

**DAVIDSON COUNTY
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**WORK FIRST DEMONSTRATION PILOT
FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES TOGETHER SUCCEED (FACTS) PROGRAM
Third Quarterly Report**

Davidson County has completed the third quarter of the FACTS program. FACTS is a WorkFirst Pilot program designed to identify and assess families at risk of imminent or future crisis and/or families at risk of remaining in poverty. Additionally, the program connects families to resources that are available in their community. By educating families about these resources they are able to utilize existing programs aimed at self-sufficiency in order to prevent them from becoming dependent on traditional welfare programs.

Ideally, the FACTS program was expected to receive at least two hundred (200) referrals each month. While these numbers have not been attained, there has been a steady increase in the number of referrals. In the first quarter, the program received sixty-five (65) referrals. In the second quarter, the numbers more than doubled to one hundred and thirty-three (133) referrals. During the third quarter, two hundred and ten (210) referrals were received. The rise in the number of referrals continues to be from Department of Social Services staff. Child Welfare social workers are increasingly learning the benefits of the FACTS program. Child Welfare social workers have been able to close unsubstantiated cases and makes a FACTS referral. By utilizing the FACTS program, the family is able to work toward self-sufficiency at more their own pace as well as without the intrusiveness of a Child Protective Services Investigation. The FACTS Supervisor has incorporated into the unit expectations that each social worker will educate at least two (2) community agencies about the FACTS program within the next grant year. By continuing to educate the public, the FACTS program will be able to identify a more diverse group of families who can be offered services.

Currently fully staffed, the FACTS social workers average a caseload of approximately sixty (60) families. The hiring of the third social work position during the second quarter has reduced the total caseload and enabled the social workers to work more intensely with the families to identify needs.

The total budget for the FACTS grant is \$306,369.00. To date the FACTS program has expended \$119,379.00. This is thirty-nine (39) percent of the total FACTS budget. FACTS has seen the largest expenditure growth in the FAST program. During the third quarter, nine (9) families graduated from that program.

The FACTS program continues to gain momentum and validity as a means toward self-sufficiency. Through the social worker's encouragement and direction, the families are able to achieve goals that they were instrumental in setting for themselves. By creating this supportive relationship the social workers are encouraging self-sufficiency. To date, the FACTS program has received four hundred and nine (409) referrals. Of the referrals received, three hundred and ninety-five (395) have been screened for services. One hundred and eighty eight (188) families or forty-seven (47) percent have accepted services. Seventy-four families (74) or nineteen (19) percent have declined services. The FACTS Supervisor feels that the decrease in acceptance of services is related to the addition of the third

social worker. This social worker has a good rapport with her families but lacks experience in working with families in crisis. Families that do not accept services continue to state that they have handled the crisis themselves or that they are aware of services in their communities should they need assistance.

The FACTS unit considers a family having declined services if the family has not responded to two (2) attempts to contact them, has a current case manager, no eligible child in the home, or over-income. The Department of Social Services has declined to serve one hundred and thirty-nine families (139) or thirty-five (35) percent of referrals. After social workers make two (2) attempts to contact the family with no response, the family is declined for services.

The progress that families make after developing a case plan with the FACTS social worker is astounding. Many of the families truly have ownership in the success they have achieved. The following are samples of family accomplishments:

Case #1:

Jamie lost her job due to a lack of transportation. After two months of unemployment, funds were gone, utilities were in jeopardy of being disconnected, and the rent was past due. The FACTS social worker worked together with Jamie with the immediate goal of getting utilities paid for, secondly Jamie was to get the car repaired and lastly, find employment. By using the referrals given by the social to meet the agreed upon goals, Jamie became employed. Jamie used the JobLink Career Center at the local community college to learn what was available. Not only did she find employment but also she learned vital information about job search and resume building. Jamie became comfortable with the staff at the JobLink Center and plans to continue visiting to learn more about career advancement.

Case #2:

The Jones family was in a dire situation. A mentally disabled teenage family member was committed to Dorothea Dix and another child was being suspended from school for selling prescription drugs. Before the teenager could be discharged, the family had to come up with a plan to ensure the safety of a younger sibling in the home. The family agreed to rearrangement of bedrooms in the home for safety. The parents also enrolled both teenage boys in Vocational Rehabilitation. With the help of Vocational Rehabilitation, the parents looked at alternative education and employment arrangements for both boys. Admittedly, the family stated they had no idea what Vocational Rehabilitation was prior to the FACTS social worker involvement. The family states that had they not learned about Vocational Rehabilitation they would have left the mentally disabled child without education, employment, or social interaction as they did not feel he would benefit from traditional school settings. The other teenage son is acceptable to alternative education and employment as he felt that he did not fit in with the traditional school setting. This family truly benefited from the knowledge of community resources.

Case #3:

Marsha is raising an infant yet was unemployed. The father of the child is in jail. Marsha's mother was paying all her bills at the time of her enrollment with FACTS. However, those arrangements could not last and Marsha would soon find herself in a grim situation. Marsha was motivated to finding a job and being self-sufficient. With encouragement from the FACTS social worker, Marsha found employment at two jobs. Her mother keeps the baby so she can work as much as possible. Marsha worked both jobs for approximately two months until all bills were paid. She is currently working only one job forty hours a week and her mother continues to provide daycare. Marsha also applied for Medicaid for her son.

Case #4:

Amber is a fourteen-year-old mother. She was eager to continue in school but had no daycare arrangements. The FACTS social worker provided the mother with daycare in her area and left it to her to call and find one with a vacancy. Amber's uncle agreed to provide the transportation to and from daycare and Amber to school. Amber has followed through with the daycare application and has returned to school. The child is doing well in daycare and Amber has returned to school and is doing well in her classes.

