



FULTON COUNTY
EARLY HEAD START
COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT
2014



22438 Great Cove Road McConnellsburg, PA 17233
Phone: 717-485-5038 • Fax: 717-485-4505

www.fcpinc.org

Executive Summary

County Overview

Fulton County is a picture-perfect rural community with a rich history and charm that is undeniable. The county is located in south-central Pennsylvania between the mountains of Sideling Hill and Tuscarora. Set among the picturesque Appalachian Mountains on the northern border of the Mason-Dixon Line, Fulton County is blanketed by a patchwork of family farms, vast areas of mountain forests, and small communities. With just under 15,000 residents spread over approximately 425 square miles, Fulton is one of only a few counties in the state that is classified as 100% rural, with less than 34 people per square mile. Fulton County has grown in population by 4.1 percent over the past decade, faster than the state as a whole. There are approximately 3,431 people under the age of 18 in Fulton County (which equals 23.1% of the total population.) The County's population by race and ethnicity includes: 97.3% Caucasian, 1.0% African American, and 0.8% Hispanic/Latino. Fulton County has 7,122 housing units with a total of 6,014 households. Median household income in Fulton County is \$46,361.00 while the average earnings per job is \$30,006. Approximately 11.3% of the County's population lives below the federal poverty level. There is a civilian labor force of just over 7,200 with an unemployment rate of 9.2%



Many organizations and individuals are working for the benefit of the people who live in Fulton County. Government agencies, nonprofit organizations, community groups, health and social service practitioners, educational institutions, businesses, the faith community and many, many more types of organizations form a web of resources the people of Fulton County rely on to enhance the quality of life and health in the region. In addition to formal systems of care, Fulton County is well-known for the strength of the partnerships that agencies and organizations have developed to coordinate their work. Perhaps less visible, but no less powerful, are the ways in which individuals and families are good neighbors to one another.

Distance from urban areas and the physical barriers of mountain ranges have historically challenged service providers and families and restricted access to services. Many families are isolated and have limited opportunity for peer interaction and lack adequate transportation, adding to the difficulty of receiving needed services.

Despite our strengths as a community, there are challenges that residents face. Some agencies providing support services to families in Fulton County are not located within the county. While some agencies have satellite offices in the county with a skeleton staff available, there are often limited office hours, which limits accessibility for working parents. Many of the services, particularly specialized, are only available outside of the county. For example, prenatal and delivery services and pediatricians are more than 30 miles away and require traveling over large

mountains. The residents of Fulton County rely strongly on multigenerational family support to meet their needs. Traditionally families have been reluctant to request help from the *outside*. Generally families prefer to access services through a familiar face that is known within the community.

Program Overview

Home-based Early Head Start services are offered throughout Fulton County to 32 pregnant women and children birth to 3 years of age. Enrollment is based on eligibility requirements that reserve 10% of enrollment for children with diagnosed disabilities and prioritizes families within 100% of the federal poverty guidelines. Families receive weekly 1 ½ hour in-home visits and frequent opportunities for group activities.

Early Head Start promotes child-development through effective parenting, early intervention and outreach services. It also supports and preserves the family unit as the foundation for success for children. The EHS program provides a seamless, comprehensive and easily accessed network of services. EHS encourages self-sufficiency for families through adult education, training and employment. EHS supports, enhances and promotes the family unit as the foundation not only successful children and families, but also as a building block for successful communities!

Central Fulton School District is grantee of Fulton Early Head Start, however; they maintain only fiduciary oversight. The full program management and operations is contracted out to the Fulton County Family Partnership Inc. Decision making is shared by the EHS policy Council and Central Fulton School Board. The FC Family Partnership Board serves in an advisory capacity to the governing bodies in issues regarding EHS programming.

Fulton County Family Partnership (FCFP) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. It exists through various funding sources, including federal and state grants and local revenues. Now in the 21st year of serving the Fulton County community, with an operating budget of just over 1.6 million dollars.

The Community Assessment process is a continual progression of data collection and analysis. Data is used in the program planning process and incorporated into the EHS strategic plan. Community Assessment Team members included the EHS Management Team, FCFP Child Care Director, Community Engagement Coordinator, COPE staff and Fatherhood Facilitator.

A Community Assessment Committee comprised of staff and EHS Policy Council reviewed the data and participated in the analysis process. The summary and program responses were discussed and refined by these groups. EHS staff reviewed the draft of summary and program responses and provided additional input and feedback to assist with further refinement of the final product. Ongoing report of the process was included in the monthly EHS program report which is distributed to EHS staff, Policy Council, FCFP Board of Directors and the Central Fulton School Board.

