Chapter 1  Table of Contents

Chapter 2  Introduction and Program Goals
2.3  Introduction and Program Goals
2.6  Work Force Attachment Model

Chapter 3  Glossary
3.3  Glossary: A...
3.6  Glossary: B...
3.9  Glossary: C...
3.12 Glossary: D...
3.15 Glossary: E...
3.18 Glossary: F...
3.21 Glossary: G...
3.24 Glossary: H-K...
3.27 Glossary: L...
3.30 Glossary: M-N...
3.33 Glossary: O-Q...
3.36 Glossary: R...
3.39 Glossary: S...
3.42 Glossary: T-Z...

Chapter 4  Client Responsibilities and Rights
4.3  Client Responsibilities and Rights
4.6  Client Rights
4.9  Client Rights - Civil Rights
4.12 Civil Rights and the Americans with Disabilities Act
4.15 Client Rights - Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
4.18 Client Rights - Data Privacy

Chapter 5  Orientation to Financial Assistance
5.3  Orientation to Financial Assistance
   5.3.3  Good Cause for Failure to Attend Financial Orientation
5.6  Timing for Employment Services
5.9  Referring Participants to ES/Choice of Providers

Chapter 6  General Requirements and Sequence of Services
6.3  Requirements and Sequence of Services
6.6  Minimum Hourly Activity Requirements
6.9  MFIP Participation Rate
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.12</td>
<td>Federal Participation Requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.15</td>
<td>Self Support Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 7</strong></td>
<td><strong>Allowable Activities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Allowable Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3.3</td>
<td>Paid Employment Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3.6</td>
<td>Unpaid Employment Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3.9</td>
<td>Job Search &amp; Job Readiness Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3.12</td>
<td>Education &amp; Training Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3.15</td>
<td>Social Services Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3.18</td>
<td>Holding &amp; Other Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3.21</td>
<td>Holidays &amp; Excused Absences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>Employment Services Overview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.9.3</td>
<td>Contents of an Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.9.6</td>
<td>Strengths-Based Approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.9.9</td>
<td>Requirements for Teen Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.9.12</td>
<td>Chemical/Mental Health/Learning Needs Screening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.9.15</td>
<td>Intervention Levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.9.18</td>
<td>Intervention Levels - Obtaining/Exchanging Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.9.21</td>
<td>Chemical &amp; Mental Health Assessments: Referrals/Costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.9.24</td>
<td>Intervention Documentation &amp; Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.9.27</td>
<td>Chemical/Mental Health Assessment Support Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.9.30</td>
<td>Accommodations for Disabled Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.12</td>
<td>Job Search Activities and Time Lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.12.3</td>
<td>Structured Job Search</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.12.6</td>
<td>Referrals to Employers/Temporary Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.15</td>
<td>Employment Plan (EP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.15.3</td>
<td>Functions of the Employment Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.15.6</td>
<td>Goals in the Employment Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.15.9</td>
<td>Order of Preference for Work Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.15.12</td>
<td>Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.15.15</td>
<td>Modified Employment Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.15.18</td>
<td>Employment Plans for Participants With a Disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.18</td>
<td>Self-Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.18.3</td>
<td>Calculating Self-Employment Earnings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.18.6</td>
<td>Cal. Hours of Add’l Work/Job Search Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.18.9</td>
<td>Child Care for Self-Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.21</td>
<td>Job Development for Participants with Limited English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.22</td>
<td>Limits on ESL and Functional Work Literacy (FWL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.23</td>
<td>Training and Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.23.3</td>
<td>Basic Education or GED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.23.6</td>
<td>Post-Secondary Training and Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.23.9</td>
<td>Approving Post-Secondary Training/Ed. at Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.26</td>
<td>Social, Legal, and Health-Related Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.29</td>
<td>Family Violence Waiver Option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.29.3</td>
<td>Person Trained in Domestic Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.32</td>
<td>Non-Displacement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.35</td>
<td>Injury Protection Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.38</td>
<td>Case Transfer Policy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chapter 8**  
**Supporting Participant Progress**

| 8.3 | MFIP Child Care |
| 8.6 | General Requirements for Child Care Assistance |
| 8.9 | Job Counselor’s Role |
| 8.12 | Child Care for Preliminary Activities |
| 8.15 | Allowable Child Care Expenses |
| 8.18 | Child Care for Job Search Activities |
| 8.21 | Child Care for Employment |
| 8.24 | Child Care for Training and Education |
| 8.27 | Child Care for Social Services in the Employment Plan |
| 8.30 | Child Care for 2-Parent Families |
| 8.33 | Special Needs Child Care |
| 8.36 | Good Cause - Inability to Obtain Child Care |
| 8.39 | Accessing and Coordinating Other Support Services |
| 8.42 | Importance of Monitoring - 2-Way Responsibility |
| 8.45 | Importance of Monitoring - Evaluation and Reporting |
| 8.48 | Minimum Contact |
| 8.51 | Monitoring Satisfactory Progress |
| 8.54 | Monitoring Job Search Activities |
| 8.57 | Monitoring Employment |
| 8.60 | Monitoring Training and Education Programs |
| 8.63 | Continuation of Employment Services |
| 8.63.3 | Transition Year Child Care |
| 8.63.6 | Basic Sliding Fee Child Care |
| 8.63.9 | Transitional MA Programs |

**Chapter 9**  
**Non-Compliance and Sanctions**

| 9.3 | Non-Compliance |
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.3.3 Pre 60-Month Type/Length of ES Sanctions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3.6 Drug Felons Sanctions - Job Counselor Responsibilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.6 Good Cause for Non-Compliance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.9 Communicating With the County Agency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.9.3 Notifying the Participant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.9.6 Options for Preventing a Sanction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.12 Failure to Respond and Notice of Adverse Action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.12.3 Time Lines for Curing the Sanction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.12.6 Removal of a Sanction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.12.9 Case Review Requirements for Occurrences of Sanctions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.12.12 Reduction or Discontinuation of Support Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.12.15 Volunteers Out of Compliance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.15 Fraud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.18 Guidelines for Working with Sanctioned Participants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.21 Dispute Resolutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 10</strong> MFIP Financial Assistance Overview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.3 MFIP Assistance Unit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.3.3 Family Cap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.6 Treatment of Income</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.9 Assets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.12 Work Incentives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.15 Grant Standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.18 Budgeting Policies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.21 Significant Change Policy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.24 Actual Budgeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.27 Opting Out of MFIP Cash Portion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.30 60-Month Lifetime Limit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.30.3 Transition Period - 48 to 60 Months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.30.6 180 to 60 Days Before MFIP Closes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.33 Hardship Extensions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.33.3 Ill/Incapacitated Extensions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.33.3.3 Ill, Injured, or Incapacitated Extension Criteria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.33.3.6 Special Medical Criteria Extension</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.33.3.9 Needed in the Home Extension Criteria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.36 Hard to Employ Extensions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.36.3 Mental Retardation/Mental Illness Extension Criteria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.36.6 Learning Disabled Extension Criteria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.36.9 IQ Below 80 Extension Criteria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10.36.12 Unemployable Extension Criteria
10.36.15 Family Violence Extension Criteria

10.39 Employed Extensions
10.39.3 Employed Extension Criteria - 1-Parent Units
10.39.6 Employed Extension Criteria - 2-Parent Units
10.39.9 Limited Work Due to Illness/Disability Extension Criteria

10.42 Post 60-Month ES Sanctions - General Provisions
10.42.3 Post 60-Month ES Sanctions - 2-Parent Units
10.42.3.3 Post 60-Month ES Sanctions - Removing Caregivers

10.45 60-Month Notice Requirements

Appendices

Appendix A  MFIP Assistance Standards
Appendix A-1 MFIP Initial Eligibility Threshold Guide
Appendix A-2 Amount of Earnings Needed to Exit MFIP Cash
Appendix A-3 Amount of Earnings Needed to Exit MFIP

Appendix B  DHS Forms

Appendix D  What to Include in the MFIP/DWP ES Paper Files

Appendix E  MFIP Activity Table
Appendix E-1 Exit Reasons
Appendix E-2 Activity Cheatsheet

Appendix F  Regional Teams and Contact Lists for MFIP and DWP

Appendix G  MFIP Participation Rate
Appendix G-1 MFIP Participation Rate - What Counts

Appendix H  How to Track Hours Per Week

Appendix I  Employment Services Activities/WF1

Appendix J  Resources for Americans with Disabilities (ADA)
Appendix J-1 Decision Points for Employment Counselors
Appendix J-2 Decision Points for Financial Workers
Appendix J-3 SSI Advocates List
Appendix J-4  Disability Criteria for SSI Benefits

Appendix K  Workforce One (WF1) Electronic Referral
The Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) is a comprehensive work-focused program that replaced AFDC, Family General Assistance, and Project STRIDE for families in Minnesota. The MFIP grant includes cash and food benefits. MFIP participants are encouraged and expected to work. Supports are provided to enable them to go to work, and earnings disregards ensure they are better off financially when they work.

The goals of MFIP are:

- To encourage and enable all families to find employment.
- To help families increase their income and move out of poverty.
- To prevent long-term dependence on welfare as a primary source of family income.

§2.6 (Work Force Attachment Model) explains more about the emphasis on the work expectation for MFIP participants.

Chapters 5 through 9 explain the MFIP program and Employment Service Providers’ responsibilities for MFIP clients during their 1st 60 months of eligibility for MFIP.

Chapter 10 explains MFIP financial assistance, including basic MFIP policies and eligibility criteria. It also explains the 60-month time limit for receiving MFIP, transitioning off MFIP, and other policies relating to the 60-month time limit.
MFIP is designed to encourage and enable early work force attachment for participants in order to build job skills, experience, and work history. This approach has been shown to be effective in increasing earnings and income while promoting self-esteem and independence for participant families.

MFIP encourages participant employment by vigorously promoting the financial, social, and psychological advantages of employment. Financial workers, job counselors, managers, and support staff should encourage work by:

- Delivering a strong and consistent message about the 60-month time limit for MFIP and the importance of work.
- Providing easy access to materials and equipment that facilitate job search and promote positive work messages by means of posters and displays of success stories.

The core methods for getting participants to work are setting clear work expectations, and providing encouragement and support for participants as they obtain and retain employment. This encouragement and support should be system-wide; that is, provided by professional job counselors and reinforced by financial, child care, and child support workers. When necessary, sanctions are applied if participants refuse to cooperate with the program. See Chapter 9 (Non-Compliance and Sanctions).

MFIP enables participants to work by supporting program activities with child care funding and health care coverage, both of which can extend through the period where families are off MFIP but not yet at a level of full self-support. These supports are available for up to 1 year after a participant becomes ineligible for a grant because of increased earnings, child/spousal support, or a combination of earnings and child/spousal support. Transitional Year Child Care (TYCC) funding is available for up to 1 year for families that meet the income guidelines. Families that still meet the income guidelines at the end of the transition year are eligible for Basic Sliding Fee Child Care Assistance.

Grants for working families are calculated from a higher standard than those for families that do not work. An ongoing disregard of 39% of earned income helps to cover work-related expenses and increases net income. Federal and state tax credits are also available. The result of these MFIP policies is that WORK ALWAYS PAYS; participants are always financially better off working. See Chapter 10 (MFIP Financial Assistance Overview) for additional information on MFIP policies and budgeting.
ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act.

AFDC: AID TO FAMILIES WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN.

AFFIDAVIT: A written declaration made under oath before a notary public or other authorized officer.

