

Alexander County Work First Plan



Fiscal Years 2011 – 2013

Submitted by:
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I. Conditions within the County

Alexander County has continued to experience high unemployment over the past 2 years and unfortunately this trend is expected to continue.

According to information released by the Employment Security Commission for July 2011, unemployment increased in all of the state's fourteen Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba MSA had the second highest unemployment rate in the state, 12.5% in June 2011.

Historically, the majority of jobs were in manufacturing. Most of those jobs paid a living wage and offered insurance coverage for the family. The creation of new jobs has not kept up with the rate of jobs lost. Many of the newly created jobs do not offer full time employment paying an adequate wage and also do not offer the opportunity for health benefits.

Transportation continues to be a huge barrier for many Work First families. There is no public transportation except the limited transit provided through the Western Piedmont Regional Transportation Authority.

Child care resources for non traditional hours such as second and third shift continue to be a need.

In essence the major barriers for low income families in our county continue to be:

- Lack of available jobs
- Minimum wage jobs with low advancement potential
- Lack of public transportation
- Low educational attainment
- Limited child care resources for non traditional hours
- Affordable and safe housing
- Language barriers for some recipients

While DSS staff will continue to give attention to each of the barriers, this plan will focus on employment and transportation.

II. Planning Process

A. Planning Committee:

The following persons participated in our planning process for 2011-2013:

- Cindy Holman DSS Director
- Trena Riddle WFFA Supervisor
- Dr. Jane Teague DSS Board
- Phillip Bowman WFFA Job Developer
- Hazel Yoder DSS Board
- Claudia Earle RHA
- Leigh Milstead Community Employment Casemanager
- Kay Dayvault Community Employment Casemanager
- Holly Yongue CPS Program Manager
- Trenda Aleen Employment Security Commission
- Jodi Smith Alexander County Chamber of Commerce
- Susan Cogdill Partnership for Children (Smart Start)
- Carol Church DSS Child Support Supervisor
- Kathy Stikeleather Greenway Public Transportation
- Linda Graham Catawba Valley Community College
- Henry Steele Vocational Rehabilitation
- Jeremy Guyer Alexander County Head Start
- Carol McConnell WFFA State Rep
- Matthew Reese FNS Supervisor
- Becky Taylor Energy Assistance Caseworker
- Melissa Dyson Catawba Valley Community College
- Chad Williams WFFA client

B. Planning Process:

Community Partners were contacted on August 22, 2011 to request their participation in a meeting at DSS on August 30, 2011. Current conditions within the county were discussed. Strategies for the 2011-2013 plan were identified.

III. Outcomes and Goals for the County

The NC Division of Social Services, in consultation with the county department of social services and county board of commissioners, will establish acceptable levels of performance by counties in meeting the following six Work First goals:

A. Statewide Work First Goals

The Work First Program is committed to family-centered practice and the six principles of partnership, which is demonstrated through local policy and practice.

All involvement with any family will reflect these principles:

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.

By using the partnership principles and the Work First Assessment of Strengths and Needs, the Work First Case manager will be better prepared to work collaboratively with families, assisting them in assessing appropriate resources that address their needs, utilize their strengths, and move them toward employment. These principles are demonstrated with our child-only families through a variety of services.

The State Mandated Goal for Work First Family Assistance:

Meeting Federal Participation Rates. *Active participation in federal countable work activities will lead to full time employment.*

Alexander County will maintain an “All Parent” participation rate of 50% as prescribed by Federal Law. Participants must average 40 hours per week or more in allowable activities or employment to be counted. The county will seek to maintain a Two-Parent Participation rate of 90%. In those households, parents are required to be involved in countable activities 55 hours per week.

Alexander County’s Participation Rates for the past 12 months:

07-2010	94%	01-2011	100%
08-2010	93%	02-2011	90%
09-2010	95%	03-2011	88%
10-2010	100%	04-2011	88%
11-2010	93%	05-2011	89%
12-2010	85%	06-2011	86%

Previous goals are now performance measures.

1. Employment. *Self-sufficiency will be realized primarily through the employment of Work First clients.*

2. Providing Employment Services. *Active participation in intensive employment services for all families is necessary in order to meet the participation rate and to ensure families are served adequately before the end of five years. One measure*

of success in Work First is the percentage of families who are subject to the work requirement that counties are assisting with job preparation and job placement.

3. Staying Off Welfare. *Efforts to reduce welfare rolls, help adults find jobs, and increase self-sufficiency are undermined when families return to welfare.*

4. Job Retention. *Families who leave Work First for employment and continue to be employed 6 to 12 months after leaving the program show evidence of keeping their income and increased job stability, which impacts a family's well being. This measure will be based on the number of responsible adults that leave Work First Family Assistance for employment who are still employed at 6 and 12 month intervals following termination.*

5 Benefit Diversion. *The most successful outcome possible is for an applicant to avoid the need to become a recipient.*

B. County Developed Outcome Goals: Alexander County will provide no service goals other than those mandated and those listed as optional components below under Section V.