Based on the meetings and data collection review by the Committee the following continue to be areas of concern and future challenges:

- Limited economic/employment opportunities due to inadequate education and job skills.
- Need for childcare during non-traditional hours and in outlying areas of County
- Difficult to access job training/education due to transportation/child care needs
- Limited local prenatal or obstetrical care available.
- Need for affordable quality housing for low-income families.
- Need to continue to improve identification and services to children with disabilities birth to 3 years old.
- Continuing challenge to provide parents with child development information and socialization experiences that meet their needs.
- Families need for social services support to gain skills in areas such as; budgeting issues, discipline, family issues and accessing available services
- Continue to enhance collaboration with agencies offering services when children reach 3 years.
- Limited availability of local access to pediatric care; only 1 in county.
- Limited availability to dental care for children less than 3 years old and few children receiving fluoride.
- Need to continue to expand opportunities for parent participation/leadership including utilizing expanded technology options.
- Expand school partnerships to enhance school readiness and parent involvement in their child's education.
- Support parent's role is guiding age-appropriate social emotional development and limit setting.



Overview of the State of the Grantee

Central Fulton School District has been the grantee for Early Head Start services in Fulton County since 1997 and the Fulton County Family Partnership (FCFP) has been the contracted non-profit agency that provides all services and manages operations for EHS. The mission of FCFP is to help families meet their basic needs and open opportunities for their children. FCFP helps parents provide the support, discipline, love and encouragement their children need to become healthy and productive citizens. To accomplish this mission, FCFP sponsors and cooperates in programs to improve the education, health, economic circumstances and functioning of Fulton County families.

FCFP operations are guided by these five comprehensive program outcomes:

1. To promote positive child development through effective parenting, early intervention and outreach services.
2. To support and preserve the family unit as the foundation of success for children.
3. To assure healthy development and health care services for children.
4. To provide a seamless, comprehensive and easily accessible network of services for families.
5. To encourage economic self-sufficiency for families through adult education, training and employment.

Understanding the geographic barriers of the region is important to understanding the delivery of services within the county. This fact makes it very difficult to have one central location from which services would be delivered that could be easily accessed by all county families. Therefore there is no “one” building you can point to and identify as “the” Family Partnership. Delivering these much needed services to FC residents has been accomplished in several ways including; increased awareness of available services, expansion of existing services, collaborating with other agencies to bring new services into the community and reorganizing existing services to maximize manpower while minimizing costs.

All Family Partnership programs operate under a common theme service statement. Key elements of this statement include the philosophy that service is dictated from the customer up, not administrate down. This assumes the family, on at least some level, can identify those basic areas that are barriers to achieving family unity and therefore, to some extent, limits their engagement in the community’s resources. Another common theme is that services provide a method for the families to permanently improve their individual situation, that is, the Family Partnership is not a provider of all services and all answers for any family, but rather we provide resources through education and collaboration that can lead to greater self-sufficiency for families.

The Fulton Early Head Start Program offers home-based services to 32 pregnant moms and children through 36 months of age. In the 2013-14 fiscal year we served a total of 54 families (7

of which were pregnant moms). Home visiting staff are located at sites within each of the three school districts. This gives us the advantages of being accessible for families, as well as, being a familiar face in each individual community. This increase in community awareness supplements our recruitment efforts and increases support of our program among all community members.

Home-based services provide families with weekly 1 ½ hour visits. The curriculums used are the Parents As Teachers (PAT), supplemented with the prenatal Healthy Babies curriculum. Families are encouraged to attend the 2 socialization experiences offered each month; rotated into each of the school district areas.

Enrollment is based on eligibility requirements that provide 10% of the enrollment for children with diagnosed disabilities and targets families within 100% of the poverty guidelines. Families are eligible for enrollment from the time of confirmed pregnancy until the child turns three. Children diagnosed with disabilities and referrals from Children Services have the highest priority for enrollment. Other priorities are teen parents, first time parents, single parents and other agency referrals.

Being part of this rural community affords FCFP staff with many opportunities to participate in activities that contribute to this needs assessment. Staff regularly attend and actively participate in many local boards and advisory committees. Data is collected by these groups is combined with local program data of both Early Head Start and the other program options offered by FCFP.

Early Head Start promotes child development through effective parenting, early intervention and outreach services. It also supports and preserves the family unit as the foundation for success for children. The EHS program provides a seamless, comprehensive and easily accessed network of services, as well as, encourages self-sufficiency for families through adult education, training and employment. This philosophy is seamlessly integrated with the stated mission of Fulton County Family Partnership. EHS supports, enhances and promotes the family unity as the foundation for not only successful children and families, but also as a building block for successful communities.

Fulton's Early Head Start Program structure is designed to encourage and even require parent participation in the decision-making process. The EHS Policy Council is comprised of five community members and six parents currently enrolled. The Policy Council meets monthly to review program policy and procedures and actively participate in the planning and decision-making processes. The Family Development Coordinator is primarily responsible for oversight of this group with much assistance provided by the other staff.

There are three parent committees divided according to the family's residency in the school district areas. The parent committees meet regularly to discuss policy council business and plan for their individual group activities.

Head Start principles include a continuous improvement cycle which uses self-assessment and planning, using community and program data, to constantly reflect and build upon program

strengths. Fulton EHS staff are committed to providing optimal service and support to the families of infants and toddlers in Fulton County.

