

Community Assistantship Program

First Call for Help® Southwest Building Regional Identity Project

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**First Call for Help® Southwest
Building Regional
Identity Project**

Conducted on behalf of
First Call for Help® Southwest

Prepared by
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CAP Report 018

CURA RESOURCE COLLECTION

Center for Urban and Regional Affairs
University of Minnesota
330 Humphrey Center

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Community Assistantship Program
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Minneapolis, MN 55455

BACKGROUND

First Call for Help ® Southwest is one branch of 11 regional non-profit First Call Minnesota™ information and referral phone services funded by the United Way. The First Call Minnesota™ toll-free phone line is a 24-hour service available for all individual community members, businesses and professionals who seek information about local and statewide health and human services. The First Call Minnesota™ database contains current listings for over 14,000 agencies and 36,000 services across the state.

OBJECTIVE

At a Kandiyohi County Community Forum meeting in March, 2000, meeting attendees were given the task of identifying the top ten needs for their community. Information about existing services was determined to be the most urgent need. First Call for Help ® Southwest was ready to provide this type of information and, by May, 2000 had begun its public relations campaign to introduce its services to the 18 county regional community through press releases, brochures and meeting presentations. After the initial public relations efforts, the director of First Call for Help ® Southwest decided to take part in the Community Assistantship Program in order to hire a research assistant. The objective was: "To promote regional recognition of First Call for Help ® Southwest; and a regional mentality that when you don't know where to turn, call First Call for Help ® Southwest." To complete this objective, the FCFH ® SW director was interested in researching the efficacy of their previous public relations efforts and in building community partnerships with regional service providers. Because all inquiries to the First Call Minnesota™ system are anonymous, the director decided that a survey would be the best tool to obtain this type of data.

PROJECT

With the help of a Community Assistantship Program research assistant, a survey was created and sent out to over 1100 individuals, families and professionals to obtain information regarding current knowledge, use and attitudes toward FCFH® services in the southwest region. In cooperation with Pact 4, an organization that serves families in Kandiyohi County, the survey was inserted in their monthly newsletter at no charge to FCFH® SW. It was determined that the agency workers, professionals, individuals and families on the Pact 4 newsletter mailing list would provide a broad spectrum of Kandiyohi County residents that were representative the FCFH® SW region.

Survey data served dual purposes: to ascertain which public relations efforts had been successful and to initiate partnerships particularly with community service agencies. By promoting the idea partnerships with community organizations, First Call for Help ® Southwest hoped to build a spirit of mutual support and benefit by combining public relations efforts between the region's service providers and FCFH® SW.

In addition to the research-based aspect of this project, contacts with community leaders and media were made by presenting survey results at local networking meetings in Kandiyohi County and making follow-up calls to individuals who indicated an interest in promoting First Call for Help®. Some individuals had identified themselves on the survey as volunteer contacts and others voiced their interest while at networking meetings. The student researcher then made contacts and sent FCFH® SW materials to those volunteers so they could distribute the information to their clients.

RESULTS

The survey requested four types of information from respondents: 1) if they were aware of FCFH® SW and how they found out about it; 2) for those who had used the FCFH® line in the past, whether they felt it was helpful; 3) which types of media the respondents prefer for finding out about community information; and 4) if they would be interested in helping FCFH® SW in its public relations efforts.

The survey showed very similar results for preferences by both individuals and agency workers/professionals for obtaining community information. Of the respondents who had previously used the FCFH® line, all but one felt the service was very helpful in obtaining the information they sought. There were also 17 respondents who offered to be a community or agency contact for future FCFH® SW public relations efforts.

From the responses to the questions regarding contacts and promotional efforts aimed at individuals, the respondents consistently answered that they had been informed about FCFH® either by word of mouth or in printed brochures that were sent out to various community service agencies. (Fig. 1) This same group of individuals answered that they preferred the radio (38%) and newspaper (37%) when they were asked to pick their top two choices for obtaining community information. (Fig. 2)

Responses from agency representatives/professionals were more varied. The distribution of responses regarding how this group had been informed of FCFH® was: 32% from meetings, 25% from word of mouth, 18% from brochures and the remaining 25% from a wide variety of other sources including agency newsletters. (Fig. 3) Like the individuals' responses, this group strongly preferred the use of the newspaper (40%) and radio announcements (29%) for obtaining information about community services and events. (Fig. 4)

FUTURE PLANS

From the survey data it appears that future promotional efforts should focus on creating public service announcements for local radio stations and sending press releases or human interest stories to local newspapers. (Fig. 5) The previous promotional efforts via brochures, word of mouth, meeting presentations

appeared to be fairly successful however less likely to impact the quantity of community members that FCFH® SW is targeting at this time. (Fig. 6)

After a broad-based media campaign has reached the region as a whole, future efforts could include marketing FCFH® SW to specific populations with information of interest to that group. Possible targeted populations may be teens, parenting and early childhood education groups and immigrant groups. These groups were mentioned as high priority groups in the original Kandiyohi Community Forum's top ten needs list.

