

# Stanly County Work First Block Grant Plan for 2009 - 2011

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**Vision Statement:** *Our long range vision for Stanly County's Work First Program is the creation of a successful welfare reform package which encourages self-sufficiency, responsibility, independence and employment while maintaining and enhancing self-esteem. This is contingent upon all local communities and agencies accepting the responsibility to provide adequate services to eliminate barriers so that all healthy families may be self-sustaining.*

It is Stanly County's practice to ensure that every client's needs are heard, not matter how insignificant the issue may seem. We do not judge based on previous experience with our clients. Everyone deserves respect regardless of how many times they have applied for Work First. DSS is very fortunate to have cooperative working relationships with many community partners that are supportive of the efforts to provide services to this population. All WFFA clients have strengths and our partners work together to help meet the goals of the client. DSS strives to help our clients develop the best plan for them to succeed. Stanly County uses the Family Centered approach in working with all of our clients by making them participants in developing services that demonstrate the six principles of partnerships which are:

1. Everyone desires respect;
2. Everyone needs to be heard;
3. Everyone has strengths;
4. Judgments can wait;
5. Partners share power;
6. Partnership is a process.

Clients who have disabilities or need interpreter services receive the same respect and partnership that participating WFFA clients receive. Neither are judged or discriminated against due to their limitations. We comply with the ADA as required with any request that meets the definition of ADA. We employ a part time interpreter and contract with several interpreters in order to meet the needs of those that cannot speak English.

## **I. Conditions within the County**

**Current realities for low-income families** in Stanly County are that unemployment is high, there are fewer jobs available than in the past, housing for those not in subsidized or public housing is disproportionately expensive, and lack of transportation is a significant barrier to self-sufficiency. The most pressing problems are lack of employment, lack of transportation, and lack of affordable housing. Other critical problems are lack of short-term skills training, need for economic literacy training, child care, and retention services.

**Current economic conditions-** The average unemployment rate for FY 2007 - 2008 in Stanly County was 5.1%, and is on the rise. According to the 2000 Census Data, 26% of persons 25 and older do not have a high school diploma; 9.1% have less than a ninth grade education and 17.5% have some high school yet no diploma. Adults without a high school diploma typically make about 65% of the wages earned by high school graduates. Stanly County's population is 59,358.

**Projected conditions-** In the next six months, it is expected that the unemployment rate will increase.

**New businesses-** During the past twelve month period, the following businesses have experienced an upturn or expansion in business operations: Fiber Composites, Michelin Aircraft Tire Company, International Automotive Component Group, High Level Components, Chicago Tube and Iron, Carnes-Miller Gear, Storm Technologies, Powerstream, United Protective Technologies, Wal-Mart – Locust, Graphi-cal, Con-Tech Steel Products, Conveyor Components, McCauley Chevrolet, Boardroom Bar and Bistro, Ansi Italian Restaurant, Spoons Ice Cream Shop, Coffee Grounds Coffee Shop, Dun-Rite Laundry and Walgreens.

**Business closings-** During this 12 month period, the following businesses have experienced a downturn in business which have resulted in layoffs and business closings: APA Marketing, Adorn, final Alcoa Phase, Southern Pipe, Fiber Composites, Morgan Motor Company, Pontiac Pointe, Martin Industries, Avdel Acument, Converpro, CTX and Gentry Mills.

**Job availability-** Job losses continue in some areas of manufacturing, especially in textile, apparel, and home furnishings. Many sewing jobs have been lost which has reduced the number of first shift jobs available in Stanly County. Even with the unemployment rate at 5.1%, low income applicants with barriers will have great difficulty competing with applicants who have more education and better work histories.

**Transportation Information –** The lack of reliable affordable transportation is a problem for many low-income households. The county operates Stanly County Umbrella Services Agency (SCUSA) Transportation which provides approximately seventy-four hundred (7400) trips to Stanly County residents each month. This is a valuable service to Stanly County residents, but SCUSA is unable to meet all transportation needs. SCUSA provides services for the general public as well as for human service agencies.

