



MACON COUNTY DEPT. OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY FAMILIES
ELECTING COUNTY PLAN**

**FEDERAL FISCAL YEARS
2023-2026**

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Our mission: Partnering to promote, protect, and strengthen our community.

STATEMENT ON PRINCIPLES OF PARTNERSHIP | CIVIL RIGHTS ACT

Macon County Dept. of Social Services prides itself on a strong adherence to its mission of promoting, protecting, and strengthening all of the families we serve through intentional and diligent application of the six principles of Family Centered Practice and Systems of Care approach in every encounter. This approach is modeled by agency leadership and reinforced throughout the organizational structure. Customers, stakeholders, and staff of the agency are treated with respect; given a chance to be heard; recognized for their strengths; exist free from prejudicial judgments; contribute to a greater partnership; and are considered equal partners in all processes. It is this agency's committed belief that this approach is crucial in leading to longer-term employment and shorter-term Work First dependence. While this agency realizes each family has different strengths and needs, our applicants/recipients (A/R) are encouraged to work diligently within their abilities and according to their specific needs and are held accountable in co-authoring their own future success.

Macon County complies with both the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA). Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 compliance in overcoming more than 350 language barriers for public assistance and social service customers is met 24/7/365 through an agency contract with [Lingüística Internacional](#). The agency also employs two full-time staff in its front reception and general intake areas to meet the interpretation and translation needs of Macon County's Hispanic or Latino population. One staff member's primary language is English with Spanish as a secondary language while the other's primary language is Spanish with English as a secondary. Duties and responsibilities of these two specific staff members are delegated so that they may also accompany field based agency staff as needed. The agency also maintains equipment to help meet the needs of our deaf and hard-of-hearing customers.

Agency employees are equally protected from discrimination under a strict adherence to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 with annual training dedicated to reminding staff of maintaining a professional and respectful atmosphere.

I. COUNTY CONDITIONS

Macon County, founded in 1828 and named for [Nathaniel Macon](#), is located in the far west mountains of North Carolina nestled in the cradle of the Nantahala, Chattahoochee-Oconee, and Sumter National Forests. With the [Town of Franklin](#) as its County Seat, Macon County is home to the headwaters of the Nantahala River and, at mile marker 110, is one of the first major stops along the 2,190-mile Appalachian Trail for northbound hikers. Macon County is a hub of bountiful outdoor activities and one of the most scenic areas within the Smoky Mountains.

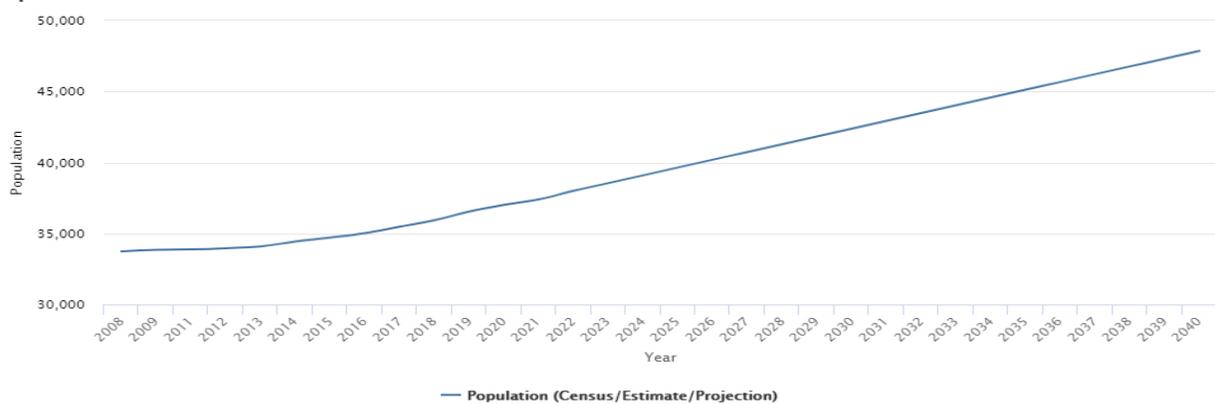


Macon County, North Carolina

The county is within easy driving distances to several major metropolitan areas including: Atlanta, GA at 127 miles to the south; Knoxville, TN at 112 miles to the north; Greenville, SC at 90 miles to the southeast and Asheville, NC at 60 miles to the east. It is often remarked that Macon County is closer to four other state capitals than she is to her own. Montgomery, AL at 290 miles; Nashville, TN at 271 miles; Columbia, SC at 215 miles; and Atlanta, GA at 130 miles are all a shorter distance than Raleigh at 312 miles. The county consists of two primary towns: Franklin and Highlands, with eleven townships throughout.

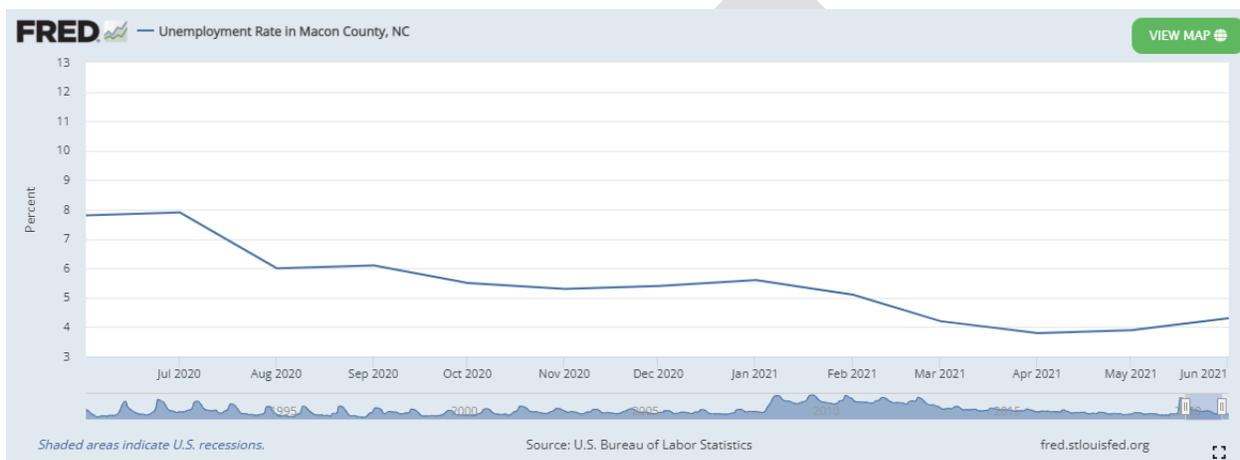
U.S. Census QuickFacts places the total county population at 37,014 as of April 1, 2020. Macon County's population experiences "surges" during the spring, summer, and early fall months due to the seasonal part-time residents and visitors in the area but remains one of the overall fastest growing counties in North Carolina with a growth trend that increases the current population by nearly 30% in less than 20 years.

Population Trend



Educationally, there are three public high schools, an advanced high school placement option through Macon Early College, a local satellite campus of one of the state's 58 community colleges (Southwestern Community College) and an easy 25-mile drive to one of only three [NC Promise](#) tuition-free University of North Carolina campuses (Western Carolina University). However, highlighting the geographical challenges of delivering education in this rural, mountainous community, Macon County is also home to two of North Carolina's only three combined K-12 public schools (Nantahala and Highlands).

The picturesque mountain setting of Macon County has made outdoor recreation and tourism its central industries. During State Fiscal Year 2021, Macon County's seasonally unadjusted unemployment rate fell from a high of 7.9% to a low of 4.3%.



<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/> 1

Macon County's nearly three-point decline, which trends with the state's overall decrease during the same timeframe, saw impact from the confluence of two drivers associated with the COVID-19 Pandemic: the county's increasing population and the high number of construction and trade jobs in Macon County. As families leave urban centers where social distancing is more difficult to maintain and move rural settings like Macon County, the larger-than-normal population influx has fueled its already heavy reliance on construction and trade skills jobs to build, maintain, and refurbish Macon County's lagging housing market.

II. PLANNING PROCESS

A. Planning Committee

With sincere appreciation for gracious dedication of their time and talent to the citizens of Macon County, the Dept. of Social Services wishes to extend our thanks to the following individuals and organizations that assisted in the development and implementation of this plan:

Macon County Board of County Commissioners

Mr. James P. Tate, Chairman

Mr. Ronnie Beale, Vice Chairman and Liaison to the Dept. of Social Services

Mr. Gary Shields

Mr. Paul Higdon

Mr. Joshua Young

Mr. Derek C. Roland, Manager

Macon County Social Services Board

Ms. Evelyn Southard, Chairman

Ms. Anne Hyder

Ms. Dale West

NC General Assembly Members Representing Macon County

Honorable Kevin Corbin, Senator

Honorable Karl E. Gillespie, Representative

Welfare Reform Board Committee¹

Ms. Karen Roberts, Former TANF Consumer

Mayor Bob Scott - Town of Franklin

Ms. Shelly Foreman, Community Relations Regional Director - Vaya Health

Mr. Chuck Sutton, Executive Director - Macon Program for Progress

Ms. Charam Miller, Community Services Director - Macon Program for Progress

Ms. Stephanie Campbell, Director – Covenant Child Care

Mr. Tim Hogsed, Executive Director - Macon County Care Network

Ms. Paul Alter, Career Center Manager - Macon County NCWorks Career Center

Ms. Brooke Keener - Macon County Public Schools

Ms. Darlene Asher, Assistant Director - Macon County Transit

Ms. Sheila Conley, Income Maintenance Supervisor - Dept. of Social Services

Ms. Jennifer Alexander, Income Maintenance Supervisor - Dept. of Social Services

Ms. Lisa Hilliard, Social Work Supervisor - Dept. of Social Services

Ms. Christina Wallace, Income Maintenance Investigator - Dept. of Social Services

Mr. Patrick Betancourt, Director - Dept. of Social Services

¹ Appointment of proposed committee members was confirmed by the Macon County Board of Commissioners at a regularly held meeting on Tuesday, October 12, 2021.

B. Public Comment

For this cycle, the public review process included making this draft plan available for public inspection with a request for comments October 15-22, 2021. This draft plan was posted and at the following locations:

- Macon County Public Library - 149 Siler Farm Rd. Franklin, NC
- Macon County Government Annex - 5 W. Main St. Franklin, NC
- Macon County Dept. of Social Service - 1832 Lakeside Dr. Franklin, NC
- Online at <http://maconnc.org/dss.html>

A Public Service Announcement of draft plan availability and a request for public comment was made to the following media outlets:

- [WFSC/WNCC](#) in Franklin, NC;
- [WHLC](#) in Highlands, NC;
- [The Franklin Press](#);
- [Macon County News](#); and
- [The Highlander Newspaper](#);
- [The Southern Scoop](#); and
- [Macon Media News, Weather, and Information](#).

Public comment on this plan may be submitted to the Macon County Dept. of Social Services, in any of the following manner:

Via mail:

Macon County Dept. of Social Services
Attn: TANF Electing County Plan FFY 23-26
1832 Lakeside Dr.
Franklin, NC 28734

Via telephone:

828-349-2124

Via website:

<http://maconnc.org/dss.html> (click on *Submit Comment* button)

Review of the plan and comments were obtained formally from the local planning committee members in a planning meeting held Tuesday, October 26, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. both virtually and in-person at the Macon Program for Progress Training Annex in Franklin, NC. Public comment was also solicited from community leaders and the Macon County citizens. The local planning committee members assisted by gathering comments from their respective agencies and agreed to continue meeting on a regular basis to assist in implementing and revising the plan as needed.

C. Planning Development

Whether an individual is a member of a family that has resided in Macon County for centuries or a whether they just arrived, living in this remote, mountainous region presents a variety of challenges including:

- lack of affordable housing;
- regionally lower competitive wages or reduced hours;
- lack of easily accessible and dependable public transportation;
- equitable lack of access to lower-cost energy sources;
- lack of primary practice medical providers;
- medical insurance limitations based on regionally prevalent health concerns² (i.e., obesity, diabetes, etc.);
- lack of broadband availability³ and broadband adoption;
- significant poly-substance misuse combined with lack of access to in-patient or medication assisted treatment services;
- lack of access to affordable or subsidized child care;
- domestic and family violence;
- poor stress coping mechanisms; and
- lack of access to reliable mental health treatment providers.

While living in Macon County presents many challenges and barriers, families quickly learn to also resourceful in multiple ways. One such adaptation families have relied on is changing their skill sets through offered education and work incentive programs such as [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#) or [Southwestern Community College's Career Technologies Division](#) programs, which focuses on supporting Macon County's many construction-related careers. Another adaptation chosen by many is working lower-paying part-times jobs and supplementing income by cobbling together second and sometimes third part-time jobs. However, as with all families across North Carolina, COVID-19 has increased the challenges to Macon County families, prompting an increase in the reliance on economic benefits programs. In addition to the normal compliment of services offered by a public welfare agency, Macon County Dept. of Social Services operates a Community Resource Center (with in-person, telephonic, and electronic access) that directs citizens to the appropriate resources within the community to assist in addressing challenges and barriers. Additionally, Angel Medical Center, in collaboration with [Macon County Care Network](#) (or CareNet, a food and self-reliance ministry) funds and manages [CharityTracker](#). This online service links various charitable organizations in the community together keeping subscribing agencies connected to share resources, keep informed of the needs of families, and helps to guard against abuse of the charity of organizations.