In addition, some of the volunteer contacts identified themselves as school employees, public health and medical staff, law enforcement officials, faith-based leaders and social services workers. These and other new contacts could play a unique role in reaching out to their own communities to promote awareness of the First Call for Help ® Southwest service.

This project was made possible by the CAP and its funding agencies. Lois Schmidt was the supervisor of the Building Regional Identity Project and worked in cooperation with me to create the survey and make arrangements with Pact 4, the agency that graciously offered to include our survey at no charge in their newsletter. In addition I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Lynn Nelson, a faculty member at the University of MN, for her expertise in survey implementation.

Individual Previous Contact to Individuals

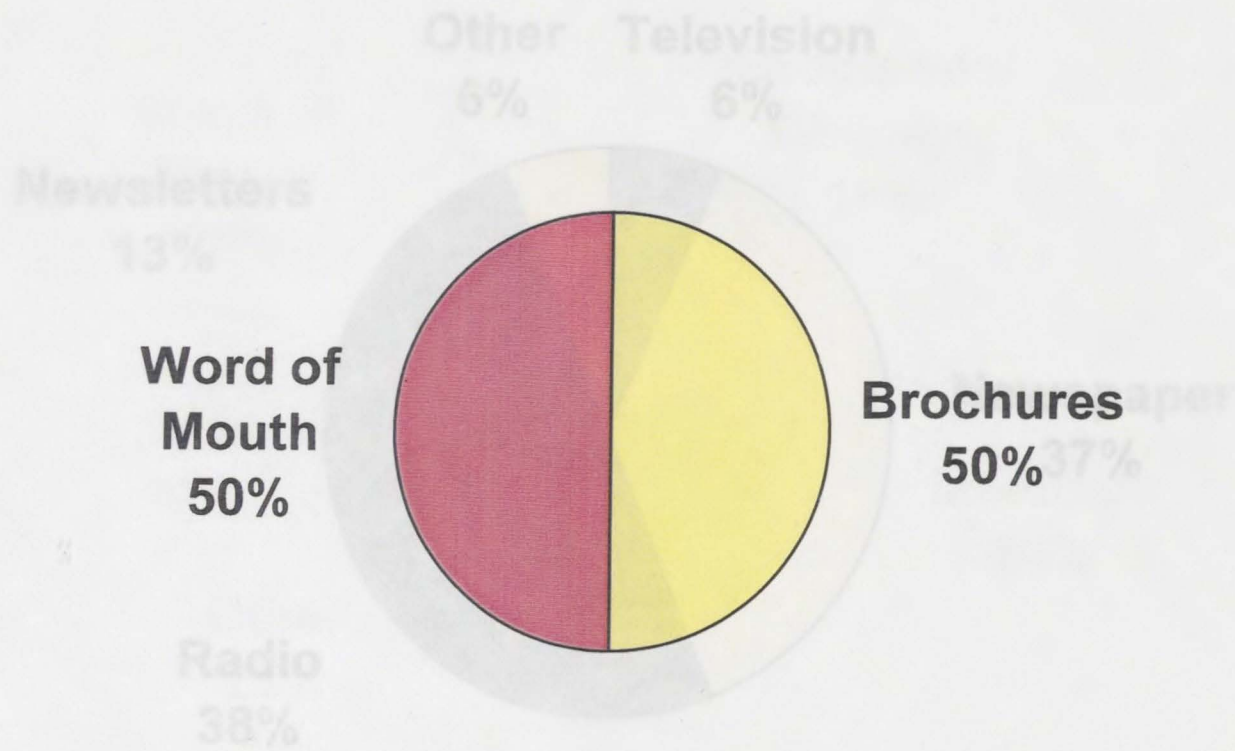


FIG.1

Fig 2

Individuals' Preferences for Future Contact

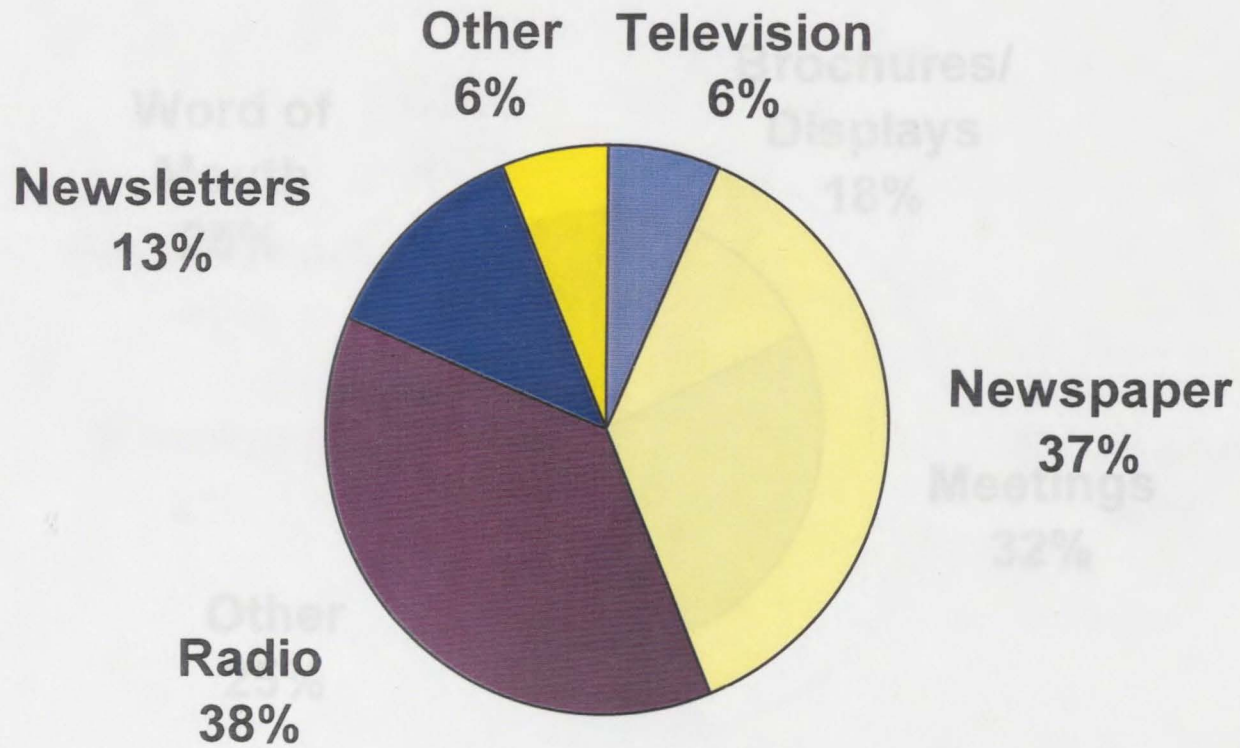


Fig 2