Fulton Early Head Start employs three full-time home visitors, with caseloads distributed generally according to school districts, however; due to family need and eligibility requirements this is not strictly adhered to. In-home services are provided by home visitors, Family Development Specialists, all of whom have received Parents as Teachers Parent Educator certification. Home Visitors not possessing advanced degrees related to early childhood development as required to obtain CDA, Child Development Associate credential. Presently two of the EHS home visitors have Bachelor’s degrees and one has completed Child Development Associate Credential.

Supervision is provided by the management team of two Coordinators: Family Health and Education Coordinator and Family Development Coordinator. Additional program and grant oversight is provided by Lead Parent Educator, the Executive Directors and FCFP Office Manager.

Current Staffing:

Elen Ott, Executive Program Director	Julia Dovey, Executive Development Director
Lori DeShong, Family Health and Education Coordinator	Kim Clark, Home Visitor – Southern Fulton
Kara Truax, Family Development Coordinator	Andrea Hanlon, Home Visitor – Central Fulton
Brandy Lewis, Lead Parent Educator	Adele Clippinger, Home Visitor – Forbes Road
Denise Chesnut, Office Manager	Marissa Welsh, Finance Coordinator

Community Assessment Process

The Community Assessment process is a continual progression of data collection and analysis. Data is used in the program planning process and incorporated into the EHS strategic plan. Community Assessment Team members included the EHS Management Team, FCFP Executive Program Director, Child Care Director, EHS staff, Community Engagement Coordinator, COPE staff and Fatherhood Facilitator.

A Community Assessment Committee comprised of staff and EHS Policy Council reviewed the data and participated in the analysis process. The summary and program responses were discussed and refined by these groups. EHS staff reviewed the draft of summary and program responses and provided additional input and feedback to assist with further refinement of the final product.

Ongoing report of the process was included in the monthly EHS program report which is distributed to EHS staff, Policy Council, FCFP Board of Directors and the Central Fulton School Board.

Sources for the Community Assessment Information:

- Fulton EHS Self-Assessment and program file data
- FCFP MIS data including Parent Satisfaction Surveys
- PA Department of Health
- Fulton County Medical Center Health Needs Assessment, 2013
- Fulton EHS Program Information Report, 2013
- FCFP Annual Report
- Fulton County Services for Children and Juvenile Probation: Needs-Based Planning & Budgeting for FY 2014-15 and 2015-16.
- Kids Count Data Center
- PA Workforce Stats
- Women In Need – Report from Director
- Fulton County Library Annual report
- Chamber of Commerce 2013 Community Profile & Membership Directory
- Fulton County Housing Committee Notes
- Communities That Care, Community Mobilizer

Methods of Data Collection

Staff from FCFP are actively involved in many community organizations, advisory committees and boards. Through this active participation there is a continual gathering of information regarding developing community needs and the response to them. Staff are privileged to insight into the lives of the enrolled EHS families, as well as the additional 100+ families that are served through other programs of FCFP.

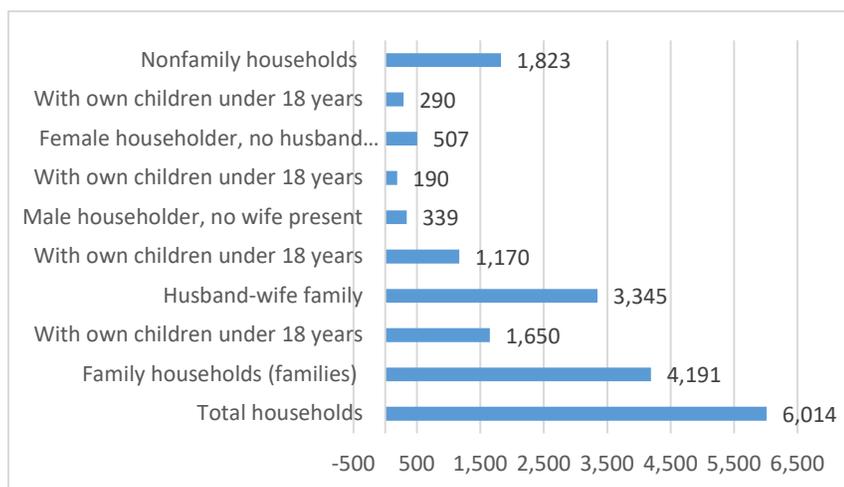
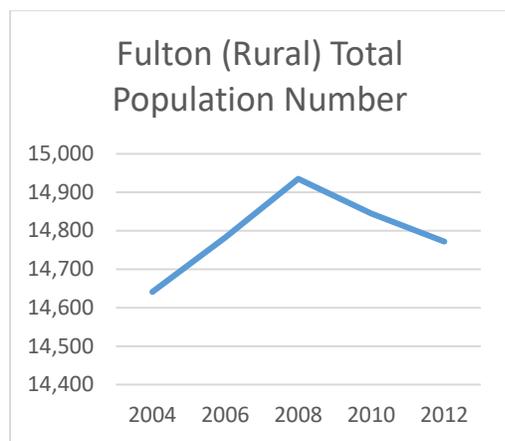
Additional data is collected using the Communities That Care Community Mobilizer who is a staff member and easily accessible. The Community Mobilizer has collected data for county-wide grants and has provided the EHS team with the most recent service statistics. The team has also accessed records and reports from other community agencies. The management team of EHS maintains an ongoing “Community updates” file in which interesting facts and developments are logged as they occur. This file is utilized in the development of the Community Assessment and annual updates.

