

**DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER**

**FAMILY SUPPORT AND CHILD WELFARE SERVICES FSCWS-15-08**

**TO: County Directors of Social Services**

**ATTENTION: Work First Administrators, Program Managers and Supervisors**

**DATE: July 29, 2008**

**SUBJECT: Funding for Work First Functional Assessments**

**EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon Receipt of Reimbursement Instructions**

This administrative letter provides information regarding Session Law 2008-107 that allocates \$2,721,787 for county Departments of Social Services (DSS) for "Work First Functional Assessments." Through the Work First Demonstration Grants, the utilization of functional assessments has proven to be a very successful strategy that provides benefits to the participants and has a positive impact on the Work Participation Rates. These funds will provide 100% reimbursement to DSS's for Functional Assessments that have been defined as a functional capacity evaluation and/or a vocational assessment which will assist in appropriate planning for certain Work First participants. Both the functional capacity assessment and the vocational assessment are similar in that they are used to determine an individual's capacity for work.

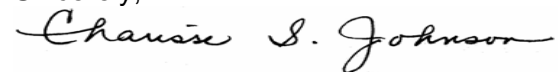
The functional capacity evaluation (FCE) assesses a person's ability to perform work from a physical, medical, behavioral or mental perspective. One result from the FCE is a finding that the participant has no capacity for work, and this finding assists the participant in the Social Security Disability benefits process. An alternative finding is that the participant has full or limited work capacity. In that case, the Work First caseworker and the participant update the Mutual Responsibility Agreement (MRA) Plan of Action to incorporate work activities based on the FCE results.

The vocational assessment (VA) assesses individuals who want employment and/or who want to improve their quality of life. The VA provides such procedures as psychological and academic testing, observations, interviewing, dexterity and motor skills tests. The VA provides information that assists in decisions about the individual's vocational goals and the services needed to help them obtain employment.

Several county DSS's have contracted with providers in their communities for Functional Assessments under their demonstration grants for Work First participants stating that they have a disability or other incapacity and are not receiving SSI or SSDI. The assessments conducted in these counties indicate that either the participant has no work capacity and the assessment is used to process SSD or SSI benefits or the participant is found to have limited or full capacity for work. With this funding all 100 county DSS's can begin to utilize this best practice on a case-by-case basis. Instructions on the reimbursement process are forthcoming. In the meantime, county DSS's may begin exploring available providers in their communities that can provide these services.

If you have further questions regarding understanding the use of functional assessments, the implementation and benefits, please contact your Work First Representative or call (919) 733-4622 for the Work First Policy Team.

Sincerely,



Charisse Johnson, Chief  
Family Support and Child Welfare Services

cc: Sherry Bradsher  
Jo Ann Lamm  
Sarah Barham  
Hank Bowers  
Family Support and Child Welfare Team Leaders  
Children's Programs Representatives  
Local Business Liaisons