Case #5:

Tisha is a single mother of three children. When FACTS became involved with her, she was unemployed and on public assistance. Tisha was eager for any referrals the social worker could give her. She followed through with all referrals. Tisha is now employed, the children are up to date on their shots. The four-year-old has been evaluated by Smart Start for School Readiness. Mom continues to work full time and has private health insurance through her employer. She is no longer on any public assistance.

The trend in the past months had been referrals on single parent homes. However, FACTS is seeing an increasing number of two parent home referrals. As the community learns more about the FACTS program, the referrals are coming from a broader section of the county. No longer are the majority of referrals in the public housing communities. The program is reaching the low-income families from all areas of the county.

According to monthly follow-ups with the families, all children served are current on immunizations and health checks. Social workers identified several families where the children were not current but the families admitted that poor follow through lead to the lapse. After stressing the importance, each family followed through with immunizations prior to the end of the quarter. During the third quarter, thirteen (13) Child Protective Services reports were received on families currently being served by FACTS. All families remained intact during the investigation.

Based on the one hundred thirty-two (132) families served through December 31st, only sixteen (16) or twelve (12) percent were verified to be unemployed three (3) or more months since services were started. Including heads of households who receive disability payments rather than wages, eighty-two (82) or eighty-four (84) percent of the ninety-eight (98) self-reporting/known working families were self-sufficient/unemployed less than three (3) months. Thirty-four (34) or twenty-six (26) percent of the families were non-responsive/employment information was unverifiable. Therefore, as a whole, eighty-two (82) or sixty-two (62) percent of the principal wage earners in each of the families served were unemployed no more than three (3) months through December 31, 2000, still somewhat less than the ninety (90) percent target for our third objective.

The more diverse the referrals, the more families that are being referred where an adult in the home is not on disability. While twenty-seven (27) of the one hundred and eighty four families (184) have an adult receiving disability, this is only fifteen (15) percent. Social workers continue to see some families where the principle wage earner has verified disabilities while others are claiming disability as a reason for unemployment or are currently unemployed while awaiting disability approval. Emergency Assistance continues to be a referral that social workers use often. Because some families are not aware of this service offered by the Department of Social Services, it is a referral often made plus is an objective measured by the grant. Of the one hundred and eight-four (184) families served through December 31st, eighty four (84) percent have not applied for Emergency Assistance. Ninety-seven (97) percent of the families served have not applied for Emergency Assistance more than once.

Family Services of Davidson County, Inc. are partners with Davidson County Department of Social Services in providing FACTS services to the community. Family Services administers the nationally recognized Families and Schools Together (FAST) program. The FAST program targets children between the ages of four (4) and middle school who are at risk of alcohol and drug abuse, violence, and delinquency, and school dropout. Family Services has completed two cycles of the FAST program. Both sessions were held in primary schools. Pickett Primary School graduated four (4) out of the eight (8) families enrolled while Fairgrove Primary School graduated five (5) out of nine (9) families enrolled. Fifty-three (53) percent of families completed the FAST program. According to information received by the FAST coordinator, one hundred (100) percent of the families have demonstrated

improved functioning in the community by receiving no new court referrals. Parents and school staff also report that in one hundred (100) percent of the families there is an improvement in school attendance, achievement, and a decrease in unacceptable behavior. Information provided by FAST also reports that one hundred (100) percent of the parents that completed FAST are employed full-time, enrolled in continuing education, involved in community activities, or counseling. The FAST Coordinator has expressed positive outcomes from the sessions. He states that he has seen the bond between family members strengthen with each weekly session. The National FAST Program will continue to evaluate standards and monitor activities and objectives for a two (2) year period on each family that completes FAST. Because of the length of time (8 weeks) that a session runs, Family Services will not be able to complete another cycle before the end of this grant year. However, it has been discussed with Family Services that the Department of Social Services would like to see the objective of sixty (60) families served met in the next grant year. The Department of Social Services has also expressed that the FAST program should expand to include middle school children as outlined in the contract. Both parties agree that with staff fully in place for the new contract year that fulfilling the objectives should be somewhat more attainable. As of December 31st, 2000, \$46,615.52 has been expended, or fifty-two (52) percent of the FAST budget.

The Get Real Program (a collaborative work force development program) serves persons between the ages of sixteen (16) and twenty-one (21) who have dropped out of school within the past three (3) years. The County was not been successful in recruiting a part-time person to fill the retention specialist/case manager position. This position was resubmitted and approved as a full time case manager position. However, the position has not yet been filled. The Job Training and Employment director is reconsidering their role in the FACTS program. Get REAL is a successful program in itself. It is possible that FACTS will make referrals to the existing program but not contract with Get REAL to provide expanded job retention and counseling services.

Evaluation of the FACTS program has already begun. The FACTS Coordinator developed a questionnaire that will be completed by each family that accepted services. This questionnaire was reviewed and revised by an MSW student. In order to get the most responses; it was agreed that face to face contact would be best. The questions were also redesigned to be more single word answer than essay type responses. The FACTS Coordinator is confident that this new revised questionnaire will yield the best statistical data for measuring obtained FACTS objectives.

FACTS continues to serve a necessary service to the public. By educating the public and networking services available to low income families, the Department of Social Services is providing families with the means to become self sufficient. The families and the social worker develop a case plan together with a goal that is set by the family. The social worker gives them places to look for answers and it is up to the family to follow through with the case plan. When the families get the service desired, they own that success. This gives the family self-esteem. By linking families with community resources, they feel a part of their community. All these factors together help to create motivation, education, and positive contributions toward self-sufficiency.