Data Collected and Findings

General overview of the service area and recruitment areas

Population

Fulton County is located in the Appalachian Mountains of south central Pennsylvania along the Maryland State line. Rectangular in shape, the county is approximately 15 miles wide and 29 miles long; and has an approximate land area of 278,400 acres or 435 square miles. Fulton County is rated as an 8th class county with a total population just under 15,000. The county has two boroughs, McConnellsburg and Valley High. McConnellsburg is the county seat with a population of approximately 1,300. There are eleven townships in the county. Ayr Township is the largest municipality with a population of 2,047 followed by Todd with about 1, 525 residents. Fulton County has seen an increase just over 4% in the county population within the last ten years. There are 4,191 families living in Fulton County according to US Census, “families” consist of a householder and one or more other people related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. Fulton County is comprised of 98.8% English speaking residents.

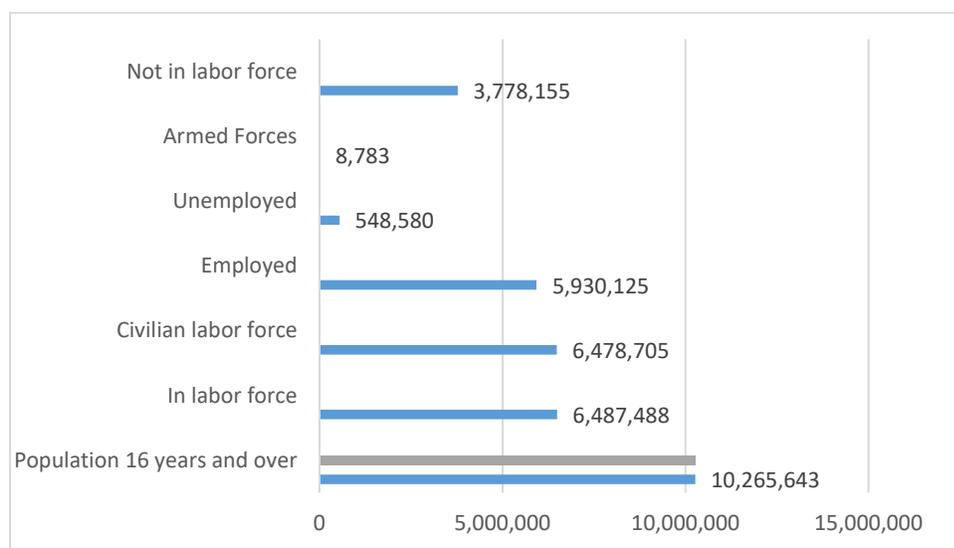


Employment Patterns

Opportunities for entry-level employment in Fulton County are limited. Many young parents seeking employment find that their skills will only qualify them for low paying positions. Often entry-level positions require the employee to work non-traditional hours and weekends, both,

which are factors to consider when looking for a childcare provider. Most low-paying positions are not full-time and often do not offer health or other benefits. Some of the local employers of unskilled labor are McDonald's, Sheetz, JLG, and grocery stores. In addition to increased referrals for child abuse and neglect, the county continues to receive increased referrals for subsidy programs for food, utilities and housing expenses.

Fulton County is an 8th class county, only one of six counties in the state with a population of less than 20,000. The others are Cameron, Forest, Montour, Potter and Sullivan.