Macon County's Social Services Board was provided a plan update on Thursday, October 21, 2021 and, as mentioned above, the local planning committee will held a meeting on Tuesday, October 26, 2021 at 3:00 p.m.

² 2018 Macon County Community Health Assessment (<https://maconncc.org/images/healthy-carolinians/Macon%20CHA%202018.pdf>)

³ NC Broadband Availability Index (<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/1ca29805a2454ffab6b9579702b99e59>)

both virtually and in-person at the Macon Program for Progress Training Annex in Franklin, NC. This meeting included a review of the previous planning processes, discussion of proposed modifications to the current plan, and identification of unmet needs within the community to be addressed by the committee and incorporated as an addendum to this plan if needed. Public comment was sought October 18-22, 2021 and the final plan was presented for approval by the Macon County Board of Commissioners at their regularly held meeting Tuesday, November 9, 2021.

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III. OUTCOMES AND GOALS

A. Statewide Work First Goals

1. Meeting Federal Work Participation Rates for All Families - Active participation in employment services and activities will lead to full time employment for 50% of all Single-Parent and as defined by Federal Rule. Macon County has met this goal for the past twelve-month period and, at this time, has only nine child-only cases.
2. Meeting Federal Work Participation Rates for Two-Parent Families - Active participation in employment services and activities will lead to full time employment for 90% of Two-Parent families as defined by Federal Rule. Employment Services will work with 100% of all work-eligible families so that self-reliance will be realized and goals for the future can be met for each family.

B. County Performance Measures

Pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 108A-27.3 the Macon County Board of Commissioners establish the following outcomes for its Work First performance measures.

1. Employment - Active participation in intensive employment services for 100% of families will be completed in order to meet the participation rate and ensure that families are served adequately before the end of plan period.
2. Meeting Federal Participation Rates - Active participation in federally countable work activities in 50% of all single-parent families and 90% in all two-parent families will lead to full-time employment for Macon County Work First participants.
3. Providing Employment Services - Employment services will assist 80% of all single-parent families and 100% of two-parent families in job preparation with the aid of the community partners.
4. Staying Off Work First Cash Assistance - 90% of adults and their families will remain off Work First welfare assistance after obtaining employment.
5. Job Retention - 60% of families who leave Work First for employment will continue to be employed six months after leaving the program while 50% of families who leave the program for employment will continue to be employed 12 months after leaving.
6. Benefit Diversion - For a more successful outcome, Benefit Diversion will be assessed for 4% of families to help alleviate the financial crisis and help families return to full time employment using this temporary assistance.

V. PLANS TO MEASURE AND ACHIEVE OUTCOMES AND GOALS

A. Activities

1. Build on efforts to promote child protection, permanency, and self-reliance for families

Methodology: Expand recruitment efforts to increase diversity of resource parents serving child welfare cases. As stated previously, Macon Dept. of Social Services employs two full-time staff who can translate and interpret information for our Hispanic and Latino customers. As Hispanic and Latino citizens comprise 7.4% (as of July 1, 2019) of Macon County's population, the agency recognizes the need for staff that can assist their child welfare colleagues in working with families whose primary language is Spanish as well as additional Spanish speaking resource families. As of this current plan, the agency has one child welfare resource family in which Spanish is the mother's primary language with English as a secondary language while the father's primary language is and English but he is proficient in conversational Spanish. The agency also contracts with a former foster parent / current adoptive parent whose primary language is Spanish to assist our foster care staff in supervising family/sibling visitations.

Methodology: Regular court reviews for children in the legal custody of Macon County are held in accordance with N.C. General Statues. Child welfare supervisors, legal staff, and the agency Director identify children who would benefit from more frequent court reviews to assist with achieving permanency within 12 months of entering foster care. As of this current plan (for period April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021), Macon County is achieving permanency rates for children entering foster care within the following timeframes⁴ (NC's average as comparison):

- Within 12 months of foster care entry = 5.41% (26.3%)
- Within 12-23 months of foster care entry = 23.1% (40.7%)
- Within 24 months or more of foster care entry = 65.2% (31.6%)

Methodology: Based on the agency's relatively small size close-working, interdepartmental teams are more easily able to share appropriate case information and identify resources available to support families. These professional relationships accomplish enhanced strategies that more firmly unify the family.

Methodology: Many of our child-only cases represent caretakers other than the biological parent providing care for children. Some caretakers have difficulty dealing with emotional and behavioral challenged children/teens.

⁴ Duncan, D.F., Flair, K.A., Stewart, C.J., Guest, S., Rose, R.A., Malley, K.M.D., Reives, W. (2020). Management Assistance for Child Welfare, Work First, and Food & Nutrition Services in North Carolina (v3.2). Retrieved October 11, 2021, from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Jordan Institute for Families website. URL: <http://ssw.unc.edu/ma/>

This agency has enhanced kinship care by expanding its definition of *relative* in child-only cases.

Methodology: Macon County will assess each child-only case in which the caretaker is not the parent. If the biological parent moves into caretaker's home, then the case will be reviewed to determine if the Work First payment should continue.

Methodology: Macon County will not receive any Work First transfer cases from another NC county or state without first assessing the sending county's case and the overall situation of the family. Macon County may decline any cash assistance that does not meet our electing plan criteria. Unless prohibited by Court Order, it may be in the best interest of the children that the child-only Work First case be terminated and the children placed with their biological parents.

Methodology: Macon County Dept. of Social Services can make relocation funds available to appropriate Work First A/R to relocate them to an area where either a support system or substantial employment can be found. These funds are limited to \$400.00 and are available only to those who meet Work First Family Assistance (WFFA) income and eligibility requirements. These funds are limited to a one-time relocation per family. The Work First caseworker will evaluate the family for this assistance. The caseworker may also make this recommendation after the application process has been initiated. The Income Maintenance Supervisor for Work First must approve any recommendation for this assistance. The caseworker will be responsible for determining the service to be purchased and for completing the vendor payment request. Families who receive relocation assistance may be eligible for one night's lodging provided by a Transient Fund administered by the Macon County Sheriff's Department. Social Work staff will be available to assist with transportation needs for these A/R, such as transportation to the bus station.

2. Condition of the Work First Mutual Responsibility Agreement (MRA)

Methodology: All families involved with Child Protective Service (CPS) and Work First that are screened to have behavioral indicators or substance abuse issues will be referred to a contract provider with Vaya Health (our Local Management Entity/Managed Care Organization) for assessment and any subsequent treatment.

Methodology: Each family entering into the Work First program will be evaluated by agency staff. At evaluation, staff will determine the most appropriate avenue for the A/R based on the evaluation, including but not limited to: classes at [Southwestern Community College](#), finance/budgeting management assistance, mental health treatment, referral to [Smoky Mountain Pregnancy Care Center](#) or the [Nurse Family Partnership \(NFP\)](#), Workforce

Center, or other appropriate agencies within the county. The caseworker will complete the MRA with the A/R and the A/R must fully agree to the conditions on the MRA. Failure to provide verification of compliance with the MRA conditions will result in termination of Work First Cash Assistance benefits.

Methodology: Of all adults who leave welfare for work, 90% will stay off welfare. Macon County will provide transitional employment services for the A/R that work while actively participating in WFFA. The A/R can receive up to three months of service after receiving their final benefit assistance payment if income is less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). Services may include a monthly follow-up by agency, transportation reimbursement or assistance, or on-going case management. Support services available to active participants will also be provided to newly employed recipients.

- **Continue to require Child Support Enforcement cooperation prior to making a Work First cash assistance application**

Methodology: It is vital for the family to move toward self-reliance and for both parents of the children provide financial support for their children. All persons applying for Work First cash assistance must comply with Child Support Enforcement prior to completing the Work First processing time of 45 days. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in a denial of the Work First Application. As of October 2021, Macon County's overall Child Support Enforcement establishment rate stands at 96.9% (goal = 99%) with 88.12% of cases under order (goal = 87.98%). 59.59% of Macon County cases are receiving support (goal = 61.9%) while only 36.34% of cases are receiving payments towards arrears (goal = 66.89%).⁵

- **Strategy planning with potential Work First cash assistance recipients**

Methodology: The Work First caseworker will work with all able-bodied adults who have had a recent connection to the workforce. These applicants will be assessed and will be required to complete a mandatory two-week job search with a specified number of applications to be determined based on the assessed skills and abilities of the individual. Staff will conduct applicant job-readiness assessments and work closely with Workforce Center to assist able-bodied adults to be job ready.

Methodology: In conjunction with the agency staff, Workforce Center staff will assist those A/R that have experienced a recent no-fault loss of employment in applying for Unemployment Insurance, if eligible and job search activities. Workforce Center is the North Carolina local connector to internet-based, real-time job matching system, which offers job seekers access 24/7 for employment opportunities; assistance in employment profile

⁵ Based on Self-Assessment scores available through August 2021 provided by the NC Dept. of Health and Human Services Child Support Enforcement Section on September 20, 2021.

updates; and request referrals when an A/R credentials match employers' criteria.

Methodology: The agency will collaborate with Workforce Center through WIOA, a federally funded program that provides services including employment and training activities for adults and dislocated workers, as well as youth activities. Provided employment and training direction focuses on people who have been dislocated from their jobs to assist them in overcoming their disadvantages. Opportunities such as On the Job Training (OJT) enables workers to be hired and trained for six months by employers who can receive reimbursements up to 50% of the starting wages. Collaborating with Southwestern Community College, the Workforce Center through WIOA, can assist in providing workforce readiness education for career change or can assist high school dropouts in obtaining their GED.

Methodology: Southwestern Community College will collaborate in assessing each A/R to determine if their skills are transferable or if classes are necessary to insure A/R are started on the appropriate path for workforce readiness. [Macon County Transit \(MCT\)](#) public transportation can be arranged by agency staff for A/R that have limited or unreliable transportation. Along with transportation, agency staff will also coordinate with the agency Child Care Subsidy caseworker to determine if the A/R is eligible to receive assistance with childcare expenses. If a potential applicant is determined to need Vocational Rehabilitation, an on-site counselor is available through the NC Department of Commerce's Division of Workforce Solutions at Macon County's center each week. Additionally, agency staff can assist with referrals to [Webster Enterprises, Inc.](#), a regionally contracted non-profit provider of educational and training services through the NC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

- **Households will meet the Federal Participation rate**

Methodology: Of one-parent households, 50% will be guided by agency staff in completing the MRA to achieve a more appropriate and specific outcomes for the A/R. Macon County will require active participation of adult parents whose children are more than three months old. The MRA Plan of Action will outline the A/R responsibility of a minimum of 40 hours per week of countable work activities in order to qualify for *Pay-After-Performance* incentives. Countable work activities may include, but are not limited to job searches, computer training, resume building, interview practicing, and any activities deemed necessary to help the A/R be successful. A/R will submit a Time Card by the fifth of each month (**Attachment A**); at which time the caseworker will release the WFFA benefits following activity verification. The caseworker will monitor, track, and record A/R work activities and hours.

Methodology: Of two-parent households, 90% will meet the participation rate. If the two-parent household is not eligible for benefit diversion, or has exhausted benefit diversion assistance and is not currently employed, the

caseworker will coordinate with local resource partners in providing job-training activities. Within one week, a MRA Plan of Action outlining 40 hours of countable activities will be completed for signatures. Countable work activities may be defined, but not limited to the same activities as those listed for one-parent households. These activities will be completed prior to the WFFA application being processed. A/R will submit a Time Card by the fifth of each month, at which time a caseworker will release the WFFA benefits following activity verification. The caseworker will monitor, track, and record A/R work activities and hours.

Following *Pay-After-Performance* guidelines as outlined in the [Work First Manual: Section 119 \(Work First Benefits\)](#), at least one adult must participate to be eligible for benefits. If the A/R's children are all over the age of three months, it is required both parents join in the work search.

Methodology: In cases where medical or mental health disabilities have led the family to apply for assistance, an immediate referral will be made to Vocational Rehabilitation or to the Social Security Administration Office, at the discretion of the Work First caseworker. The family must follow through with appointments and recommendations of these agencies in order to receive benefits. Cash assistance will be issued on a monthly basis and the caseworker will meet with these families monthly to review progress.

- **Expand efforts in reducing teen pregnancy in our community**

Methodology: For 2018 (updated October 2019) Macon County's teen pregnancy rate per 1,000 of 15 to 19 year-old girls is 27.3%. For comparison, this rate is slightly above North Carolina's teen pregnancy rate of 24.6% per 1,000 girls age 15 to 19 years of age.⁶

Macon County Public Health, Smoky Mountain Pregnancy Care Center, NFP, and this agency will partner together for the availability of counseling to A/R to place emphasis on the importance of family planning options, neonatal health, and on strong family principles aimed at disrupting the cycle of poverty. This agency will also strongly emphasize the importance of continuing education in support of teen parents receiving a high school diploma as well as continued development of a skill or trade to support their career choice. Assisting eligible teen parents with subsidized childcare services only reinforces their school attendance to ensure completion of their education. This strategy is targeted at the promotion of the A/R in becoming self-sufficient and reducing reliance on the welfare system.