AID TO FAMILIES WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN (AFDC): The program authorized to provide financial assistance and social services to needy families with a minor child. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity and Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) replaced AFDC with a block grant called Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Grant (TANF). In Minnesota, AFDC was replaced by the MINNESOTA FAMILY INVESTMENT PROGRAM (MFIP). See MINNESOTA FAMILY INVESTMENT PROGRAM (MFIP) in §3.30 (Glossary: M-N...).

ALIMONY: An allowance for support that a court orders a person to pay to his or her SPOUSE.

ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT PLAN (AEP): The AEP was replaced by the Employment Plan. See §7.15.12 (Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence) for further information.

AMERICORPS: The NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES TRUST ACT of 1993 amended the NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY ACT of 1990 and established a CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE. This Corporation merged the work and staff of two predecessor agencies, ACTION and the Commission on National and Community Service and administers national service programs that include three AmeriCorps programs among others:

- AmeriCorps State and AmeriCorps National (together these two programs are also known as AmeriCorps USA) support a broad range of local service programs that engage thousands of Americans, age 17 years and older, in intensive service to meet critical community needs.

- AmeriCorps VISTA (formerly known as VISTA) provides full-time members, in the age groups 18 years and older, to community organizations and public...
agencies to create and expand programs that build capacity and help bring low-income individuals and communities out of poverty.

- AmeriCorps NCCC (AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps) is a full-time residential program for men and women, ages 18-24, that strengthens communities while developing leaders through direct, team-based national and community service.

In addition to a stipend/living allowance and an educational award, payments to AmeriCorps participants may include child care allowance if needed to participate in the program, health insurance if not otherwise available, and reasonable accommodations, supplies and services for individuals with disabilities. As an alternative to the AmeriCorps Education Award, members may choose to take a post-service cash stipend instead.

**APPEAL:**
A CLIENT's or authorized representative's request to the State of Minnesota appeals referee for review of a county agency's action or inaction.

**APPLICANT:**
A person who has submitted a request for assistance for whom no decision has been made regarding eligibility, and whose application has not been acted upon or voluntarily withdrawn.

**APPLICATION:**
A request for assistance made by submitting a signed and dated page 1 of the Combined Application Form (CAF).

**ASSET LIMIT:**
The maximum amount of net counted assets clients may own or have available and remain eligible for MFIP.

**ASSETS:**
Real property and personal property owned wholly or in part by the client.

**ASSISTANCE PAYMENT:**
Assistance received from the MINNESOTA FAMILY INVESTMENT PROGRAM (MFIP), General Assistance (GA), Minnesota Supplemental Aid (MSA), Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA), and emergency cash programs.

**ASSISTANCE STANDARD:**
An amount set under Minnesota Statutes to provide for an ASSISTANCE UNIT's shelter, food, fuel, clothing, utilities, household supplies, and personal expenses. See FAMILY WAGE LEVEL in §3.18 (Glossary: F...), TRANSITIONAL STANDARD in §3.42 (Glossary: T-Z...). Also see MFIP Assistance Standards in Appendix A.

ASSISTANCE UNIT:
A group of people receiving or applying for benefits together.

ATTEMPT TO MEET:
The county or job counselor contacts the participant in writing and by telephone, if a telephone number is available about the proposed time and place for the face-to-face meeting. Counties further defined guidelines for attempting to meet in their local service unit plan. The Department of Human Services recommends that counties attempt a face-to-face meeting up to 3 times.
BANKED MONTHS:
Months credited during the initial 60 months of MFIP eligibility, which can potentially be used after the 60-month time limit is reached to extend eligibility. Banked months are accrued when a caregiver meets the conditions for Special Medical Criteria. Banked months **must be used before** a participant is extended under a different hardships extension category. See §10.33.3.6 (Special Medical Criteria Extension).

BATTERED WOMEN'S SHELTER:
A public or private non-profit crisis shelter, housing network, or other shelter facility providing services to battered women and their children.

BUDGET MONTH:
The calendar month from which the county agency uses the income or circumstances of a unit to determine the amount of the benefit for the payment month.

BUDGETING:
Assigning income to a payment month. Using unit income to compute eligibility and benefit levels. See PROSPECTIVE BUDGETING in §3.33 (Glossary: O-Q...), RETROSPECTIVE BUDGETING in §3.36 (Glossary: R...).

BURIAL PLOT:
A cemetery lot.
CALENDAR MONTH:
A period that begins with the 1st day of the month and ends with the last day of the month.

CAREGIVER:
A person who provides care and support to a MINOR CHILD. The person may or may not receive benefits. For example, a grandparent may care for a child but not receive MFIP with the child.

CASH ASSISTANCE:
Assistance received from 1 of the cash programs, excluding the food portion of an MFIP grant.

CHILD:
See MINOR CHILD in §3.30 (Glossary: M-N...).

CHILD CARE SUPPORT:
A court-ordered payment by a non-custodial parent for a portion of the child care costs incurred by the custodial parent.

CHILD SUPPORT:
A voluntary or court-ordered payment by non-custodial parents for the support of their children.

CITIZENSHIP:
The status of being a native born or naturalized citizen of the United States.

CLIENT:
A person who is an APPLICANT or PARTICIPANT.

COMMUNITY WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM (CWEP):
A county agency implemented program that helps MFIP participants gain employment experience in a actual work setting, by placing them in temporary, non-paid positions with public or private not-for-profit employers.

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS:
Structured programs in which TANF recipients perform work for the direct benefit of the community under the auspice of public or non profit organizations.

CONCILIATION CONFERENCE:
An informal meeting offered to the caregiver by the EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROVIDER or county agency to resolve Employment Services-related non-compliance issues. This opportunity is also offered to a minor caregiver to resolve non-compliance issues related to education requirements.

CONSOLIDATED FUND:
A combination of state and federal dollars the state allocates to counties and tribes to administer Welfare Reform. Counties and tribes have the flexibility to use these funds to develop local programs and services designed to improve MFIP participant outcomes. These programs and services may include Employment Services, social services and emergency funds, as well as others with the goal of improving the economic stability of MFIP participants. Services may also be provided to families whose incomes are under 200% of FPG, and to non-custodial parents of a child receiving MFIP. See §6.9 (MFIP Participation Rate).

COUNTED ACTIVITIES:
Activities that count toward the work participation rate. These activities are divided into core, non-core, and not counted. For more information, see §6.9 (MFIP Participation Rate), §7.3 (Allowable Activities).

COUNTED EARNINGS:
The earned income that remains after applicable disregards have been subtracted from gross earned income.

COUNTY AGENCY:
The local human services office.
DEDUCTION:
An amount of income not counted in the computation of a person's income because its use or intended use is for certain specific expenses.

DEEMING:
To count all or part of the income of people not in the UNIT as if it were income the unit had received. The financial worker is responsible for applying deeming provisions to the case on MAXIS.

DENIAL:
The act of disapproving an APPLICATION for assistance or an addendum asking to add a person to a grant.

DHS:
The Minnesota Department of Human Services.

DISQUALIFICATION:
A disqualification, for extension purposes, may result in removal of 1 caregiver from a 2-parent case or case closure.

DISQUALIFIED PERSON:
A person who is ineligible for assistance due to non-cooperation with a program procedure. The length of disqualification may vary depending on which program provisions the person violated or failed to comply with.

NOTE: For extension purposes, to disqualify is to make a person or a case ineligible for MFIP because of non-cooperation with Employment Services requirements. The term is also used for both pre- and post- 60 months when removing a person from MFIP due to a fraud conviction.

DISQUALIFY:
To make a person ineligible for assistance because of non-cooperation with a program procedure.

DISREGARD:
An amount of income which is excluded in determining NET INCOME.

DOCUMENTATION:
A written statement or record that substantiates or validates an assertion made by a person or an action taken by a person, agency, or entity. For example, supporting evidence that the hours and activities have been verified.
EARNED INCOME:
Cash or in-kind income earned in the form of salaries, wages, commissions, profit from employment activities, net profit from self-employment, payments made by an employer for regularly accrued vacation or sick leave, and any other profit earned through effort or labor. The income must be in return for or as a result of legal activity.

EARNED INCOME CREDIT (EIC):
A federal refundable tax credit for low or moderate income working individuals and families. People may receive an EIC once a year as a refund. Working families with children can apply for advance payments with each paycheck.

EARNED INCOME DISREGARD:
An employment incentive. The exclusion of a portion of EARNED INCOME in determining eligibility and benefits.

ELIGIBILITY FACTORS:
Conditions and standards an applicant or participant must satisfy to be eligible for benefits.

EMANCIPATED MINOR:
A person under the age of 18 who is or was married, is on active duty in the uniformed services, or has been declared emancipated by a court.

EMPLOYMENT PLAN:
A plan developed by the job counselor and the participant which includes the participant's overall employment goal, activities necessary to reach that goal, and a time line for each activity. The Alternative Employment Plan and Job Search Support Plan have been replaced by the Employment Plan. All Employment Plans must be based on the participants’ individual assessment. See §7.15 (Employment Plan(EP)), §7.15.12 (Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence)

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES:
See MFIP EMPLOYMENT SERVICES (MFIP-ES) in §3.30 (Glossary: M-N...).

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROVIDER (ESP):
An agency or organization that operates under formal agreement with the COUNTY AGENCY to provide Employment Services to certain clients on behalf of the COUNTY AGENCY. In some instances, the ESP is another unit of the county.
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) :
   English language program designed for non-English speaking people.

EXEMPT FROM EMPLOYMENT SERVICES :
   A person who is not required to participate in Employment Services activities
   because he/she meets certain criteria.

EXEMPT MONTHS :
   Months that were not counted toward the 60-month time limit.

EXTENSION :
   Allows families to receive additional months of MFIP beyond 60 months if certain
   criteria are met. See §10.33 (Hardship Extensions).
FAIR HEARING:
A hearing conducted by the DHS Appeals Office to decide disagreements concerning eligibility determinations and benefit amount.

FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT: (FSLA) All work experience participants are considered employees under the FSLA. Participant would not be required to participate in unpaid work experience more hours than the monthly MFIP cash assistance amount plus the monthly food support amount divided by the state minimum wage.

FAMILY:
The following people who live together: a minor child or group of minor children related to each other as siblings, half-siblings, step-siblings, or adopted siblings; together with their natural, step, or adoptive parents or their caregiver; or a pregnant woman with no other children.

FAMILY VIOLENCE:
An act or a combination of acts such as: physical harm, bodily injury or assault, the infliction of fear of imminent physical harm, bodily injury or assault, terroristic threats, criminal sexual conduct committed against or committed by a family or household member. See §7.15 (Employment Plan (EP)), §7.15.12 (Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence), §7.29 (Family Violence Waiver Option).

For family violence purposes, family or household members are:
- Spouses and former spouses.
- Parents and children.
- People related by blood.
- People who are residing together or who have resided together in the past.
- People who have a child in common regardless whether they have been married or have lived together at any time.
- A man and a woman if the woman is pregnant and the man is alleged to be the father, regardless of whether they have been married or have lived together at any time.
- People involved in a current or past significant romantic or sexual relationship.

FAMILY VIOLENCE WAIVER OPTION:
A provision under which participants, who are victims of FAMILY VIOLENCE, may be exempt from the 60-month lifetime limit. See §7.15 (Employment Plan (EP)), §7.15.12 (Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence), §7.29 (Family Violence Waiver Option).
FAMILY WAGE LEVEL:
A standard used for calculating benefits for families with earned income which is set at 110% of the TRANSITIONAL STANDARD.