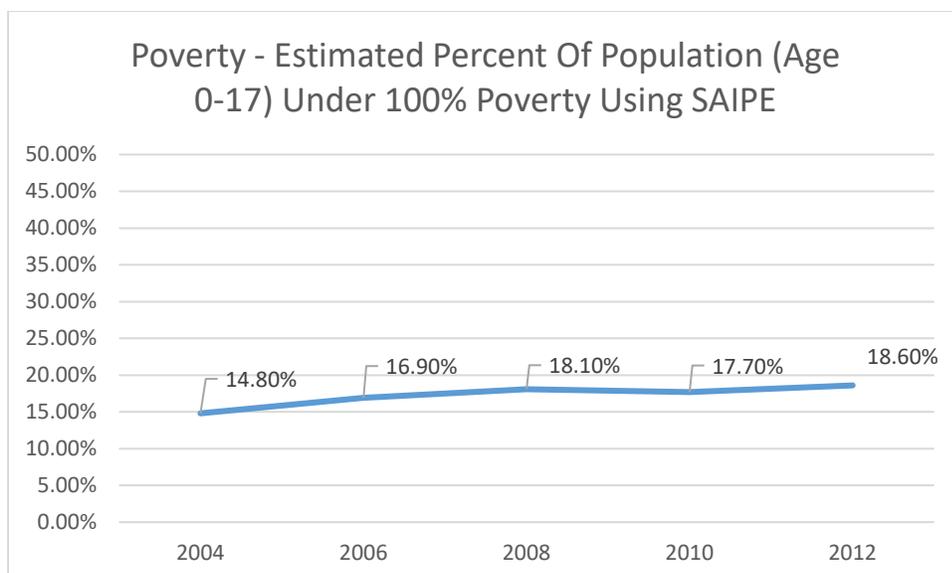


Social Economic

Fulton County has 437.6 square miles in land area and a population density of 33.9 per square mile. Fulton has experienced a minimal increase of population since 2004, from 14,641 to 14,772.

- 53% of all children under the age of 5 are living 200% below poverty levels
- 19% of all children under the age of 5 are living 100% below poverty levels
- 34% of all persons age 18-24 are living below 200% poverty levels
- The number of children 5 – 17 years old living within 100% of the federal poverty (HS Eligible) income guidelines has increased since 2005 from 14% to 17% in 2012.

The adjusted median household income in Fulton County is \$47,798, which is below the state average of \$55,703.



Fulton County enrollments in Free and Reduced Lunch Programs:

Location	Data Type	2009 - 10	2010 - 11	2011 - 12	2012 - 13	2013 - 14
Fulton-- Central Fulton (Rural)	Number	371	403	400	399	420
	Percent	37.70%	41.00%	39.70%	39.80%	42.00%
Fulton-- Forbes Road (Rural)	Number	214	211	196	197	173
	Percent	45.20%	45.80%	45.70%	48.60%	45.90%
Fulton-- Southern Fulton (Rural)	Number	389	443	396	355	381
	Percent	44.40%	49.80%	46.00%	43.90%	47.10%

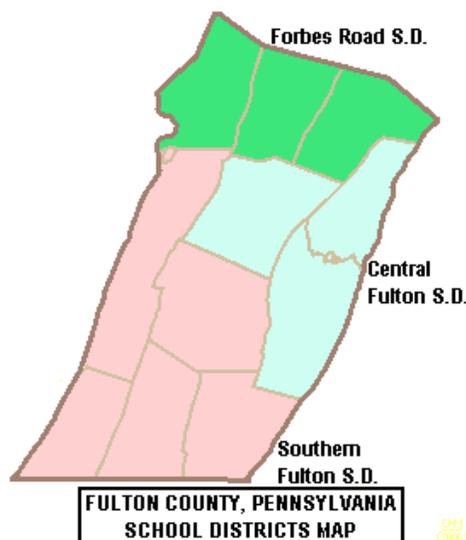
Housing

Housing options for low-income families in this county are limited. There is one apartment complex located in McConnellsburg that provides subsidized housing. As of June 1, 2014 there are 150 Section 8 Housing vouchers in use in Fulton County. There are 187 vouchers available. The historical problem in Fulton County has been a lack of Section 8 units, not the lack of vouchers available. The housing committee has been working on figuring out ways to increase the number of units in the county. Center for Community Action’s Fulton Housing Office provides several services to families including energy assistance, weatherization, home repair, and homeless assistance. Our local Catholic Church’s Sister Margie manages the Rental and Utility Assistance program for the county. In 2013 the program helped over 150 persons, and so far in 2014 there have been 188 persons who received some financial assistance. The program increased its available funding from \$14,000 to \$20,000 for 14-15 FY with help from Block Grant Funding.

Education

Fulton County public education is served by three districts; in the south – Southern Fulton, in the central area – Central Fulton and to the north – Forbes Road District. Each operates independently with their own Board of Directors.

Two of the three districts now offer residents PreK programming and all three have full-day Kindergarten. Central Fulton and Forbes Road School Districts offer pre-K preschool programs to 4-year-old residents of the district. At the high-school level the three districts combine efforts to offer secondary students the opportunity to attend Fulton County VoTech School. This is the only job training type of facility in the county. The training programs include; Agriculture, Drafting, Construction Trades, Health Occupations, Computer Repair/Networking, Engineering Technology, Child Care and Welding.



Public school enrollment is as follows:

	2012-2013	2013-2014
Central Fulton School District K4-12	899	998
Forbes Road School District K4-12	382	375
Southern Fulton School District K-12	807	793
Fulton County AVTS	158	161
Totals	2,246	2,327

Dropout rates vary as indicated by the chart below, fluctuation from year to year is common due in large part to the low numbers of students enrolled.