⁶ Statewide information on the state of adolescent health and helpful resources. Retrieved October 11, 2021, from the Sexual Health Initiatives for Teens (SHIFT) website. URL: <http://www.shiftnc.org/>.

B. Supportive Services

Support services listed above will enable individuals to participate in activities that lead families to self-reliance. Below are additional supportive services that will expand and develop self-confidence in support of A/R participation:

- **Case Management**

Case management means planning, directing and providing services. The caseworker will be responsible for working with families in the assessment, planning, directing and providing of supportive services. The caseworker will document progress for all child-only families and eligible families that are searching for work. The Work First caseworker and Child Welfare social workers will continue to work together to define the responsibilities of each other and strive to improve communication between the agency and the families.

- **Childcare Subsidy Assistance**

This agency continues to prioritize child welfare families in providing subsidized childcare services. Through contract negotiations with [Southwestern Child Development Commission](#), our regional Local Provider Agency (LPA), Macon County is typically not subject to wait listing for subsidized childcare (contingent upon childcare subsidy allocations from the NC General Assembly administered through the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education). However, as a rural, mountain community, there is very limited availability for infants and toddlers in childcare centers. Work First eligible families and families eligible to receive services based on being below 200% the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) must participate in work or work related activities to ensure they comply with program guidelines. Parent subsidy fees will be assessed by the Childcare Subsidy caseworker once the parent becomes employed (unless otherwise determined during a declared Public Health Emergency).

- **Child Protective Services**

Work First and CPS will continue to work collaboratively to ensure the safety of Macon County's children and families. Child Welfare social workers rely heavily on [KIDS Place](#), our local Child Advocacy Center (CAC). KIDS Place, a CAC based on the Huntsville, AL model, is devoted to the protection and well-being of abused and neglected children by providing a safe, non-threatening environment for multi-disciplinary forensic interviewing, medical examinations and counseling. If needed, supportive court intervention services are also available through KIDS Place. Macon County child welfare staff also work closely with The Baptist Children Homes of NC and Family Care Ministry at the Moody Home in Franklin, NC. Family Care Ministry is designed to provide housing, job search assistance, money management and parenting instruction to single mothers (over 18 years of age) and their children who are homeless or

facing homelessness. Each parent must agree to seek employment and a permanent place of residency.

- **Streamlining Eligibility Determination and Services**

Macon County has established a process of determining eligibility for A/R that will serve them more quickly and efficiently. This continuum of services will emphasize intake diversion services, two-week job search for all able-body adults, job development, and referrals (**Attachment B**).

- **Transportation Assistance**

This agency will continue to coordinate with MCT for our Work First families so that they may successfully transition to independence. Additionally, we agency may offer gas vouchers to A/R with their own transportation in order to complete job searches or until they receive their first paycheck.

- **Work Expenses**

This agency will assess and may provide assistance with non-recurring, work-related expenses such as work clothes, tools, equipment and uniforms, etc.

- **Participation Expenses**

This agency will continue to assist families with uniforms, books, registration fees, etc. so that they may continue to complete job readiness and locate or continue work; thus maintaining a lower participation rate.

- **Education/Training**

This agency will continue to refer families to education facilities such as Southwestern Community College, Workforce Solutions, WIOA programs, and other agencies for continuing education classes.

- **Domestic Violence Services**

This agency will continue screening and assessing families facing domestic violence (DV). Families found to be in need of DV assistance will be referred to [REACH](#), our local DV Awareness and Assistance Agency.

- **Human Resources**

This agency will continue to collaborate with local resources such as Southwestern Community College to help families learn to budget their finances so that they may become self-reliant.

- **Medicaid/Health Choice**

All families are assisted in applying for Medicaid, Health Choice or the Federally Facilitated Marketplace to help with medical expenses and medical insurance for all children under 200% of poverty. Families receiving Medicaid will continue to be eligible for Non-Emergency Medicaid Transportation (NEMT) for eligible services with approved

service providers either through a contract with MCT or by receiving gas vouchers if they provide their own transportation to Medicaid covered services.

- **Food and Nutrition Services**

All families are assisted in applying for Food and Nutrition Services.

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VI. ADMINISTRATION

A. Authority

The Macon County Board of County Commissioners has delegated the administration of the Work First program to the Macon County Department of Social Services. Nothing in the Macon County Electing Plan shall imply an entitlement to any resources or services at the disposal of Macon County and the implementation of the Electing Plan.

B. Organization

Macon County focuses on providing services in the most efficient, customer-friendly and cost-effective manner possible. Macon County has a dedicated Work First caseworker and multiple Economic Services intake staff to meet with the A/R the same day they enter the agency and take an application as needed.

This agency continually assesses the needs of the community and attempts to be responsive to those needs. Employment Services and Eligibility Services are not a consolidated function. The Workforce Center and Macon County Dept. of Social Services have developed a plan in which all applicants for cash assistance will register for work at the Workforce Center. All Workforce Center partners will enhance job searches and job readiness activities for WFFA participants. The partners include Southwestern Community College, WIOA staff with [Macon Program for Progress \(MPP\)](#), and the NC Division of Vocation Rehabilitation. All partners work for the good of the families and utilize all resources in order to ensure that each WFFA family becomes self-reliant.

This agency will evaluate each family for a one-time benefit diversion for cash assistance (now optional) not to exceed three months of support. Benefit Diversion is intended to be a short-term benefit, which may ultimately resolve the crisis for the family.

Crisis Intervention Program (CIP) funds are a type of Energy Assistance provided to families for a short-term benefit that alleviates the energy crisis such as a utility disconnect notice. The total amount that an A/R may receive in any given fiscal year may not exceed \$600. Temporary Assistance to Needy Families - Emergency Assistance (TANF-EA) may also assist 200% FPL families through financial assistance not to exceed \$400 in any given fiscal year. The Work First caseworker and agency social workers collaborate to provide informed solutions to address the situation in the home such as health, well-being, substance misuse, financial assistance, educational needs or other barriers that may prevent self-reliance.

C. Childcare

As mentioned in the Supportive Services section above, this agency continues to prioritize child welfare families in providing subsidized

childcare services. Work First eligible families and families eligible to receive services based on being below 200% FPL must participate in work or work related activities to ensure they comply with program guidelines. Parent subsidy fees will be assessed by the Childcare Subsidy caseworker once the parent becomes employed (unless otherwise determined during a declared Public Health Emergency).

D. Transportation

Services may be available for Work First applicants, active participants, and those recipients that are newly employed for three months following date of employment if income is under 200% of FPL. The estimated allocation for this program is not to exceed \$400 per household. Work First A/R falling within 200% FPL with a recent connection to the workforce within the past 3 months may be eligible for \$35 in gas vouchers (**Attachment C**) to be used for job search or employment. This assistance shall not exceed three vouchers within a fiscal year per household and no more than one per month. Work First applicants are to use the gas vouchers for job search or employment, attending orientation or career assessment classes only. Applicant/Recipients that have received gas vouchers within the past year must meet with the caseworker prior to receiving the voucher. Applicant/Recipients without available transportation will be referred to MCT by the intake worker (**Attachment D**). These vouchers will be covered by TANF funds. Vehicle repairs, solely at the discretion of the Economic Services Supervisor or the Director, may be made for WFFA active participants only if the participant is employed or is newly hired. The vehicle MUST be registered in the participant's name and repairs may exceed \$400. [Finish Line](#) grant funds for vehicle repairs funded through the NC Dept. of Commerce may also be available to any A/R that is involved in WIOA.

E. Substance Use/Mental Health

Substance Abuse Screening will be conducted as required by law by the case worker by completing the [DSS-8219 \(Attachment E\)](#) and the [DSS-5325 \(Attachment F\)](#). At the request of the agency, a [Vaya Health](#) contracted substance abuse provider will coordinate with the Dept. of Social Services (**Attachment G**) to provide screening, assessments, and referrals for treatment if needed. Non-compliance will result in denial or termination of benefits. Pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 108A-29.1 substance use screening and testing for illegal use of controlled substances, if there is reasonable suspicion, for each Work First Program applicant or recipient is a condition of eligibility to receive assistance. Substance Use Testing (urine toxicology) is only requested when there is reasonable suspicion to suspect the applicant/recipient is engaged in the illegal use of controlled substance. Reasonable suspicion for making a referral for substance use testing is only determined by the following criteria:

- a. score of three or above on the Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST-10)
- b. criminal conviction relating to an illegal controlled substance within the past five (5) years.

The following A/Rs are subject to the substance use screening and testing requirements:

1. single parent families (biological, adoptive, and step);
2. two parent families (biological, adoptive, and step);
3. emancipated teen parents;
4. parents being added to an existing Work First case;
5. parents who are ineligible due to fleeing felon and/or parole/probation violator status;
6. individuals who both committed and were convicted under federal or state law on or after August 23, 1996 of any offenses classified as a felony by the law of the jurisdiction involved with an element of the possession, use, or distribution of a controlled substance;
7. parents/caretakers with a Class H or I controlled substance felony conviction in North Carolina on or after August 23, 1996 are subject to disqualification to the Work First Program;
8. individuals who have been convicted of substance abuse felonies outside North Carolina will be permanently disqualified from participating in WFFA cases; and
9. school-age children 12 to 18 years of age may also subject to drug screening and testing.

Macon County will follow North Carolina's Standard Plan for substance use testing. If the A/R has a confirmed positive result from a screen/testing, that individual is sanctioned for a period of 12 months for the first offense. The second offense will result in sanction for a period 24 months, and third sanction results in lifetime Work First disqualification. If a caretaker is sanctioned, a protective payee must be assigned to receive the cash assistance payment on the household's behalf. The cost of the first test will be assumed by the Dept. of Social Services. If additional tests are needed, those costs are borne by the A/R. Screening results will be provided directly to the agency by the testing facility. Results provided to the county agency by the A/R will not be considered valid for program purposes. Non-compliance with the substance use screening and testing requirements will result in automatic denial or termination of WFFA benefits.

F. Family Violence Option

The Family Violence Option will be provided as required by Federal law. The caseworker will screen applicants using forms [DSS-6965](#) (**Attachment H**) and for family violence issues and make the appropriate referrals. All applicants are made aware of their right not to participate in

Employment Services if employment would place the applicant or applicant's children in danger due to the domestic violence issue via form [DSS-6966 \(Attachment I\)](#). This agency follows all state policies to protect the A/R identity and location.

Procedures for A/R experiencing family violence are as follows:

1. The A/R must read, understand, sign and indicate they wish to speak to someone on the Notification of Family Violence Option form;
2. The caseworkers must refer the A/R for family violence screening or further assessment if they self-disclose, or if there are indicators of family violence present. The caseworker will refer A/Rs to REACH of Macon County, our local DV Awareness and Assistance Agency;
3. REACH will administer the screening and assessments for domestic violence; and
4. If the A/R requests a waiver from any Work First requirements, the caseworker will consult with REACH concerning the request before a decision grant waiver is made.

G. Other Services

A Memorandum of Agreement with the Division of Workforce Solutions is included as an attachment **(Attachment L)**

H. Maintenance of Effort (MOE)

1. MOE funds will be used for child welfare staffing, child welfare services, Emergency Assistance, and contract services to support employment. The SFY 2022 MOE for Macon County Dept. of Social Services' MOE remains \$168,596.
2. TANF expenditures are budgeted at \$754,773 for SFY 2022.
3. Other SFY 2022 budgeted amounts include:

CPS, TANF Foster Care, and Adoption	\$683,033
Work First Cash Assistance	\$25,000
Work First EA/Contract Services	\$41,740
Families under 200% and 150% FPL	\$5,000

I. Child Welfare Services

Child welfare services utilize the largest portion of Macon County's TANF Block Grant with the belief that protection of our children and families is protection of the future of our community. Macon County's community response to child abuse and neglect sets the standards for North Carolina and Macon County Dept. of Social Services remains a leader at the center

of formidable partnerships with child and family serving agencies within the region.

DRAFT

VI. EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE (EA)

EA cash assistance will be provided to families who meet the eligibility requirements, as stated in the [Work First Manual: Section 102 \(Short-Term Services and Benefits\)](#). Eligibility for this benefit is based on the prudent judgment of the Work First caseworker in consultation with the Income Maintenance Supervisor when examining the emergency. The maximum payment for each A/R will be \$400 per fiscal year. This cap may be re-examined if the county, state, or federal government declares a state of emergency in Macon County due to natural disaster or severe weather. The total amount to be allocated to this program for emergency cash assistance will vary.