IV. Plans to Achieve the Outcomes and Goals

A. Activities

The following activities will be utilized in assisting the agency to meet the federally mandated goals:

Activity	Provider	Location
Job Readiness Skills Class	CVCC	CVCC – Alexander Campus
Parenting Classes	Alexander Co. Partnership for Children/DSS/Alexander Co. Schools/DJJDP	Alexander County Head Start/ Mt. Herman Baptist Church
Vocational Rehab Activities	Vocational Rehab.	DSS or Hickory Office
Employment Assessment	DSS, ESC, VR Family Care Center	Offices located in Alexander County
Job Search	DSS, ESC	Offices located in Alexander County
Vocational Education	CVCC	CVCC Alexander and/or Hickory Campus
Jobs Skills Training	CVCC, ESC	CVCC, Alexander and/or Hickory Campus, ESC
Education (GED, High School, ESL)	CVCC Alexander Central	CVCC or Alexander County Schools
Work Experience	DSS	Various Work Sites

B. Supportive Services

The following supportive services will be offered in conjunction with the above activities in order to meet goals:

Service	Provider	Location
Substance Abuse Counseling	Smoky Mountain Center	In Caldwell & Alexander County
Child Care Subsidy	DSS/Partnership for Ch.	Taylorsville NC
Family Violence Services	Domestic Violence Resource Center and/or Family Violence Prevention Services	DVR Center Family Viol. Prev. Ser.
Emergency Assistance	DSS Christian Crisis Center	Taylorsville, NC
Transportation	DSS, WPRTA Transportation Services, Private Providers	Taylorsville & Hickory, NC
Child & Family Team Meetings	DSS	Taylorsville, NC

V. Administration

A. Authority

Alexander County will operate the Work First Program through the Department of Social Services as a “Standard” County.

B. Organization

Eligibility determination, employability assessment, and employment services are provided by a single case manager. These case managers are a part of a family eligibility team made up of Work First and Family Medicaid. These staff members are supervised by an Income Maintenance Supervisor.

Collaboration between Work First and CPS is ensured by requiring each CPS and Work First worker to verify all services being received within the agency each time a new case is opened.

Emergency Assistance services are performed by an Income Maintenance Caseworker located in the DSS Agency. This worker is supervised by an Income Maintenance Supervisor.

All day care services including Work First and CPS are performed by a staff person located on a Work First Team which is supervised by an Income Maintenance Supervisor.

C. First Stop

The Employment Security Commission is the deliverer of job placement services for the Work First Program in accordance with GS 108A-29. As such, individuals seeking to apply or reapply for Work First cash assistance and who are not exempt from work requirements shall register with the First Stop Employment Assistance Program. Individuals, if not exempt, must present verification to their caseworker of registration by deadline established on their Mutual Responsibility Agreement or their Work First case will be terminated. Verification can also be determined on line by DSS caseworkers. A Memorandum of Understanding, designating the ESC as the provider of First Stop assistance, is attached as an addendum to this plan.

D. Child Care

Alexander County recognizes that child day care services are essential to success in securing and maintaining employment for Work First families. When child care funding through the state subsidized program and through Smart Start are insufficient to provide subsidy assistance to all families who apply for daycare services, a waiting list will be implemented per Alexander County local policy. There are 132 children at present on a waiting list. Work First program applicants will not be placed on the waiting list as long as funds are available to serve the applicant. If demand exceeds our designated allocation, TANF funds, subject to availability, will be utilized to pay for day care subsidy for families currently receiving cash benefits or former recipients who need child day care to remain employed. TANF funds may be used to extend child day care services when eligibility for regular subsidy expires due to extended need for job search activities.

Current local policies established by the Social Services Board prioritize the use of subsidy monies for child day care as follows:

Priority for waiting list is as follows:

1. To support employment
 - a. Full time employment
 - b. Part time employment
 - c. Other employment
2. To support education or job training activities
 - a. Teen parent to complete high school
 - b. Post- secondary education or skills training
3. To support developmental needs of children

CPS (Child Protective Services), CWS (Child Welfare Services), Foster Care and Work First Program applicants will not be placed on the waiting list as long as

funds are available. When resources are available, families on the waiting list will be served in the order listed.

Prioritizing Daycare Services

The decision to prioritize daycare services will be made by the DSS director when the amount of funding available is less than the amount needed to serve all eligible children.

Services for preschool children may receive higher priority than services for school age children when funding is limited during the funding year.

E. Transportation

Transportation is a major problem and barrier to Work First families in Alexander County. There is no public transportation except for limited transit provided through the Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority. They do provide human service transportation, but cannot provide consistent daily transportation to and from employment for our Work First recipients.

