WORK FIRST PILOT
FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES TOGETHER SUCCEED
First Quarterly Report

The WorkFirst Pilot program submitted and approved by the State entitled FACTS is in the implementation process in Davidson County. The FACTS program was 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 would facilitate a family’s access to existing community resources and prevent them from becoming dependent on traditional welfare roles.

The goal of the program was to have two hundred referrals each month. These referrals would come from school systems, resource centers, other agency departments, and community agencies. Currently, the FACTS unit is receiving approximately twenty-five referrals per month. The low number of referrals is in part due to the lack of time that has been spent educating the public about this new program.

Even though the FACTS program supervisor was hired in April 2000, a social worker was not hired until July 3, 2000. In addition to the current social worker, the agency plans to hire two additional social workers and be fully staffed by August 15, 2000. Once fully staffed the supervisor will be able to focus on educating the public thus increasing the number of referrals.

In the absence of additional staff the FACTS supervisor designed, developed and distributed pamphlets, brochures, and referral forms about the program. In addition, the supervisor also interviewed applicants and began to assess and assist families that were referred.

Costs for the FACTS program has been minimal largely in part due to the delay in implementing the program. Total funds in the FACTS grant were $304,555.00. To date the FACTS program has expended $15,948.96. This is .05 percent of the total FACTS grant.

Although the FACTS program was delayed in the beginning, it has been a rewarding start. The FACTS program has received sixty-eight referrals. The program has been able to screen twenty-six families for services. Fifteen of these families have accepted services. The Department of Social Services has declined to assist ten families. Documentation indicates that these families did not return phone calls or missed appointments agreed upon by the social worker and the potential client. After two attempts are made to contact the family, the agency considers that the family does not want services at this time. After speaking with families about the FACTS program, only one family has declined services offered. In that situation, the social worker felt that the adult caretaker knew how to access services should the need arise in the future.
Through our assessment, we have learned that the children in these households have been immunized. We also found that the majority of referrals were made on single parent families or families where the grandparent(s) were raising their grandchildren. Information gathered also indicates that the majority of the homes include at least one person who is receiving disability. Of the caretakers who are not employed, they state reasons such as they are disabled (despite no medical evidence), incompatibility with co-workers, and transportation as an issue. Two referrals have been made to the Get Real program. In following up with the families, one teen enrolled in that program.

As a part of the FACTS program, Family Services of Davidson County and Get Real were contracted to offer additional services. Both agencies will work offer services to youth at the risk of quitting school and/or who have behavioral issues.

The Get Real Program will work with persons between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one who have already quit school. The Get Real program has experienced some difficulty in hiring an additional staff person to maintain the Get Real/FACTS participates. The director of the Job Training and Employment Center has resubmitted the job description to offer more hours to the applicant in an attempt to fill the position. This change is pending approval from Pheon Beal’s office. Revision of the position should aid in the successful recruitment for the position. Fully implementing this aspect of the FACTS program continues to be delayed.

Family Services will offer the FAST Program targeted at youth between the ages of eight and fifteen that are at risk of juvenile delinquency or quitting school. The FAST program is scheduled to be fully operational in August, when school starts. In preparation for the program Family Services staff are engaging in start-up activities and have scheduled the national training required of program staff. Family Services and the Davidson County Department of Social Services each plan to send a worker to learn more about carrying out the FAST program.

The FACTS program has seen several families secure more appropriate housing, adults enroll in continuing education classes, children participate in summer camps, and parents become more educated about what services are available to them in their community. The Davidson County Department of Social Services is hopeful that the second quarter will see all program components operational and an increase in the number of families actively served. In addition to adding new families, we will continue to monitor and work with those families already being served by the FACTS program.

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