Work First Pilot Projects - Quarterly Progress Report
for
A.C.O.R.N. Center for Families - Linea de Conecciones para Familias
Hispanas

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While continuing to expand all of the A.C.O .R.N. Center for Families’ Work First Pilot Project components, the following major activities have been initiated during the past three months:

- ACORN staff has come together with the school system and the Literacy Council to form a group, including advocates, Hispanic families, and agency staff, to discuss issues and find solutions. The group has met twice and is currently recruiting a corps of bi-lingual volunteers to assist Carteret County’s Hispanic Families.
- To further address the need for housing counseling and financial literacy ACORN has community meetings and is meeting on an individual basis with families. Staff is also working with landlords to improve communication with current and potential tenants.
- Over 300 people attended ACORN’s second annual Hispanic Heritage Fiesta on September 22nd. There were ten community agencies with information and resources for the Hispanic Families.

Of the 187 Hispanic families we have identified in Carteret County, ACORN’s Hispanic Family Support Coordinators are currently working with 56 families that qualify for services under the defined guidelines - these families equal 208 individuals.

The outcomes observed during the last three months include:
The 110 individuals who were assisted with overcoming language barriers utilized appropriate community resources and made independent, well informed decisions. Hispanic Family Support Coordinators have tremendously increased the Hispanic Families’ access to community resources by educating the families on which resources could assist them, translating and communicating between the families and the local agencies, and assisting with applications and forms. Community resources benefit from correct referrals for their services and provide services Hispanic families need. Overcoming language barriers is helping Hispanic families become part of the community and others are seeing them as equals.

For the 52 children who were involved with child development programs or received access to them, their progress towards being better prepared to enter kindergarten on grade and developmental level is evident. The school system is realizing the greater need for outreach in the earlier years, but is frustrated that they do not have the resources needed.

For the 4 individual contacts made to assist Hispanic families in creating safe neighborhoods by eliminating criminal activity or other dangers to child and family safety and well being, the families received information and skills to better care for their families in emergencies, such as hurricanes, and improve their communities by organizing crime watch groups.

For the 10 individual contacts needing assistance with finding housing and moving from poverty to self-sufficiency, staff is working with the families to identify their immediate needs and long term goals. The outcomes for these families include safe and healthy housing situations, along with improved decision making skills and financial literacy skills they will use throughout their life. They are also informed of their rights as tenants and are better equipped to advocate for their rights so they do not become homeless again in the future.

The program finally served 2 non-custodial Hispanic fathers in the ACORN Center’s parenting class. Both fathers were referred by Carteret County DSS and demonstrated an improvement in parenting skills and knowledge of child abuse and domestic violence laws in the United States.

These outcomes are inline with the overall goal of the program, which is to strengthen the local community through the empowerment of Hispanic families in Carteret County. Hispanic families are developing skills to build upon their strengths and address their own employment and language barriers.
community collaboration, Hispanic families are gaining the opportunities and resources required to stop intergenerational poverty in their families and thus reach their full potential.

Just as the Hispanic families are striving to improve themselves, this pilot program is working towards a strong future. There are weekly reviews with staff to discuss the outreach and services we are providing in the community and how we can improve performance and reach more people. Issues facing Carteret County’s Hispanic families include lack of livable housing and financial management skills. Our new program component is allowing us the flexibility to further address these issues.

During the last three months, $19,659.76 or 11.4% of the total ACORN Center for Families Work First funds have been expended.