SCUSA must have sufficient revenue to support public routes. Currently the county provides public transportation, one route primarily in the city of Albemarle. Other routes are provided throughout the county in conjunction with the subscription routes. There is currently no public transportation for second or third shift jobs or on weekends. In March 2007, SCUSA began a five year planning process. One recommendation in this study was to review the need and cost for providing after hours and weekend service.

Initially SCUSA designed a route for Work First clients to meet their goals of applying and seeking employment, but was discontinued due to a lack of interest. SCUSA is open to provide this service again upon request.

A taxi service began operation in December 2005. It currently operates utilizing 2 cars.

DSS addresses the transportation issue with qualified Work First recipients through our Wheels to Work program. This program was implemented in 1999 and a car can be purchased for those recipients who qualify for the program.

### **Key issues addressed by our plan:**

The key areas that need to be addressed to assist citizens in Stanly County toward self-sufficiency include:

- **Need for skills training or apprenticeships** – lack of training and preparation for employment or trade. This area will be addressed by pursuing short-term training for employment / trades. We offer skills training to TANF clients in such areas as business/accounting classes, CNA classes, cosmetology classes, etc. We can pay tuition costs for formal classes out of participant expenses for TANF-eligible clients. Another approach to this would be to recruit more work sites in need of assistance to hire our clients to learn job skills. Stanly Community College (SCC) can provide classes in basic reading and math on site at DSS or in other community locations, as well as HRD classes, to benefit our clients. SCC also through partnering with Stanly County Partnership for Children offers GED and ESL classes where childcare is provided enabling participants to complete their GED or improve their English skills while their children are being cared for on-site, thus eliminating the child care need during class time. There is a need for computer literacy training and SCC plans to offer basic computer classes along with a class about how to complete on-line applications and gain a job from a distance.
- **Alternatives to traditional employment** – Stanly County is making a commitment to pursue any and all feasible alternatives to traditional employment for our TANF-eligible citizens. This could include self-employment, trades, skills training, etc. Any self-employment options that clients would be interested in pursuing would need to enroll in the Rural Entrepreneurship through Action Learning (REAL) program at SCC to develop a viable business plan. DSS can pay the tuition for this program out of participant expenses. SCC also offers a certificate in Small Business Management to promote entrepreneurship and small business ownership.
- **Inability to access services** – because of location, lack of knowledge about the service, lack of transportation, etc., DSS developed a concise, user-friendly County Resource Brochure to educate citizens about resources available in the community and giving contact information for avenues to eliminate some barriers.
- **Child care** – Priorities for providing day care services in Stanly County are:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> – Child Protective Services/Child Welfare Services
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> – Child in Foster Care placement meeting one of the 5 need categories as defined in the DCD (Division of Child Development) Manual
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> – Education for high school students
  - 4<sup>th</sup> – Work First employment and training
  - 5<sup>th</sup> – Full time employment for other families

- 6<sup>th</sup> – Full time education for other families
- 7<sup>th</sup> – Part time services for employment, education
- 8<sup>th</sup> – Children with Developmental delays

Effective July 2, 2007 Stanly County started a waiting list for day care services in order to not overspend our budget. We have paid for some day care benefits out of participant expenses. As of August 31, 2008, we had a total of 252 children on the waiting list. The areas that do present problems are finding day care for after-school care and day care for second or third shift employment.