DSS ongoing explores (and does sometimes accomplish) enrolling volunteers to assist Work First clients in daily transportation to and from work experience sites. Many recipients of cash assistance own a car, but not normally one that is sufficient to provide reliable transportation to and from work. Therefore, TANF funding is provided for car repairs when financially logical. Maintenance, repairs, supplies such as tires, and insurance can be provided if by doing so; the recipient can obtain and maintain employment.

Mileage reimbursement is available at \$.23 a mile to support job search activities and to maintain employment for current and former recipients up to a maximum of \$150 per month, in accordance with state approved policy. Transportation services are determined “non-cash-like” assistance by federal regulations and therefore do not impact the former recipient’s time clock for lifetime benefits.

Use of DOT funding is available and utilized prior to Work First funds for former recipients. DOT funds can be used to help families with expenses, such as:

- 1) transportation or fuel for job interviews, job fair attendance, short-term job readiness activities or training (no more than 3 months), and GED classes,
- 2) transportation or fuel to workplace,
- 3) transportation or fuel for getting children to and from childcare (for working parent(s),
- 4) maintenance repairs/tires to personal cars (must own car AND collision repairs are NOT included, and
- 5) personal car insurance (a one-time payment that can cover needs up to 3 months). Applicants must be working a minimum of 20 hours per week and have a gross monthly income of less than 200% of the federal poverty level for their household size.

It is estimated that \$5,000 in Work First Block Grant funds will be spent annually to support transportation needs of Work First families.

F. Substance Abuse Services

As part of the Work First-Substance Abuse Initiative, Substance Abuse Services of Smoky Mountain Center provides a Qualified Professional Substance Abuse Counselor (QPSA) who will conduct initial substance abuse assessments for the Work First population. Each adult applicant included in the Work First grant will be screened by the Work First intake staff for substance abuse utilizing the Audit-Dast form provided by the State. For those applicants who screen positive, the applicant will be referred for further assessment to the Qualified Professional Substance Abuse Counselor (QPSA) who will be responsible for a full assessment that includes an in-depth clinical interview and the use of a state approved assessment tool, the SUDDS IV. If the applicant is identified as having a substance abuse problem, the QPSA begins the treatment planning process with the applicant, a record is opened and treatment services begin. The Community Employment Case Manager or the QPSA may provide ongoing case management services to the recipient, a decision made jointly.

The plan for treatment includes several options, depending upon the severity of the participant's disease. Those include:

1. 13 Session Group designed for those who have only a substance abuse diagnosis and are in only the early stages of addiction.
2. 24 Session Group designed for those with middle stage symptoms of substance dependence.
3. Intensive Group meetings designed for persons experiencing chronic substance dependence symptoms. Participants meet two or three times per week and are expected to attend self-help groups on other days.
4. Non-hospital Medical Detoxification Services
5. Inpatient Treatment
6. Halfway House Placement – a structured living environment designed for participants leaving treatment or intensive outpatient programs but who need extra support to stay drug free.

When a Work First participant becomes non-compliant with treatment, DSS is notified. At that time, the individual is removed from the budget unit and a protective payee is assigned to the family. The participant continues to be eligible for Medicaid. Benefits will be fully reinstated once the participant complies with the treatment plan for thirty consecutive days.

Procedures for administration of this program are detailed in the Memorandum of Understanding attached to this plan as an addendum.

G. Family Violence Option

It is recognized that family violence is a factor that imposes a substantial barrier to individuals maintaining employment. We recognize that imposing work requirements on some spouses or mates also presents a risk to families who are experiencing violence as a pattern of behavior. As a result, we will provide for the Family Violence Option in the administration of the Work First Program. Intake staff will screen for possible family violence in order to direct the recipient to needed services. The participant who evidences violence in the home will be offered an in-depth assessment through qualified domestic violence counselors/providers in the county. The purpose of the assessment is to evaluate the applicant/recipient's situation and to determine services needed, as well as the extent to which the violence is an impediment to self-sufficiency. Care will be taken to assure that requirements imposed by the agency will not place the applicant in a position to be further victimized.

The Domestic Violence Resource Center provides this assessment at the cost of \$50 per assessment. Services are provided by two local providers, depending upon the preference of the applicant. The state has funded an average of \$9,284.00 for 2011/2012. Counseling will be provided through the DVRC at no charge.

H. Maintenance of Effort (MOE)

All services activities provided in the area of Work First Employment and Child Protective Services are funded with MOE until that money has been expended. At that time the county reverts to the utilization of Federal Monies. Activities include: TANF Emergency Assistance, transportation and Supportive Services to enable recipients to find and maintain work; school supplies, tuition, fees; participation expenses; retention services; child welfare allowable staff activities.

I. Child Welfare Services

The county will use TANF funds of approximately \$246,836 to fund allowable activities in Child Welfare Services.

Americans with Disabilities:

The two significant elements of Section 504 and Title II of the ADA are:

- 1) Individualized treatment and 2) effective and meaningful opportunity.

