966-H Morganton Blvd., SW
Lenoir, NC 28645
Phone: (828) 426-8276
Fax: (828) 426-8397 or (828) 426-8398
Email: sjohnson@co.caldwell.nc.us

Due Date: August 31, 2006

Submit to: Sara Anderson Mims, Program Administrator
Work First/CPS Policy Team
Family Support and Child Welfare Services Section
North Carolina Division of Social Services
325 N. Salisbury St.
2408 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-2408
Fax: (919) 715-6714

An Equal Opportunity / Affirmative Action Employer

**CALDWELL COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

Planning Committee

September 26, 2006

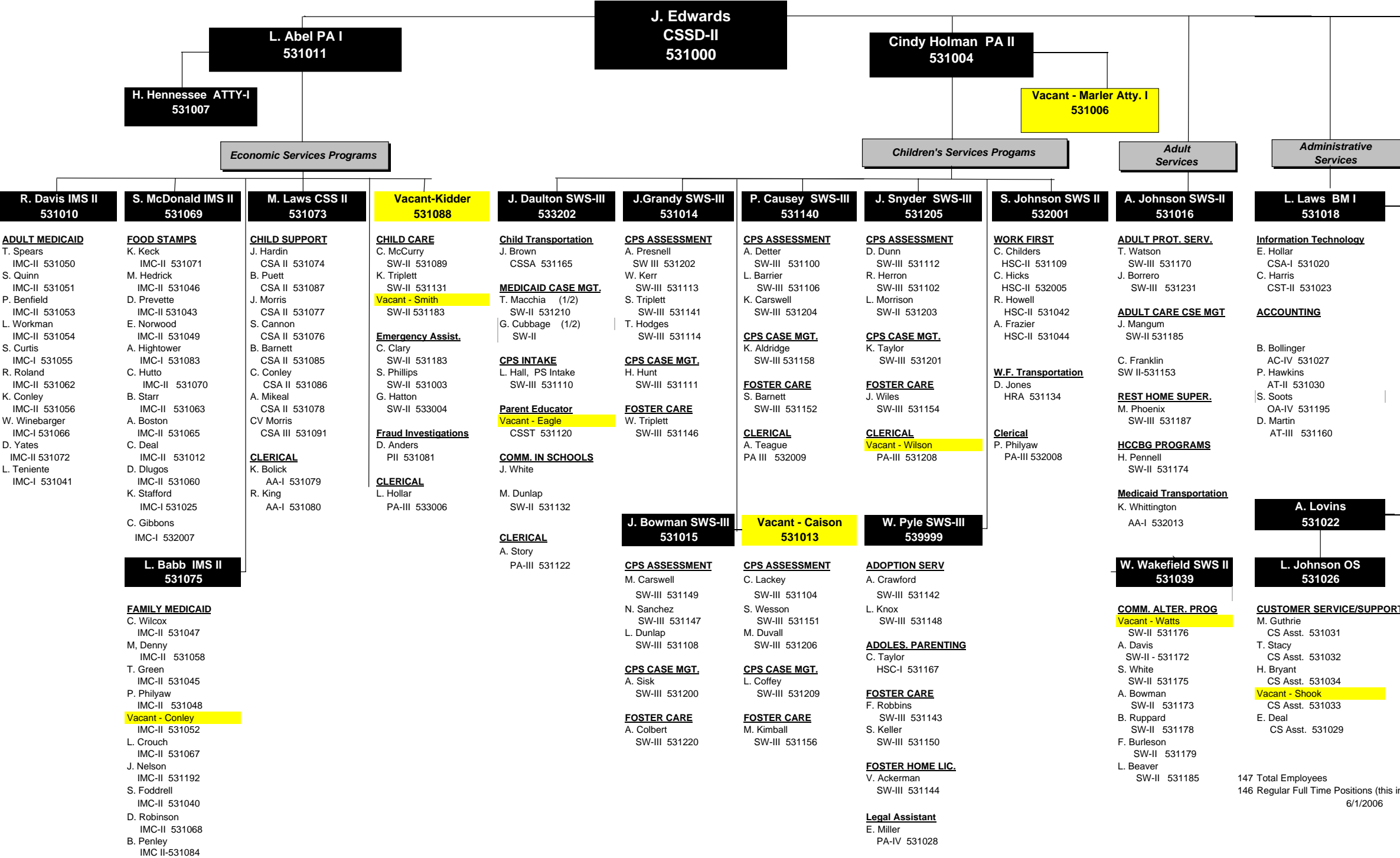
Caldwell County Public Library in Lenoir