FOOD STAMP PROGRAM:
A United States Department of Agriculture program that issues benefits in the form of food coupons or electronic benefits to increase food purchasing power. In Minnesota it is called the FOOD SUPPORT PROGRAM.

FOOD SUPPORT PROGRAM:
Minnesota’s name for the FOOD STAMP PROGRAM.

FRAUD:
A person is considered to have committed fraud when obtaining, attempting to obtain, or aiding and abetting another to obtain assistance benefits to which the person is not entitled or in amount greater than the person’s entitlement, through material and intentionally false statements, representations, or the withholding of information. See §5.5 (Fraud).

FRAUD OVERPAYMENT:
An overpayment which is determined to be fraud by:
- Court action, including criminal conviction, disqualification consent agreement, pre-trial diversion plan, or civil fraud judgment.
- Administrative Disqualification process (an ADH hearing or ADH waiver).
- Confession of judgment which admits intentional program violation.

FULL-TIME STUDENT:
A person who is enrolled in a graded or ungraded primary, intermediate, secondary, GED preparatory, trade, technical, vocational, or post-secondary school, and who meets the school's standard for full-time attendance. Summer vacations and school holidays do not affect the student's full-time status.

FUNCTIONAL WORK LITERACY (FWL):
Intensive work-focused ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE instruction for MFIP participants. See §3.10.6 (Limits on ESL and Functional Work Literacy (FWL)).
GENERAL EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT CERTIFICATE (GED) :
A certificate issued by the Minnesota Board of Education or a similar certificate from another state equivalent to a SECONDARY SCHOOL diploma.

GOOD CAUSE :
A situation or circumstance beyond a participant’s control which may allow the person to be excused from certain Employment Services activities for a certain period of time or allow a sanction to be removed retroactively.

GRANT DIVERSION :
A program in which an EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROVIDER arranges for the county agency to reimburse an employer for a portion of a client's wages. Reimbursement is from the ASSISTANCE PAYMENT that the client would be eligible for if the client were not employed.

GRANT STANDARD :
See ASSISTANCE STANDARD in §3.3 (Glossary: A...).

GROSS EARNED INCOME :
The income earned from employment before mandatory and voluntary payroll deductions.

GROSS INCOME :
Total non-excluded income (minus expenses for self-employment) before any deduction or disregard.
HOUSEHOLD:
People who live together.

HOUSEHOLD REPORT FORM (HRF):
A form (DHS-2120) used by clients to report income and circumstance changes.

IN COMPLIANCE:
A participant is meeting the requirements in his or her EMPLOYMENT PLAN. For purposes of an extension, a participant must NOT be in sanction for any reason on the MAXIS system.

INCOME:
Cash or in-kind benefit, whether earned or unearned which is, received by or available to an applicant or participant, that is not an asset.

INELIGIBLE PERSON:
A person who does not meet eligibility requirements for assistance.

INITIAL ELIGIBILITY:
The determination of eligibility for an APPLICANT.

JOB SEARCH:
The act of seeking or obtaining employment, preparation to seek or obtain employment, including life skills training, substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment or rehabilitation activities for those who are otherwise employable.

JOB SEARCH SUPPORT PLAN:
The Job Search Support Plan has been replaced by the Employment Plan. See §7.15 (Employment Plan (EP)), §7.15.12 (Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence).
LEARNING DISABLED:
A disorder in 1 or more of the psychological processes involved in perceiving, understanding, or using concepts through verbal language or non-verbal means. It does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of:
- Visual, hearing, or motor handicaps.
- Mental retardation, emotional disturbance.
- Environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

NOTE: For purposes of an extension to the 60-month time limit, the disability must severely limit the person’s ability to obtain, perform, or maintain suitable employment.

LEGAL CUSTODIAN:
A person under legal obligation to provide care for and who is in fact providing care for a minor. For a Native American child, any Native American person who has legal custody of a Native American child under tribal law or custom, under state law, or to whom temporary physical care, custody, and control has been transferred by the parent of the child. If assistance is being requested for the minor child, this person meets the definition of CAREGIVER. For the definition of CAREGIVER, see §3.9 (Glossary: C...). For the definition of MINOR CHILD, see §3.30 (Glossary: M-N...).

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP):
Unable to speak, read, write, or understand the English language well enough to allow a person to interact effectively with health care, social services, or other providers. For more information, see §4.15 (Clients Rights - Limited English Proficiency (LEP)).

LOCAL LABOR MARKET:
A geographic area no more than 2 hours round trip from a person's home in which the person must search for suitable employment.

LUMP SUM:
Cash received on a non-recurring or irregular basis that cannot reasonably be anticipated. Lump sums include winnings, insurance settlements, and inheritances, retroactive payments of RSDI, VA, and unemployment insurance. See §10.6 (Treatment of Income).
MANDATORY PARTICIPANT:
All participants are mandatory except those extended under the Ill/Incapacitated Category, who may volunteer. See §3.42 (Glossary: T-Z...) for the definition of a VOLUNTEER.

MAXIS:
Minnesota's statewide automated eligibility system for public assistance programs.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE (MA):
The program established under Title XIX of the Social Security Act and Minnesota Statutes 256B providing for health care to needy people.

MEDICALLY NECESSARY:
A health service rendered in response to a life-threatening condition or pain; to treat an injury, illness, or infection; to achieve a level of physical or mental function consistent with prevailing community standards for the diagnosis or condition; to care for a mother and child through the maternity period; is a preventative health service; or to treat a condition that could result in physical or mental disability. The provider's professional peer group must recognize the service as the prevailing standard or current practice and consistent with the participant's diagnosis or condition.

MFIP EMPLOYMENT SERVICES (MFIP-ES):
The program that provides Employment Services to current and former MFIP participants.

MFIP PARTICIPATION RATE:
The MFIP participation rate is a state measure used to assess and reward counties for high performance. This measure was designed to mirror the activity rules of the TANF participation rate, but it applies these rules to all non-exempt eligible MFIP adults. See §6.9 (MFIP Participation Rate).

MINIMUM WAGE:
The lowest wage established by law that an employer may pay an employee. See SUITABLE EMPLOYMENT in §3.39 (Glossary: S...).

MINNESOTA FAMILY INVESTMENT PROGRAM (MFIP):
Minnesota's family assistance program. The program is both TANF-funded and state-funded.
MINNESOTA WORKING FAMILY CREDIT:
A state tax credit for which low or moderate income individuals and families are eligible if they qualify for the federal EARNED INCOME CREDIT. See EARNED INCOME CREDIT in §3.15 (Glossary: E...). The Minnesota Working Family Credit can be applied for by filing a Minnesota income tax return.

MINNESOTACARE:
A premium-based health care coverage program for uninsured Minnesota residents who meet the income guidelines. It is administered by the Department of Human Services. See the Health Care Programs Manual.

MINOR CAREGIVER:
A person who (a) is under the age of 18 years and not emancipated, and (b) has applied for or receives assistance as a caregiver on behalf of himself or herself and his or her minor child.

MINOR CHILD:
A child who lives with parents or other caregiver, is not the parent of a child in the home, and who is 1 of the following:

- Less than 18 years old.
- OR
- Under the age of 19 and a full-time student in a secondary school or equivalent level of vocational or technical training, designed to fit students for gainful employment.

MONTHLY INCOME TEST:
The test used to determine ongoing eligibility and the unit's assistance amount.

NET INCOME:
Income remaining after each program's DEDUCTIONS and DISREGARDS are subtracted from GROSS INCOME.
OCCURRENCE OF NON-COMPLIANCE:
A month a participant is not in compliance with MFIP requirements. In post 60-month MFIP, an occurrence of non-compliance refers to non-cooperation with Employment Services and may result in sanction, removal (disqualification) of a household member, or case closure (disqualification of case).

ON-LINE DIPLOMA:
For an 18- or 19-year old with an on-line diploma other than from a program approved by the Dept. of Education, explain the MFIP policy and place the teen in the “work option”. See §7.9.9 (Requirements for Teen Parents).

For caregivers under 18 years of age, who are enrolled in an on-line secondary school or GED program, refer to the school district to determine its legitimacy. Each district has a transfer specialist who will sort this out, probably by doing testing.

ON-THE-JOB TRAINING (OJT):
Training in the public or private sector that is given to a paid employee while he or she is engaged in productive work and that provides knowledge and skills essential to the full and adequate performance of the job.

PARENT:
A child's natural, step, or adoptive mother or father. Also see STEPPARENTS in §3.39 (Glossary: S...).

PARTICIPANT:
A recipient of assistance who participates or is required to participate in the Diversionary Work Program or MFIP Employment Services.

Paternity:
Legal fatherhood, either adjudicated or established through a Recognition of Parentage.

PAYMENT MONTH:
The calendar month for which assistance is paid.

PERMANENT DISQUALIFICATION:
For extension purposes, permanent disqualification occurs when 1 or both caregivers are no longer eligible to receive MFIP due to failure to comply with Employment Services. Both caregivers may reach this point in post 60-month MFIP after the 6th occurrence of non-compliance with Employment Services, or 1
caregiver in a 2-parent case may reach this point upon 2nd removal from the MFIP grant due to non-compliance with Employment Services.

PERSONAL NEEDS ALLOWANCE:
An allowance of up to $70 per month for each Diversionary Work Program unit member to pay for expenses such as household products and personal products.

PERSON TRAINED IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:
An individual who works for an organization designated by the Minnesota Center for Crime Victim Services as providing services to victims of family violence, a county staff person who has received similar training, or any other person or organization designated by a qualifying organization. See §7.15 (Employment Plan (EP)), §7.15.12 (Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence), §7.29 (Family Violence Waiver Option).

POST-SECONDARY SCHOOL:
A school serving students beyond the 12th grade, such as a community college, university, or technical college.

PROSPECTIVE BUDGETING:
A method of anticipating income and determining benefit levels in which the budget month and payment month are the same. See §10.18 (Budgeting Policies).

PROTECTIVE PAYMENT:
Assistance payments made to people outside the unit who receive the entire assistance benefit on behalf of the unit and are responsible for paying for the basic needs of the unit to the extent of the assistance payment.

PROTECTIVE SERVICES:
Social service programs designed to prevent abuse or neglect and safeguard dependent children and vulnerable adults.

QUALIFIED HEALTH PROFESSIONAL: Licensed physician, a physician’s assistant, a nurse practitioner, a certified midwife, or a licensed chiropractor. For qualified mental health professional or qualified professional to determined mental retardation see §10.36.3 (Mental Retardation/Mental Illness Extension Criteria). Qualified professional to determine leaning disability or IQ see §10.36.6 (Learning Disabled Extension Criteria). Qualified professional to determine if participant is ‘unemployable’ see §10.36.12 (Unemployable Extension Criteria).
RECERTIFICATION:
The process used by the COUNTY AGENCY to determine a participant's continued eligibility for benefits.

RECOUPMENT:
Witholding part of a unit's assistance benefit to recover an overpayment.

RECOVERY:
The process of obtaining a repayment of an overpayment.

REFEREE:
A person who presides over appeal hearings and issues a recommendation on the appealed matter to the Commissioner of DHS.

RESTITUTION:
A court order for repayment of an OVERPAYMENT.

RETIREMENT, SURVIVORS, AND DISABILITY INSURANCE (RSDI):
A program operated by the Social Security Administration that provides a monthly income to retired people, survivors or dependents of insured people, and people with disabilities.