Previous Contact to Agencies

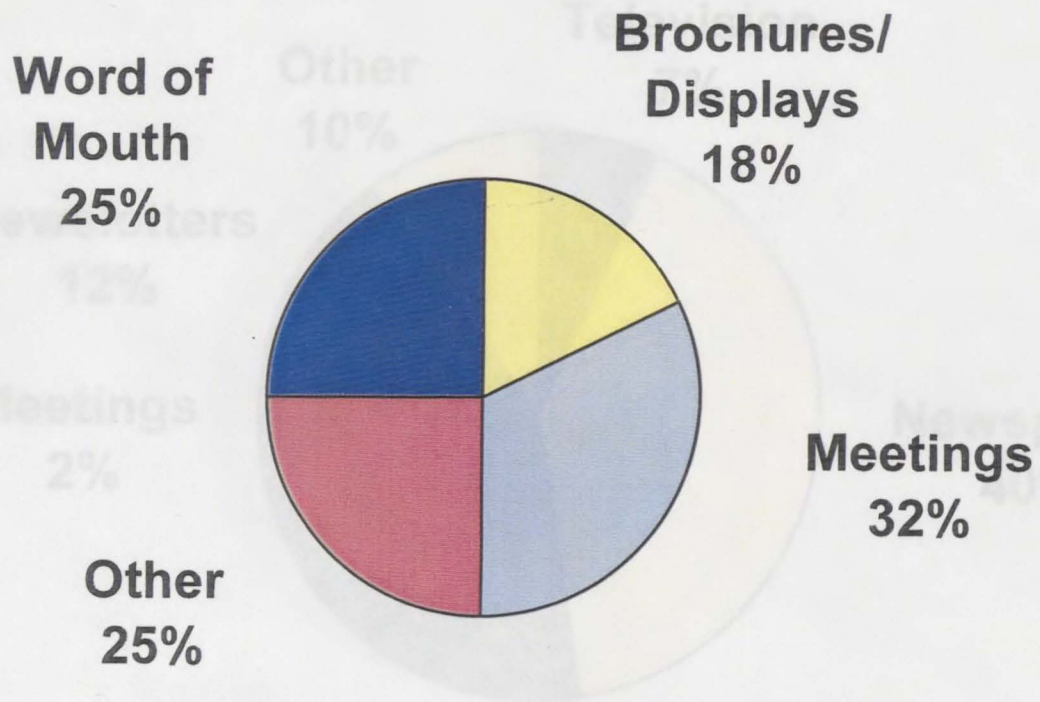


Fig. 3

Fig. 4

Agency Preferences for Future Contacts

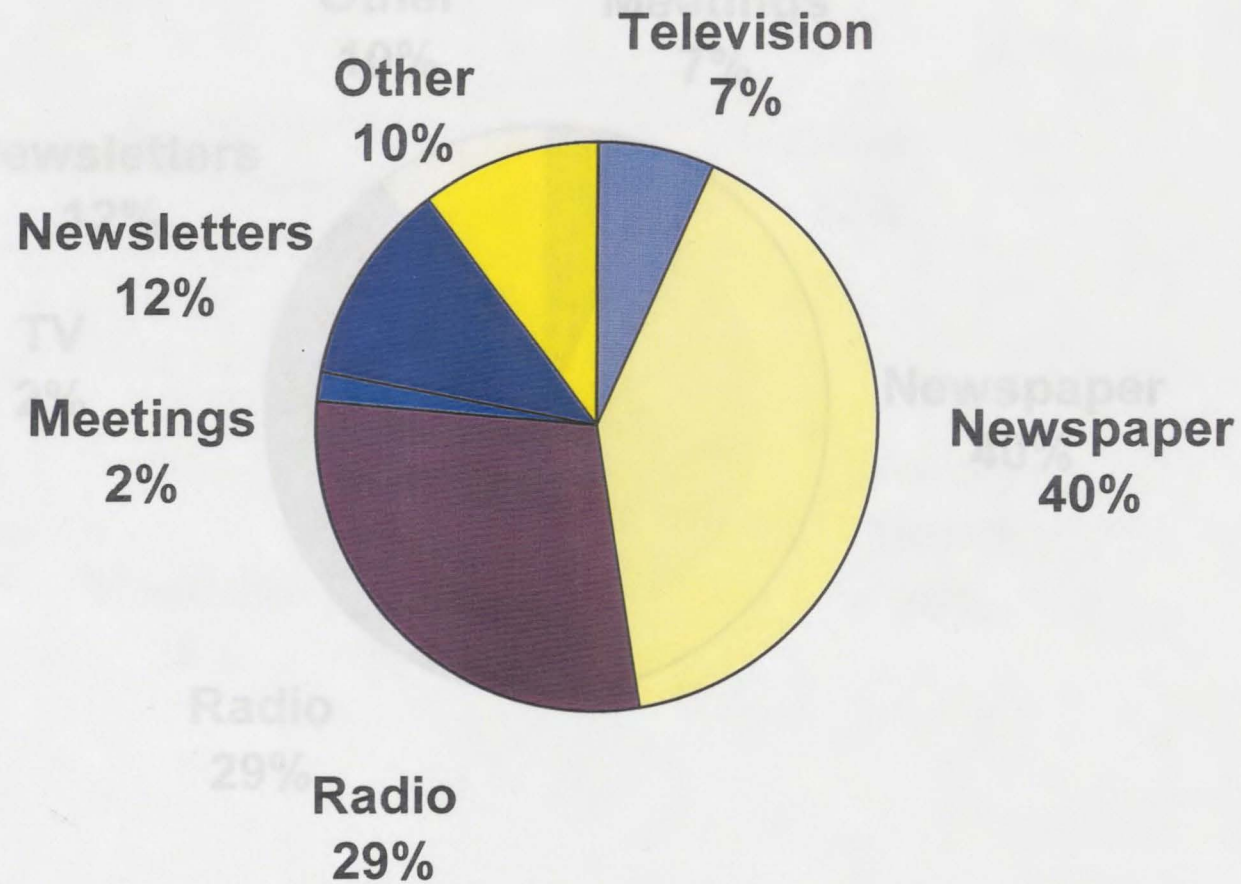


Fig. 4

Preferred Future Contact Overall

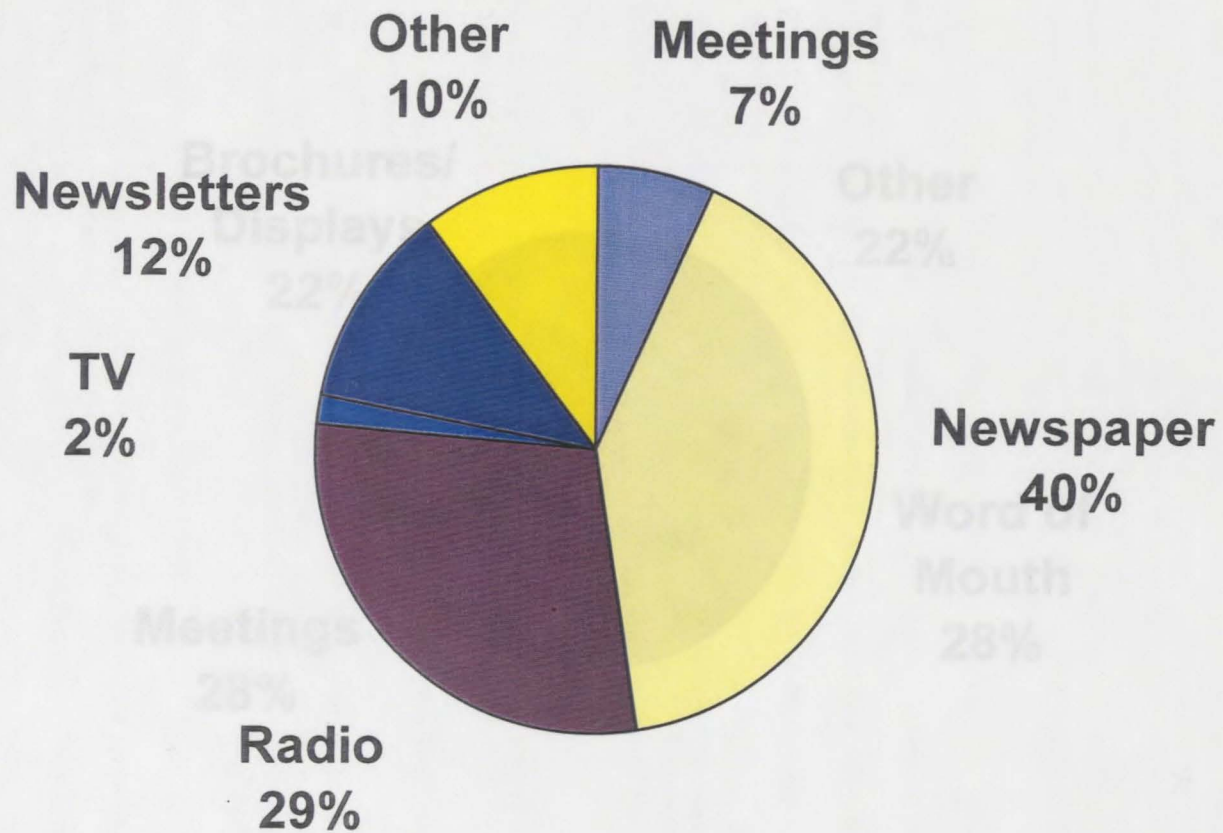


Fig. 5 Fig. 6

Previous Contact Overall

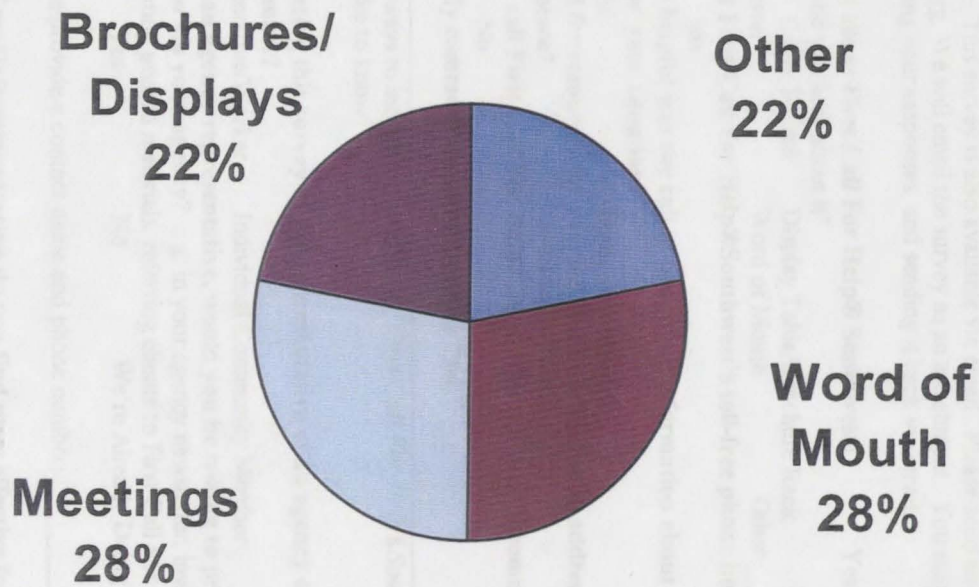


Fig. 6

Just Tell Me What I Need to Know – Quick Shot Survey
First Call For Help®Southwest

Accessing information about existing services was recently identified as the #1 need for Kandiyohi County residents. No matter where you are, you can likely identify with this same need. *First Call For Help®Southwest* is a free, 24 hour information and referral line staffed with people who can answer your questions about resources and services in west central, southwest and all Minnesota counties.

First Call For Help®Southwest believes that an important first step to bridge the information gap about resources can be met by promoting awareness of *First Call For Help®Southwest*, and by building a partnership with agencies