Individualized treatment means that persons with disabilities should be treated

on a case-by-case basis and not on stereotypes and generalizations. Further, individuals should be afforded the opportunity to benefit from Work First in the same manner as those individuals who do not have disabilities.

Our agency will ensure access to employment programs for qualified individuals with disabilities through the provision of appropriate services; adopt methods of administration which do not discriminate against and ensures equal access and opportunity to qualified individuals with disabilities; and modify policies, practices, and procedures to provide equal access that allows qualified persons with disabilities to participate and benefit from employment programs unless doing so would fundamentally change the program or cause undue hardship .

To ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access to employment programs, the Work First Case Manager would first assess the participant's specific abilities and limitations. At the conclusion of the assessment, the Mutual Responsibility Agreement should reflect the strengths of the participant and include activities such as VR assessment and evaluation to ensure the participant receives necessary services through the Work First program. Functional Evaluation Assessments will also be used to identify areas that need to be addressed.

VI. Emergency Assistance

Alexander County will continue to address the emergency needs of families utilizing various resources in the community as well as appropriate \$25,000 of MOE funds. The county will provide emergency assistance to approximately one hundred thirty three (133) families experiencing a temporary crisis or emergency. Providing such assistance should assure the safety and well being of children residing in the home and eliminate the need for on-going assistance. Emergency assistance, not to exceed \$300.00 per family, will be available for families who meet the eligibility requirements.

The following guidelines, as defined by federal/state policy, will be used to determine eligibility for this assistance:

- 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.
- Total gross income must be at or below 110% of federal policy.
- Family members must meet the same citizenship requirements as for Work First cash assistance.
- Only short term benefits may be provided. Short term benefits are described as: non-recurring, short-term benefits designed to deal with a specific episode of need; is not intended to meet recurring or ongoing needs; and not extending beyond four months.

Those ineligible for EA or who need further assistance to eliminate the emergency will be referred to other community agencies and services such as: County DSS Emergency

Assistance, Christian Crisis Center, Salvation Army, Red Cross, Consumer Credit Counseling (when eligible), or to other church and civic benevolent funds.

VII. Services to low income families (under 110% of poverty)

Services to low-income families will be provided but only to provide assistance to families to enable them to continue employment. Families must meet the state/federal required eligibility (as described above for TANF EA) and must specifically need aid to prevent loss of family income, such as car repair, tools, uniforms, or child care. Maximum benefit per year will be up to \$600.00 per family. The budgeted amount for this service is \$15,000.

VIII. Services to Non-Custodial Parents

Alexander County will only serve these individuals through the Job Boost Program. These individuals are paying child support through the Alexander Child Support Agency to parents of children who live and receive assistance in Alexander County therefore, helping support and provide for children of Alexander County.

IX. Exemption from the Work Requirement

Exemption from participation in employment service activity follows the state approved plan with the exception that Alexander County will exempt single parents of children under three months of age from the work requirement. The parent will lose the exemption the month after the child reaches three months of age. Should the parent choose to return to work prior to the end of the 3 month exemption and then decide he/she did not want to return to work at that time the parent could reclaim the exemption.

OPTIONAL PLAN ELEMENTS

X. Innovative County Strategies

Every effort is made by county staff to assist those adults in the caseload that exhibit disabilities that present barriers to employment to receive the services of Vocational Rehabilitation. Individuals applying for Work First who state they are unable to work due to a medical condition will be required to complete a functional evaluation. The evaluation will also be used to identify what barriers the customer may have with regards to employment and to assist them in applying for and receiving disability benefits from Social Security or other federal programs.

Work Experience Sites

In an effort to assist participants with job skills and hands on training, we have partnered with local employers to put participants in a non-paid work experience where they can learn job skills and possibly earn a permanent position. They are located throughout the county in a wide range of different professions and give the participant a choice of different careers. Currently we have 21 work sites with 45 positions.

Job Developer

The Work First Team has a part time Job Developer who works with the Community Employment Case Managers and clients in developing strategies for overcoming employment barriers and achieving the goals for self sufficiency. The Job Developer also works with local government agencies and local employees to develop work experience sites where clients can be evaluated and trained for future employment.

Job Boost

The Job Developer has been working on a temporary program through the state called Job Boost. This program provides individuals with children in the home under 18 and who meet the 200% of the federal poverty level for their household size employment of at least 20 hours per week up to 40 hours per week for a 20 week period. Local employers hire these individuals on at their company & pay 25% of their wages while the Job Boost program pays the other 75% for the 20 week period. At the end of the 20 weeks the employer then hires the employee on permanent with their company. Alexander County was awarded a grant in the amount of \$84,192 for this program. Our goal is to employ 15 individuals at an average pay of \$8.50 per hour for 20 weeks. This program runs through June 30, 2012

XI. Special Issues

With the worsening of the economy and loss of jobs in this and surrounding counties, it is becoming even more difficult to find entry-level jobs that offer work to the unskilled labor market. According to information released by the Employment Security Commission for June 2011 unemployment increased in all of the state's 14 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). However, the Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba MSA had the second highest unemployment rate in the state, 12.5%, compared to 8.5% in June 2011. Efforts are being made to work with the local Community College, the Workforce Development Board, Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development, and the ESC to determine future job market and assist Work First recipients in preparing for the change.