RETROSPECTIVE BUDGETING:
Calculating benefit levels using income received 2 months before the payment month to determine benefit levels for the payment month. For example, January’s income is used to determine March benefit levels. Also see PROSPECTIVE BUDGETING in §3.33 (Glossary: O-Q...).

RETROSPECTIVE CYCLE:
Looking back on conditions in a past month and applying the information in the present month. For example, income received in January is budgeted for March; income received in February is budgeted for April.
SANCTIONED MONTH:
A month a participant is in sanction on the MAXIS system.

SANCTIONS:
Reduction of a family’s assistance payment by a specified percentage of the MFIP standard of need because a non-exempt participant fails to comply with the MFIP Employment Services requirements, a parental caregiver fails without good cause to cooperate with the child support enforcement requirements or a participant fails to comply with other program requirements.

SECONDARY SCHOOL:
A school accredited by the Minnesota Department of Education as a secondary school. This includes grades 7 through 12 or an equivalent technical, vocational, or GED program.

SELF-EMPLOYMENT:
Employment where people work for themselves rather than an employer, are responsible for their own work schedule, do not have taxes or FICA withheld by an employer, and do not have coverage under an employer's liability or workers' compensation insurance.

SELF-SUPPORT INDEX:
An MFIP/DWP outcome measure that tracks whether adults are either working 30 or more hours per week, or no longer receiving MFIP/DWP cash payments 3 years after a baseline quarter. This measure is used with the MFIP participation rate to determine the amount of performance-based funds a county or tribe will receive from the MFIP Consolidated Fund.

SHARED HOUSEHOLD STANDARD:
The standard used when unrelated people reside in the same household as the ASSISTANCE UNIT and no exception is met.

NOTE: For extension purposes, the standard used when a mandatory household member is removed from the MFIP household for non-compliance with Employment Services requirements. The financial worker is responsible for implementing this standard on MAXIS.

SIBLINGS:
Brothers and sisters related through birth or adoption to 1 or both parents.

SIGNIFICANT CHANGE:
The unit's gross earned and/or unearned income for the payment month declines by 39% or more from the gross earned and/or unearned income budgeted in the budget month. See §10.21 (Significant Change Policy).

SOCIAL SERVICES:
The services included in a county's community social services plan which are administered by the county board as described under Minnesota Statutes, section 256E.03, subdivision 2.

SPOUSAL SUPPORT:
An allowance for support that a court orders a person to pay to his or her SPOUSE or former SPOUSE.

SPOUSE:
A person who is legally married to another person; husband or wife.

SSA:
Social Security Administration.

SSI:
See SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI) below.

STEPPARENT:
The spouse of a child’s natural, adoptive, or legal parent.

SUBSIDIZED PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYMENT:
Employment in the private sector for which the employer receives a subsidy from TANF or other public funds to offset some or all of the wages and costs of employing a recipient.

SUBSIDIZED PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYMENT:
Employment in the public sector for which the employer receives a subsidy from TANF or other public funds to offset some or all of the wages and costs of employing a recipient.

SUITABLE EMPLOYMENT:
Suitable employment:
- Is within the participant’s physical and mental capacity.
- Pays hourly gross wages which are not less than the federal or state minimum wage for that type of employment.
- Meets health and safety standards set by federal, state, and county agencies.
➢ Complies with federal, state, and local anti-discrimination laws.

Do not knowingly refer participants to employers who offer employment that violates these standards.

SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI):
A program operated by the Social Security Administration that provides monthly income to low-income people who are aged, blind, or have a disability.

SUPPORTED WORK:
A subsidized or unsubsidized work experience placement with a public or private sector employer, which may include services such as individualized supervision and job coaching to support the participant on the job.

SUSPENSION:
A 1-month interruption in eligibility for benefits. Benefits suspended 1 month are reinstated the next month without a new application.

SWORN STATEMENT:
A written declaration made by participant. It is similar to an affidavit, but unlike an affidavit, it does not need to be sealed by an official such as a notary public or other authorized officer. The signing of the statement only needs to be witnessed if a Notary is not available.
TANF:
See TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF) GRANT below.

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF) GRANT:
A federal grant which replaced the AFDC program nationwide. In Minnesota it is called the MINNESOTA FAMILY INVESTMENT PROGRAM (MFIP), see §3.30 (Glossary: M-N...).

TRANSITIONAL STANDARD:
The basic standard for a family with no earnings consisting of a combination of the cash assistance needs and the food assistance needs for a family of that size. See Appendix A.

UNEARNED INCOME:
Income a person receives without being required to perform any labor or service as a condition of receiving the income.

UNIT MEMBERS:
People living together as part of an ASSISTANCE UNIT.

UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT:
Full- or part-time employment in the public or private sector that is not subsidized by TANF or any other public program. Self-employment is not subsidized by TANF or any other public program. Self-employment is included in this activity.

UNIVERSAL PARTICIPATION:
All caregivers must develop an Employment Plan. This requirement begins at different times, depending on whether the client is a new applicant. See §2.5 (Universal Participation).

VENDOR PAYMENT:
A payment made by a 3rd party to a vendor on behalf of the unit; or, ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS made directly to a provider of goods and services on the unit’s behalf.

VERIFICATION:
The process and evidence used to establish accuracy or completeness of information from an APPLICANT, PARTICIPANT, THIRD PARTY, etc. For example, it could also be an action taken by the county or employment services provider to validate the hours and activities of program participants.
VOLUNTEER:
Most people must participate in MFIP Employment Services (MFIP-ES). Those who are not required to participate may volunteer for ES. There are 2 groups of caregivers that may volunteer:

- Caregivers extended on MFIP who are not required to have an Employment Plan (EP).
- Caregivers who are granted ES exception for child under 12 weeks.

Caregivers who participate in MFIP-ES under either group listed above are exempt from sanction. However, the ES case may be closed if the caregiver does not comply with the Employment Plan. In this case, the job counselor will send a Diversionary Work Program/Minnesota Family Investment Program Status Update Form (DHS-3165) panel that the caregiver is no longer a volunteer. The job counselor will also send a DHS-3165 to the county's child care provider who will issue a 10-day notice that child care services will be reduced or discontinued.

WAGE MATCH:
An Income Eligibility Verification System (IEVS) exchange with the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development completed quarterly for participants and monthly for applicants of federal programs. It provides information on wages earned in Minnesota.

WORK STUDY:
Federal or non-federally funded employment arranged for students by a post-secondary school; or a program operated or approved by a SECONDARY SCHOOL or its equivalent which allows students to earn academic credit for employment.
All clients have responsibilities and rights under various laws. These rights include the right to fair treatment, to privacy and confidentiality, and to information about the programs and client responsibilities. General information about client responsibilities and rights is included in the sections noted below. Use Employment Services - Rights and Responsibilities (DHS-3172), to explain Employment Services rights and responsibilities to clients.

These sections detail client responsibilities:

§4.6 Client Rights.
§4.9 Client Rights - Civil Rights.
§4.12 Civil Rights and the Americans With Disabilities Act
§4.18 Client Rights - Data Privacy.
At application for MFIP, at recertification, and on request, financial workers must inform clients of the following rights:

- To be told orally and in writing of their responsibilities and rights.
- To receive assistance program informational brochures.
- To an explanation of all programs, including the benefits and limitations of each.
- To an explanation of eligibility requirements for all programs, including exceptions from program requirements.
- To an explanation that receipt of Food Support has no bearing on any other program’s time limits that may apply to the household.
- To review program regulations, manuals, instructions, and state plans.
- To file an application the same day they contact the county agency if they contact the agency during office hours.
- To request a fair hearing through the county agency or the state agency.
- To be told that a formal application is needed to determine eligibility and exercise their right to appeal the county agency's decision.
- To apply or re-apply for assistance programs at any time even if they seem to be ineligible.
- To receive prompt action or notification of delay on their application.
- To receive written notice of approval or denial of the application and reason for denial.
- To receive written notice of how the county agency calculated their benefits and why benefits increased, decreased, or ended.
- To other services and programs offered by the county agency.
- To special help, if needed to understand and provide information. For example, interpreters for participants with limited English language proficiency or hearing impaired clients. See §4.15 (Client Rights - Limited English Proficiency (LEP)).
To special help to meet program requirements and access services if they are considered disabled under the ADA, see §4.12 (Civil Rights and the Americans with Disabilities Act).

To services and programs offered by other agencies, when appropriate.

To have anyone they choose represent or help them with applications for MFIP, recertifications, appeals, or any contact with the county or state agency. The person does not have to be an attorney.

To fair treatment under federal and state law, and to file a complaint if they feel they have been treated unfairly. See §4.9 (Client Rights - Civil Rights).

To have information collected kept private by the county agency. See §4.18 (Client Rights - Data Privacy).

To protection. If there is a reason to suspect abuse or neglect of children or vulnerable adults, refer the information to social services. The client's cooperation with social services is not a condition of eligibility.

To family planning information. Refer clients who request family planning help to family planning services provided by the county agency or an outside agency.

To manage their financial affairs, unless the county is making protective or vendor payments.

For victims of family violence, to request a Family Violence Waiver. See §7.15 (Employment Plan (EP)), §7.29 (Family Violence Waiver Option), §10.30 (60-Month Lifetime Limit), §10.33 (Hardship Extensions), §10.36.15 (Family Violence Extension Criteria).

When you ask people to provide private or confidential data about themselves, you must tell them:

- The purpose and intended use of the requested data.
- Whether they may refuse or the law requires them to supply the data.
- The consequences of supplying or refusing to supply the data.
- The identity of other people or entities authorized to receive the data.
The financial assistance Combined Application Form (CAF) (DHS-3469), the Employment Services - Rights and Responsibilities form (DHS-3172), and Notice of Privacy Practices form (DHS-3979) are used to ensure participants proper notice.
All applicants for and participants of assistance are entitled to information about their civil rights. They are also entitled to information about how to file a complaint if they believe they have been subjected to discriminatory treatment by a human services provider.

The civil rights protections that clients have depend upon applicable laws. For example, under state human rights law, you may not discriminate against applicants or participants of assistance on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, disability (including ensuring physical and program access for people with disabilities), sex, sexual orientation, or public assistance status.

Under federal civil rights law, you may not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, or disability. Unlike state law, federal law does not protect applicants or participants of public assistance from discrimination based on sexual orientation or based on receipt of public assistance.

In addition, the Food Support (FS) program has specific civil rights protections of its own. Under that federal program, you may not discriminate against an applicant or participant of FS on the basis of age, sex, color, race, handicap/disability, religious creed, national origin, or political beliefs.

WHERE TO FILE CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINTS

There are several agencies that people may contact to file a complaint if they believe they have been subjected to discrimination by a human services provider. Under certain circumstances, a person may file the same complaint with more than 1 agency. However, some agencies do not have authority to accept certain types of civil rights complaints.

Always give clients enough information about filing complaints so they can decide for themselves which agency (or agencies) to contact. Use the Employment Services - Rights & Responsibilities (DHS-3172) to provide this information. After a client contacts an agency, that agency will inform the client about whether it is the appropriate agency to receive the complaint.

The Minnesota Department of Human Rights enforces the state human rights law. This agency will assist people with the complaint filing process. Clients may file a public services discrimination complaint by contacting that agency directly:

Minnesota Department of Human Rights
Army Corps of Engineers Centre
190 East 5th Street, Suite 700
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101
People may also file a discrimination complaint with the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS). Upon receiving a complaint, DHS will determine whether or not it has authority to investigate the complaint, and will notify the person. Clients must contact DHS to file the complaint at:

Department of Human Services  
Office for Equal Opportunity  
444 Lafayette Road  
St. Paul, Minnesota  55155-3812

In addition to the state agencies listed above, applicants and participants of federally-funded assistance programs who believe they have been discriminated against may also file complaints directly with the federal agencies administering those programs. They may file complaints directly with the United States Department of Health and Human Services or the United States Department of Agriculture. They must file the complaint within 180 days of the alleged discrimination.