Dropout rates reported from 2012-2013 school year are as follows:

LEA	LEA Type	Grade 7-12 Enrollments	Male Dropouts	Female Dropouts	Dropouts - 2012-13	Dropout Rate
FRSD	SD	182	3	0	3	1.65%
CFSD	SD	400	8	3	11	2.75%
SFSD	SD	405	2	1	3	0.74%
	Grade 7-12 Enrollments	Male Dropouts	Female Dropouts	Dropouts	Dropout Rate	
Fulton	987	13	4	17	1.72%	
State	826,750	6,739	4,881	11,620	1.40%	

According to the Chamber of Commerce's 2014 publication 17% of the county's residents (or just over 1,900 people) have less than a high school diploma. 51% have a high school diploma or GED. 17% have a bachelor's degree or higher. It is well known that without a minimum of a high school diploma a person's options when seeking employment are very limited. Residents in Fulton County desiring to further their education past high school are faced with geographic challenges. There are no colleges or universities offering classes in Fulton County and students have to travel a minimum of 30 miles across mountains to the nearest higher educational institution.

Educational opportunities for preschool children in the county is also limited. The Fulton County Family Partnership (FCFP) serves over 82 families in the home visiting programs, Parents as Teachers (PAT), and Early Head Start. Families receive parenting information and support and child development information in their own homes. The services through PAT are available to families from prenatal through school age. The Early Head Start program enrollment is limited to 32 children or pregnant women from low-income families or children under three diagnosed with a disability.

Bedford Fulton Head Start provided services to 54 children ages 3 to 5 throughout Fulton County in 2013-2014. Families can choose between the home-based or combination model options.

The local Intermediate Unit, TIU #11, in collaboration with Bedford Fulton Head Start operates an integrated preschool program for children ages 3 to 5. Through this effort, children who have diagnosed disabilities are given the opportunity to grow in an environment similar to those of their peers.

Transportation

The lack of public transportation services further complicated the issues of accessing services. The Fulton County Family Partnership has been able to offer transportation to families for medical appointments through the MATP (Medical Assistance Transportation Program) and for job training/employment through the ETAP (Employment Transportation Assistance Program).

The lack of public transportation in this very rural county has been an obstacle in accessing services and employment. Many families have vehicles, but many are not reliable to travel the longer distances that also include going over mountains. Our families rely on assistance from friends and other family members for transportation.

In 2005 the Fulton County Family Partnership (FCFP) established a Medical Assistance transportation program designed to help people with MA get to and from their MA compensable medical appointments. An eligible consumer can get transported by an FCFP staffed van or get reimbursed for mileage to medical appointments. Employment Transportation Assistance Program (ETAP) is a Welfare to Work transportation program designed to help working residents with children overcome employment transportation barriers. FCFP can help qualifying individuals get to work and become self-sufficient in their transportation needs by offering transportation, mileage reimbursement, vehicle repairs and vehicle purchasing assistance.

Dental

Dental care is available to low-income families in Fulton County through Fulton County Family Partnership. The services are available to county residents who have Medical Assistance or are currently working but have no dental insurance. This past year there were 387 dental visits provided to patients under the age of 17. There continues to be limited availability to dental care for children less than 3 years old, and few children are receiving fluoride treatments.

Mental Health

Access to mental health services has improved over the past two years to Fulton County families. There are now two providers of mental health services for children in the county and TrueNorth Wellness Services has recently implemented a pediatric tele-psych program that is available to MA recipients. The service allows a pediatric psychiatrist to “see” clients using Skype technology, bringing specialized services to our rural area.

Medical Care

The county has one acute care facility, Fulton County Medical Center (FCMC) that is an approved Critical Access Hospital. There are 2 active general practice physicians in the county. TriState Health Center, a federally qualified health center, offers both general practice and pediatric services. There continues to be no obstetrical delivery services within the county. There is a local mid-wife who sees patients at FCMC, but has to deliver babies in hospitals out of the county. Gynecological care is offered in FC Medical Center’s Specialty Clinic. Fulton County continues to struggle with keeping a pediatrician in the area. There have been large chunks of time where there has been no pediatrician, and people with young children are expected to see a general practitioner. The TriState Health Center has been attempting to recruit, and is in the process of hiring, but as of the time this report is being written, there is no current pediatric physician in the county.

Child Care

Fulton County Family Partnership (FCFP) operates the county’s only licensed child care centers. Pre-School Age Child Care (PACC) is located in the Overly-Raker Building located on RT 522, North of McConnellsburg. We serve children from 6 weeks of age until they enter kindergarten. Children receive quality care in an environment designed to encourage learning. We are open Monday through Friday from 6:00 AM until 6:00 PM. Fees for services are paid by parents, and child subsidy is accepted. Collaborations with the DPW office and Employment and Training allow us to offer care to children whose parents are enrolled in programming through these agencies. Services provided include developmentally appropriate activities in a safe environment, with nutritional meals and snacks provided. The only requirement for enrollment are that the child has current physicals and immunizations. PACC continues to operate with a Star 2 designation (based on Keystone Stars quality improvement program). The Director of Child Care Services provides supervisory support to the center and additional child care staff are employed as

needed to meet the requirements of DPW for staff/child ratios. This fluctuates with enrollment, but averages about 12 employees.