- **Retention services** – many of our clients need to develop their job retention skills, plus we have had loss of jobs due to closings in our textile industry. Retention services could be accomplished by providing intensive case management services to TANF-eligible employment services clients. These services would focus on the following areas:
  1. **Review of job-seeking and interview skills for those clients not yet fully employed** – Assist clients in preparing resumes, review interviewing skills, obtain appropriate interview clothing, role play interview situations, have client play the role of interviewer as well as interviewee, perhaps video-taping mock interviews for them to see their own strengths and weaknesses firsthand. SCC offers classes for job seeking and interviewing skills through the HRD services.
  2. **Job retention services to include**
    - effective expression of anger
    - delayed gratification rather than instant gratification
    - value of longevity, building seniority
    - value and need to make contingency plans to avoid loss of job due to illness, illness of child, transportation problems, day care issues, etc.
    - component to focus on planning ahead proactively rather than reacting to an unforeseen and previously unplanned for crisis

Job retention services will include individual and group work, utilizing cognitive behavioral therapy, to address the issues listed above as well as other issues identified as barriers to job retention.
- **Economic literacy** – We have found that many of our clients lack economic literacy and are making choices inconsistent with working toward the goal of self-sufficiency. Economic literacy could be addressed both by the employment services social worker, and arranging with a county resource to provide training to TANF-eligible employment services clients. Financial counseling would focus on the following areas:
  - distinction between needs and wants
  - delayed gratification rather than instant gratification
  - goal-setting
  - priority-setting
  - budgeting information & education, using the Money Smart program through SCC
  - how to set up a checking account

- how to balance a checking account
- how to set up a savings account
- value of savings
- how to help one's children develop economic literacy and make good financial decisions
- children's economic literacy work to engage children's support and assistance for their parent to make financial decisions in line with long-term goals

The economic literacy component will include both individual and group work, both with adults and their minor children. Enlisting the children's support for parents' long-term goals will help ensure success of the program. If the child can see the value in giving up name-brand items for the short-term to allow for obtaining long-term goals, car- or home-ownership, for example, there will be less sabotage of economic literacy efforts on their parents' behalf.

**Lack of socioeconomic and family support systems** – The WFBG planning committee is concerned about the lack of community support for TANF-eligible citizens. This issue will be addressed by providing intensive case management services to work with clients to help them develop appropriate support systems. Stanly County will also develop and implement job coaching as appropriate. Our focus will be on intensive case management services and the development of support systems.

- **Housing needs** – We have found that many low-income citizens are paying exorbitantly high rental prices. Stanly County will work with Habitat for Humanity to make referrals for affordable home ownership. Referrals will also be made to public housing or other housing agencies as appropriate.

## II. Planning Process

### A. Planning Committee

The membership of Stanly County's local planning committee includes:

Barbara D. Whitley, *Director, Stanly County Partnership for Children*

Bobbie Whitley, *Director, Stanly Community Christian Ministries*

Claudia Covington, *RDC, Business Community*

Nathan Sanges, *Manager, Employment Security Commission*

Debbie Efird, *DSS, Employment Services Social Worker*

James Curtin, *Piedmont Behavioral Health*

Gwen Hinson, *Stanly County Transportation*

Sharon S. Scott, *Director, Stanly County DSS*

Karen Wojcik, *DSS, Work First Supervisor*

Kathy Gardner, *Stanly Community College*

Patsy McNeill, *DSS Board*

Margaret Rudisill, *Board of Public Health*

Sherrill Smith, *Board of County Commissioners*

Jeanette Eatman, *DSS, IM Administrator*

Shannon Batchelor, *Stanly County Schools*

Lisa Moehn, *DSS, CPS Supervisor*  
Cathy Harris, *Crisis Council*  
Skeet Ayscue, *Director, Homes of Hope*  
Nancy Rummage, *Vocational Rehabilitation*  
Mary Walls, *Vocational Rehabilitation*  
Tammy Fraley, *Work First Recipient*

### **B. Public Comment**

The final draft of the WFBG plan was completed on October 2, 2008. Public review and comment period ran from October 3 through October 17, 2008. For the period of public review and comment, copies were placed at the Department of Social Services, at each of the five branches of the Public Library, at Job Link Center, in the County Manager's Office, and the library at Stanly Community College. At each location which a WFBG Plan was placed, we included a Comment Sheet for citizens to be able to submit comments immediately on-site or they could submit comments via mail, email, or telephone. The WFBG Plan was posted on the DSS Website: [www.StanlyDSS.com](http://www.StanlyDSS.com) with the capacity to comment on-line. Notices about public review and comment were posted in the local newspapers, local radio stations and the DSS website. Community recommendations were incorporated and the final plan submitted to the Board of County Commissioners for approval at their meeting on October 20, 2008.