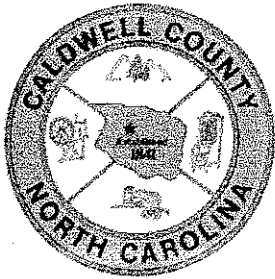
Room 6

AGENDA

- I. Welcome
- II. Invocation
- III. Lunch
- IV. Overview of Committee Purpose and Timelines
- V. What has Worked Well Being an Electing County?
- VI. Review of Current Plan and Recommendations for SFY
2007-2009 Plan

**Caldwell County Department of Social Services
Organizational Chart**





COUNTY OF CALDWELL

Department of Social Services
 1966-H Morganton Boulevard, SW
 Lenoir, North Carolina 28645
 Phone: (828) 426-8200
 Fax: (828) 426-8398
www.co.caldwell.nc.us/depart/dss

BOARD MEMBERS
 Mattie Patterson, Chair
 Frances Fox, Vice-Chair
 Metaleen Thomas
 Walter Land
 Ronald Roukema

DIRECTOR
 Joyce P. Edwards

WORK FIRST FAMILY ASSISTANCE AND EMPLOYMENT SECURITY COMMISSION

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING REGARDING FIRST STOP REGISTRATION

The purpose of this memorandum of understanding is to establish procedures for the staff of Caldwell County Department of Social Services and the Employment Security Commission to follow regarding Work First clients registering with First Stop.

All Work First applicants, recipients, re-applicants and individuals requesting inclusion (unless exempt), are required to register with First Stop Employment Assistance Program at ESC before their application or inclusion request can be approved or their assistance continued. The Employment Security Commission office is located at 504 Wilkesboro Boulevard, S.E., Lenoir, N.C.

Unless exempt, at case review all adults included in the Work First Assistance case must be referred to ESC for First Stop registration unless they are active First Stop registrants.

Caldwell County DSS elected option A according to Work First Family Assistance manual section 104C. Work First Assistance applications are taken the day the client comes to the agency and then the applicant is referred to ESC (unless exempt) to complete the First Stop Work registration process.

The Work First intake worker completes a First Stop Registration Form for the client to take to ESC when registering. The client is given 12 calendar days to file for First Stop unless they have good cause. The deadline is documented on the DSS-8146A form. It is the applicant's responsibility to notify the DSS worker when they have completed their First Stop registration. ESC agrees to update screens in the ESCS system.

To determine if an individual is registered at ESC, the caseworker signs on to the ESCS system and requests the Client Characteristics screen (CC), the First Stop Data Screen (FD), and the Display Services screen (DS). The Reg/Date field on the CC screen reflects the date of registration. An "A" in the FD field will indicate if the individual registered as a First Stop applicant. The FD screen reflects the FS registration date, if the person is job ready or not and if job referrals are made. The DS screen gives a services description listing of provided services.

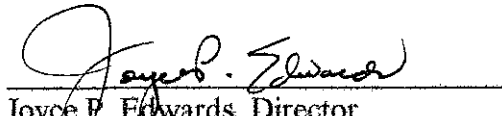
Caldwell County does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services.

If the client has been to ESC and registered within the last 12 workdays, he/she has met the First Stop requirement. DSS agrees to notify ESC by completing and forwarding Addition of First Stop Indicator form.

Both agencies have data entry capabilities and agree to update each other as changes occur.


Sue A. Land, Manager
Employment Security Commission

10/3/06
Date


Joyce P. Edwards, Director
Caldwell County Department of
Social Services

9/8/06
Date

**CALDWELL COUNTY DSS
WORK FIRST BLOCK GRANT PLAN 2007-2009**

FUNDING

<u>TANF Funds</u>	<u>Item Expense</u>	<u>Total Expenses</u>
TNF Cash Assist Payments to Clients	\$ 390,000	
TNF – UP Cash Assist Pymts to Clients	<u>15,000</u>	
Projected Cash Assist Pymts FY <u>2006-2007</u>		\$ 405,000
Work First Staff & Social Work Time Expense	\$ 907,379	
Emergency Cash to Clients	300,000	
Participation & Transportation paid to Clients	17,000	
Contractual Expense – Job Coach	36,180	
TANF Foster Care Payments & Maximization Pymt	102,528	
TANF 100% (used for all TNF expenses MOE met)	<u>845,271</u>	
Projected TNF/WF Admin & Client Expenses		<u>\$2,208,358</u>
<hr/>		
Total Work First Allocation FY <u>2006-2007</u>		<u>\$2,613,358</u>
<u>Other TANF Funds</u>		
Domestic Violence	\$ 9,776	
TANF CPS & FC Adopt	<u>421,799</u>	
<hr/>		
Total Other TANF Funds		<u>\$ 431,575</u>
Grand Total Annual Anticipated TANF expenses FY <u>2006-2007</u>		<u>\$ 3,044,933</u>