School Age Child Care (SACC) is located in the Central Fulton Elementary School and serves children ages 5 to 12. SACC offers children a chance for social interaction, home-work help, and fun activities. Hours are before school from 6:00 to 8:00 and after school until 6:00 PM. The program has been in place over 14 years. The program is licensed by PA DPW to provide care to a maximum of 56 children, enrollment averages 25. Staffing is provided by one school-age group supervisor with oversight by the child care director and additional support staff are utilized as necessary. Central Fulton school-age program has achieved a Keystone Star designation of one star.

Child Care Works provides over 220,000 working families in PA with reliable access to child care, making them more likely to retain employment and be more productive at work. Most recent data shows 32 children received Child Care Works in Fulton County. (Source: PA Office of Child Development and Early Learning)

Early Childhood Education

Quality early learning and child development play a major role in a child's future success in school and in life. Pennsylvania's early childhood initiatives play a major role in providing out families with access to reliable, quality early learning opportunities. Listed below are some ways in which these programs affect Fulton County.

Pre-K Counts provides high quality pre-kindergarten education for 3 and 4 year olds with a focus on children at risk of academic failure. Central Fulton SD and Forbes Road SD have K4 programs. In both school districts these programs are growing in attendance each year. They are highly valued by parents and teachers. All Pre-K programming in the county is provided within the local elementary schools.

Keystone STARS is an initiative of the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) to improve, support, and recognize the continuous quality improvement efforts of early learning programs in Pennsylvania. Fulton County has 2 center-based child care facilities that participate in STARS. No home-care providers in the county participate. An estimated 82 children have been served in one of the two centers over the past year. Approximately 35% of those children are under the age of five.

Services to children with special needs

Early Intervention

Early Intervention services in Fulton are provided by two agencies. Franklin-Fulton MH/ID/EI serves the birth to 3-year-old population and Tuscarora Intermediate Unit #11 works with the 3 – 5 age group.

Location	Data Type	2008 - 09	2009 - 10	2010 - 11	2011 - 12	2012 - 13
Fulton County	Number of Children receiving Early Intervention Services	106	107	121	129	125

Referrals for Early Intervention services come from a variety of sources including, Early Head Start staff, Dr.'s offices, and the Office of Children's Services. During the 2013-14 year Fulton EHS had 17 enrolled children with diagnosed disabilities who were receiving Early Intervention services. Only 3 of these children were identified with delays prior to enrolling in the EHS program.

Children and Youth Services

In Fulton County various agencies offer support to families. One of the primary agencies is Fulton County Services for Children. The role of child welfare is to protect children and to preserve the family unit; however, it defines itself. We believe that children do best in their own homes; and that it is a parent's right to raise children according to their own value system, provided the child's physical, emotional, and social needs are met. Government intervention is justified when the family cannot, or will not, provide for the child's safety and/or basic needs. Placement of a child by child welfare can only occur if ordered by the Juvenile Court. As reported in the 2013 Annual Services for Children Report.

Abuse and neglect - # of substantiated cases – 2011 – 14 cases, 2013 – 7 cases.

Foster Care – number of children in placement - 9 for 2013

Recruitment for Fulton EHS is the entire county, including all three public school districts. Fulton EHS is home-based with office locations in each school district serving 54 infants, toddlers and pregnant women in a year-round program model. 100% enrolled families were below the federal poverty guidelines. Fulton EHS has maintained a wait list of 15, all within the income guidelines. The home visit completion rate average is 75%. Every attempt is made by staff to reschedule cancelled visits with families within the same week, if possible.

EHS Service Statistics

- 54 infants/toddlers/pregnant women funded; 47 children, 7 pregnant women
- Of the 47 children, 17 were under the age of 1, 15 were 1 year old and 15 were 2 years old.
- Average monthly enrollment was 100% of funded enrollment.
- Eligibility:
 - 100% enrolled were below federal poverty line
 - 14 were recipients of public assistance such as TANF or SSI
 - 0 Children were foster children
 - 0 were homeless

- 0 were over income guidelines
- Prior enrollment – Enrolled in Early Head Start for:
 - 8 in the second year
 - 8 in 3 or more years
- Transition and turnover:
 - 22 infants and toddlers left program any time after home visits began
 - 14 aged out of EHS
 - 5 entered Head Start
 - 9 entered another early childhood program
 - 1 pregnant women left the program after receiving EHS services but before the birth of their infant.
 - 6 women receiving EHS services subsequently enrolled in the program.
- Health Services:
 - 100% of infants and toddlers were enrolled in Medicare and/or CHIP
 - 6 of 7 pregnant women were enrolled in Medicaid
 - 1 women had private health insurance
 - 44 children had continuous, accessible dental care provided by a dentist.
 - 46 children were up-to-date with age-appropriate preventative and primary health care
 - 7 of these 46 were diagnosed with a chronic condition needing medical treatment
 - 100% have received or are receiving medical treatment
 - 46 of all children have been determined to be up-to-date with all immunizations
 - 1 child met the state guideline for an exemption from immunizations.
 - 100% of pregnant women received prenatal and postpartum health care
 - 100% received education on; substance abuse prevention, fetal development, and the benefits of breastfeeding.
 - 2 women received substance abuse treatment
- Family Demographics:
 - 47 Families
 - 27 two-parent families
 - 0 both parents employed
 - 17 one parent employed
 - 10 both parents not working
 - 20 single-parent families
 - 5 parents employed
 - 15 not working
 - Education-Of the total number of families, the highest level of education of parent(s):
 - 0 families with advanced or bachelor’s degree
 - 3 families with an associate degree, vocational school, or some college
 - 32 high school graduate or GED
 - 12 less than high school graduate
 - Federal or other assistance