EA is designed to assist families with emergency needs and is not intended to meet recurring or ongoing needs. If a family has received EA in a prior fiscal year, the family will be referred to an appropriate, local finance and budgeting education partner agency before approval of EA will be completed. The adult caretaker will be provided an interview and asked to complete a workbook, which focuses on family budgeting and job skills. EA applications will not be approved until the adult caretaker meets with the local resource partners and has complied with the services offered. Refusal to comply or fail to keep a scheduled appointment triggers ineligibility for EA assistance for that current SFY and one SFY following.

An emergency is defined as failure to meet a child's basic needs including, but not limited to:

- lack of appropriate housing;
- notice of intent to foreclose;
- court-ordered eviction;
- loss of shelter due to natural disaster or condemnation of property; or
- food spoilage due to lack of refrigeration; etc.

The emergency must exist because of a situation beyond the control of the adult caretaker including, but not limited to:

- reduction in force (RIF);
- lay-off as a result of plant or facility closure;
- stolen paycheck; or
- unexpected car repairs; etc.

Cash assistance directed at services provided to help meet these emergencies may include, but not limited to:

- household utilities;
- vehicle repair (at agency discretion); or
- childcare; etc.

No EA will be provided to A/R if the assistance cannot alleviate the stated emergency. EA will not be provided for any medical care, regardless of A/R coverage by Medicaid.

VII. SERVICES TO LOW-INCOME FAMILIES (UNDER 200% OF FPL)

Services provided to families with income at or below 200% FPL include:

- budgeting;
- supporting job retention;
- strengthening families; and
- promoting healthy development parent/child relationships.

With \$5,000 set as the budgeted amount of funding available for this service, assistance is limited to \$400 per year per household. As such, services are prioritized on the following basis:

1. former Work First families (within one year of termination of support);
2. child welfare families; and
3. single incident hardship cases (as determined by the Economic Services Supervisor).

VIII. SERVICES FOR NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS

Macon County will not utilize TANF funds to serve non-custodial parents.

DRAFT

IX. EXEMPTION FROM THE WORK REQUIREMENT

To be eligible for Work First cash assistance, applicants must register with Workforce Center, unless exempt for the following reasons:

- caretaker of a child less than 3 months old;
- victim of domestic violence in which participation would place the family at risk;
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipient; or
- caretaker receiving Social Security Disability (SSD) for a non-budgeted household member or non-parent caretaker in a child-only case.

Macon County elects to retain the work requirement policy for single parents of children under the age of three months. This policy will be limited to a three-month exemption period per child not to exceed a lifetime maximum of twelve months. The three-month exemption is in alignment with the [Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993](#).

This work exemption will terminate on the last day of the month in which the child turns three months of age. At this point, a single parent will be required to meet with the Work First caseworker to begin their mandatory work requirement activities. Once the child turns two months of age, a childcare referral will be made to ensure services will be available at the end of the third month exemption period. If childcare placement is unable to be obtained, the parent will be determined to be exempt from work requirement activities until the first available childcare opening is secured for a period not to exceed 12 months. If a medical condition prevents the child from being placed on the first day of the fourth month, the work registration code in NC FAST will accurately note the parent's need to care for an incapacitated person in their home and their 24 month clock will not begin until the household circumstances change.

X. INNOVATIVE COUNTY STRATEGIES

Intensive job development and job coaching

Family-centered services are provided to the A/R as a priority of achieving outcomes and goals. Agency staff and local resource partners will support in the following ways:

- provide coaching to overcome obstacles such as financial budgeting, assisting families with learning to shop within their budget;
- provide vouchers for consignment clothing shops and thrift stores, etc.;
- provide job searches, job placement, and determine the type of work role for which the A/R is best suited; and
- the A/R will be assisted in determining financial aid for continuing education, if appropriate.

Child-Only case reviews

Reviews for child-only cases will be completed every year unless the following circumstances indicate an earlier review:

- the child reaches 18 years of age;
- the child moves out of the home of the caregiver; or
- the death of the caregiver.

Provide career assessment for all applicants

Southwestern Community College will assess the skill level of A/R using a standardized Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) and career choice using the Career Decision Making System (CDMS) in on-site classes. WIOA participants may also attend the classes to meet WIOA eligibility and assessment requirements.

Retention Assistance

The agency will assist working families for up to three months after leaving welfare for work.

Time Limits for Working Participants

A/Rs receiving Work First cash assistance for a total of 24 months become ineligible for additional benefits for a period of 36 months following termination, unless granted an extension (not to exceed 60 months assistance in a lifetime). This time limit is a cumulative total that includes time receiving TANF assistance in other NC counties or in other states.

Services for Mental and Physical Impairments

A/Rs with declared mental and physical impairments will be referred to VR or the Social Security Administration to participate in a Functional Assessment to determine assistance eligibility under those programs. The A/R may also be referred to Webster Enterprises for job skills training or to Vaya Health for on-going treatment as needed.

XI. SPECIAL ISSUES

As economic conditions may impact any welfare reform effort, the agency will continue to explore creative ways to help families take responsibility for their own safety, for their financial well-being, and for their personal life choices in providing for their children. The agency will continue to place emphasis on assisting families in moving from poverty to greater self-reliance.

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XII. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Macon County will follow criteria established as outlined within the Work First Manual for:

- age limits for children;
- payment levels;
- benefit calculation;
- sanctions;
- resource requirements (limit and countable items);
- change in circumstances;
- citizenship and identity requirements;
- residency requirements; and
- benefits diversion requirements.

The North Carolina Work First Standard Plan will be followed except for changes as noted below. Any future statewide policy changes will be reviewed and evaluated before Macon County implements such changes. If changes are made, the Macon County Work First Plan will be amended to incorporate changes.

1. *Pay After Performance* - all work eligible family participants will be required to participate in countable work and work-related activities and completed satisfactorily in order for this agency to provide to the vendor/vendors a benefit check on behalf of the A/Rs at the end of each month. Vendor payments will be agreed upon by the families and this agency and documented on the signed MRA. Families who fail to complete their required hours as agreed within their MRA are considered to be in non-compliance. Families must complete the required hours to be eligible to receive the benefit assistance.
2. All work eligible individuals are required to actively participate in work and work related activities for a total of 40 hours per week. Participation will be a combination of activities including but not limited to:
 - employment;
 - subsidized employment;
 - vocational training;
 - work skills training;
 - education;
 - work experience;
 - mental health and/or substance abuse treatment;
 - vocational rehabilitation;
 - job readiness / job search activities; or
 - other agency approved activities endorsed under this plan.
3. The agency will continue to count earned and unearned income for household members excluding SSI recipients receiving benefits and SSD recipients for non-required budget household members (in child-only cases). This agency

will follow standard Work First policy in all other areas in order to be in compliance with NC FAST system requirements.

4. All A/R will experience a three-month ineligibility penalty for each episode of a job quit unless “good cause” is established by the Work First caseworker with approval from the Income Maintenance Supervisor. The ineligibility period is defined as the month of application and the next three months. An individual may reapply for Work First assistance at any time but is ineligible for benefits during a job quit penalty period. There is no remedy for a job quit penalty once the penalty period begins.
5. In order to receive WFFA, children must live with an adult relative who is within a certain degree of kinship defined as:
 - parent, including a biological mother, father, or adoptive parent;
 - legal father or mother, or step-father or step-mother;
 - an alleged biological or legal father or other alleged paternal relative;
 - spouses of the above individuals (that also meet kinship requirements) even if the marriage has been terminated through death or divorce;
 - paternal or maternal grandparents, great-grandparents, or great-great-grandparents;
 - paternal or maternal uncles or aunts, great uncles or great aunts, great-great uncles or great-great aunts, nephews, nieces, or first cousins;
 - brothers, sisters, half-brothers, half-sisters, adoptive brothers, adoptive sisters, step-brothers or step-sisters; or
 - other adults who have court ordered legal custody or guardianship of a child.

Biological parents and their relatives are not eligible to receive WFFA for a legally adopted child. This relative must be providing care for the child on a daily basis and be responsible for ongoing decisions regarding the child’s well being. A relative who meets the above relationships must be included in the case with the child, unless they are an SSI benefit recipient. This agency will comply with the State Standard Plan of Kinship requirements.

XIII. APPEALS PROCESS

A public assistance A/R has the right to appeal the decision of the Macon County Dept. or the Board of County Commissioners granting, denying, terminating, or modifying assistance. Each applicant or recipient shall be notified in writing of his or her right to appeal. An example of the appeals rights notification is provided and submitted (**Attachment J**).

This agency will follow the appeals process as stated in [N.C. Gen. Stat. § 108A-79](#) (**Attachment K**) with the exception of A/R appeals beyond the decision of the local hearing officer as outlined in subsection (g) of the above cited statute, which will be replaced with an impartial two-member team. The Macon County Board of Commissioners will appoint the members of the impartial team.

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XIV. REVIEW PRIOR TO EXPIRATION OF TIME LIMITS

The process by which the agency will review all Work First caseloads prior to expiration of federal and state time limits will follow policy as in the [Work First Manual: Section 105 \(Federal and State Time Limits\)](#).

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XV. FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

The agency anticipates 100% of its Work First Block Grant will be expended on benefit diversion, employment services, TANF EA, 200% FPL services, and child welfare services.

DRAFT

XVI. CERTIFICATIONS

Macon County Social Services Board Certification

As Chairman of the Macon County Social Services Board, I certify that Macon the TANF Electing County Plan for FFY 2023-2026 has been reviewed and endorsed by this Board at its regularly held meeting on Thursday, October 21, 2021.

Evelyn Southard, Chairman

Date

Macon County Board of Commissioners Certification

As Chairman of the Macon County Board of Commissioners, I certify that the TANF Electing County Plan for FFY 2023-2026 was adopted at its regularly held meeting on Tuesday, November 9, 2021 by a two-thirds majority of votes with the following count:

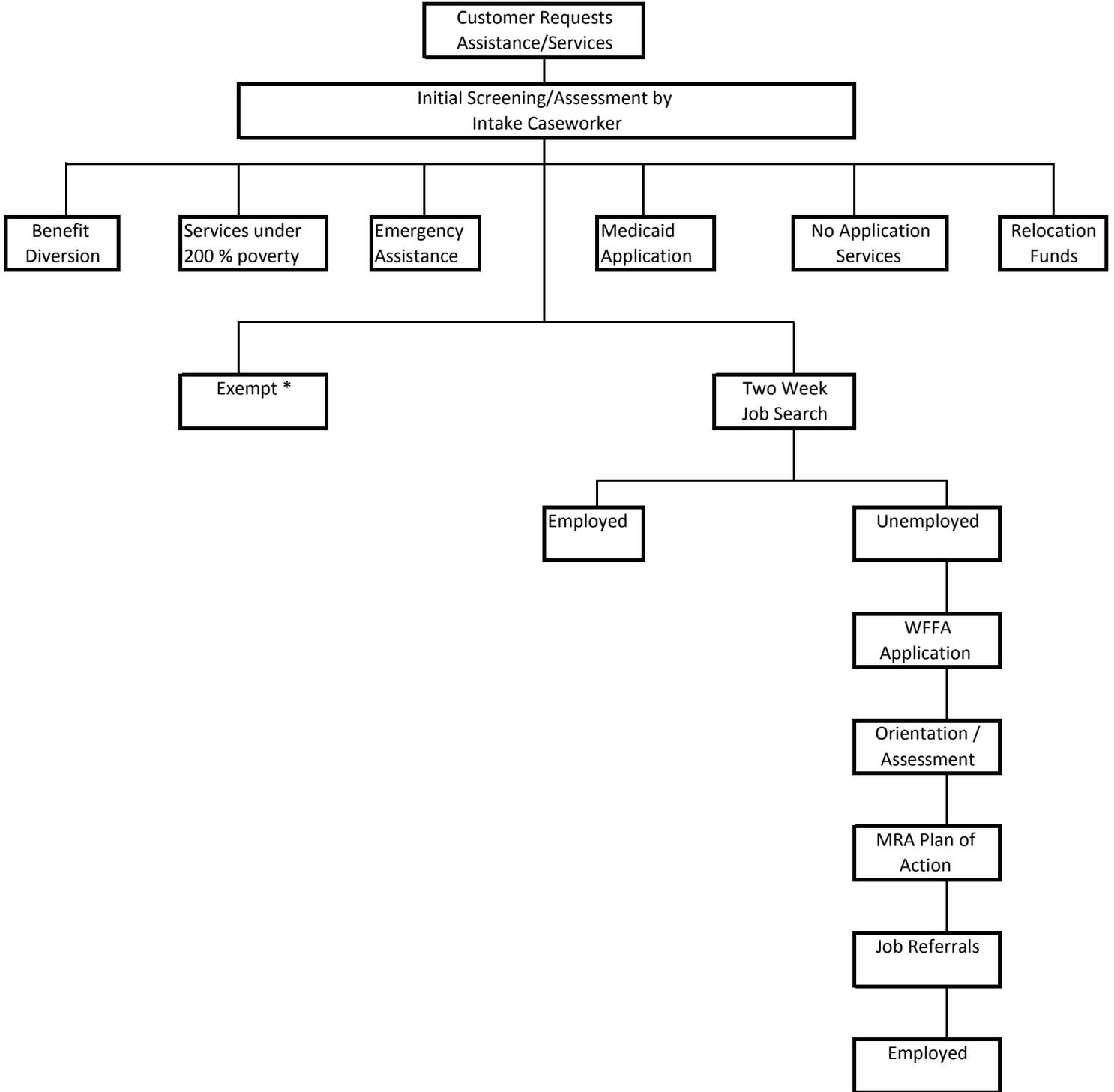
_____ COMMISSIONERS ***IN FAVOR***

_____ COMMISSIONERS ***AGAINST***

James P. Tate, Chairman

Date

STREAMLINED PROCESS MODEL FOR ELIGIBILITY AND SERVICES



* Exempt limited to child only cases, cases with child less than 3 months old, and those verifiably disabled.