XII – XVI. Applicable to Electing Counties Only

Alexander County is a Standard County.

Work First Block Grant Standard County Survey

County: Alexander

1. Coordination with the following agencies: (all MOUs, MOAs, agreements, contracts, etc. must be on file)

- Employment Security Commission (optional) Yes No
- Local Management Entity (required) Yes No
- Domestic Violence Agency (required) Yes No
- Vocational Rehabilitation (required) Yes No

2. Budget for use of MOE funds* Yes No

3. Amount of Work First Block Grant funding for Child Welfare services* Yes No

4. Local policy for the following services if applicable: (guidelines specified, payment limits, etc.):*

- Emergency Assistance Yes No
- Transportation Yes No
- Services for low-income families at or below 200% of federal poverty level, (service required) Yes No
- Services for non-custodial parents (service optional) Yes No
- Exemption from work requirement for single parents of children under age one Yes No

5. List Innovative Strategies: _____

7. Comments: _____

Janina Riddle
Signature of Program Manager

10-21-11
Date

[Signature]
Signature of Director

10-21-11
Date

*All information must be on file at the county agency for the current planning cycle.

Date: 9-29-11

**LETTER OF AGREEMENT
FIRST STOP EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Pursuant to the provisions of G.S. 108A-29(a2) the undersigned parties hereby acknowledge that the point of registration in Alexander County for the First Stop Employment Association Program shall be the office of the Employment Security Commission of North Carolina located as set forth below.

**Employment Security Commission
606 7th Street SW
Taylorsville, NC 28681**

By: Trenda Allen
Trenda Allen, Manager Taylorsville Office
Employment Security Commission of N.C.

By: Cindy P. Holman
Cindy P. Holman, Director
Alexander County Department of Social Services

Memorandum of Agreement
Between
Alexander County Social Services
And
Vocational Rehabilitation

This Memorandum of Agreement is entered into and by Alexander County Social Services and Vocational Rehabilitation. The Work First Program provides short-term assistance to eligible families to facilitate their movement to self-sufficiency through employment. The objective of this agreement is to ensure that Work First customers are provided with services from Vocational Rehabilitation when appropriate. This Memorandum of Agreement establishes the responsibilities of the above referenced agencies in meeting the objective.

The Work First staff will make a referral to Vocational Rehabilitation requiring the Work First customer to go to Vocational Rehabilitation and to be assessed if appropriate.

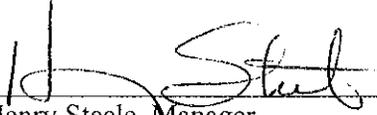
The Work First case manager and Vocational Rehabilitation will utilize the standardized consent form to facilitate confidentiality. This consent form is considered part of the initial screening tools.

Alexander County Department of Social Services, Work First Program Supervisor will serve as liaison under this MOA.

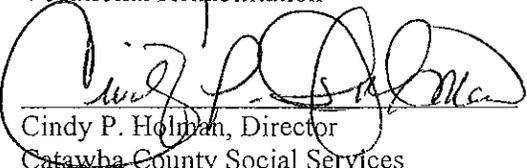
Vocational Rehabilitation – Manager or designee will serve as liaison under this MOA.

The Manager of Vocational Rehabilitation and Director of Social Services (and/or the Liaison under this MOA) shall meet annually to review the terms of this Memorandum of Agreement.

The terms of this agreement shall begin July 1, 2011 and will end upon the written request of either party


Henry Steele, Manager
Vocational Rehabilitation

8.30.11
Date


Cindy P. Holman, Director
Catawba County Social Services

8-30-11
Date

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

**ALEXANDER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
And the
SMOKY MOUNTAIN CENTER for
MENTAL HEALTH, DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES,
And SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES**