NON-FOOD SUPPORT RELATED COMPLAINTS: FOOD SUPPORT COMPLAINTS:

Office of Civil Rights - Region V  
United States Department of Health and Human Services  
233 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 240  
Chicago, Illinois  60601
312-886-2359 (voice)  
312-353-5693 (TDD)  
312-886-2359 (voice)  
312-353-5693 (TDD/TTY)  

USDA  
Director - Office of Civil Rights  
Whitten Building, Room 326W  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410  
202-720-5964 (voice/TDD)

The written complaint should include the following information:

- Name, address, and telephone number.

- Name and address of the office accused of discriminating against the client, including names of employees involved.

- A brief description of the incident, action, or program rule that led the client to allege discrimination. The description should include the basis of discrimination (for example: race, color, national origin).

- The date(s) when the alleged discriminatory act occurred.
Names, titles, and addresses of people who may have knowledge of the alleged discriminatory act.
In January, 2001, a policy guidance prohibiting discrimination against people with disabilities was issued by the U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services Office of Civil Rights (OCR). This guidance focused on TANF programs and was based on Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and on Section 504 of the Rehabilitation act of 1973.

Two concepts central to compliance are:

1. Individual treatment: individuals with disabilities should be treated on a case by case basis consistent with facts and objective evidence.
2. Effective and meaningful opportunity: individuals with disabilities must be afforded the opportunity to benefit from TANF programs that are as effective as the opportunity afforded to individuals without disabilities.

An individual with disabilities, for purposes of compliance with ADA and Section 504, means an individual with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity, a record of such an impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment. (Disabilities that are temporary in nature are not included under the ADA.) This definition is different than that typically used to determine eligibility in programs that provide cash assistance based upon disability, such as SSI and SSDI.

County and Employment Services workers are required to inform all participants of their right to equal access to all services and benefits regardless of a physical or mental disability. This means that Employment Plans for all individuals with disabilities must take into consideration any/all limitations due to a disability. For many individuals, a modified plan must be developed.

The OCR guidance can be found at http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/prohibition.html.

Caregivers must be informed of their rights under the ADA. DHS has developed a brochure, “Do you have a disability?” (DHS-4133), which provides job seekers with information about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The brochure, or something comparable, must be used at application for DWP or MFIP, at recertification for MFIP, during the Employment Services overview, when an Employment Plan is developed or revised, and prior to assessment, including the MFIP self screen.

Also see Appendix J (Resources for Americans with Disabilities (ADA), Appendix J-1 (Decision Points for Employment Counselors), Appendix J-2 (Decision Points for Financial Workers), Appendix J-3 (SSI Advocates List), Appendix J-4 (Disability Criteria for SSI Benefits).
People with limited English language proficiency (LEP) often face unique challenges due to their inability or limited ability to speak, read, write, or understand English. Lack of English proficiency can limit people’s access to public services programs to which they may be entitled, such as financial, medical, educational, health, and social services. Federal and state civil rights laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of national origin, as it affects people with limited English language proficiency.

All applicants for and participants of assistance who have limited English language proficiency are entitled to FREE language assistance services, including an interpreter. The burden of providing language assistance services must never be on the person with LEP. It is always the responsibility of the county agency or service provider.

Counties must ensure that all LEP clients are given adequate information and are able to understand the services and available benefits, and receive benefits for which they are eligible. Counties must also ensure that LEP clients are able to communicate the relevant circumstances of their situation to the county.

Each county is required to develop and implement an LEP plan. The LEP plan must include policies and procedures for providing language assistance, including a range of oral language assistance options, and in certain circumstances, translation of written materials. The plan should also include procedures that arrange for providing notice to people with LEP of the rights to language assistance FREE of charge and in a timely manner during all hours of operation. ES Providers should follow the provisions of their county LEP plan for dealing with LEP participants.

For more information about county LEP plans, see DHS Bulletin #06-89-01 (DHS Issues Overview of 2005 Laws Affecting Children and Families).
Data collected and maintained by county agencies and Employment Services Providers about people are private, unless specifically classified otherwise by law. Private data are accessible to the subject of the data or the subject's authorized representative.

State law classifies some data collected and maintained by county agencies as confidential. Confidential data are not accessible to the subject of the data.

All requirements related to data privacy and confidentiality that apply to other MFIP cases also apply to extended cases.

**SHARING INFORMATION**

In general, the State has the authority to share private data on applicants and participants with other members of the welfare system without signed written consent, as long as proper notice was given, see Notice of Privacy Practices (DHS-3979). Employment Services Providers are considered part of the welfare system (for vendor agencies, this must be specified in their contract with the county).

County Human Services, Corrections, Public Health and Veterans services agencies within a county may inform each other when a person or family is currently being served by the county unit, without the consent of the subject of the data. Beyond informing of involvement with these county units, data sharing is limited to name, telephone number, and last known address, and the identification and contact information regarding personnel of the county unit responsible for working with the person or family. If additional information is needed, the county may share if the unit is authorized by state statute or federal law, or if the person gives written informed consent.

Data gathered as part of a professional mental or chemical health assessment must be classified and disclosed according to laws governing data practice (Minnesota Statutes 13.46). This means that a signed release of information is necessary to obtain or exchange information.

All chemical dependency and mental health screening, assessment and treatment information should be considered private data that requires a signed written consent before it may be shared. The consent form must identify the specific type of chemical dependency or mental health information being requested.

It is important that counties, tribes, and Employment Service Providers ensure confidentiality to victims of family violence. This is critical when the victim of family violence lives with the abuser. You should consult with your county attorney regarding your county’s data practices policy if you are uncertain how to apply this policy.
Obtain a release of information from the client prior to talking to a family violence advocate about the client’s issues relating to family violence. Financial workers and job counselors must consult with the client to determine where mail should be sent or phone calls made. Do not assume that mail can be sent or phone calls can be made to the client’s residence as often the abuser is still in the home or has access to the home.

CLIENT REVIEW OF RECORDS

Clients may review private records which contain information on them. Only information classified as private or public is available for review by the client. Private or public data must be actually shown to the subject of the data and not summarized.

The stamp of "confidential" by a health care provider does not change that right, EXCEPT under rare circumstances in which the health care provider (authorized licensed medical or mental health professional) deems certain information contained in the record to be detrimental to the physical or mental health of the data subject, or likely to cause the data subject to inflict self harm or harm to others, and the licensed medical or mental health professional specifically requests that the information be withheld from the data subject. Health care providers should be informed that the subject of the data will be allowed access to all of the information submitted unless the health care provider specifically identifies the information to be withheld as described above.

Honor requests for review as soon as possible, but no later than 10 days following the request. Do not count weekends and holidays in the 10-day period. When more than the initial 10 days is necessary, the county or ES provider may take up to an additional 10 days with agreement of the client. The county agency or ES provider may set the place and time of review.

Data on 2 or more people maintained in a common file because of family relationships are "joint records". Delete material in joint records about the person not requesting the review to protect that person's privacy. Parents may view records of their minor children, unless:

- There is a court order preventing access to the data.
- The minor children request in writing that the agency deny parental access to the data, and the agency determines that accessing the data by the parent(s) is not in the best interest of the children.

Provide copies of original documents when requested by the subject of the data or the subject's authorized representative. Provide 1 free copy of a document and additional copies at the cost of reproduction.
Refer to the Data Practices Manual issued by DHS for further information. This manual is available on the DHS Web site at: [http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/id_016540](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/id_016540).
Caregivers in all MFIP cases must attend a face-to-face orientation to financial services, unless they meet 1 of the 3 exemptions listed in this section. Caregivers may also have good cause for not attending orientation. See §10.33.3.6 (Special Medical Criteria Extension). For other reasons that caregivers may have good cause for not attending orientation, see §5.3.3 (Good Cause for Failure to Attend Financial Orientation). For 2-parent families, both parents must attend. Failure to attend orientation without good cause is considered non-compliance with program requirements and may result in a sanction. See §9.3 (Non-Compliance), §9.3.3 (Pre 60-Month Type/Length of ES Sanctions).

The orientation may be conducted by county financial assistance staff, Employment Services Provider staff, or may be a joint presentation. The orientation focuses primarily on the financial aspects of MFIP. (Later, the “overview” will concentrate on Employment Services.)

A joint presentation is recommended to make sure that a strong and consistent message is delivered about the expectations and supports for going to work.

The orientation may be a part of the intake process or it may be held at a separate time. If orientation is not on the same day as the caregiver's intake appointment, the county must provide or reimburse for transportation and child care the caregiver needs to attend orientation. Orientation must be held within 30 days of approval of the case.

Give caregivers written information that they must attend orientation unless they meet 1 of the following exemptions:

- A single parent, or 1 parent in a 2-parent family, employed at least 35 hours per week.
- The 2nd parent in a 2-parent family, when the 2nd parent is employed at least 20 hours per week and the 1st parent is employed for at least 35 hours per week.
- Pregnant or parenting minor who is not exempt from the educational requirement and is complying with that requirement.

Any time an application/reapplication is filed for MFIP, the caregiver(s) must attend an orientation. Caregivers who do not receive MFIP are NOT required to attend orientation.

The orientation must inform caregivers of the following topics:

- MFIP work incentives.
An explanation of the significant change policy.

Availability of the Earned Income Credit (EIC).

Minnesota Working Family Credit.

The types and locations of child care available to help a caregiver participate in employment, pre-employment, and training or educational programs.

The child care resource and referral service that will help the caregiver choose child care services. See §8.6 (General Requirements for Child Care Assistance).

The responsibilities and rights of MFIP participants.

What will happen if participants do not meet requirements.

An explanation of the 60-month time limit on assistance (including periods of non-cooperation with program requirements, with or without good cause, continue to count toward the 60 months), and the post 60-month time limit extension categories. See §10.30 (60-Month Lifetime Limit), §10.33 (Hardship Extensions).

Information about exemption from the 60-month time limit for victims of family violence. See §7.15 (Employment Plans (EP)), §7.29 (Family Violence Waiver Option).

Information about shelters and programs for victims of family violence.

The availability and benefits of the early childhood health and developmental screening.

Eligibility for Transition Year Child Care (TYCC) when MFIP ends.

Availability of all health care programs, including transitional medical assistance.

The necessity to obtain immediate employment.

The requirement to comply with Employment Services.
Information about available Employment Services Providers and the option to choose an Employment Services Provider.

A description of the range of work and training activities that are allowable under MFIP to meet the individual needs of participants. For a list of these activities, see §7.3 (Allowable Activities).

Notification that the county may not impose a sanction for failure to comply when the participant has good cause because of the unavailability of child care.

The financial worker must explain good cause, including:

- The definition of terms used in determining the inability to obtain appropriate child care.
- That participants cannot be sanctioned if appropriate child care is not available.
- Who will make the determination of child care availability.
- That the inability to obtain child care does not extend time on assistance.

The caregiver’s option to request approval of an education and training plan according to the assessment requirements

The availability of work study programs under the higher education systems.

Information to individuals who are not required to participate in Employment Services but may volunteer, volunteer’s right to request participation in any allowable work activity, and the exemption for volunteers from the hourly participation requirements.