### **C. Planning Process**

The planning committee composition was appointed by the Board of County Commissioners upon recommendation by the Director of DSS.

The Planning Committee identified needs and possible strategies. DSS completed the document based on feedback from the planning committee and any public comments. Information was shared with the Social Services Board and the Commissioners during the planning process.

## **III. Outcomes and Goal for the County**

**A. Statewide Work First Goal** – the only goal is to meet the participation rates. The following will be used as measures that will assist DSS in evaluating those indicators that contribute to the goal of meeting participation rates.

### **1. Employment –**

- All WF applicants will be referred to First Stop.
- Incentive program for obtaining employment.
- Stanly County is interested in developing and encouraging alternative employment possibilities. We are interested in providing skills training for our clients. This should increase clients' likelihood of self-sufficiency even in times of higher unemployment.
- Stanly County DSS in conjunction with Job Link, will assess the economy and determine the need for job fairs.
- We will encourage clients to consider employment outside the county in higher level positions.

- We will provide education about completing employment applications, making copies, keeping a copy of application & resume for future reference and expedited application completion and other job seeking and retention skills.

We will encourage clients to obtain their GED and other continuing education classes, such as Nurses Assistant, Welding, Electrical Wiring, Phlebotomy, etc.

## **2. Meeting Federal Participation Rates –**

- Gift card incentive program for meeting the required number of hours, returning time card in a timely manner and being dressed appropriately when meeting with a social worker, as if going on a job interview.
- We will provide education to our clients about getting a note from their physician regarding a sick child to avoid terminations.
- Retention services that focus on development of a work ethic.
- Stanly County will assess all two-parent family applications for Benefit Diversion.
- Stanly County's participation rates are as follows:
 

9/07 – 33.33%	1/08 – 20.83%	5/08 – 26.47%
10/07 – 33.33%	2/08 – 30.77%	6/08 – 10.00%
11/07 – 30.00%	3/08 – 23.53%	7/08 – 12.20%
12/07 – 22.58%	4/08 – 31.03%	8/08 – 16.67%

## **3. Providing Employment Services –**

- We will provide employment services to all WFFA adult cases that are not incapacitated.
- We will provide an incentive program for obtaining and maintaining employment.
- We will provide retention services for employment services clients.

## **4. Benefit Diversion –**

- Assess Benefit Diversion for all two-parent family applications.
- Offer Benefit Diversion Assistance to all appropriate applicants.

Due to the new Citizenship and Identity requirements, birth certificate delays prevent benefits from being issued quickly. To help with this problem, more referrals may be made to the EA program.

## **5. Staying off Welfare After Going to Work**

- We will provide intensive case management services regarding job retention.
- Use of Job Coaches as appropriate
- Distribution of alarm clocks for all employment services clients to increase the likelihood that they will get up and off to work on time.
- We will provide education for our clients about getting a note from their physician regarding a sick child to avoid terminations.

## **6. Job Retention**

- We will provide intensive case management services regarding job retention.
- Use of Job Coaches as appropriate
- Distribution of alarm clocks for employment services clients to increase the likelihood that they will get up and off to work on time.

- We will provide education to our clients about getting a note from their physician regarding a sick child to avoid terminations.

### **III. B. County Developed Outcome Goal**

Our county adopts the statewide goal. Outcomes will be measured in the manner the state sets.

