

## 2005 ECONOMIC SUPPORT ANNUAL REPORT

### Goals and Objectives Achieved in 2005

#### **Division of Economic Support/Wisconsin Works (W-2)**

The Division continued to address the needs of low-income individuals and families through services and programs provided by 23 staff in cooperation with Job Center partner agencies and Manitowoc County, our W-2 program consortium partner. Accomplishments in 2005, which are based upon the goals cited in the last annual report, included:

- The effectiveness of the W-2 Lakeshore Consortium with Manitowoc County was monitored and assessed, with regular progress reports provided to the Director and Health and Human Services Board. This monitoring resulted in a request to the Department of Workforce Development for the release of an additional \$112,000 in funding to the consortium in June 2005. The monitoring was also utilized in moving forward to continue to provide W-2 services as the Lakeshore Consortium for the 2006-2009 contracting period.
- Our newest Economic Support Specialist completed the mandated training in the first quarter of 2005 and as of fourth quarter, is maintaining a full caseload. It was hoped that with a fully trained staff for the first time in over three years, a full assessment of caseload sizes and service delivery effectiveness would be able to be finalized. Unfortunately three staff medical leaves of relatively long duration have occurred, and will necessitate a continuation of this goal in 2006.
- Assessment of the service needs of our customers in several programs has occurred, and the result is that appropriate services are being provided to responsibly manage the allowable funding.
- FoodShare Wisconsin error reduction has taken place. The staff has reduced the agency preventable error rate by our stated 2005 goal of 50%. To their credit, they have made a remarkable effort and reduced the rate to 0% for federal fiscal year 2005.
- Awareness of the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) crisis payment component, with an emphasis on public benefits, has increased. With the start of the new season in October 2005, we have seen an increase of 250-300 applications at any given point in time. Many of these are first-time applicants to the program and are eligible for crisis and public benefits services.
- The goal by the end of 2005 to successfully guide 35% of the newly arrived Hmong refugees into unsubsidized employment has been met and exceeded. Almost 52% of the newly arrived refugees are employed in unsubsidized employment, and staff in the Division continues to provide case management and employment support programming to maximize their employment retention.
- Increased awareness and participation levels in the Wisconsin Shares Child Care program has occurred, with a 10% increase in families receiving services, and a 21% increase in payments issued to regulated childcare providers.

#### **Issues, Concerns or Constraints**

#### **Division of Economic Support/W-2**

- The total caseload within the Division of Economic Support increased by 8.5% in 2005. Since the end of 2001, the caseload has increased by over 62%, with no increase in staffing levels. The Division continues to be administratively responsible for an increasing amount of benefit dollars issued and spent in this county. In 2005, the total is in excess of \$71.8 million dollars. Our concern continues to be matching staff ratios to caseload and administrative responsibilities.
- Program funding remains a concern, in that funding continues to remain stagnant or has been reduced, even though need for services continues to increase, as stated in the bullet above.
- A concern is continuing to develop with the departments at the State level, mainly DHFS and DWD, and their lack of coordination in servicing many of the same customers. Two recent examples are the training section splitting and the public assistance fraud unit's reassignment, requiring two separate plan submissions that are either identical or very similar in nature.
- A lack of funding and tangible resources for job retention and advancement services to people exiting in both the W-2 and FSET programs.

## *Goals and Objectives for 2006*

### Division of Economic Support/W-2

- Implement CARES electronic case file and the subsequent conversion to it in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2006. This will require a thorough assessment of work processes and staff duties of both Economic Support and Clerical staff to ensure efficiency and cost effectiveness.
- Continue to assess the service needs of our customers in all programs and appropriately adjust services provided to responsibly manage the allowable funding. Complete this assessment in relation to current Economic Support staffing levels and current clerical support functions/levels.
- Continue to maintain a FoodShare Wisconsin error rate that is under state and federal tolerance levels.
- Implement the Medicaid state contract required targeted case review (TCR) system, with 100% completion. In addition, maintain the FoodShare TCR requirements, with 100% completion.
- Appropriately track in a timely manner the new W-2 performance standards, until DWD provides adequate reports.
- By working with our subcontractors, attempt to maintain a spending level of approximately 1/24<sup>th</sup> of the total W-2 contract funding.
- Due to unusually high heating costs, increase the awareness, and thus, participation levels, in the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program by 10%.
- Continue to work with the Department in the building and implementation of the NetSmart (CMHC) computer system. Analyze the most efficient means of integrating the Economic Support Division programs, both those that will actually run out of the system and those that will only be maintained in the master file.