Macon County Department of Social Services

Lakeside Government Complex
1832 Lakeside Drive
Franklin, North Carolina · 28734-6778
Tel: 828-349-2124 · Fax: 828-349-2401
www.maconnc.org/dss.html

R. Patrick Betancourt
Director

TRANSPORTATION REFERRAL

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

Direction to Home:

Medicaid _____ Transitional _____
Application – from _____ to _____
Work First Active – from _____ to _____
– from _____ to _____ Other _____

APPOINTMENT: Date _____
 Time _____
 Place _____

REMARKS: _____

Referred by: _____

Date: _____

MACON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
1832 Lakeside Drive
Franklin, NC 28734
828-349-2132

WORKFIRST TRANSPORTATION
GAS VOUCHER

VOUCHER NO:

EXPIRATION DATE:

CLIENTS NAME:

WORK ACTIVITY:

I hereby grant the release of the information contained on this form to Express USA/Dunoco Company in obtaining assistance with WorkFirst transportation services. This information is to be held in confidence by Express USA/Dunoco

Date

Client's Signature

.....
Amount Authorized (up to) \$

Redeemable at:

Express USA - 1078 East Main St., Franklin - Open M-Sat 6:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. & Sunday 12:30-8:30 p.m.

Dunoco Station #2 - Marble, NC

Date

Case Worker Signature

.....

Please make sure receipts are attached to each voucher.
This voucher can only be used once. Any remaining balance cannot be redeemed.

CONSENT FOR RELEASE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

I, authorize _____ to
(Mental Health/Substance Use Services/Local Management Entity/Managed Care Organization)

disclose to _____
(Name of County Department of Social Services or designated Work First agency)

The following information:

(Applicant/Recipient needs to initial each category that applies.)

- _____ My name and other personal identifying information
- _____ Assessment
- _____ Dates of services
- _____ Recommendations for treatment
- _____ Progress and compliance
- _____ Progress and compliance with treatment
- _____ Attendance
- _____ Date of discharge and discharge status
- _____ Discharge plan
- _____ Employment and training related information

The purpose of these disclosures is to: Provide permission to the above named MH/SAS/LME/MCO provider to disclose information as initialed to the above named county department of social services either orally or in written format for the evaluation of Work First and Food and Nutrition Services Program eligibility.

For Substance Use: I understand that my records are protected under federal regulations, 42 CFR Part 2 Confidentiality of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Records, and cannot be disclosed without my written consent unless otherwise provided for in the regulations. I also understand that, except for action already taken, I may rescind this consent at any time.

For Mental Health: I understand the contents to be released, the need for the information, and that there are statutes and regulations protecting the confidentiality of authorized information. I also understand that, except for action already taken, I may rescind this consent at any time.

Protected Health Information:

I understand that my alcohol and/or drug treatment records are protected under Federal regulations, 42 C.F.R. Part 2 Confidentiality and Drug Abuse Patient Records, and 45 C.F.R. Parts 160& 164, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 ("HIPAA"). Unless otherwise provided by federal regulations, information from alcohol and/or drug treatment records cannot be disclosed without my written consent. I also understand that I may revoke this consent in writing at any time except to the extent that action has been taken in reliance on the consent. I understand that generally _____

(Name of treatment program)

may not condition my treatment on whether I sign a consent form, but that in certain limited circumstances I may be denied treatment if I do not sign a consent form.

DSS-8219 (rev.09/15)
Economic and Family Services

The North Carolina Division of Social Services does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, political beliefs, or disability in the admission, treatment, or participation in its programs, services and activities, or in employment.

If I do not rescind this consent, it expires automatically as follows:

1. Upon my termination from the Work First Program, and/or the Food and Nutrition Services Program;
2. Or one year from the date this consent is signed; whichever occurs first.

Applicant/Recipient Signature

Date signed

Witness Signature

Date Signed

Applicant/Recipient received a copy of this consent form for his/her records. Yes / No (circle one)

SUBSTANCE USE BEHAVIORAL INDICATOR CHECKLIST II

This forms may be completed when there is an observation of actions, appearance or conduct that may be associated with Substance use issues. Once the checklist is completed, the caseworker may then administer the AUDIT/DAST-10.

Name of Recipient _____

County Name _____

Name of Observer _____

Date of Observation _____

Location _____

Time of Observation _____ a.m. /p.m.

Check all appropriate items. Behavioral indicators require only one check to administer the AUDT/DAST-10.

APPEARANCE/PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

____ odor of alcoholic beverage on breath

____ extremely poor hygiene

____ constricted pupils (pinpoint)

____ dilated pupils (enlarged)

____ glazed or glassy eyes

____ stumbling/staggering

____ body odor of alcoholic beverage

____ lethargic/slow movement

____ swaying gait

SPEECH

____ slurred speech

____ rapid/accelerated speech

____ incoherent speech

HISTORY OF SUBSTANCE USE RELATED PROBLEMS

____ pending DUI or drug court case

____ loss of license for DUI

____ drug or alcohol arrest or conviction

____ history of/or current substance use treatment involvement

CONDUCT/BEHAVIOR

____ loss of inhibitions with no apparent reason (i.e., yelling, screaming, cursing, assaultive)

____ failure to report for job interview (2 or more)

____ repeated missed scheduled appointments

If known, how is the recipient's behavior different from that previously observed? Be specific and describe any other observations about behavior or actions not listed above.

To the best of my knowledge, this report represents the appearance, behavior and/or conduct of the above named person, observed by me.

Signature of Observer _____ Date _____

DSS-5325 (rev. 9/2015)
Economic and Family Services

The North Carolina Division of Social Services does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, political beliefs, or disability in the admission, treatment, or participation in its programs, services and activities, or in employment.



Vaya Health
200 Ridgefield Court, Suite 206
Asheville, NC 28806
1-800-893-6246
www.vayahealth.com

Date: 9/28/2017

Dear Provider:

Your Memorandum of Agreement (“MOA”) with Vaya Health (“Vaya”) is attached. In an effort to improve the contracting process, Vaya has implemented electronic document signing utilizing web-based software called DocuSign. Please sign the MOA electronically utilizing this software. Electronic signature is legal and administratively efficient. Implementing this process eliminates the need to print or mail a copy of the MOA, reducing the administrative costs required to execute the MOA for both you and Vaya. If you require instructions on how to sign, please click the following hyperlink: <https://www.docusign.com/support/how-to-guides/signing-information-for-signers>.

Once the MOA is signed by all Parties, a completely executed copy will be automatically sent to you via email.

Please sign the MOA as soon as possible. If you have any questions or need additional information you may contact the Contracts Team.

Quick reference:

Emily Nelson
Sr. Contracting and Procurement Specialist
828-225-2785 ext. 5982
Emily.nelson@vayahealth.com

Sincerely,

Contracting and Procurement Team
Vaya Health
200 Ridgefield Court, Suite 206
Asheville, North Carolina 28806
828-225-2785

Attachment(s)

For 24/7 access to services or crisis assistance, call 1-800-849-6127 | NC Relay 711

Serving individuals with mental health needs, substance use disorders or intellectual/developmental disabilities in Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Caldwell, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes and Yancey counties in North Carolina

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

Between

Macon

COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

And

Vaya Health

For

WORK FIRST AND CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES SUBSTANCE USE INITIATIVE

This Memorandum of Agreement (“Agreement”) is entered into by and between the Macon County Department of Social Services (“DSS”) and Vaya Health (“Vaya”) (individually “Party,” collectively “Parties”).

WHEREAS, in 1997 the North Carolina General Assembly enacted N.C.G.S. § 108A-25 and N.C.G.S. § 108A-29.1, which form the basis for the current North Carolina Work First/Child Protective Services (“CPS”) Substance Use Initiative (“WF/CPS Substance Use Initiative” or “Initiative”).

WHEREAS, the WF/CPS Substance Use Initiative provides comprehensive substance use/co-occurring mental health clinical assessments, treatment recommendations, collaboration to address any barriers to assessment and/or treatment, monitoring of treatment compliance, and reporting treatment compliance to DSS. The Initiative is intended to provide early identification of individuals applying for public assistance who may be experiencing substance use problems that act as a barrier to self-sufficiency. Furthermore, the identification assists in connecting individuals to substance use treatment so that sustained self-sufficiency is likely. Self-sufficiency will benefit the individual, his or her family, the local communities, and the State of North Carolina.

WHEREAS, in 2001, the WF/CPS Substance Use Initiative was expanded in two ways. The first allows DSS to refer Work First applicants for voluntary mental health screenings and subsequent connection to mental health treatment if indicated. The second expansion allows for DSS to refer indicated individuals and families whose CPS cases have been substantiated or who are found to be in need of services due to an indication of substance use to providers for WF/CPS Substance Use Initiative services. The expansion includes a population who may experience mental health issues as barriers to self sufficiency and a population whose possible addiction is jeopardizing their family resulting in more individuals and families receiving necessary treatment for recovery.

WHEREAS, N.C.G.S. § 108A-29.1 was revised to require drug screening and testing for Work First Program applicants and recipients effective March 1, 2015.

WHEREAS, substance use and mental health issues are significant barriers to employment for a number of Work First Program applicants and recipients.

WHEREAS, Vaya is the public managed care organization responsible for oversight and management of public mental health, intellectual/developmental disabilities, and substance use disorder/ addiction (“MH/IDD/SA”) services for a 23-county region in western North Carolina (“Catchment Area”) pursuant to contracts with the NC Department of Health and Human Services.

WHEREAS, Vaya’s responsibilities include the development of a network of MH/IDD/SA service providers, and payment for authorized and appropriately delivered MH/IDD/SA services using a mix of available federal, state, and county funding.

WHEREAS, this Agreement establishes procedures surrounding the services of a WF/CPS Qualified Professional - Substance Use (“QPSA”), through an appropriately credentialed provider of MH/IDD/SA services that has entered into a contract for participation in Vaya’s Closed Network (defined herein) in accordance with N.C.G.S. § 108D-1(13) (“Network Provider”).

WHEREAS, “Closed Network” means the network of providers who have been selected, credentialed, enrolled and contracted with Vaya to furnish MH/IDD/SA services to Enrollees (defined herein), in accordance with N.C.G.S. § 108D-1(2)).

WHEREAS, “Enrollee” means a Medicaid and/or State of North Carolina beneficiary whose Medicaid/state funding eligibility arises from a county located within the Catchment Area and who is enrolled with Vaya.

WHEREAS, Vaya receives federal grant funding through the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services (“DMH/DD/SAS”) to reimburse providers for services delivered as part of the WF/CPS Substance Use Initiative.

WHEREAS, DSS is responsible for administering the Work First Program, the Food and Nutrition Services program, and CPS in order to prevent abuse, neglect and exploitation of vulnerable citizens, and promote self-reliance and self-sufficiency for individuals and families.

WHEREAS, DSS partners with individuals, families, and communities to strengthen their efforts toward independence, permanence, and safety.

NOW THEREFORE, THE PARTIES AGREE AS FOLLOWS:

- I. INTENT:** This Agreement establishes the responsibilities of the Parties in meeting the objectives of the WF/CPS Substance Use Initiative.
- II. MISSION:** The WF/CPS Substance Use Initiative provides early identification of a substance use disorder(s) and/or a mental illness that will affect an Eligible Individual’s ability to secure and maintain employment through screening via the Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Test (“AUDIT”), Drug Abuse Screening Test (“DAST-10”) and/or the Behavior Observation Checklist, assessment including the Substance Use Disorders Diagnoses Schedule (“SUDDS”) 5 (or other pre-approved evidence-based

assessment instrument), referral, and case coordination services. The WF/CPS Substance Use Initiative also facilitates substance use disorder services and mental health services to parents and caretakers of children, where there has been substantiated child abuse, neglect and/or dependency with an indication of substance use disorders, in order to better assure the safety, permanence, and wellbeing of children. The services for WF/CPS Substance Use Initiative-involved families provided under this Agreement are assessment, referral, and case coordination. Responsibilities also include collaboration to ensure that barriers to receiving treatment are addressed, compliance with the requirements of N.C.G.S. § 108A-25.2 and N.C.G.S. § 108A-29.1, case consultation, follow-up, training with local DSS staff, and other activities approved by DMH/DD/SAS.