### **IV. Plans to Achieve the Outcomes and Goal**

#### **A. Activities**

- First Stop registration
- Referrals to employment opportunities
- Referral to Employment Security Commission for job referrals
- Skills training or apprenticeships
- Short-term training opportunities through Stanly Community College
- Development of alternatives to traditional employment
- Wheels to Work program for qualified applicants
- Retention services
- We hope to decrease the denominator by ensuring that code changes are keyed appropriately, referring to other programs and agencies as needed
- DSS has been granted WF Demo Grant Funds which will provide incentives for our clients
- DSS will work with the client to develop a plan of action they agree to and with which they will comply

#### **B. Supportive Services**

- Child care
- Retention services
- Transportation assistance
- Housing assistance – referral to Housing Authority
- Economic literacy classes
- Emergency Services
- Other DSS services as appropriate

### **V. Administration**

#### **A. Authority**

The Stanly County Department of Social Services will be responsible for administration of the Work First Program in Stanly County.

#### **B. Organization**

The eligibility division within the agency handles all Family and Children's Medicaid, Adult Medicaid, Food Stamps, Work First Family Assistance, and Employment Services. We have four Family & Children's intake workers who take and process applications for Work First cash assistance, Benefit Diversion, and Family & Children's Medicaid as well as NC Health Choice for Children. Six

caseworkers maintain the on-going caseload. Employment services are included in this division in an effort to facilitate communication and coordination between cash assistance workers and employment services workers. We are not consolidating employment and eligibility. With our high caseloads, it is likely that if we did combine, the eligibility deadlines would result in employment services not being as high a priority as we want. We are dedicating two social workers to employment services. Both eligibility and employment are under the supervision of the IM Administrator. Emergency assistance is handled primarily through a general services intake social worker with other social workers serving as back-up.

The other division of the agency is the services division. This division includes child protection, adult protection, foster care, adoptions, child care, intake, and child support. See Attachment - DSS Organizational Chart.

### **C. First Stop**

Our local ESC office is our designated **Job Link Center**. DSS co-locates Family and Children's Medicaid and Food Stamp intake there each week. The local ESC will do job registration with all WFFA applicants at their office through First Stop. They will also provide all job search functions they normally provide to ESC registrants. A copy of our MOU with ESC regarding First Stop Registration is included as an attachment to this WFBG Plan.

### **D. Child Care**

Priorities for providing day care services in Stanly County are:

- 1<sup>st</sup> – Child Protective Services/Child Welfare Services
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- 3<sup>rd</sup> – Education for high school students
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- 8<sup>th</sup> – Children with Developmental delays

As of August 31, 2008, we had 252 children on the waiting list. This list became effective July 2, 2007 in order not to overspend our allocation. We are paying for some day care benefits out of participant expenses. The areas that do present problems are finding day care for after-school care and day care for second or third shift employment.

### **E. Transportation**

We work with Stanly County Transportation (SCUSA) which provides approximately seventy-four hundred (7400) trips to Stanly County residents each month. SCUSA provides services for the general public as well as for human service agencies; however, they are unable to meet all transportation needs.

Currently the county provides public transportation, one route primarily in the City of Albemarle. Other routes are provided throughout the county in conjunction with the subscription routes. There is currently no public transportation for second or third shift jobs or on weekends. Work First has contracted with SCUSA to provide transportation for clients. A route was designed for clients to meet their goals of applying and seeking employment, but was discontinued due to lack of utilization. SCUSA is open to provide this service again upon request.

A taxi service began operation in December 2005 that utilizes 2 cars.

SCUSA began a five year planning process in March 2007. One recommendation in this study was to review the need and cost for providing after hours and weekend service.

DSS addresses the transportation issue in a variety of ways. We reimburse mileage during job search and Work First required activities. We pay for car repairs under participant expenses and with 200% clients, and we pay car insurance bills under both participant expenses and 200% services. We reimburse SCUSA for transportation for Work First clients. We anticipate spending a minimum of \$10,000 per year on transportation expenses.