Give the caregiver a copy of the brochure Education and Training in MFIP (DHS-3366), which explains the general parameters that govern education and training.

It is critical that participants leave the orientation knowing MFIP is a work-focused program and that they are prepared to enter the next phase of the Employment Services program. The county and the Employment Services Provider staff may design the details of the orientation to suit the needs of their local area and participants. However, the orientation is the participant’s 1st exposure to MFIP Employment Services and should actively promote the value of early employment.
In general, counties will schedule the orientation to financial assistance and determine whether the participant has good cause for not attending.

Participants required to attend orientation to financial assistance may claim any 1 of the following reasons as good cause for failure to attend:

- Appropriate child care is not available. See §8.36 (Good Cause - Inability to Obtain Child Care).
- The participant is ill or injured.
- A family member is ill and needs care by the participant that prevents the participant from attending an orientation.
- The participant is unable to secure the necessary transportation.
- The participant is in an emergency situation that prevents him or her from attending an orientation.
- The orientation conflicts with the participant's work, training, or school schedule.
- The schedule of orientation conflicts with judicial proceedings.
- The participant documents other verifiable impediments to attendance at an orientation beyond the participant's control.
- The participant is needed in the home to care for someone who is ill or incapacitated, OR has a child or adult in the household who meets ANY of the following disability or special medical criteria and whose services have been interrupted. See §10.33.3.6 (Special Medical Criteria Extension).
  - Child or adult who receives physician-ordered, medically necessary home health services or private duty nursing in his or her residence.
  OR
  - Child or adult in the household who meets the disability or medical criteria for a home and community-based waiver services program.
  OR
  - Child who meets the definition of “severe emotional disturbance”, as determined by a qualified professional.
  OR
  - Adult who meets the definition of “serious and persistent mental illness”, as
determined by a qualified professional.

If a caregiver misses an orientation because he/she must care for a disabled child or adult whose services are interrupted, the county should grant good cause without time-consuming attempts to document that the complex criteria above are met. When in doubt if the above criteria are met, it is appropriate to grant good cause based on either an emergency situation or verifiable impediments.

County agencies must work with participants to provide child care and transportation necessary to ensure a participant has every opportunity to attend an orientation.
All caregivers receiving MFIP during the 1st 60 months, and caregivers in some post 60-month extension categories, see Chapter 9 (Post 60-Month Time Limit), must be engaged in Employment Services, with the exception of participants with a natural born child under the age of 12 weeks, see below. Certain participants have the option to develop a modified plan. See §7.15 (Employment Plan (EP)).

MAXIS TRACKING FOR CERTAIN CASES

Although participants in the categories below are no longer exempt from participation in ES after 7-01-05, financial workers will continue to code this information on the STAT/EMPS panels in MAXIS. If the disability covered in 1 of these categories occurs after enrollment in ES, notify the financial worker.

- A participant who has been diagnosed by a qualified professional as suffering from an illness or incapacity that is expected to last for 30 days or more.
- A participant who is determined by a qualified professional as being needed in the home to care for an ill or incapacitated family member.
- A woman who is pregnant if the pregnancy has resulted in an incapacity that prevents the woman from obtaining or retaining employment and the incapacity has been certified by a qualified professional.
- A caregiver with a child or an adult in the household who meets the disability or medical criteria for home care services or a home and community based waiver services program or meets the criteria for severe emotional disturbance or serious and persistent mental illness.
- A participant who is age 60 or older.

Note: Post 60-month ES policies pertaining to who is required to participate and develop an Employment Plan and who is exempt are unchanged. However, units with a child under 12 weeks who have not already used the previous child under 1 exemption or the child under 12 weeks exception may opt to use the exception.

CHILD UNDER 12 WEEKS OF AGE EXCEPTION

Under the law there is a time-limited exception for caregivers with a natural born child under 12 weeks of age, regardless if the child’s needs are included in the grant, if the assistance unit has NOT already used the child under 12 weeks exception or all the months of the
previous ES exemption allowed for a child under 1 year of age. This is an option and assistance units are not required to choose this option if it would not be advantageous for them to do so.

The child under 12 week exception ends the first full month after the child reaches 12 weeks of age. This provision is available only once in a caregiver's lifetime and may not be split between births. In a 2-parent household only 1 parent may use this exception. The participant must be referred to ES and must meet with the job counselor to revise the participant's EP by the 10th day of the month following the month the child reaches 12 weeks of age. Until the Employment Plan is developed, consider the participant in compliance with the participation requirements as long as the participant is cooperating with development of an EP.

TEEN PARENTS

All parents (in 1- or 2-parent families) under the age of 20 who do not have high school diplomas or the equivalent must have an individual assessment done as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days after receipt of MFIP, unless the caregiver is an 18 or 19 year old who chooses an Employment Plan with a work option. See §7.9.9 (Requirements for Teen Parents).
Each county should establish a process to refer participants to Employment Services (ES) that will best facilitate referrals. However, 2 conditions must be met:

- The process must ensure that caregivers begin participating (for example: attend an overview) within 30 days or within 10 days when a person participated in the diversionary work program within the past 12 months.

- Caregivers must be offered a choice of at least 2 Providers, EXCEPT in counties using a Workforce Center and counties exempt from this requirement due to financial hardship.

With the exception of Hennepin County, all referrals are electronically generated from MAXIS to WF1. Paper referrals do not replace the electronic referral. Referrals can be sent to Employment Services Providers 2 different ways:

- The most common way is the automated referral. These referrals are generated when cases become eligible for the MFIP program. They are also generated when a case is first approved after transferring into a new county.

- A county-generated or manual referral option is also available to counties. This allows financial workers to send referrals whenever they deem it necessary. County-generated referrals will only contain the information available on MAXIS at the time of the referral.

This option will be used only when the automated option doesn’t work for the local referral process. For example, some counties have the Employment Services Overview the same day as the intake appointment. Even though verifications may be lacking to determine eligibility, the county may choose to refer the applicants to the ES Overview anyway. Using the manual referral process will allow financial workers to send a referral which accommodates this local process.

Employment Services Providers in Hennepin County should follow instructions for processing referrals on the TEAMS system.

**CHOICE OF PROVIDERS**

Unless a county is affiliated with a Workforce Center system or can demonstrate financial hardship, participants must have a choice of at least 2 service providers. Service providers must offer, or contract for, all services necessary to meet the requirements of the state’s Employment Services legislation, including overview, assessment, development of
Employment Plans, and job search activities.

The selected employment and training service provider can be any of the following:

- A public, private, or non-profit agency certified by the Department of Employment and Economic Development.
- A public, private, or non-profit agency that is not certified.
- A county agency that chooses to provide services.

To help ensure coordination of service for 2-parent families, both parents must choose the same Employment Services Provider unless a special need is identified but not available through 1 service provider. Examples of a special need include availability of language-specific services or cases involving family violence.

**CHANGING EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROVIDERS**

The state recommends counties and their Employment Services Providers:

- Have no policy which totally prohibits changes between providers.
- Allow changes between providers when circumstances warrant.

Counties should develop guidelines and ensure that all MFIP staff is aware of their county's policy.
REQUIREMENTS

Participants have 2 basic requirements:

- DEVELOP A PLAN. Participants must meet with you for an assessment and to develop an Employment Plan.

- COMPLY WITH THE PLAN. Participants must comply with the terms of their Employment Plan. For most participants, this means participating in job search activities. For details on requirements for these components, see §7.15 (Employment Plan (EP)).

SEQUENCE OF SERVICES

Most participants will follow the same sequence of services during the 1st 6 weeks of participation in MFIP Employment Services. The service sequence is as follows:

1. An overview of MFIP Employment Services. See §7.6 (Employment Services Overview).

2. An assessment and development of Employment Plan. See §7.9 (Assessment), §7.9.3 (Contents of Assessment), §7.15 (Employment Plan (EP)).


Each of these services is described later in this chapter.

When you determine during the assessment that a mandatory participant has sufficient skills to obtain suitable employment, he or she must job search at least 30 hours per week and accept any offer of suitable employment.

When the assessment indicates a mandatory participant has barriers to employment that will not be overcome by 6 weeks of job search, he or she must develop an Employment Plan that addresses those barriers and meets hourly requirements. See §6.6 (Minimum Hourly Activity Requirements).

NOTE: This sequence does not apply to minor parents, 18- and 19- year old parents without a high school diploma or equivalent who choose an education option, or participants in an ill/incapacitated extension category. See §7.9.9 (Requirements for Teen Parents), §10.33.3 (Ill/Incapacitated Extensions).
Also see §7.15.12 (Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence).
The general expectation is that participants will participate to the greatest extent possible and obtain full-time employment as soon as possible. Activities supporting these goals should be included in the Employment Plan. See §7.15 (Employment Plan (EP)), §7.15.12 (Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence). The number of hours in the Employment Plan must meet the minimum requirements below, unless there is a compelling reason to do otherwise.

Verify activity hours for each participant. Documentation MUST be contained in each case file.

Participants who are new to MFIP Employment Services with a skill level likely to succeed in obtaining suitable employment must job search a minimum of 30 hours per week for the 1st 6 weeks. To meet participation requirements any remaining hours may be met by including other allowable work activities in the plan. This applies to parents in single-parent families and to both parents in 2-parent families.

After the 1st 6 weeks of job search, participants must continue to meet the following hourly requirements:

- In single-parent families with a child under 6 the requirement is 87 hours per month of work activities.
- In single-parent families with no children under 6 the requirement is 130 hours per month of work activities.
- In 2-parent families the requirement is:
  - A combined total of at least 55 hours per week.
  - When 1 parent in a 2-parent family is participating 55 hours per week, the 2nd parent is still expected to participate. This 2nd parent is not exempt from the requirement to participate. Use your professional discretion to decide the appropriate number of hours required of this parent to help achieve the goal of leaving MFIP.
  - In 2-parent families where only 1 parent is receiving MFIP, for example the 2nd parent is receiving SSI, follow the single parent minimum hourly requirements.

Note that the above are minimum requirements. Use your professional discretion to prescribe the optimum number of hours for a given participant. In most cases, the number of hours per week will be more than the minimum. Do not use the minimum
hourly activity requirements as a default.

You may lower the minimum weekly requirement when there are convincing reasons to do so. In cases where the participant or the family is incapable of meeting the minimum requirement, the Employment Plan may include fewer hours.

Do not count transportation time from home to a child care provider, and to and from work or other work activities, toward a participant’s hourly requirement. However, count transportation that is a part of the work activity, such as from the Employment Services office to an interview, or between interviews. For participants who are seeking employment, job search IS their job, and they will receive credit for the time needed for transportation which is a part of that process.

➤ Teen parents without a diploma or GED:

- Minor parents without a diploma or its equivalent and 18- and 19- year old parents who choose a school option meet the minimum participation requirements by attending school. However, you should decide whether to include additional activities, especially in cases where school attendance is less than full time. See §7.9.9 (Requirements for Teen Parents).

EMPLOYMENT PLAN FOR VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

The number of hours in an Employment Plan with a Family Violence Waiver are based on the circumstances of the family and must be agreed to by the participant, Family Violence professional and the job counselor. See §7.15.12 (Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence).
The MFIP Participation Rate is a measure designed to mirror the TANF Participation Rate rules and is applied to all MFIP cases with an eligible adult. For the definition of MFIP Participation Rate, see §3.30 (Glossary: M-N...).

