

## ***SUMMARY REPORT***

### **West Virginia Healthy Marriage Forum and Strategic Planning Session November 3, 2004 Charleston, West Virginia**

ACF Region III, in conjunction with the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (WV DHHR), convened the West Virginia Healthy Marriage Forum and Planning Session on November 3, 2004, in Charleston, WV. This meeting was a follow-up to the June 9, 2004, West Virginia Healthy Marriage Forum. ACF Region III has provided on-going technical assistance and guidance to West Virginia by assisting with strategic planning, organizing, agenda development, and in hosting the meetings. The purpose of the session held on November 3 was to facilitate a strategic planning process to help each county brainstorm and identify their target population, local marriage education service providers (who may join the coalition), goals, potential program activities, next steps, and in requesting for assistance from WV DHHR. Currently, the WV DHHR and West Virginia University Cooperative Extension offices are proposing an eight county Healthy Marriage Initiative pilot project in the State.

ACF Region III staff arranged for Dr. Rozario Slack, Director of Fatherhood and Urban Initiatives for First Things First – Chattanooga, and a Lewin Group contractor, to facilitate the meeting. The ACF Region III Healthy Marriage Specialist provided an overview of the ACF Healthy Marriage Initiative at the session, shared lessons learned from Healthy Marriage grantees, and also assisted Dr. Slack facilitate the meeting.

More than 40 WV DHHR, West Virginia University Cooperative Extension staff, and local community, and faith-based leaders from the proposed eight counties attended. During the session, each county developed a draft strategic plan. After the November 3, 2004, session each of the eight pilot counties held follow-up meetings to develop a more detailed second draft of their strategic plans. The revised plans were then submitted to WV DHHR on November 15, 2004. WV DHHR will submit them to ACF Region III staff for comment, feedback, and technical assistance to develop next steps for the pilot project.