#### **F. Substance Abuse Services**

DSS eligibility intake workers conduct the initial screening and refer those who need further assessment to the Qualified Professional in Substance Abuse (QPSA) through Daymark. Substance abuse assessments will be conducted and treatment referrals made for identified substance abusers. Mental Health Agencies will be invited to participate in Work First Orientation groups to discuss substance abuse issues.

#### **G. Family Violence Option**

Domestic abuse is addressed by Stanly County DSS and our local domestic violence service agency, Crisis Council, Inc. All agencies involved maintain DV information in a confidential manner. The Department of Social Services will be responsible for assessment and determination of the need for a waiver of TANF program requirements.

Domestic Violence funding is available and services provided include screening and identification of victims, development of safety and service plans, referrals to appropriate services, short term emergency services that ensure client safety and helping victims relocate to a safe place within or outside of the state. A domestic violence professional at Crisis Council completes the DV assessment form and makes recommendations as to what services are needed. DSS completes the eligibility worksheet, application, etc., and authorizes appropriate services. Expenses may be paid with DV funds as appropriate to ensure client safety provided they do not meet the federal definition of "assistance" of cash-like services intended to meet basic, ongoing needs.

**H. Maintenance of Effort (MOE)**

MOE funds will be used to provide funding for salaries for child welfare Services workers, Work First workers and Emergency Assistance funding.

**I. Child Welfare Services**

We anticipate spending approximately 55% of our WFBG on Child Welfare Services.

**VI. Emergency Assistance**

Stanly County will address the emergency needs of families. An emergency is defined as a situation in which a family is facing [1] eviction from their home, or [2] utility (electricity, gas, or water) disconnection. EA can be used to pay rent or mortgage to prevent eviction or foreclosure, to make utility payment(s) to prevent disconnection or to re-connect service, or to pay the deposit needed to establish utilities. EA must not meet the definition of "continuing assistance."

The following are eligibility criteria:

- There must be a minor child age birth through age 17 in the home
- The family must have a child who lives with a relative as defined for Work First cash assistance and who meets the age limit for Work First cash assistance.
- Assistance must be limited to \$500 within a 30-day period and may not be utilized more than once in any 12-month period.
- Income eligibility can be equal to or less than 150% of the current poverty level.
- Recipients must meet the same citizenship requirements as for Work First cash assistance.
- Emergency assistance does not qualify as part of the recipients' twenty-four (24) month limit to receive assistance.
- Recipients are not subject to work requirements or considered in the work participation rate.

Stanly County will set aside specific amounts of Emergency Assistance funds each month, with larger amounts available during the winter months. We feel this will enable the agency to assist families throughout the year as emergencies occur at all times in the year. The total amount set aside for Emergency Assistance is \$70,000.

**VII. Services for Families with Income at or Below 200% of Poverty**

Stanly County will provide non-cash-like services to families with income at or below 200% of the federal poverty level to support these families to maintain self-sufficiency and avoid becoming Work First recipients. This service is a 2<sup>nd</sup> priority after serving Work First cash assistance recipients. Allowable services include, but are not limited to: education, job readiness, transportation, work-related expenses, case management, on-the-job training, skills training,

counseling, parenting skills, and child and family enrichment provided these services meet the criteria outlined in Work First Manual Section 003, IX. This service is capped at \$500.00 per client per year.

#### **VIII. Services for Non-Custodial Parents of Work First Recipient Children**

Stanly County will provide non-cash-like employment-related services for non-custodial parents of Work First children. This service is a 3<sup>rd</sup> priority after serving Work First cash assistance recipients and 200% clients. Assisting non-custodial parents whose gross family income does not exceed 200% of the federal poverty level with obtaining and maintaining stable employment so they can make their child support payments will increase the potential for custodial parents to be independent of public assistance. Allowable services include, but are not limited to: education, job readiness, transportation, work-related expenses, case management, on-the-job training, skills training, counseling, parenting skills, child care, and job search provided these services meet the criteria outlined in Work First Manual Section 003, X.