WHY THE WORK PARTICIPATION RATE IS IMPORTANT

The work participation rate is a key performance measure both for counties and for the state as a whole. Beginning in 2005, counties will have to earn 5% of their consolidated fund allocation by meeting performance targets. One of the measures is the MFIP Work Participation Rate. Meeting the target for the MFIP Work Participation Rate will help ensure counties have full funding for programs to help families move to work and economic stability.

STEPS JOB COUNSELORS AND LOCAL AGENCIES CAN TAKE TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE ON THE MFIP WORK PARTICIPATION RATE

There are 3 steps local agencies and job counselors can take to improve performance on the MFIP work participation rates:

1. Ensure all countable hours of paid employment are correctly entered in MAXIS and all non-paid countable hours are reflected in WF1.

2. Write Employment Plans that include core activities to the greatest extent possible, and supplement as necessary with non-core activities. Non-countable activities should only be included when necessary to address issues that interfere with employment. See §7.3 (Allowable Activities), §7.15 (Employment Plan (EP)), §7.15.9 (Order of Preference for Work Activities), §7.15.12 (Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence).

3. Develop work placements (paid work, subsidized jobs, unpaid work experience or CWEP) which will count as core activities for participants who are unable to find unsubsidized employment. See §7.3.3 (Paid Employment Activities), §7.3.6 (Unpaid Employment Activities).

CALCULATION OF THE MFIP PARTICIPATION RATE

The steps used to calculate the MFIP Participation Rate are listed below. The sub-headings below the calculation (Who Is Part of the Calculation, Required Hours of Participation, Countable Activities) contain details that will help explain the content of each of these steps.

1. For each month in the quarter, active MFIP cases with an eligible adult are
selected, including those which receive the food portion only and those which are suspended. Child only cases are excluded.

2. Numerator = Determine the number of cases in Step #1 for the month that meet the required hours of participation. Sum the numbers from each of the 3 months of the quarter.

3. Denominator = Determine the cases in Step #1 for each month. Sum the numbers for each month of the quarter.

4. MFIP Participation Rate = Percentage of cases meeting the required hours of participation for the quarter is calculated by dividing the numerator (#2) by the denominator (#3).

WHO IS PART OF THE CALCULATION

All cases with eligible adults (excludes child-only) are part of the calculation EXCEPT:

- Cases with a child under 1 where the 12-month lifetime limit has not been used.
- Cases in the 1st 3 months of sanction out of the preceding 12 months.

UNIVERSAL PARTICIPATION

On July 1, 2005, DHS began to include all previously exempt caregivers in the calculation of the MFIP Participation Rate. This means the MFIP Participation Rate published January 1, 2006, for the months of July through September, 2005, will include all formerly exempt caregivers who were not included in previous calculations.

REQUIRED HOURS OF PARTICIPATION

The requirement for each participant to meet the rate is 130 hours per month, 87 of which must be core activities in order for any non-core activities to count, with the following deviations:

- **Single parent (1 eligible adult) and a dependent child under age 6.** 87 core hours are required to successfully participate.

- **Teen parents who are either married or the only eligible adult in the household.** These caregivers are counted as meeting the participation requirement if they are meeting their school attendance requirements. This is true regardless
of the actual number of hours they attend school. **NOTE:** The requirement for unmarried teens with another eligible adult in the household is 130 hours per month, 87 of which must be core hours in order for non-core hours to be countable. All teen school hours are pulled from MAXIS.

- **Two parent cases (2 eligible adults).** The MFIP Participation Rate is based on cases. When 2 eligible adults are in a case, the following rules apply:
  
  - If 1 parent fulfills the 130-hour requirement, with 87 hours in core activities before any non-core hours count, the case is counted as fully participating (1 in the numerator and denominator).
  - If both parents fulfill the requirement, the case is again counted as fully participating (1 in the numerator and denominator).
  - If neither parent fulfills the requirement, the case is counted as not fully participating (0 in the numerator and 1 in the denominator).

**NOTE:** MFIP policy allows 2-parent cases to have plans totaling 55 hours. One parent’s plan could have 25 hours and the other parent’s plan could have 30 hours, for example. This policy is not reflected in the participation rate calculation for 2-parent families.

Many counties and providers will be able to substantially increase their MFIP Participation Rate by enrolling participants in countable rather than non-countable activities, and by ensuring that all countable hours of paid employment are correctly recorded on MAXIS and all non-paid countable hours are reflected in WF1. While counties and Employment Services providers are strongly encouraged to focus on countable activities, there will be cases where it is necessary to include non-countable hours in the plan (social services or safety related activities), or where a request for 24 months of education meets approval criteria and has been included in the Employment Plan.
Under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, states are required to meet 2 participation rates for each fiscal year. The overall work rate is the percentage of all families receiving assistance who must participate in work activities by fiscal year. The 2nd rate is the work rate for 2-parent families. The table below describes the federal participation rates for each fiscal year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federal Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Overall Rate</th>
<th>2-Parent Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998 (10/97-09/98)</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 (10/98-09/99)</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 (10/99-09/00)</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 (10/00-09/01)</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002 (10/01-09/02)</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(And ongoing)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** Although 2-parent MFIP families are state-funded and do not count toward the participation rate, we MUST track and report participation hours to the federal government. Two-parent families are expected to meet hourly requirements. See §6.6 (Minimum Hourly Activity Requirements).

In addition, under the TANF program, participants must participate in work activities for a minimum number of hours per week. These hours depend upon the participant’s family composition and are used to compute the above state performance ratios. The table below describes the federal minimum number of hours for participants for each fiscal year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federal Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Single Parent Families</th>
<th>Two Parent Families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Children Under 6</td>
<td>Using MFIP Child Care*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(And ongoing)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Does not apply to 2-parent families where 1 adult is disabled or caring for a severely disabled child.

**IMPORTANT:** Weekly hours are calculated on an annual basis. This means there are 4.33
weeks in a month, making the actual monthly requirement as follows:

- Single parent cases with a child under 6: 87 hours
- Single parent cases with youngest child 6 or older: 130 hours
- 2-parent cases - at least 1 parent must have: 130 hours

Do not confuse the above table of federal minimum number of hours with the minimum hourly activity requirements. See §6.6 (Minimum Hourly Activity Requirements).
SELF SUPPORT INDEX

6.15

The Self Support Index is a measure that tracks whether adults are either working an average of 30 or more hours per week, or no longer receiving MFIP or DWP cash. The measure is calculated at follow-up points of 1, 2, and 3 years beginning in July, 2002. This is reported quarterly for all counties. Adults in their 1st 60 months of MFIP are counted as successes if they were either working 30 hours or more per week, or if they were no longer receiving an MFIP or DWP cash payment during each month of the measurement quarter. Participants whose MFIP case is closed due to reaching the 60-month limit are not counted as successes in this measure unless they also worked 30 or more hours per week during the measurement quarter.

All MFIP eligible adults are part of the calculation. The measure is person-based, not case based.

NOTE: This indicator includes separate rates for the tribal providers that contract directly with the state to provide MFIP services and for the Mille Lacs Band. This indicator also includes a separate rate for the combination of Faribault and Martin counties, and a separate rate for the combination of Lincoln, Lyon, and Murray counties.

WHY THE SELF SUPPORT INDEX IS IMPORTANT

The Self Support Index is a key performance measure for counties and tribes. Beginning in 2005, counties will have to earn 5% of their consolidated fund allocation by meeting performance targets. One of these measures is the Self Support Index. The other measure is the MFIP Participation Rate, see §6.9 (MFIP Participation Rate). Meeting the target for the Self Support Index will help ensure counties have full funding for programs to help families move to work and economic stability. Exceeding the target will provide a modest bonus of 2.5%.

IMPROVING PERFORMANCE ON THE SELF SUPPORT INDEX:

Job counselors and local agencies can focus on the following areas:

- Target cases with 24+ months for services such as job placement and paid work experiences.

- Consider talking to participants about opting out if they are only receiving a small grant. If they are not receiving a cash portion of their grant, their cases are not counted in the Index.

CALCULATION OF THE SELF SUPPORT INDEX
Prior to the implementation of the Self Support Index, county performance has been reported without attempting to adjust for differences among counties that might have affected performance. The Self Support Index uses a model that takes into account these differences. Some county characteristics are likely to have a positive impact on performance. For example, all other things being equal, counties with a low average unemployment rate should find it easier to achieve employment success with MFIP participants. Alternately, some county characteristics may decrease the likelihood of a county’s success. Characteristics of county’s participants can also increase or decrease the Self Support Index. For instance counties where the average age of the youngest child is lower can make it more difficult, all things being equal, for that county to achieve as high a performance outcome. Because of these different county and participant characteristics, this measure uses a range of expected performance for each county.

The measure is reported as a percentage. For example, Hennepin County’s range of expected performance for January through March of 2006 was 63.3% to 64.8%. Hennepin’s actual performance was 64.5%. Therefore 64.5% of the caseload is either off or working 30 hours a week compared to three years ago. 64.5% was within the expected range of performance.
Types of allowable Employment Services (ES) activities are divided into “core”, “non-core”, and “not counted”. The following lists each allowable Employment Services activity under its respective category. The column on the right shows how the activity appears in WF1.

### CORE ACTIVITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Track in WF1 as:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed 30 Hours or More Per Week</td>
<td>Employed full time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See §7.3.3 (Paid Employment Activities).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Less Than 30 Hours Per Week</td>
<td>Employed part time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See §7.3.3 (Paid Employment Activities).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-the-Job Training (OJT), Public Sector</td>
<td>OJT public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See §7.3.3 (Paid Employment Activities).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-the-Job Training (OJT), Private Sector</td>
<td>OJT private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See §7.3.3 (Paid Employment Activities).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid Work Experience</td>
<td>Paid work experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See §7.3.3 (Paid Employment Activities).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Diversion</td>
<td>Grant diversion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See §7.3.3 (Paid Employment Activities).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Service Program</td>
<td>Volunteer &amp; community service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See §7.3.6 (Unpaid Employment Activities)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§7.3.3 (Paid Employment Activities).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Work Experience Program (CWEP)</td>
<td>CWEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See §7.3.6 (Unpaid Employment Activities).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care for Employment in Community Service Program</td>
<td>Providing childcare (CWEPS)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§7.3.6 (Unpaid Employment Activities).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid Work Experience</td>
<td>Unpaid work experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§7.3.6 (Unpaid Employment Activities).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-secondary vocational education and training lasting 12 months or less</td>
<td>Training/ed 12 mos. or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§7.3.12 (Education &amp; Training Activities).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES

7.3

Vocational Training & Education, 13–24 Month
(12 months in a lifetime)
See §7.3.12 (Education & Training Activities).

Job search (for 6 weeks in a fiscal year)
See §7.3.9 (Job Search & Job Readiness Activities).

NON-CORE ACTIVITIES

Job skills training directly relating to Employment
related See §7.3.12 (Education & Training Activities)

English as a Second Language (ESL) Training
See §7.3.12 (Education & Training Activities).

Adult Basic Education (ABE)
See §7.3.12 (Education & Training Activities).

Functional Work Literacy (FWL)
See §7.3.12 (Education & Training Activities).

High School Completion
See §7.3.12 (Education & Training Activities).

GED Classes
See §7.3.12 (Education & Training Activities).

Vocational Training/Education, 13–24 Months
(12 mos. lifetime limit used up)
See §7.3.12 (Education & Training Activities).

ACTIVITIES NOT COUNTED

Job search (after 6 weeks is used)
See §7.3.9 (Job Search & Job Readiness Activities).

