

NUMBER

#17-11-02

DATE

October 2, 2017

OF INTEREST TO

County Directors

Nation/tribal Directors

Financial Assistance

Supervisors

Employment Services

Managers/Supervisors

ACTION/DUE DATE

Please read information and
prepare for submission by
November 17, 2017

EXPIRATION DATE

October 2, 2017

2018 – 2019 Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) Biennial Service Agreement (BSA) Guidelines

TOPIC

To provide information to county and nation/tribal directors on the requirements of the MFIP Biennial Service Agreement.

PURPOSE

To notify counties and nations/tribes of time frames and responsibilities regarding the preparation and submission of the 2018 – 2019 MFIP BSA.

CONTACT

Tria Chang
MFIP Policy Improvement Specialist
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Tria.chang@state.mn.us

SIGNED

JAMES G. KOPPEL
Assistant Commissioner
Children and Family Services Administration

TERMINOLOGY NOTICE

The terminology used to describe people we serve has changed over time. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the use of "People First" language.

Background

Under Minnesota Statutes, section 256J.626, subdivision 4, counties, consortia and nation/tribes are required to submit a Biennial Service Agreement (BSA) to be approved by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) to receive consolidated funds for the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP).

The purpose of the Biennial Service Agreement is to provide DHS with information about services and strategies intended to meet program measures with the goal of increasing the economic stability of low income families on MFIP. The different sections of the BSA gather information about program strengths and service delivery gaps. The Agreement will give us a comprehensive assessment of current efforts; insight into what types of assistance are needed; and information on new strategies to better serve participants. We want to ensure that people served through MFIP are equipped to obtain and sustain gainful employment that will ultimately lead to greater self-sufficiency.

Allowable Services under MFIP Consolidated Fund

The MFIP Consolidated Fund provides funding for:

- Diversionary Work Program (DWP)
- Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)
- Family Stabilization Services (FSS)
- Support services to DWP and MFIP participants including those receiving Family Stabilization Services
- Extension services for people eligible to receive MFIP for longer than 60 months
- Emergency/Crisis Services

Counties, consortia and nation/tribes have the flexibility to determine how much of the consolidated funds to spend on any of the covered activities. In addition they can decide whether or not to offer emergency and/or crisis services. The decision to fund a program or service, and the level of funding, should be made based on the county or nation/tribe's best determination of which investments will lead to the greatest improvement in outcomes for families.

Consolidated funds do not carry forward between state fiscal years. DHS may reallocate unencumbered or unexpended consolidated funds to counties and nation/tribes that can demonstrate a need for additional money or use the funds for innovative projects to address the needs of DWP/MFIP participants.

Eligibility for services under the MFIP Consolidated Fund is limited to pregnant women, families with a minor child, or non-custodial parents of minor children receiving MFIP who are under 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG).

If a county, consortia or nation/tribe is interested in using their MFIP consolidated fund allocation to provide services to non-custodial parents of minor children receiving MFIP who are under 200 percent of the (FPG), the county or nation/tribe should contact Tria Chang at 651-431-3988 to discuss the type of assistance to be provided and determine what reporting requirements apply.

The Sections of the Biennial Service Agreement

Needs statement

Purpose of section: Identify challenges facing the county or nation/tribe.

Include examples and ideas about what support is needed, besides additional funding, from DHS to help resolve these issues. This section also includes a check list of strengths, resources and gaps as well as space to enter county and employment services providers' contact information. Please list all of the employment service providers in your county.

Service Models for MFIP/ DWP

Purpose of the Section: Identify the various services available to the people you serve. We are particularly interested in:

- how you engage hard to serve participants;
- what job development strategies you use;
- how your employment services agencies generate employer partnerships, job leads; and
- what types of retention services you provide.

Services for Teen Parents

Purpose of section: Identify services specifically for teen parents. What additional services are they receiving to provide them with additional tools and support needed to succeed?

Performance Measures

Purpose of Section: Provides links to performance measures achieved by the county or nation/tribe. This information will determine if a county or nation/tribe will receive performance-based funding by exceeding a service area's annualized 3 year Self-Support Index (S-SI) value. Counties, consortia and nation/tribes that have performed above expectations are invited to describe successful interventions. Counties or nation/tribes may be required to submit a Performance Improvement Plan if they continue to perform below their expected range of performance.

Performance data are also used to identify disparities in outcomes for racial/ethnic groups within counties and consortia. These service areas will outline strategies and action steps to reduce these disparities.