#### **IX. Exemption from the Work Requirement**

Stanly County's policy with regard to exempting single parents of children under age one from the work requirement is the following:

- Single parents of children under three months of age are exempt up to a lifetime maximum of 12 months of this exemption, regardless the number of children this involves.
- In keeping with the practice of reflecting the standards in the working world through Family Medical Leave Act, in the month following the month in which the child reaches three months of age, the parent will be subject to the work requirement.
- Should a parent choose to waive the option of being exempt, the parent may not reclaim exemption during the three months.
- If a parent has already used their three months exemption in another county, they will not be considered for an additional exemption in Stanly County.
- Exceptions to this policy include:
  - Situations in which a parent is needed in the home due to some extreme medical condition of the child as verified by a physician.
  - Situations in which there is no available day care for the child within a reasonable distance.
  - Situations in which we cannot offer day care subsidy for the child.
- Should the county unemployment rate be such that it would be unlikely that participants could obtain employment, this policy may be waived. Should that occur, single parents would be allowed to use the S exemption for children under one year of age providing they have not already used the 12-month lifetime maximum of this exemption.

#### **X. Innovative County Strategies**

- **Skills training** for TANF-eligible citizens, particularly those with poor work records and a history of changing jobs due to interpersonal relationship

difficulties. Possibilities to pursue include painting, home repair, accounting/business, CNA, cosmetology, cleaning/maintenance, and landscaping.

- **Alternatives to traditional employment** – we want to focus on any viable alternatives to traditional employment that could allow our citizens to become self-sufficient
- **Wheels to Work program** – Stanly County plans to continue its Wheels to Work program. Wheels to Work helps subsidize purchase of reliable used vehicles to qualified cash assistance clients to eliminate the barrier of lack of transportation.
- **Child care** will be provided to employment services clients out of participant expenses when there is a day care waiting list until they can be switched to regular day care funding sources to eliminate this barrier to employment
- **Economic literacy training** to be provided by employment social workers, Cooperative Extension Service, or by a social worker on a contract basis
- **Job Coaching** will be provided
- Stanly County will provide an **incentive program for maintaining employment** to our WFFA cash assistance employment services clients. These employment services clients will receive a \$50 gift card for obtaining full-time employment. Cash assistance clients then receive a Job Bonus, if eligible, but WFFA clients are eligible for another \$50 after maintaining that employment for one month, \$75 after maintaining the employment for two months, and \$100 after maintaining the employment for three months. The philosophy behind this incentive program is that once a person establishes the habit of going to work for a three-month period, it is more likely they will continue with the employment. This is a one time incentive.
- **Clothing suitable for interviews or new jobs** will be provided for employment services clients on an as-needed basis. This clothing may be obtained through the SCCM Clothing Closet or purchased from participant expenses by DSS.
- **Haircuts and styling for interviews or new jobs** will be provided for employment services clients on an as-needed basis. This can be paid for from participant expenses by DSS. We will attempt to use classes at the community college and local high schools.
- **Job Fairs** – Stanly County DSS in conjunction with Job Link will assess the economy to determine the need for a job fair. This would allow TANF-eligible citizens to make contact with large numbers of employers in one central location.
- Provide training to clients to help develop **conflict resolution, anger management skills** – referrals to short-term skills class at Stanly Community College or contract for classes.
- Develop **Job Seeker's packet** to include completed application to assist with details, state and federal W2 forms, copies of resume, Social Security card, driver's license or ID and birth certificate to assist clients in employment applications.