- I. **INTENT:** This Memorandum of Agreement is entered into by the Alexander County Department of Social Service, hereinafter referred to as "DSS" and the Smoky Mountain Center for Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services hereinafter referred to as "Smoky Mountain". The Work First Program provides short-term assistance to eligible families to facilitate their movement to self-sufficiency through employment. The objective of this agreement is to reduce substance abuse related barriers to employment for current Work First recipients, applicants and Work First and Food Stamp applicants convicted of a class H or I substance abuse felony offense. The Memorandum of Agreement establishes the responsibilities of the above reference agencies in meeting the objective.
- II. **Work First County Plan.**
- a. The QPSA represents Smoky Mountain on the committee responsible for developing the Work First County Plan.
 - b. The Alexander County, Director of Social Services represented the County Department of Social Services in developing the Work First Substance Abuse Plan.
- III. **Qualified Profession in Substance Abuse.** Smoky Mountain has assigned a QPSA (Qualified Professional in Substance Abuse) to work with the DSS to provide SA assessments and referrals to recipients in need of substance abuse services. The schedule of this counselor will be the agreement of the Smoky Mountain and the DSS, with the times best suited for recipients, and may vary to account for the number of referrals and need for consultation and care coordination. If the QPSA is scheduled to be at DSS and the schedule is altered, DSS needs to be informed of the schedule.
- a. Primary responsibility for the initial screening will be that of the DSS; however, the QPSA will assist in training, consultation and determination of the need for Smoky Mountain assessment.
 - b. The QPSA will coordinate & link consumer to substance abuse prevention services for children through the Child Substance Abuse Services staff.
 - c. A Plan of Care will be developed initially by the QPSA and will be updated as needed by the SA treatment staff, with consultation from the QPSA assigned to DSS.
 - d. The Case Coordination Plan for the recipient will be developed by the staff of the DSS.
 - e. Primary responsibility of child care and transportation for recipients receiving substance abuse services will be that of the County DSS.

However, DSS and Smoky Mountain will work to ensure that child care and transportation are not barriers to accessing substance abuse services. Since treatment groups and meetings often occur after 5:00 PM, alternative measures will be needed.

- f. Authorization of the appropriate level of care for recipients identified as requiring substance abuse services will be that of Smoky Mountain Center.

IV. Joint Responsibilities: Current Work First recipients, applicants, and Work First and Food Stamp applicants convicted of Class H or I substance abuse felony offenses will be screened by DSS staff. All Work First adult applicants/recipients may **volunteer** to be screened for mental health issues.

Smoky Mountain Center will ensure DSS has adequate access to the QPSA. Those found to be in need of assessment will be referred to the QPSA. The QPSA will assess the individual's need for treatment and develop a Plan of Care and link the consumer to appropriate substance abuse, mental health and/or developmental disabilities services.

- a. DSS will utilize the AUDIT and DAST-10 screening tools identified by DMH/DD/SAS and the QPSA will use the (SUDDS) IV assessment tool.
- b. The standardized consent form provided by the State Division of Social Services will be utilized to facilitate adherence to regulations concerning confidentiality. All Federal regulations concerning confidentiality will be complied with by both parties.
- c. Initial training for staff on the screening process has occurred and ongoing cross training for staff will be provided by DSS staff and the QPSA Agency.
- d. Once the QPSA receives the referral from the DSS, a letter will be sent within 5 calendar days to the client, giving the client 10 calendar days to contact the QPSA and make an appointment.
- e. The QPSA will notify the Department of Social Services staff person in writing if the client contacts the QPSA to schedule and appointment within the following 10 workdays.
- f. If the client does not contact the QPSA within the above time frame, the QPSA will notify the appropriate DSS staff person in writing the next work day.
- g. The DSS staff will send the client an appropriate notice based on program policy
- h. The QPSA will notify the appropriate DSS staff member of the treatment recommended so they can put this on the client's Mutual Responsibility Agreement.
- i. All non-compliance by recipients will be reported in writing by the QPSA to the DSS staff person the next workday following their non-compliance.
- j. DSS staff will notify the QPSA in writing within 10 calendar days of any change that may affect the case.
- k. All changes and notifications may be done by electronic means to save time and ensure a rapid response. If not done by electronic means, the

QPSA and DSS staff person will call to report the change and follow-up with written verification.

- 1. The QPSA will be available for consultation to staff of the DSS regarding the referred individual pursuant to the requirement of the Work First Plan.

V. **LIAISON:** The Alexander County DSS Liaison is Work First Supervisor Position. The QPSA position is the Smoky Mountain Center LME Liaison under this MOA.



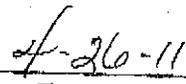
 Director, Smoky Mountain Center



 Date



 Director, Alexander County Department of Social Services



 Date

Memorandum of Understanding between Alexander County Department of Social Services & The Domestic Violence Resource Center

The parties listed above and whose designated agents have signed this document agree that:

