

Organization: Cumberland County Department of Public Health

County: Cumberland**Address:** 227 Fountainhead Ln.
Fayetteville, N.C. 28301**Phone:** 910-433-3894**Website:** <http://www.co.cumberland.nc.us/health.aspx>**Project:** Expansion of SISTA Program*****Below are excerpts from their final report*****

About the Project: Cumberland County Department of Public Health was able to implement the SISTA (Sisters Informing Sisters about Topics on AIDS) Project in a new housing area located in Fayetteville as a result of the funding. The N.C. Healthy Start Foundation provided necessary funds to purchase program items for participants to learn about and to correctly use barrier methods to protect themselves and the ones they care about from HIV/AIDS and other STIs.

The education is tailored and adapted to reach women from different cultures. Women are referred into the program by the Residence Coordinator at Tera Garden who assist tenants with securing community service hours as part of their lease agreement. The first SISTA Project was from April 1st through the 29th, the second project was offered from May 6th through June 2nd. Participants have agreed to attend a two to four month Booster session to discuss outcomes of the social intervention and share some of their success and challenges.

Successes: The effective community based prevention program addresses HIV-risk reduction and social skills intervention that give participants knowledge and skills and pride to actively protect themselves from becoming infected with HIV. 100% of the ladies participating agreed to get tested as a result of the intervention. Most of the participants have expressed their appreciation in learning about the different barrier methods and the skills necessary to educate and demonstrate how to use a condom correctly. It is believed based on the intervention that women who participate in SISTA will have a broader knowledge and social skills to assist with delaying their decision to have unprotected sex since African American women account for 60% of AIDS cases.

As a result of the N.C. Healthy Start Foundation funding Cumberland County Department of Public Health was able to offer SISTA in a new zip area with HIV incidences documented. Until there is a vaccine and/ or cure, educating the citizens of Cumberland continues to be a priority along with getting people tested and involved with community events.