III. POPULATIONS TO BE SERVED—The following populations are included in the Initiative (individually “Eligible Individual,” collectively “Eligible Individuals”):

- Work First Program applicants and recipients.
- Class H or I Controlled Substance Felons applying for Work First and/or Food and Nutrition Services.
- Non-custodial parents and/or families with income at or below 200% of federal poverty guidelines (the eligibility of this population is based on inclusion of this population in the county Work First Plan).
- Parent(s)/Caretakers who have a substantiated CPS case or who have been determined to be in need of CPS services may be referred for a substance use assessment and treatment services referral if indicated. The AUDIT and DAST-10 screening tools are not required for these individuals.
 - CPS encompasses the provision of specialized services for maltreated children or those who are at risk of harm. Services are aimed at strengthening family life by supporting and improving parental/caretaker responsibility that, in turn, assures for each child a safe, nurturing home. Services focus on prevention and rehabilitation and are directed toward identifying and changing the cause of the maltreating behavior. This is accomplished through parent/caretaker cooperation and consent or, in the event that conditions pose serious issues for the child’s safety, through the agency petitioning for court intervention.
 - This Agreement memorializes procedures to facilitate appropriate substance use disorder services and mental health services to parents and caretakers of children in order to better assure the safety, permanence, and well-being of children when the need for CPS services has been identified and substance use or mental illness has been a factor in the maltreatment of a child.
- All Work First adult applicants and recipients will be screened for possible substance use, and they may be voluntarily screened for mental health. Non-custodial parents and families with incomes at or below 200% of poverty may also volunteer to be screened for mental health, or substance use, if DSS has chosen to serve these populations.
- If the verbal screening indicates the Work First adult applicant/recipient is at risk for substance use, he/she will be referred to a QPSA. The QPSA will either provide information or conduct a substance use disorder assessment per N.C.G.S. § 108A-29.1. If treatment is appropriate, the QPSA will facilitate the referral for the appropriate level treatment.

IV. OBLIGATIONS OF BOTH PARTIES—Vaya, through a Network Provider, and DSS shall:

- A. Comply with all applicable state and federal laws, rules, regulations and requirements applicable to the Initiative, including, but not limited to, all requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act and its implementing regulations at 45 CFR Part 160 *et seq.*, all requirements of the Confidentiality of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Patient Records regulations at 42 CFR Part 2 and all requirements of N.C.G.S. 108A-80 governing Social Services Confidentiality of Records.
- B. Develop a plan for Eligible Individuals to access substance use disorder, mental health, and developmental disabilities services.
- C. Utilize the screening tools identified as AUDIT, DAST-10, and/or the Behavioral Health Indicator Checklist. The Network Provider will utilize the SUDDS 5 (or other pre-approved evidence-based assessment instrument), the ASAM Criteria, and DSM5 as part of the clinical assessment. (QPSA may use additional tools when necessary to ensure accurate referrals to appropriate level of care.)
- D. Utilize the Substance Use Information Form (DSS Form #8215) and the Work First Program Referral to Qualified Professional in Substance Abuse Form (DSS Form #8224).
- E. Confer about treatment recommendations when the assessment results in an indication of substance use disorder or a mental health disorder.
- F. Provide ongoing collaboration and consultation regarding decisions affecting substance use disorder treatment outcomes or mental health outcomes and/or child safety.
- G. Arrange for appointments for Eligible Individuals and coordinate planning for child care and transportation.
- H. Inform Eligible Individuals about the method of payment for substance use treatment or mental health treatment in the event an Eligible Individual must bear any of the cost.
- I. Maintain regular contact on the Eligible Individual's engagement in treatment.
- J. Utilize the standardized consent form to facilitate confidentiality as provided by DSS.
- K. Arrange ongoing cross training for staff of both agencies.
- L. Develop a reporting system of non-compliance by Eligible Individuals.
- M. Have a QPSA attend all appropriate collaborative meetings.
- N. Support collection and provide data for outcomes and program evaluation.
- O. Abide by confidentiality regulations as set forth by DSS or DMH/DD/SAS as well as federal regulations.

V. OBLIGATIONS OF Vaya HEALTH—Vaya shall:

- A. Contract with a selected Network Provider for the WF/CPS Substance Use Initiative who shall designate specific staff to perform assessment and other required functions of this WF/CPS Substance Use Initiative.
- B. Include the following requirements in the contract with the identified WF/CPS Network Provider:
 1. Identify a specific contact person for the Initiative and identify this position as a QPSA.
 2. Work with DSS to determine days/times the assigned QPSA will be on site at the DSS office based on the needs of DSS and available funding.
 3. Review referral information, including screening information, received from DSS.
 4. Comply with all privacy and security laws, rules and regulations, including but not limited to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (“HIPAA”) and 42 CFR Part 2 and obtain and maintain appropriate, voluntary, knowing signed consent when necessary.
 5. Conduct substance use information sessions utilizing the Substance Use Information Form for individuals referred by DSS for this purpose.
 6. For individuals referred for assessment, conduct a Comprehensive Substance Abuse/Co-Occurring Mental Health Disorder Comprehensive Clinical Assessment utilizing the SUDDS 5 or alternative evidence-based assessment instrument approved by DMH/DD/SAS and Vaya.
 7. Have assessments performed by a clinician registered with the North Carolina Substance Abuse Professional Practice Board (“NCSAPPB”) as a Licensed Clinical Addictions Specialist (“LCAS”) or LCAS-Associate or a clinician licensed by another N.C. behavioral health professional licensing board whose scope of practice includes substance use; this individual shall also be registered with the NCSAPPB. The other Initiative functions may be performed by an unlicensed qualified substance use professional. These two primary functions may be performed by the same individual or different individuals.
 8. Have the assessment determine if referred individuals meet the criteria for a substance use diagnosis and the Network Provider shall refer and link individuals for substance use, mental health treatment or prevention services as indicated by the assessment.
 9. Advise the DSS worker in writing of the assessment outcome/treatment recommendations prior to twenty five (25) days of the client’s Food and Nutrition Services application or prior to forty-five (45) days of the client’s application for Work First.
 10. Advise the DSS worker of assessment results/treatment recommendations for emergency Food and Nutrition Services referrals prior to seven (7) days of the client’s application for food stamps.
 11. Work with the DSS worker to develop individual client/family plans to ensure success.
 12. Coordinate with the DSS worker to address common barriers to substance use treatment such as transportation or child care.
 13. Provide tracking, monitoring, and reporting including the following:

- a. Written communication regarding assessment results (whether or not client is recommended for treatment and level of treatment recommended). Network Provider will also advise DSS of assessment no shows.
 - b. Track the provision of and participation in services including at least monthly contact with the treatment provider to determine treatment compliance for those in treatment at the time of referral or recommended for treatment through the assessment process.
 - c. Submit at least monthly written reports to DSS regarding client's compliance with treatment.
 - d. Advise DSS in writing when the client has completed or otherwise been discharged from treatment.
14. Confer with DSS regarding treatment recommendations, provide case consultation and/or participate in case reviews or interagency staffings with DSS staff as indicated.
 15. Provide on-going collaboration and consultation regarding decisions affecting substance use disorder treatment outcomes, mental health outcomes, or child safety concerns.
 16. Bill all first and third party payers, including private insurance and available state and Medicaid funding, for Initiative services when clients meet eligibility requirements.
 17. Inform Eligible Individuals about the method of payment for substance use or mental health treatment in the event that an Eligible Individual must bear any of the cost.
 18. Offer substance use training to DSS staff as indicated or requested in order to increase the capacity of the DSS workers' effectiveness in screening and working with substance abusing individuals. Initial training on the screening process and the Initiative will be provided jointly by DSS and the Network Provider.
 19. Invite the QPSA to attend all appropriate collaborative meetings.
- C. Reimburse the Network Provider for appropriate services delivered in accordance with contract requirements and within available funding allocated for the Initiative by DMH/DD/SAS.
 - D. Provide oversight and monitoring of the Network Provider contracted for the Initiative.
 - E. Designate a Vaya staff member to act as a liaison for the Initiative.
 - F. Offer substance use training to DSS staff as indicated or requested in order to increase the capacity of the DSS workers' effectiveness in screening and working with substance abusing individuals.

VI. OBLIGATIONS OF DSS—DSS shall:

- A. Explain to the parent/caretaker the nature of the Initiative including voluntary consent, DSS requirements including services eligibility, how assessment and treatment information will be utilized by DSS, and informational session and/or assessment process and services provided by the Network Provider.
- B. Secure appropriate signature(s) on the approved release of confidential information form when the parent/caretaker consents to the referral, explain the type of information to be disclosed and ensure that the parent/caretaker initials each category of information s/he is willing to have the Network Provider disclose.
- C. Administer the AUDIT and the DAST-10 to all Work First Program specific applicants in accordance with DSS Work First state policy (WFB 104). If neither the AUDIT or DAST-10 reveal a substance use issue, the Behavioral Health Indicator Checklist will be completed based on the observation of the DSS worker. If an applicant agrees to a voluntary mental health screening, the Emotional Health Inventory will be utilized by the DSS Work First Program staff.
- D. Refer (accompanied by the release of confidential information form) the following individuals to the Network Provider:
 - 1. Work First and Food and Nutrition Services applicants and recipients who have been convicted of a Class H or I felony in North Carolina.
 - 2. Work First applicants and recipients who have received a confirmatory positive substance use test for education regarding substance use disorder treatment, services, and resources.
 - 3. Work First applicants and recipients that meet or exceed the minimum acceptable score on the AUDIT or DAST-10 for further assessment or informational sessions per policy.
 - 4. Work First applicants and recipients that request mental health services.
 - 5. CPS involved individuals who have a substantiated CPS case or who have been found in need of CPS services where the case includes substance use.
- E. Consider including QPSAs in any Child and Family Teams or in multidisciplinary meetings that involve planning with mutual applicants and recipients.
- F. Involve DMH/DD/SAS in planning and policy discussions on issues that impact the mutual population that NC DSS serves.
- G. Share research of federal and state law and policy that will affect DMH/DD/SAS and NC DSS collaboration in serving mutual populations.
- H. Collaborate with the QPSA assigned to the case in order to support the provision of care coordination and case management/case support services to access services recommended by the QPSA, when indicated.
- I. When indicated, include substance use recommendations in the Case Plan and/or Mutual Responsibility Agreement.
- J. When indicated, base eligibility for DSS services or continuation of services on client compliance with participating in the assessment and treatment process, including continued treatment participation until the client completes treatment or it is determined by mutual agreement between DSS and the Network Provider that the Initiative case will be closed.
- K. Notify the Network Provider in writing within ten (10) calendar days of any change that may affect the case.

- L. Ensure that the substance use assessment results are not used to determine substantiation of a CPS referral/ investigation.
- M. Designate a staff person to serve as a liaison under this Agreement.

VII. TERMS AND TERMINATION:

- A. This Agreement shall be in effect as of July 1, 2017, and unless earlier terminated, shall terminate June 30, 2018.
- B. This Agreement may be amended or terminated upon mutual agreement of both Parties, or terminated by any Party with thirty (30) days prior written notice to the other Party.

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS:

- A. E-Verify. DSS shall comply with the requirements of Article 2 of Chapter 64 of the State of North Carolina General Statutes. Further if DSS utilizes a subcontractor(s) of any tier, DSS shall require its subcontractor(s) of any tier to comply with the requirements of Article 2 of Chapter 64 of the State of North Carolina General Statutes.
- B. Independent Contractor. The Parties to this Agreement are independent contractors, and their relationship shall not be construed to be a partnership, agency, joint venture, franchise, or employment relationship.
- C. Assignment and Subcontracting. Neither Party shall have the right to assign, subcontract or further delegate its obligations hereunder without the prior written consent of the other Party.
- D. Entire Agreement; Modification. This Agreement and any attachments constitute the entire agreement between the Parties and supersede all prior agreements and understandings, oral or written, with respect to the subject matter hereof. This Agreement may be changed only by an agreement in writing signed by an authorized representative of each Party.
- E. Invalid Provisions; Severability. Any provision of this Agreement which is determined by a court of competent jurisdiction to be prohibited, unenforceable, or not authorized shall be ineffective to the extent of such prohibition, unenforceability, or non-authorization without invalidating the remaining provisions hereof or affecting the validity, enforceability, or legality of such provision. In such case, such determination shall not affect any other provision of this Agreement, and the remaining provisions of this Agreement shall remain in full force and effect. If any provision or term of this Agreement is susceptible to two or more constructions or interpretations, one or more of which would render the provision or term void or unenforceable, the Parties agree that a construction or interpretation which renders the term or provision valid shall be favored.
- F. Waiver of Breach. No covenant, term, condition, or undertaking contained in this Agreement may be waived except by the explicit written agreement of the Parties. Forbearance or indulgence in any other form by either Party in regard to any covenant, condition or undertaking to be kept or performed by the other Party shall not constitute a waiver thereof, and until complete satisfaction or performance of all such covenants, conditions, and undertakings have been satisfied, the other Party shall be entitled to invoke any remedy available under the Agreement, despite any such

forbearance or indulgence. The waiver by either Party of a breach of any of the provisions of this Agreement by the other Party shall not be construed as a continuing waiver of such provision, or as a waiver of any subsequent breach by the breaching Party.