1. The Alexander County Department of Social Services and the Domestic Violence Resource Center will work collaboratively to participate in and/or develop coordinated community response teams/task forces to address domestic violence and child maltreatment. As a part of this process, both parties agree to develop meaningful relationships with diverse communities in order to design effective services.
2. The Alexander County Department of Social Services and the Domestic Violence Resource Center will offer services in culturally appropriate and effective ways and in settings comfortable to the family.
3. When domestic violence is identified, the Alexander County Department of Social Services will include the Domestic Violence Resource Center staff in child and family team meetings, unless requested not to do so by the adult victim/survivor. The Alexander County Department of Social Services will take all precautions to ensure victim/survivor safety during child and family team meetings. Both parties agree not to disclose the location of a victim/survivor to a domestic violence perpetrator, and to use care during team meetings to ensure that this information is not inadvertently disclosed.
4. The Alexander County Department of Social Services and the Domestic Violence Resource Center agree to work to the amount feasible to ensure that each family has a consistent staff member assigned to assist them and to minimize the transfer of cases involving domestic violence and child maltreatment.
5. The Domestic Violence Resource Center agrees to provide Alexander County Department of Social Services with basic information about domestic violence. In addition to complying with the DSS Intake Policy, Alexander County Department of Social Services agrees to provide all workers with basic information about domestic violence to aid in their screening process. Domestic violence information can be obtained from the [NC Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#).
6. The Domestic Violence Resource Center agrees to provide every victim/survivor seeking services with safety planning (including safety planning for children) and information on how to meet their basic human needs (such as food, housing and clothing), as mandated in the [NC Council for Women Guidelines](#).
7. The Domestic Violence Resource Center agrees to create supportive interventions for victims/survivors who maltreat their children at the same time that they ensure safety and protection for abused or neglected children.
8. The Domestic Violence Resource Center agrees to provide child-friendly environments in their service sites.

9. The Domestic Violence Resource Center agrees to have advocates or volunteers who are able to provide services or referrals for children who are affected by domestic violence.
10. The Domestic Violence Resource Center agrees to provide or coordinate services (including shelter) for all victims/survivors of domestic violence including those who: have teenage boys; are immigrants; are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender; or are stigmatized due to substance abuse, mental health needs or criminal records, in compliance with NC Council for Women Guidelines.
11. The Alexander County Department of Social Services will consider alternative placement of a child **only** when the risk of harm from remaining in the home with the non-battering parent outweighs the risk of harm from being separated from the non-battering parent. The NC Division of Social Services Domestic Violence Policy provides guidance for making placement determinations. Additional information about assessing risk can be found in "Assessing Risk to Children from Batterers" (Bancroft and Silverman, 2002).
12. The Alexander County Department of Social Services agrees to avoid placing a child in foster care with persons who have a documented history of perpetrating child maltreatment or domestic violence.
13. The Alexander County Department of Social Services is committed to thoroughly assessing the possible harm to a child resulting from maltreatment of the child or from the effects of adult domestic violence and to developing service agreements to address this harm. When possible the Domestic Violence Resource Center will support and/or participate in programs designed to address the harm to the child from adult domestic violence.
14. The Alexander County Department of Social Services and the Domestic Violence Resource Center agree that being a victim of domestic violence does not necessarily affect one's ability to effectively parent. Therefore, mandatory referrals to parenting classes for domestic violence victim/survivor should not be made by either party unless actual concerns about the victim/survivor's parenting abilities exist or the referral is requested by the victim/survivor. When referrals are made, they should be made to classes that address the specific needs of the person receiving the referral. (For instance, parents of teenagers should not be referred to infant care classes.) Unnecessary referrals to parenting classes may send the message to the victim/survivor that they are to blame for the domestic violence they have experienced.
15. If the Alexander County Department of Social Services identifies that domestic violence is occurring within a family, the following assessments will be conducted and/or services will be provided (reference existing instruments) when feasible:
 - a. Assessments/Services for Children

Assessments of children will utilize existing screening instruments. In addition, DSS will:

 - Assess the nature and severity of past violence, the risk of violence in the future, the child's degree of exposure and resilience, the presence of protective factors in the immediate and extended family, and available support from the community;

- Determine whether in-home services, such as intensive family preservation services, can provide meaningful support to adult and child victim/survivor, including help for the adult victim/survivor in assessing safety needs, making viable safety plans, and determining whether the safety strategies are working or need adjustment;
 - Use visitation centers, when needed, for court-ordered visitation between a child and violent parent to protect the child from abuse and/or witnessing further assaults and threats against the victim/survivor;
 - Referring children affected by domestic violence to skilled resources for counseling and treatment services in order to assess and address the consequences of the violence as appropriate;
 - Provide transportation to safety resources, including shelters, domestic violence programs, childcare, court, educational institutions, counseling, and health care services.
- b. Assessments/Services for Non-Offending Parent
 Service agreements for the adult victim/non-offending parent shall not include accountability for coordination, payment or transportation for services required of the batterer/offending parent. In addition, DSS will:
- Assess the nature and severity of past violence, the risk of violence in the future, and available support from the community;
 - Determine whether in-home services, such as intensive family preservation services, can provide meaningful support to adult and child victim/survivor, including help for the adult victim/survivor in assessing safety needs, making viable safety plans, and determining whether the safety strategies are working or need adjustment;
 - Assist in securing safe housing-in the adult and child victim/survivor's own residence whenever possible or with her family or friends, in subsidized housing, in shelter, or in transitional or permanent housing;
 - Offer support to adult victims/survivors in a respectful way that does not label them unnecessarily as neglectful and produce unintended, long-term, harmful consequences for them and their children;
 - Refer adult victim/survivor to services that will aid in securing assistance (such as the TANF/DV program), child and employment support, and Work First;
 - Refer adult victims/survivors to voluntary supportive counseling, groups or community-based advocacy services, and to job training, parenting, substance abuse treatment, and immigration specialists in programs trained to respond to domestic violence victim/survivor and their children referring survivors to legal advocacy, family law, or immigration law programs for assistance in obtaining protection orders, custody and safe visitation arrangements, child support, and/or divorce;
 - Provide transportation to safety resources, including shelters, domestic violence programs, childcare, court, educational institutions, counseling, and health care services.

