Work First Pilot Projects – Quarterly Progress Report
for
A.C.O.R.N. Center for Families – Línea de Conexiones para Familias Hispanas

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Submitted by: Mary Carmichael, Director of A.C.O.R.N. Center for Families
East Carolina Community Development, Inc. (ECCDI)
402 Turner Street – West Office
Beaufort, NC 28516
Phone Number: 1-252-504-2797
Fax Number: 1-252-504-2314
E-mail: acorncenter@netscape.net

While continuing to expand all of the A.C.O.R.N. Center for Families’ Work First Pilot Project components, the following major activity was initiated during the past three months: ACORN staff has collaborated with the Carteret County Partnership for Children to provide a developmentally appropriate play group specifically for the Hispanic children in Beaufort ages 0-5. Each week the number has increased and we are looking at arranging for another one in Morehead City. It has also been a great opportunity to provide outreach to the parents of these children. Even a few fathers who don’t work in the morning due the factor shift have been coming.

Of the 206 Hispanic families we have identified in Carteret County, ACORN’s Hispanic Family Support Coordinators are currently working with 75 families that qualify for services under the defined guidelines - these families equal 276 individuals.

The outcomes observed during the last three months include:

- The 251 individual contacts were made assisting families overcoming language barriers while utilizing appropriate community resources and making 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 can 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 228 contacts which involved Hispanic children 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 play group collaboration with Smart Start discussed earlier is an important first step for many of these children to access developmentally appropriate programs.

- For the 52 individual contacts made to assist Hispanic families in creating safe neighborhoods by eliminating criminal activity or other dangers to children and family safety and well-being, the families received information and skills to better care for their families in emergencies, referrals to domestic violence and rape crisis, and child safety seat information and car seat distribution—with seats generously provided by the Carteret County Health Department.

- For the 12 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. This preventative support is greatly helping to reduce the homeless population in Carteret County. 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. 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.

- The program served 5 Hispanic fathers in the ACORN Center’s parenting class and fatherhood and child support/non-custodial issues. The fathers were referred by Carteret County DSS and by other Hispanic fathers in the community by word of mouth. They demonstrated an improvement in parenting skills and knowledge of child abuse and domestic violence laws in the United States.

These outcomes are in line 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. Through 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 program components are providing comprehensive and holistic family support with the ability to address these community issues.

During the last three months, $23,483.65 or 13.6% of the total ACORN Center for Families Work First funds have been expended.