- G. Governing Law; Construction. This Agreement has been accepted and performed in the state of North Carolina. This Agreement and the rights and obligations of the Parties hereto shall be construed under and governed by the laws of the State of North Carolina, without giving effect to principles of conflict of laws. Both Parties have consulted with counsel of its choice, or has been afforded the opportunity to consult with such counsel and has declined to do so, in the negotiation and preparation of this Agreement. This Agreement has been prepared by counsel for Vaya as a convenience to the Parties, and, therefore, no provision of this Agreement, whether unclear, ambiguous, or otherwise, shall be construed adversely to Vaya merely by virtue of the fact of its preparation by counsel for Vaya.
- H. Indemnification. Each Party agrees that it will be responsible for its own acts and the results thereof and shall not be responsible for the acts of the other Party and the results thereof. Each Party therefore agrees that it will assume all risk and liability to itself, its agents or employees for any injury to persons or property resulting in any manner from the conduct of its own operations and the operations of its agents or employees under this Agreement, and for any loss, cost, or damage caused thereby during the performance of this Agreement.
- I. No Third-Party Beneficiaries. Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed as creating or justifying any liability, claim, or cause of action, however alleged or arising, by any third party against Vaya or DSS.
- J. Headings. The section headings used herein are for reference and convenience only, and shall not affect the meaning, construction, or interpretation of this Agreement.
- K. Notices. Any notice, request, demand, or other communication required or permitted hereunder shall be in writing and shall be deemed to have been duly given when received if personally delivered and when transmitted if transmitted by confirmed facsimile transmission, electronic mail, or similar electronic transmission method, by overnight courier, or by registered or certified mail, postage prepaid, return receipt requested, to the receiving Party at the following address:

Vaya Health

Attention: Legal Department
 200 Ridgefield Court, Suite 206
 Asheville, North Carolina 28806
 legalandcompliance@vayahealth.com

Macon

County Department of Social Services

ADDRESS: 1832 Lakeside Drive
 CITY/STATE/ZIP: Franklin, NC 28734

Receipt of such notice shall be deemed effective one working day after it is sent if sent by recognized express mail, and two business days after it is sent if sent by first class certified mail, return receipt requested, with postage prepaid.

- L. Iran Divestment Certification. By signing below, Contractor certifies and attests that neither it nor its subcontractors are listed on the Final Divestment List created by the State Treasurer pursuant to N.C.G.S. Chapter 147, Article 6E.
- M. E-Verify. By signing below, Contractor certifies and attests that Contractor shall comply with the requirements of Article 2 of Chapter 64 of the State of North Carolina General Statutes. Further if Contractor utilizes a subcontractor(s) of any tier, Contractor shall require its subcontractor(s) of any tier to comply with the requirements of Article 2 of Chapter 64 of the State of North Carolina General Statutes.
- N. Authority to Bind Parties. The individuals signing this Agreement on behalf of the Parties represent and warrant they are empowered and duly authorized to bind the Party on whose behalf they are signing to this Agreement.
- O. Incorporation of Recitals. The recitals set forth above are an integral part of this Agreement and shall have the same contractual significance as any other language.
- P. Counterparts. This Agreement may be executed in two or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original and all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.
- Q. Signatures. This Agreement may be executed by facsimile or electronic signatures, which for all purposes shall be deemed to constitute originals.

DocuSigned by:
Brian Ingraham _____ 10/3/2017
 V-27E7411F8A014CC... _____
 Vaya Health Date
 Chief Executive Officer

DocuSigned by:
R. Patrick Betancourt _____ 10/2/2017
 D-65C9A465BF45428... _____
 Director Date
 Macon County Department of Social Services

APPENDIX A

§ 108A-29.1. Drug screening and testing for Work First Program applicants and recipients.

- (a) The Department shall require a drug test to screen each applicant for or recipient of Work First Program assistance whom the Department reasonably suspects is engaged in the illegal use of controlled substances. The Department shall provide notice of drug testing to each applicant or recipient. The notice shall advise the applicant or recipient that drug screening, and testing if there is reasonable suspicion that an individual is engaged in the illegal use of controlled substances, will be conducted as a condition of receiving Work First Program assistance, and that the results of the drug tests will remain confidential and will not be released to law enforcement. Dependent children under the age of 18 are exempt from the requirements of this section. The Department shall require the following:
- (1) That for two-parent households, both parents comply with the requirements of this section.
 - (2) That any teen parent who is emancipated pursuant to Article 35 of Chapter 7B of the General Statutes complies with the requirements of this section.
 - (3) That each applicant or recipient be advised before drug testing that he or she may inform the agent administering the test of any prescription or over-the-counter medication he or she is taking.
 - (4) That each applicant or recipient being tested signs a written acknowledgement that he or she has received and understood the notice and advice provided under this subsection.
 - (5) That each applicant or recipient who fails a drug test understands that he or she has the right to take one or more additional tests at his or her own expense.
 - (6) That each applicant or recipient who fails a drug test be provided with information regarding substance abuse, substance abuse counseling, and substance abuse treatment options, including a list of substance abuse treatment programs that may be available to the individual.
- (b) An applicant or recipient who tests positive for controlled substances as a result of a drug test required under this section is ineligible to receive Work First Program assistance for one year from the date of the positive drug test except as provided in subsections (b1) and (b2) of this section. The individual may reapply after one year. However, if the individual has any subsequent positive drug tests, the individual shall be ineligible for benefits for three years from the date of the subsequent positive drug test unless the individual reapplies pursuant to subsection (b1) or (b2) of this section.
- (b1) An applicant or recipient deemed ineligible under subsection (b) of this section may reapply for Work First Program assistance after the expiration of 30 days from the date of the positive drug test if the individual can document either the successful completion of or the current satisfactory participation in a substance abuse treatment program offered by a provider under subsection (e) of this section and licensed by the Department. The applicant or recipient who reapplies for Work First Program assistance after successful completion of a substance abuse program shall pass a drug test. The cost of any drug testing and substance abuse program provided under this subsection shall be the responsibility of the individual being tested and receiving treatment. An applicant or recipient who reapplies for Work First Program assistance pursuant to this subsection may reapply one time only.
- (b2) An applicant or recipient deemed ineligible under subsection (b) of this section may reapply

for Work First Program assistance after the expiration of 30 days from the date of the positive drug test if a qualified professional in substance abuse or a physician certified by the American Society of Addiction Medicine determines a substance abuse program is not appropriate for the individual and that individual has passed a subsequent drug test. The cost of any drug testing provided under this subsection shall be the responsibility of the individual being tested. An applicant or recipient who reapplies for Work First Program assistance pursuant to this subsection may reapply one time only.

- (c) The children of any applicant or current recipient shall remain eligible for benefits, and these benefits shall be paid to a protective payee pursuant to G.S. 108A-38.
- (d) The Social Services Commission shall adopt rules pertaining to the testing of applicants and recipients under this section. The Social Services Commission shall adopt rules pertaining to the successful completion of, or the satisfactory participation in, a substance abuse treatment program under subsection (b1) of this section, including rules regarding timely reporting of completion of or participation in the substance abuse treatment programs.
- (e) Area mental health authorities organized pursuant to Article 4 of Chapter 122C of the General Statutes shall be responsible for administering the provisions of this section.
- (f) Repealed by Session Laws 2013-417, s. 4, as amended by Session Laws 2014-115, s. 66 (c), effective March 1, 2015.
- (g) For the purposes of this section, reasonable suspicion that an applicant for, or recipient of, Work First Program assistance is engaged in the illegal use of controlled substances may be established only by utilizing the following methods:
 - (1) A criminal record check conducted under G.S. 114-19.34 that discloses a conviction, arrest, or outstanding warrant relating to illegal controlled G.S. 108A-29.1 Page 3 substances within the three years prior to the date the criminal record check is conducted.
 - (2) A determination by a qualified professional in substance abuse or a physician certified by the American Society of Addiction Medicine that an individual is addicted to illegal controlled substances.
 - (3) A screening tool relating to the abuse of illegal controlled substances that yields a result indicating that the applicant or recipient may be engaged in the illegal use of controlled substances.
 - (4) Other screening methods, as determined by the Social Services Commission under subsection (d) of this section.
- (h) Child only cases shall be exempt from the requirements of this section. (1997-443, s. 12.8; 2009-489, s. 13; 2013-417, s. 4; 2014-115, s. 66(c).)

G.S. 108A-25.2 Exemption from limitations for individuals convicted of certain drug-related felonies.

Individuals convicted of Class H or I controlled substance felony offenses in this State shall be eligible to participate in the Work First Program and food stamp program:

- (1) Six months after release from custody if no additional controlled substance felony offense is committed during that period and successful completion of or continuous active participation in a required substance abuse treatment program determined appropriate by the area mental health authority; or
- (2) If not committed to custody, six months after the date of conviction if no additional controlled substance felony offense is committed during that period and successful

completion of or continuous active participation in a required substance abuse treatment program determined appropriate by the area mental health authority.

A county department of social services shall require individuals who are eligible for Work First Program assistance and food stamp benefits pursuant to this section to undergo substance abuse treatment as a condition for receiving Work First Program or food stamp benefits, if funds and programs are available and to the extent by federal law.

FAMILY VIOLENCE OPTION / DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

WORK FIRST ASSESSMENT

Date of Referral: _____

Held Appointment ___ Yes ___ No

Referred by: _____
Name: _____

- _____ Latino/Hispanic
- _____ Native American
- _____ Afro-American
- _____ Euro-American
- _____ Other

Address: _____

Telephone: (H) _____ (W) _____

SEX: _____ DOB: _____ County _____

Name, sex and age of children _____

1. Have you ever felt Emotionally Abused? Tell me about it. Circle key words:

- Putting me down*
- Making me think I'm crazy*
- Making me feel bad about myself*
- Mind games*
- Calling me names*

2. Have you been Economically abused? Tell me about it. Circle key words:

- Kept me from getting job*
- Keeps me on an allowance*
- Kept me from my job*
- Takes my money*
- Make me ask for money*

3. Have you ever been Sexually abused? Tell me about it if you can. Circle key words:

- Making me do sexual things against my will*
- Treating me like a sex object*
- Physically attacking sexual parts of my body*

4. Has your child/children seen, heard or directly been involved in family violence? Tell me about it. Circle key words:

- Made to feel guilty about the children*
- Using children as messengers*
- Using visitation to harass me*

5. Have you ever been threatened? Tell me about it. Circle key words:

- Making or carrying out threats to do emotional harm*
- Threaten to commit suicide*
- Threatened to take the children*
- Report me to welfare*

6. Have you ever been made to feel like you are not capable of making decisions? Tell me about it. Circle key words:

Treats me like a servant Men make all the BIG decisions

Acts like, "Master of the Castle"

7. Have you ever been intimidated? Tell me about it. Circle key words: (Put me in FEAR by:)

Looks

Loud voices

Smashing things

Destroying our property or mine

8. Have you ever been kept isolated? Tell me about it. Circle key words:

Controls: who I see, what I d, who I talk with, where I go.

Questions: who I talk to, where I've been / I have to lie to him.

9. Have you ever been physically abused? Tell me about it. Circle key words:

Pushed, shoved, hit, slapped, choked, pulled hair, punched, kicked, grabbed, used a weapon against me, beaten, thrown me down on floor, twisted my arm, tripped me, bitten me.

10. Did you grow up in a home with family violence? Tell me about it.

Circle all that apply:

1. Was it a violent incident?

First time _____

Repeated _____

2. Did violence occur in the last

Week

Month

6 months

Year _____ ago

3. Do you feel you are in danger now?

Yes

No

4. Have you received medical attention?

Not necessary

Yes

No

When _____

Where ? _____

5. Have you left the abuser before?

Yes

No

6. Are you living with the abuser now?

Yes

No

7. Present emotional condition:

Good

Fair

Poor

8. Is there an alcohol abuse problem in this relationship?

Yes

No

9. Is there a drug abuse problem in this relationship?

Yes

No

10. Have the police / sheriff been involved in the history of your family violence?

Yes

No

11. Do you feel powerless / frustrated with agency help?

Yes

No

12. Do you have difficulty in finishing a goal?

Yes

No

13. Have you lost a job due to family violence or stalking?

Yes

No

14. Has the abuser stalked you at work?

Yes

No

15. Has the abuser stalked you in the community?

Yes

No

Participant's Name _____

Notification of Family Violence Option

Family violence is defined a verbal, sexual, emotional, psychological and/or physical abuse between or among family members or intimate partners. You may be a victim of abuse if someone is:

- Keeping you isolated
- Making you feel like a prisoner
- Threatening or scaring you
- Taking control over your life
- Shaming or belittling you
- Forcing you into sexual acts
- Hitting, slapping, kicking, choking or in any way hurting you physically

Any disclosure of family abuse is voluntary.