c. Assessments/Services for Batterer/Offending Parent

Services for the Batterer/Offending parent will be provided in a manner which does not hold the adult victim/non-offending parent responsible for the batterer's compliance or participation. In addition, DSS will:

- Assess of the nature and severity of past violence, the risk of violence in the future, and available support from the community;
- Refer to batterer intervention programs approved by the NC Council for Women (anger management classes are not appropriate interventions for batterers) and other education programs and monitor attendance and compliance with court and program requirements;
- Assess skills and provide referrals for parenting classes as needed or requested;
- Create service agreements which are designed to promote accountability for the batterer/offending parent should not be reliant on the victim/survivor's cooperation in regards to treatment for the batterer/offending parent. Service agreements should include requirements to:
 - Cease verbal, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of all family members;
 - Cease interference with their partners' efforts to parent children safely;
 - Comply with protection orders and other court-ordered mandates, including those imposed by probation, parole, and perpetrator intervention programs;
 - Attend, actively participate, and complete a Batterer's Intervention Program

We, the undersigned, approve and agree to the terms and conditions as outlined in this Memorandum of Understanding.



Jodi Smith
Interim Director
Domestic Violence Program



Cindy Holman
Director
Alexander County DSS

6/22/11

Date

6/22/11

Date

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is between the **Alexander County Partnership for Children** (hereinafter called the Partnership) and the **Alexander County Department of Social Services** (hereinafter called LPA). The purpose of the MOU is to define the responsibilities of each agency regarding the use of Smart Start funds for subsidy services and administrative costs for the **2011-2012** fiscal year.

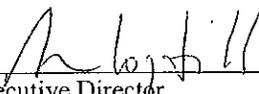
I. LPA agrees to:

- A. Screen all applicants for subsidy services and certify eligible those who meet the current DCD established criteria for subsidized care and/or specific criteria as determined by the Partnership board.
 - Funds to be spent on TANF/CCDF eligible children.
 - Purchase of care in **4 and 5 star licensed** facilities.
- B. Make payments to child care providers in the amount specified by the Partnership as long as funding is available.
- C. Provide the Partnership with monthly expenditure reports by the **30th** of the following month, specifically detailing expenditures for TANF/CCDF-eligible children versus Non-TANF/CCDF eligible children, including (if applicable) TANF/CCDF and Non-TANF/CCDF expenditures for both Base subsidy payments and Enhancement payments.
- D. Permit the Partnership staff to have access to the subsidy services records at the LPA office of families who received Smart Start funded services to ensure that funds are expended for the purpose intended.
- E. Work with the Partnership staff to develop outreach efforts to inform parents about the star rated licensing system and the availability of subsidy services.
- F. Provide information about overhead and indirect cost to the Partnership at the start of the funding period if funds are provided for administration of the Subsidy Program.
- G. Meet with the staff of the local partnership as needed and/or requested to discuss subsidy spending and plan for future spending.

II. Partnership agrees to:

- A. Provide funding in the amount of **\$59,709 for TANF/CCDF eligible children** effective July 2011 for the Subsidy Program and \$3,800 for administrative services to support the Subsidy Program. Revisions in the amount of funding will be handled by an attachment to this agreement or by revising this agreement.
- B. Provide Smart Start subsidy funding which can be used for the purposes described in Section I. A. Any changes regarding how funds will be spent will be handled by an attachment to this agreement or by revising this agreement.
- C. Ensure that Smart Start funds are being used for subsidy services according to Partnership criteria. This may include periodically reviewing Smart Start subsidy records at the LPA or using the information provided by DCD staff regarding their review of LPA records and results of monitoring.
- D. Provide advance notice of visits to the LPA for the purpose of reviewing Smart Start records.

- E. Ensure that Partnership staff who review subsidy records at the LPA observe confidentiality policies regarding information contained in client files.
- F. Meet with the staff of the LPA as needed and/or requested to discuss subsidy spending.


Executive Director

Alexander Partnership for Children

7-1-11
Date


Director

Alexander DSS Local Purchasing Agency

7-1-11
Date