Quarterly Progress Report Welfare Reform Liaison Project  
Fourth Quarter Report 2000

Item 1. Describe the major activities initiated as part of the pilot project during the last three months. Include dates as necessary.
The major activity initiated this quarter was the expansion of our co-op training project. We recruited new business partners to provide on-site job training for our program participants. Currently we have 6 TANF individuals placed in co-op training settings, and 3 TANF individuals who have been hired by recruited business partners. We have developed an excellent partnership with our local DSS and have some of our graduates placed both in Greensboro and High Point.

Item 2. How many individuals has your pilot project served during the last three months?
The February class of Welfare Reform Liaison Project (WRLP) was the organization’s 6th training class since its inception. Welfare Reform Liaison Project, held its fourth welfare-to-work training session for the reporting period of this grant. Instead of it being a nine week training session we increased it to 11 weeks. This class started out with 21 participants, and a total of 11 will finish the program. This pattern, (usually with a smaller number) is the pattern we have seen in each session. Four people who will complete the program were active TANF recipients. One of the dropouts was an active TANF recipient. It must be kept in mind that this is a voluntary program with a small staff, so surveying each dropout is very difficult.

Please note that this report is being completed before the 6th class actually graduates, so some unforeseen event may cause someone to drop the program and thus change the statistics. We do not have a projection on how many students will enter the workshop aspect of the program because the program is not complete and we are not sure that there is funding available for this cycle of students to place them in the workshop. Nearly 40 percent of our budget is from state revenues and the state funding crisis had a ripple effect in slowing down our program planning. It is quite likely that this group of students, regardless of labor market readiness, may have to forgo the intermediary steps of workshop, coop, and then full labor force participation, and instead, move immediately to the market.

The specific outcomes in this report will point to: (1) The progress of those 4 recipients on a range of items of importance. (2) The report will also provide information about the other 7 participants as well. One of the remaining 7 students, 1 was a former AFDC recipient. One student this session was a young man, another was a 60 year old woman, and 6 participants had not received welfare. Two non TANF students had some college. This fact reinforces the point that we brought up in the last report which noted that (WRLP) is, on one level, becoming a legitimate labor force training program and a welfare prevention program as well.

In our last report we outlined the seven concerns which serve as lenses through which the success of (WRLP) ought to be viewed. Our clients often bring to the training an intertwined set of untapped skills, a deep desire to succeed, and personal and structural barriers that can thwart change. Couple those matters with the fact is the program itself is so intricate that we are
convinced that no single factor is the one that the hat of success can be hung. Briefly those seven concerns were:

(1) The complex and multiple problems of the clients, such as the lack of transportation or inadequate housing, which is often laced with their personal inabilities to manage time effectively or plan appropriately. Those problems in turn influence their attitude and comportment.

(2) The intense and complicated interactions the students have with the staff, which include intense case management to address the above concerns, coupled with a no-nonsense educational program.

(3) The unifying and supportive relationships the students have with each other.

(4) The respect the staff has gained among the leaders and line staff of the other social service organizations with which it has had to form partnerships to deliver these complex services.

(5) How this program and the students have become known and gained legitimacy in the low income community in Greensboro.

(6) The increasingly intricate relationships the agency has developed with the institutional stakeholders in its sphere: (a) foundations, (b) businesses, (c) media, (d) United Way, (e) higher educational institutions; (f) Department of Social Services, (g) other nonprofit organizations, (h) religious congregations, and the intricacies involved in securing and maintaining all of these partnerships; and

(7) The blending of the Faith Factor and Professional Factor which takes much of its form in the deeds and professional approach to service delivery of the highly trained professional staff.

It was also noted in the last report that the establishment of intense personal relationships with the students, alongside the creation of lasting partnerships with its stakeholders in the community, was key to understanding the success of this organization. We stand by these points as the basis for accomplishing our mission.

Item 3. Briefly describe the outcomes observed for these individuals.

Of the 4 TANF recipients in the February Class: each will successfully complete the Guilford Technical Community College certificate program. If we have an opportunity to place TANF students in the workshop setting – it would be beneficial. As of this writing we are uncertain as to what will happen.

Each of the TANF recipients experienced minor, moderate, and severe structural barriers during the course of the training, some of which were overcome or managed effectively through intensive case management. After six classes almost completed, we come to expect that just about every student brings to the program, one or more problems like inadequate housing, the lack of transportation or unreliable child care. Our records show us that we have the most difficulty in changing child care situations, and intense educational deficiencies. Although for this class, we were able to help move the students with severe child care problems to more manageable situations by the time of this report.

Those who come to us with barriers that can be managed with skilled intervention, progress through the program nicely. For example we had 2 TANF recipients who entered the program with severe transportation problems and a weak commitment to the program. There was a high positive correlation between the resolution of the transportation problem and increased
commitment to the program. Two had child care problems and they were resolved. Two brought difficult educational problems to the training and there was no change in those situations.

One TANF and the former AFDC recipient were both victims of domestic violence and had criminal records. This will more than likely have some effect on either ease of job placement and/or job performance – depending of course on if the abuse continues. One of the recipient’s children had health problems that were managed effectively at the time of this report. Two of the 4 TANF students brought fairly limited work histories to the training session and could benefit from the workshop experience.

We have noted in other reports that the social work staff has become extremely skilled in addressing both the systemic barriers facing the student, and the psychological barriers that often go hand-in-hand. The staff moves easily back and forth from its three pronged role of broker of services, advocate, and counselor.

3a. Observed outcomes for Non TANF Recipients.
Below are some briefly noted statistics about the barriers faced by the non TANF group. One member of this group had difficulties with child care but it was resolved by the time of this report. One member of this group, as noted above, a former AFDC recipient, was a victim of domestic violence and two, as in the 5th class, brought severe educational limitations to the training. One student had an extreme transportation problem and 2 were faced with moderate transportation problems. At the end time of the writing of this report, there was one person with an extreme transportation problem and one moderate problem. Interestingly, students will take a cab to the training in order not to miss. This is expensive. Two non TANF students had criminal records for minor offenses, 2 had slight to moderate problems with their health, which was handled effectively by this writing. All in all, both groups brought problems to the training that caseworkers had to manage intensively.

4. Describe how these outcomes are in line with the goals and objectives of your pilot project? As we have noted in our previous reports, Welfare Reform Liaison Project’s major goals center on the assisting families with special problems that prevent them from obtaining immediate employment or long-term employment, and training them for employment. Accomplishing these objectives depends on solving, managing, or preventing the complex and multiple problems of the clients such as the lack of transportation, or inadequate housing, which is often laced with their personal inabilities to manage time effectively or plan appropriately that in turn affects their attitude and comportment.

TANF recipient or not, students and staff work hard together to accomplish their common objectives of reducing the barriers and gaining skills that lead to successful employment. We have come to realize that our program is indeed vulnerable to policy shifts and budget problems at the state level.
5. List any changes or modifications to the services you provide or the manner in which services are delivered as a result of these outcomes.

The only change, and we noted this both above and in the previous report, is that we have moved back to an eleven week training session instead of the nine week session now currently in place. We have experimented with a 12 week session and while we felt that was ideal, a local funder thought we ought to consider increasing the number of students we served. One way to accomplish that request was to reduce the number of weeks from 12 to 9, so as to add one more class to the year. We did this and will be looking to see if it is a more effective route.

6. What percentage of your project funds have you expended during the last three months?

Twenty three percent (23%).