- 5 families received TANF benefits
 - 8 families received SSI
 - 39 families received services under the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
 - 27 families received services under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formally referred to as Food Stamps
 - 17 children (36%) whose fathers/father figures participated in EHS activities.
- Family Services:
 - 8 Emergency/Crisis intervention
 - 16 Housing assistance
 - 13 Mental Health
 - 6 Job Training
 - 1 adult education such as GED
 - 47 Substance Abuse prevention
 - 3 Substance Abuse treatment
 - 13 Child abuse and neglect
 - 1 Domestic violence
 - 2 child support assistance
 - 47 Health education
 - 47 Parenting Education
 - 47 Relationship/marriage education
 - 100% received at least one of the services listed above
- Disability Services:
 - 24 infants/toddlers or 51% of enrolled children had an Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP).

Recommendations and Priorities

Long Range Program Goal # 1: Fulton EHS families and staff will develop personal empowerment.

Personal empowerment involves developing the confidence and strength to set realistic goals and fulfill your own potential.

Expected Outcome: EHS families and staff will increase in confidence, make positive choices, set realistic goals and develop new skills all aimed at taking control of their own life and make positive choices.

Objectives:

1. To strengthen the ability of Fulton EHS staff to understand the complexities of the challenges faced by EHS families. Staff will complete a minimum of 5 hours of training in the *Bridges Out of Poverty* tool or similar curriculum by the end of program year 2015-16 and by the conclusion of their first year of employment.
2. 75% of Fulton EHS families will complete the *Framework for Understanding Poverty – Audio Workshop* within the total time of enrollment, utilizing group meetings as the delivery of the workshop.
3. 100% of Fulton EHS families will set at least one individualized Family Partnership Goal that has SMART objectives to be met within their enrollment period. This goal will be aimed at empowering the parent to take control of their life by making positive choices and setting realistic, achievable goals.
4. 90% of Fulton EHS families will achieve a minimum average score of 3.5 or above on the Life Skills Progression Family Outcome Tool in the areas of Education/Employment within their enrollment period.

5. Staff will develop 2 SMART annual professional development goals that are specific to their own individual needs and will enhance the contribution they make both as an individual and as a member of our EHS team.

Long Range Program Goal # 2: Fulton EHS will strive to develop a comprehensive, easily accessed network of services to meet basic human needs in the community.

Expected Outcome: EHS program will be an active participating partner in Fulton’s Community Collaborative group to continuously improve the service network for families.

Objectives:

1. The needs of EHS families, as identified through Fulton’s 2014 Community Assessment, will be included in the *2016 Fulton County Community Needs Assessment* being conducted by Fulton County Medical Center and Collaborative Board “Partners”.
2. Fulton EHS staff will be active participants, representing the interests/need of EHS families on at least 4 local committees and boards with purposes related to improving community supports.
3. Fulton EHS will meet quarterly with Bedford Fulton head Start to improve the exchange and of information for children transition from EHS to Head Start.
4. 90% of Fulton EHS families will achieve a minimum average score of 3.5 or above on the Life Skills Progression Family Outcome Tool in the areas of Relationships with Supportive Resources within their enrollment period.

In addition to the long range goals and objectives, Fulton County EHS continues to respond to the needs of the community in several ways including, but not limited to;

- The Fulton County Family Partnership continues to explore the need for expanding childcare options within the County. The Early Head Start program is open to new/expanded program options. We will continue to work with the county planning committee to evaluate current trends and to support and develop services as needed.
- To continue to provide quality services to families, we are committed to retaining quality staff. A commitment to continuous self-improvement and is included in our strategic plan.
- We continue our efforts to enhance collaboration with programs offering services to children after their 3rd birthday and to those agencies with which we are dually serving families. Some of these agencies are Bedford Fulton Head Start, FCFP PAT program, School Districts and TIU Preschool Program.
- We are working with each of the 3 school districts to meet the needs of families in their areas, especially the unique needs of teen parents still attending school.
- FCFP staff will capitalize on opportunities to plan and develop expanded services for families of Fulton County especially in the areas of mental health and social emotional development.
- Continue efforts working within community agencies and with providers to evaluate and continually improve services.
- Explore the expanded use of technology within EHS program to provide expanded opportunities for parent leadership.