The purpose of this notice is to inform you about possible abuse and let you know there is community support to help you with this situation. If you decide not to tell me today, you can change your mind at any time, and tell me or someone else.

Disclosure of family abuse is confidential.

However, as required by law, if there is evidence of children being abused, a report will be made to a child protective services agency.

Work First Participants

Work First provides participants with employment assistance, child care, transportation and, if necessary cash assistance. In order to receive cash assistance Work First Program participants subject to the work requirement are required, among other things, to go to work or participate in work activities.

If working, looking for a job, or going to school or job training may put you or your family in danger of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, you may be eligible for a temporary waiver of one or more Work First requirements after further assessment and development of a safety plan.

I have read and understand the above _____ Date _____
Work First Participant

I have explained the above information _____ Date _____
Worker

Would you like to speak to someone further about abuse in the family? __Yes __No

Distribution:
Original in case file
Copy to participant



Macon County Department of Social Services

Lakeside Government Complex
1832 Lakeside Drive
Franklin, North Carolina · 28734-6778
Tel: 828-349-2124 · Fax: 828-349-2401
www.maconnc.org/dss.html

R. Patrick Betancourt
Director

APPEAL RIGHTS

HOW TO GET A HEARING

If you are not satisfied with this decision, you have the right to request a hearing. The hearing will determine if the decision was correct. Your first hearing is before an impartial official of the local agency where you applied. The hearing should be held within five calendar days of your request. If you delay it, you have up to 10 more calendar days. Unless the agency holds the hearing by the 10th day, you cannot have a hearing.

YOUR RIGHT TO BE REPRESENTED

You may speak for yourself or you may have a friend, relative, or lawyer to speak for you at your hearing. You must pay for the lawyer. However, free legal service may be available in your community. Contact your worker for information or call CARELINE, toll-free 1-800-662-7039. TDD/Voice for the hearing impaired is also available through the CARELINE number.

YOUR RIGHT TO SEE YOUR RECORD

Before your hearing, you may ask your case worker to show you and the person speaking for your case record. If you ask, you may also see any other information to be used at the hearings. You can get free copies of this information. You may also request to see this information again at your hearing.

DO YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR RIGHTS?

Do you understand your rights to get a hearing? If you have any questions or need further information, please contact your worker as soon as possible.

Article 4.

Public Assistance and Social Services Appeals and Access to Records.

§ 108A-79. Appeals.

(a) A public assistance applicant or recipient shall have a right to appeal the decision of the county board of social services, county department of social services, or the board of county commissioners granting, denying, terminating, or modifying assistance, or the failure of the county board of social services or county department of social services to act within a reasonable time under the rules and regulations of the Social Services Commission or the Department. Each applicant or recipient shall be notified in writing of his right to appeal upon denial of his application for assistance and at the time of any subsequent action on his case.

(b) In cases involving termination or modification of assistance, no action shall become effective until 10 workdays after notice of this action and of the right to appeal is mailed or delivered by hand to the recipient; provided, however, termination or modification of assistance may be effective immediately upon the mailing or delivery of notice in the following circumstances:

- (1) When the modification is beneficial to the recipient; or
- (2) When federal regulations permit immediate termination or modification upon mailing or delivery of notice and the Social Services Commission or the Department of Health and Human Services promulgates regulations adopting said federal law or regulations. When federal and State regulations permit immediate termination or modification, the recipient shall have no right to continued assistance at the present level pending a hearing, as would otherwise be provided by subsection (d) of this section.

(c) The notice of action and the right to appeal shall comply with all applicable federal and State law and regulations; provided, such notice shall, at a minimum contain a clear statement of:

- (1) The action which was or is to be taken;
- (2) The reasons for which this action was or is to be taken;
- (3) The regulations supporting this action;
- (4) The applicant's or recipient's right to both a local and State level hearing, or to a State level hearing in the case of the food and nutrition services program, on the decision to take this action and the method for obtaining these hearings;
- (5) The right to be represented at the hearings by a personal representative, including an attorney obtained at the applicant's or recipient's expense;
- (6) In cases involving termination or modification of assistance, the recipient's right upon timely request to continue receiving assistance at the present level pending an appeal hearing and decision on that hearing.

An applicant or recipient may give notice of appeal by written or oral statement to the county department of social services, which shall record such notice by completing a form developed by the Department.

Such notice of appeal must be given within 60 days from the date of the action, or 90 days from the date of notification in the case of the food and nutrition services program. Failure to give timely notice of appeal constitutes a waiver of the right to a hearing except that, for good cause shown, the county department of social services may permit an appeal notwithstanding the waiver. The waiver shall not affect the right to reapply for benefits.

(d) If there is such timely appeal in cases not involving disability, in the first instance the hearing shall consist of a local appeal hearing before the county director or a designated representative of the county director, provided whoever hears the local appeal shall not have been involved directly in the initial decision giving rise to the appeal. If there is such timely appeal in cases involving disability, the county director or a designated representative of the county director shall within five days of the request for an appeal forward the request to the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department shall designate a hearing officer who shall promptly hold a hearing in the county according to the provisions of subsections (i) and (j) of this section. In cases involving termination or modification of assistance (other than cases of immediate termination or modification of assistance pursuant to subsection (b) (2) of this section), the recipient shall continue to receive assistance at the present level pending the decision at the initial hearing, whether that be the local appeal hearing decision or, in cases involving questions of disability, the Department of Health and Human Services hearing decision, provided that in order to continue receiving assistance pending the initial hearing decision the recipient must request a hearing on or before the effective date of the termination or modification of assistance.

(e) The local appeal hearing shall be held not more than five days after the request for it is received. The recipient may, for good cause shown as defined by rule or regulation of the Social Services Commission or the Department, petition the county department of social services, in writing, for a delay, but in no event shall the local appeal hearing be held more than 15 days after the receipt of the request for hearing. At the local appeal hearing:

- (1) The appellant and the county department may be represented by personal representatives, including attorneys, obtained at their expense.
- (2) The appellant or his personal representative and the county department shall present such sworn evidence and law or regulations as bear upon the case. The hearing need not be recorded or transcribed, but the director or his representative shall summarize in writing the substance of the hearing.
- (3) The appellant or his personal representative and the county department may cross-examine witnesses and present closing arguments summarizing their views of the case and the law.
- (4) Prior to and during the hearing, the appellant or his personal representative shall have adequate opportunity to examine the contents of his case file for the matter pending together with those portions of other public assistance or social services case files which pertain to the appeal, and all documents and records which the county department of social services intends to use at the hearing. Those portions of the public assistance or social services case file which do not pertain to the appeal or which are required by federal statutes or regulations or by State statutes or regulations to be held confidential shall not be released to the appellant or his personal representative. In cases where the appellant has been denied access to the public assistance or social services case file the hearing officer shall certify as part of the official record that the hearing officer has examined the case files and that no portion of those files pertain to the appeal. Such certification may be subject to judicial review as provided in subsection (k) of this section. Nothing in this section is intended to restrict an applicant or recipient access to information if that access is allowed by rules and regulations promulgated pursuant to G.S. 108A-80.

(f) The director or his designated representative shall make the decision based upon the evidence presented at the hearing and all applicable regulations, and shall prepare a written

statement of his decision citing the regulations and evidence to support it. This written statement of the decision will be served by certified mail on the appellant within five days of the local appeal hearing. If the decision terminating or modifying the appellant's benefits is affirmed, the assistance shall be terminated or modified, not earlier than the date the decision is mailed, and any assistance received during the time of the appeal is subject to recovery.

(g) If the appellant is dissatisfied with the decision of the local appeal hearing, he may within 15 days of the mailing notification of the decision take a further appeal to the Department. However, assistance may not be received pending this further appeal. Failure to give timely notice of further appeal constitutes a waiver of the right to a hearing before an official of the Department except that, for good cause shown, the Department may issue an order permitting a review of the local appeal hearing notwithstanding the waiver. The waiver shall not affect the right to reapply for benefits.

(h) Subsections (d)-(g) of this section shall not apply to the food and nutrition services program. The first appeal for an electronic food and nutrition benefit recipient or his representative shall be to the Department. Pending hearing, the recipient's assistance shall be continued at the present level upon timely request.

(i) If there is an appeal from the local appeal hearing decision, or from an electronic food and nutrition benefit recipient or his representative where there is no local hearing, or if there is an appeal of a case involving questions of disability the county director shall notify the Department according to its rules and regulations. The Department shall designate a hearing officer who shall promptly hold a de novo administrative hearing in the county after giving reasonable notice of the time and place of such hearing to the appellant and the county department of social services. Such hearing shall be conducted according to applicable federal law and regulations and Article 3, Chapter 150B, of the General Statutes of North Carolina; provided the Department shall adopt rules and regulations to ensure the following:

- (1) Prior to and during the hearing, the appellant or his personal representative shall have adequate opportunity to examine his case file and all documents and records which the county department of social services intends to use at the hearing together with those portions of other public assistance or social services case files which pertain to the appeal. Those portions of the public assistance or social services case files which do not pertain to the appeal or which are required by federal statutes or regulations or by State statutes or regulations to be held confidential shall not be released to the appellant or his personal representative. In cases where the appellant has been denied access to portions of the public assistance or social services case file, the hearing officer shall certify as part of the official record that the hearing officer has examined the case files and that no portion of those files pertain to the appeal. Such certification may be subject to judicial review as provided in subsection (k) of this section. Nothing in this section is intended to restrict an applicant or recipient access to information if that access is allowed by rules or regulations promulgated pursuant to G.S. 108A-80.
- (2) At the appeal hearing, the appellant and personnel of the county department of social services may present such sworn evidence, law and regulations as bear upon the case.
- (3) The appellant and county department shall have the right to be represented by the person of his choice, including an attorney obtained at his own expense.

- (4) The appellant and county department shall have the right to cross-examine the other party as well as make a closing argument summarizing his view of the case and the law.
- (5) The appeal hearing shall be recorded; however, no transcript will be prepared unless a petition for judicial review is filed pursuant to subsection (k) herein, in which case, the transcript will be made a part of the official record. In the absence of the filing of a petition for a judicial review, the recording of the appeal hearing may be erased or otherwise destroyed 180 days after the final decision is mailed.
- (6) Notwithstanding G.S. 150B-28 or any other provision of State law, discovery shall be no more extensive or formal than that required by federal law and regulations applicable to such hearings.

(j) After the administrative hearing, the hearing officer shall prepare a proposal for decision, citing pertinent law, regulations, and evidence, which shall be served upon the appellant and the county department of social services or their personal representatives. The appellant and the county department of social services shall have the opportunity to present oral and written arguments in opposition to or in support of the proposal for decision to the designated official of the Department who is to make the final decision. The final decision shall be based on, conform to, and set forth in detail the relevant evidence, pertinent State and federal law and regulations, and matters officially noticed. The decision shall be rendered not more than 90 days, or 45 days in the case of the food and nutrition services program, from the date of request for the hearing, unless the hearing was delayed at the request of the appellant. If the hearing was delayed at the appellant's request, the decision may only be delayed for the length of time the appellant requested a delay. The final decision shall be served upon the appellant and upon the county department of social services by certified mail, with a copy furnished to either party's attorney of record. In the absence of a petition for judicial review filed pursuant to subsection (k) herein, the final decision shall be binding upon the appellant, the county department of social services, the county board of social services, and the board of county commissioners.

(k) Any applicant or recipient who is dissatisfied with the final decision of the Department may file, within 30 days of the receipt of notice of such decision, a petition for judicial review in superior court of the county from which the case arose. Failure to file a petition within the time stated shall operate as a waiver of the right of such party to review, except that, for good cause shown, a judge of the superior court resident in the district or holding court in the county from which the case arose may issue an order permitting a review of the agency decision under this Chapter notwithstanding such waiver. The hearing shall be conducted according to the provisions of Article 4, Chapter 150B, of the North Carolina General Statutes. The court shall, on request, examine the evidence excluded at the hearing under G.S. 108A-79(e)(4) or G.S. 108A-79(i)(1) and if the evidence was improperly excluded, the court shall consider it. Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions, the court may take testimony and examine into the facts of the case, including excluded evidence, to determine whether the final decision is in error under federal and State law, and under the rules and regulations of the Social Services Commission or the Department of Health and Human Services. Furthermore, the court shall set the matter for hearing within 15 days from the filing of the record under G.S. 150B-47 and after reasonable written notice to the Department of Health and Human Services and the applicant or recipient. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to abrogate any rights that the county may have under Article 4 of Chapter 150B.

(l) In the event of conflict between federal law or regulations and State law or regulations, the federal law or regulations shall control. (1937, c. 288, ss. 18, 48; 1939, c. 395,

s. 1; 1957, c. 100, s. 1; 1969, c. 546, s. 1; cc. 735, 754; 1973, c. 476, s. 138; 1977, 2nd Sess., c. 1219, ss. 14-18; 1979, c. 691; 1981, c. 275, s. 1; c. 419, ss. 1-3; c. 420, ss. 1-3; 1987, c. 599, ss. 1-3; c. 827, s. 1; 1997-443, s. 11A.118(a); 2007-97, s. 13.)