- Encourage clients to volunteer so they can make a contribution to the community. This could enable them to learn new skills or become aware of abilities they already have, broaden their social base, and even strengthen the family by volunteering as a family or at the school where children attend. Working to improve something would help clients to focus on something other than deficits in their own life and the experience could provide positive reinforcement. Possible placements could be the schools, Habitat for Humanity, etc.
- **Training Sessions** – Stanly County will have training sessions utilizing agencies in our County on a regular basis. This will include SCUSA, Stanly County Partnership for Children, Stanly County Health Department, Stanly Regional Medical Center (for nutrition), Crisis Council, Employment Security Commission, Stanly Community College, Piedmont Behavioral Health, SCOOP (Stanly County One on One Program), Community Action (to do weatherization, etc.), Cooperative Extension, DSS, etc. These agencies will be asked to give presentations concerning the programs available.
- **Shelter Plus Care Vouchers** – Piedmont Behavioral Health is the grantee for this program using vouchers for the homeless and disabled.
- **Homes of Hope** – Provides short term transitional housing for usually up to six months for individuals/families who are homeless or will become homeless in the near future. This may be due to loss of job, eviction, family violence, etc. Homes of Hope will provide a place to live with utilities included to eligible applicants. Those selected for the program are required to sign an agreement outlining the plan of how they will become self-sufficient. Since 2005, Homes of Hope has assisted 26 families, including 35 children. Currently Homes of Hope has 6 housing sites. This program is funded by area churches, grants, businesses and individuals, and serves Stanly County residents only.
- **Stanly Community Christian Ministries** works closely with DSS. We refer clients on a regular basis to possibly receive help from one or more of their many programs.
- **Community Link** – provides casework and supportive housing to individuals and families who are homeless through a grant from HUD. They also provide in-home intensive parent education for family reunification.
- **WF Demo Grant** – This money will be used for providing incentives to our WFFA clients. This includes a gift card for completing their GED or receiving a High School Diploma; gift card for gas for having perfect attendance at school, work experience, budgeting classes, etc for one month; gift card for purchase of clothing to those that get a job; gift card for those that come to a 2 week “check-in” meeting with WFES.

**XI. Special Issues** – The greatest “special issue” in this county at present is the huge loss of industry, particularly textiles. At present, Stanly County’s rate is higher than the state average. With lack of county water and sewer, and lack of interstate access, we have been unsuccessful at attracting new employers to the county.

- XII. Eligibility Criteria for Electing Counties – Not applicable**
- XIII. Community Service Programs for Electing Counties – Not applicable**
- XIV. Appeals Process for Electing Counties – Not applicable**
- XV. Review Prior to Expiration of Time Limits for Electing Counties – Not applicable**
- XVI. Funding Requirements for Electing Counties – Not Applicable**

**XVII. Certification**

As Chairperson of the Stanly County Board of Commissioners, I hereby certify that the Stanly County Work First Block Grant Plan has been subject to a period of public review from October 3 through October 17, 2008. After incorporation of suggestions, it was reviewed and approved by the Stanly County Board of Commissioners on October 20, 2008.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tony M. Dennis, Chair, Board of County Commissioners

Attachment 1

**Memorandum of Understanding**

Between  
Stanly County Department of Social Services and Employment Security  
Commission

**Regarding First Stop Registration**

for Work First Family Assistance

In SL 1997-443, the North Carolina General Assembly enacted the First Stop Employment Assistance Program. It is administered by the Employment Security Commission (ESC) and is established to assist applicants and participants of Work First Family Assistance to become employed. The intent of First Stop is to have a face-to-face evaluation by ESC staff to assess job readiness accurately and make appropriate referrals.

All Work First adult applicants (except those applying for Benefit Diversion), recipients, re-applicants and individuals requesting inclusion (unless exempt), are required to register with the First Stop Employment Assistance Program at ESC before their application or inclusion request can be approved or their assistance continued. DSS will give the applicant the salmon-colored First Stop Work Registration form to be taken with them to ESC to complete First Stop registration. The form will note the date by which they must be registered for employment with ESC.

ESC will register all non-exempt adults or note on the form any individual who refused to register. Registration could result in an immediate job referral. Upon registration, ESC will complete the salmon-colored First Stop Work Registration form including an assessment of job readiness and return the form to DSS. DSS will then process the Work First application.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Sharon S. Scott, Director, Stanly County DSS

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Nathan Sanges, Manager, Stanly County ESC

Date: \_\_\_\_\_