

Human Services Report
3/20/07
by Marilee A. Reck, Director

I. Food Support Participation Information:

Following a discussion last month I have done some follow-up on Food Support Participation (which essentially means the percentage of people potentially eligible for food support who actually receive it). While MN is not in the top 10 counties for participation we are approximately 26th (this was our rating in 2004 and I think it remained about the same in 2005). The overall participation rate for the state as a whole is 71% with Waseca County having an average participation rate of 89%. Our weak area, as it is across the state, is for participation for seniors, those 65+. One of the reasons we see is that many seniors are eligible for a small amount and don't want to bother with the process for a small amount of resource – that they have to use an electronic benefit card to access. MN actually has 29% of the possible eligible who do not participate based on an overall participation rate of 71%. The most current detailed information is from 2004 and at that time the national average participation rate was 66.3%.

A reminder of some of the good work that MN does in the Food Support (food stamp) are is that we did receive a bonus payment for FFY (federal fiscal year) 2005. Mn received a total of \$2,500,737.00 as a bonus for having the 3rd lowest negative error rate in the nation. This is a measure of the validity of Food Support and MN Family Investment Program (MFIP) denials and terminations. Waseca County received \$10,269.94 and as I had indicated previously we used the additional funding to bring on our new financial worker a little earlier than originally planned and then the balance for computer, etc. The money does have to be used in a way to enhance service in the food support area and being able to have adequate staff to meet needs timely fits in with that overall goal.

II. Homelessness Prevention Grant Process:

Following approval to participate in hiring a consultant to work on a Homelessness Prevention Grant application for Region 9 (all the counties are in – Blue Earth, LeSueur, Faribault-Martin, Sibley, Nicollet, Watonwan and Waseca) the consultant has been hired and the process started. The first step is having a meeting on Friday (March 16) for potential Advisory Committee members.

III. Children's Mental Health Bill:

This is a proposal by the Region 9 group (plus Rice and Freeborn) to develop a Children's Mental Health system as a pilot project for 2 years. The impetus for this is to essentially develop a more streamlined system

that provides for regional access to services. It is my understanding that the bill does have a sponsor in the house. I will keep the board apprised of the status of this bill.

IV. MSSA:

Reminder that the MSSA (MN. Social Services Association) Conference is next week. Sessions start on Wednesday AM and run through approximately noon on Friday. Any questions please feel free to contact me.

V. Child Support Corrective Action Plan:

Ann has completed the corrective action plan and it will be submitted by the 15th of March. As I have indicated previously our staff did very well on the self-assessment and had only one area that we had to write a corrective action plan on.

NOTE: I had planned to have an overview of how we ended the 2006 year in terms of the budget but all the information is not together yet so that will be on the agenda for a report next month.