The information provided will allow DHS to gather information about:

- strategies that helped people turning to MFIP succeed
- strategies and action steps your agency will take to address disparities

Program Monitoring / Compliance

Purpose of section: Understand the procedures that are in place to monitor use of funds, to ensure accurate implementation of policy and to oversee contracted providers.

Collaboration and Communication with Others

Purpose of Section: Ensure processes are in place to support collaboration and communication between employment services and financial assistance staff. Indicate how many ES staff have access to MAXIS Inquiry, and how the county or nation/tribe will address issues identified. Describe the process your service area uses to identify and resolve discrepancies between MAXIS and Workforce One data.

Emergency / Crisis Services

Purpose of Section: Describe how the county or nation/tribe plans to provide Emergency Services and to whom, including the application process, approval process, maximum amount approved and eligibility requirements. Emergency/Crisis Services plans funded with Consolidated Fund dollars must maintain fair treatment for all families. For example, financial literacy tests can be offered, but cannot be required.

Requirements for EA:

- Funds must serve families with a minor child or pregnant woman
- Priority must be given to families currently receiving MFIP, DWP, or Family Stabilization Services
- Must meet a 30 day Minnesota Residency requirement, exceptions include time spent in a shelter for battered women
- Issue payments using MAXIS

Please attach a copy of your most up to date Emergency / Crisis Plan. If your plan exceeds the allowable character limit, you may email your Emergency / Crisis Plan to tria.chang@state.mn.us

Administrative Cap Waiver

Purpose of Section: State your intention to apply for the Administrative Cap Waiver and to describe activities that will be provided, reasons for increased administrative costs and the target population that will be served. This section only applies to counties who are seeking a waiver beyond the 7.5% administrative cost.

Instruction on Completing the Document

Counties and nation/tribes will complete the MFIP BSA for 2018 – 2019 using a web form available by clicking on one of the links below.

MFIP Biennial Services Agreement link – Counties and consortia, please use this link.

<https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Secure/DHS-3863-ENG>

Tribal MFIP Biennial Services Agreement link – Nations/tribes, please use this link.

<https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Secure/DHS-3863A-ENG>

The web form will be available for counties and nation/tribes to complete between **September 22 and November 22, 2017**. After the submission date, counties and nation/tribes will not be able to access the web form to make changes.

Completing the MFIP BSA Web Form

1. County, consortium and nation/tribal directors or the BSA contact person will receive an email with unique ID and instructions for the web form during the week of **September 22, 2017**.
2. Click on the link to access the MFIP BSA. Enter the unique ID assigned to you. Once, the ID is entered, click the **Look Up** button. The navigation bar will appear on the top and bottom of the page.
3. Navigate the form by using the top/bottom toolbars, or the Next/Previous Page buttons.
4. Respond to each question.
5. All staff assigned to work on the document in your county or nation/tribe need to use the same unique ID number. You will be able to save a partially completed BSA and return to it at a later time, if necessary. If multiple people are working on the online document, this should be done one at a time. If two or more people are working on the document at the same time, revisions or changes by one person may not be visible to the other person and some items may be lost.
6. You can print the document at any time.
7. Once the BSA document is complete, click “submit” and the form will be sent electronically to DHS. The submission deadline is **November 22, 2017**.
8. After the document is submitted, the BSA contact person will receive an automatic email with a PDF copy for your file.

If you encounter any problems with the web site, need clarifications, or are **unable to meet the deadline and wish to request an extension**, please contact Tria Chang at 651-431-3988 or by email at tria.chang@state.mn.us

Public Input and Comment

By law, county and nation/tribe must allow a period of at least 30 days for public comments on the contents of the agreement before approval. Additionally, in counties with a city that has a population over 300,000, the county must consider a service agreement that includes a jointly developed plan for the delivery of employment services with the city. Counties and nation/tribes must address the above requirements in their planning process and ensure that enough time is given for public input and comments.

DHS Approval

DHS must approve all Biennial Service Agreements and notify counties and nations/ tribes by December 15, 2017. If an Agreement is not approved, DHS will inform the particular county or nation/tribe of any additional information needed for approval. Counties and nations/tribes must have an approved service agreement to receive MFIP consolidated funds.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Advisory

This information is available in accessible formats for people with disabilities by calling (651) 431-4049 (voice) or toll free at (800) 234-1138, or by using your preferred relay service. For other information on disability rights and protections, contact the agency's ADA coordinator.