and community members. In order to learn more about who is currently aware of *First Call For Help®Southwest*, we would appreciate your answers to the following questions. Please circle your answer choice. This survey is also available via email. Please send an email survey request to southwest@firstcall-mn.org. We will email the survey as an attachment. You may then complete it by either underlining or bolding your responses, and sending it back via email.

1. **Have you heard about First Call For Help® Southwest?** Yes No
 - 1a. If yes, how did you hear about it?
Radio Ad Cable TV Ad Display Table/Brochure Rack Meeting Presentation
Agency Referral Word of Mouth Other _____
2. **Have you called First Call For Help®Southwest's toll-free phone line: 800-543-7709?**
Yes No
 - 2a. If yes, how helpful was the call in providing information about services and resource options for your situation?
Very Helpful Somewhat Helpful Not Very Helpful
 - 2b. Did you call for resources for yourself/family/friend or to address the needs of a client at your workplace?
Self/Family/Friend Work-related
 - 2c. Would you call First Call For Help®Southwest again or recommend it to others?
Yes No
Please briefly comment why "yes" or why "no."

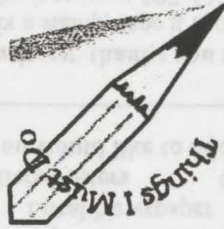
In order to find effective ways to increase awareness of *First Call For Help®Southwest* and to build partnerships, we would like to know:

3. **Are you completing this survey as the representative of an agency or as an individual community member?**
Agency Representative/Worker Individual Community Member
 - 3a. If you are an agency representative, would you be willing to promote *First Call For Help®Southwest* via your agency? e.g. in your agency newsletter, inviting a *First Call For Help* speaker, distributing printed materials, referring clients to First Call For Help®Southwest, or in other ways. Yes No We're Already Doing This (please describe)

If yes, please provide a contact name and phone number: _____
4. **Which types of media/communication do you find most effective for spreading news in your neighborhood or community? Choose the top two.**
Local Television Local Newspaper Local Radio Town Meetings
Community Newsletters/Posters Other: _____
5. **Is there anything else you would like to add?** _____

First Call For Help®Southwest thanks you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please fold this form in half, affix a stamp, tape it (no staples, please) and drop it in the mail by **August 18, 2000**. Or, you may fax it to us at 507-537-6095. You may complete the survey anonymously, but if you would like to receive a "nifty" thank you gift from us for your time and attention, please jot your name and address here: _____

Just Tell Me What I Need To Know - Quick Shot Survey



Return this quick survey

- by mail
- by email
- by fax

(see details inside)

First Call For Help@Southwest
P.O. Box 563
Marshall, MN 56258

Please Place
First Class
Postage Here

24 hour information/referral
to connect people with the
programs and services they
need: 1-800-543-7709

First Call For Help@Southwest
P.O. Box 563
Marshall, MN 56258

tape here