Assessment
See §7.3.15 (Social Services Activities).

Screening
See §7.3.15 (Social Services Activities).
ALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES

7.3

Employment Plan for Family Violence Waiver
See §7.3.15 (Social Services Activities). Alternative employment plan*

Participating in Social Services
See §7.3.15 (Social Services Activities). Social Service activities

Holding
See §7.3.18 (Holding & Other Activities). Holding

Holding – Sanction
See §7.3.18 (Holding & Other Activities). Holding Sanctioned

Other
See §7.3.18 (Holding & Other Activities). Other

Integrated Services Project
See §7.3.18 (Holding & Other Activities). Integrated Services Project

The activities “post 60 month service not Ext.” and “SEID” are available in WF1. They should not be used as they are outdated activities.

*These activities are outdated in WF1 and need to be updated.

For further information on these ES activities, see §7.3.21 (Holidays/Excused Absences).
All types of paid employment are core activities.

The following activities types of paid employment: unsubsidized employment (employed more than 30 hours; employed less than 30 hours), on-the-job training, paid work experience, and grant diversion. These activities should be coded accordingly on WF1 (TEAMS for Hennepin), but only hours tracked on MAXIS will be used towards the participation rate.

**Employed 30 Hours or More Per Week (Core Activity)**

This activity is used for participants who work 30 hours or more per week and continue to receive MFIP assistance. Hours per week could be the result of two or more part-time jobs. Include paid internships, work study, and self employment in this activity.

**Employed Less Than 30 Hours Per Week (Core Activity)**

This activity is used for participants who work less than 30 hours per week and continue to receive MFIP assistance. Include paid internships, work study and self employment for less than 30 hours a week in this activity. Hours can be the result of 2 or more part-time jobs.

**On-the-Job Training (OJT) Public Sector and Private Sector (Core Activity)**

Counties and Employment Services Providers who develop on-the-job training programs for MFIP participants may make payments to employers for costs that, during the period of the training, must not exceed 50% of the wages the employer pays to the participant. Payments to employers are considered compensation for the extraordinary costs associated with training participants and in compensation for costs associated with the lower productivity during the training. See §3.33 (Glossary: O-Q...).

Participants in on-the-job training must be compensated by the employer at the same rates, including periodic increases, as similarly situated employees or trainees, and in accordance with applicable law, but in no instance less than the federal or applicable state minimum wage, which ever is higher.

The limit on length of training should be based on the complexity of the job and the participant’s previous work experience and training. Placement in an on-the-job training position with an employer is for the purpose of training and employment with the same employer who has agreed to retain the person upon satisfactory completion of training.

- **On-the-Job Training (OJT), Public Sector.** This activity is used when a participant is hired by a public employer and while engaged in productive work
receives training that provides knowledge or skills essential to the full and adequate performance of that job.

- **On-the-Job Training (OJT), Private Sector.** This activity is used when a participant is hired by a private or private non-profit employer and while engaged in productive work receives training that provides knowledge or skills essential to the full and adequate performance of that job.

**Paid Work Experience (Core Activity)**

This activity is used when a participant is in a temporary employment experience in the public, nonprofit or private sector.

Paid work experience may or may not be considered **subsidized employment**. Paid work experience is considered subsidized employment when the employment services provider reimburses the employer for wages paid to the participant. Paid work experience is not considered subsidized employment when the employment services provider pays the participant’s salary directly (unless the participant is an employee of the employment services provider). In either case, hours in paid work experience count as core hours and are collected from the MAXIS system. It is important for job counselors to inform financial workers when a job is subsidized.

Tax Credits are not considered subsidies for the purpose of determining if a participant is in subsidized employment.

**AmeriCorp**

According to the Department of Labor and the Corporation for National and Community Service, the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act do not apply to AmeriCorp members as each member receives some form of compensation for participating in the AmeriCorp program. **Cash payments to participants enrolled for full-time service as a volunteer under AmeriCorp programs including AmeriCorps VISTA, AmeriCorps State, AmeriCorps National and AmeriCorps NCCC are considered excluded income.**

Counties should record both income received for participating in Americorps programs and hours of participation in AmeriCorp programs in the MAXIS system. In Workforce One and TEAMS, code this activity under paid work experience.

**Grant Diversion (Core Activity)**

Counties and Employment Service Providers may develop a grant diversion program for MFIP participants and divert to an employer all or part of the cash portion of the MFIP grant
for the participant’s assistance unit. Payments to employers are intended to subsidize employment for participants as an alternative to public assistance payments.

In addition to diverting the cash portion of the MFIP grant to an employer, Employment Services funds may be used to subsidize the Grant Diversion payment.

The employer will compensate participants in Grant Diversion at the same rates, including periodic increases, as similarly situated employees or trainees and in accordance with applicable law, but never less than the federal or state minimum wage, whichever is higher. Grant diversion may last up to 9 months during which time the participant continues to be an MFIP participant. Nine months is the limit of the program.

Placement with an employer is for the purpose of training and employment with the same employer who has agreed to retain the person upon satisfactory completion of training. Placement of any participant in a Grant Diversion subsidized training position must be compatible with the participant’s assessment and Employment Plan.

For information on non-displacement in work activities, see §7.32 (Non-Displacement).

**Daily Supervision of Paid Employment**

Assume the participant’s employer will provide daily supervision. There are no additional supervision requirements.

**Verification and Documentation of Paid Employment**

The county must verify the number of hours of paid employment. Accept the following documentation for all participants who are engaged in paid employment, who are not self-employed:

- Pay stubs (that include hours worked).
- Employer reports (that list hours worked).
- Employer time and attendance records.
- Employer statement of hours worked.

MFIP participants submit a monthly Household Report Form to the county and attach documentation of the hours of paid employment. Employment services providers are not required to obtain additional verification of hours in subsidized employment.

**Special Documentation and Verification Requirements for Self-Employment**

Self-employment participants are required to submit a monthly Household Report Form
and either a Self-Employment Report Form with documentation that supports the participant’s business related income and allowable expenses or other similar documentation of monthly business income and expenses. The hours of self-employment counted toward the participation rate requirement are determined by subtracting the allowable business expenses from the business income (net income) and dividing the remainder by the federal minimum wage ($5.85/hour). MAXIS will calculate the number of hours of self-employment.

Counties must inform employment services providers of a participant’s hours of self-employment each month. Employment services counselors must determine if the countable hours of self-employment are sufficient to meet the work participation rate requirements. If the hours are not sufficient to meet the work participation rate, the employment services counselor and participant must consider additional countable work activities.
Unpaid employment activities include: unpaid work experience, CWEP, and community service. Track AmeriCorp and AmeriCorp/Vista Programs under paid work experience because they are a form of compensation. See §7.3.3 (Paid Employment Activities).

All of the following activities are core activities. These activities should be coded accordingly and the hours should be tracked on WF1 (TEAMS for Hennepin).

Unpaid work experience is an option if the participant agrees to participate or the unpaid work experience meets following criteria:

- The participant has been unable to obtain or maintain paid employment in the competitive labor market and paid work experience programs are available.
- The unpaid work experience provides specific skills or experience that cannot be obtained through other work activity options where the participant lives or is willing to live.
- The skills or experience result in higher wages that the participant would earn without the unpaid work experience.

Paid work is the ultimate goal for everyone in the program. However, unpaid work may be a necessary intermediate step that provides a work experience and core activity hours that count toward the participation requirement. See §6.9 (MFIP Participation Rate). MFIP is designed to put participants on “the most direct path to unsubsidized employment”.

Unpaid Work Experience (Core Activities)

This activity is used when a participant is in a placement in a public, non-profit, or private sector work site. This can include unpaid supported work and unpaid internships.

Community Service Program (Core Activities)

Community service placements must fulfill a useful public purpose. MFIP employment services providers must identify and document this purpose in the case file. Some examples include work performed for a school, Head Start Program, providing clerical support for a government or not-for-profit agency and working for a church preparing meals for the elderly, as well as participation in volunteer organizations, such as Volunteers in Service to America or private volunteer organizations.

Document how the community service program work assignment enhances the participant’s employability.
This activity includes sentence-to-serve community service.

**Community Work Experience Program (CWEP) (Core Activities)**

This activity is used to improve the employability of MFIP individuals not otherwise able to obtain employment by providing work experience and training to assist them to move into regular employment. The participant must have completed job search prior to entering CWEP. Placements must serve a useful public purpose.

CWEP may be used for a particular participant after exhausting other employment opportunities, including opportunities to participate in other work activities. This means that as a condition of making a CWEP placement the participant must first be provided with:

- An opportunity for placement in suitable subsidized or unsubsidized employment through participation in job search.

  OR

- Placement in suitable employment through participation in on-the-job training, if such employment is available.

CWEP work sites developed are limited to projects that serve a useful public service such as: health, social services, environmental protection, education, urban and rural development and redevelopment, welfare, recreation, public facilities, public safety, community service, services to aged or disabled citizens, and child care. To the extent possible, the prior training, skills, and experience of the participant should be considered in making appropriate work experience assignments. Structured, supervised volunteer work with an agency or organization, which is monitored by the county service provider, may, with the approval of the county agency, be used as a CWEP placement.

For information on non-displacement in work activities, see §7.32 (Non-Displacement).

The maximum number of hours any participant may work in a CWEP placement is limited to the amount of the MFIP Transitional Standard divided by the federal or state minimum wage, whichever is higher. The placement may not continue beyond 9 months unless the maximum number of hours the participant works is no greater than the amount of the MFIP Transitional Standard divided by the rate of pay for individuals employed in the same or similar occupations by the same employer at the same site. This limit does not apply if it would prevent a participant from working enough hours to count toward the work participation rate. For the Transitional Standard amounts, see Appendix A.

County agencies and ES providers may place participants in Unpaid Work Experiences that are not part of CWEP.
Unpaid placements that do not meet all of the CWEP criteria listed in this section should be coded as Unpaid Work Experience.

Unpaid Work Experience Placements are subject to non-displacement restrictions. See §7.32 (Non-Displacement).

The participant’s Employment Plan must include the length of time needed in the CWEP or Unpaid Work Experience placement, the need to continue job search activities during the placement, and the participant’s employment goals.

After each 6-month participation period in a CWEP or unpaid work experience placement, and at the conclusion of the assignment, review the Employment Plan and revise as necessary.

Providing Child Care for Parent Working In a Community Service Program (Core Activities)

This activity is used only for participants who are providing child care for other participants in a community service program. This is an unpaid activity, if the participant is being paid for the childcare, they should be coded as you would any self-employed person, in unsubsidized employment.

Daily Supervision of Unpaid Employment Activities

Require participants who are engaged in unpaid employment activities to be supervised on an ongoing basis no less frequently than daily. Daily supervision means participants have an assigned supervisor they report to daily, preferably at the work site. Supervision includes developing and overseeing the participant’s work schedule and assignments. An employer, work site sponsor or other responsible individual, such as an employment services staff person, can provide daily supervision of the participant in an unpaid employment activity. NOTE: DHS recommends development of a written agreement between the work site and the employment services provider that specifies the party responsible for providing daily supervision of a participant engaged in an unpaid employment activity.

Require participants who are providing child care to another MFIP participant who is participating in a community service program to be supervised on an ongoing basis no less frequently than daily. Supervision may be by a responsible individual, such as an employment services provider staff person. The employment services provider and the participant must develop an agreed upon employment plan that lists the days and hours the participant will be providing child care for another MFIP participant who is in a community service program.
Verification and Documentation of Unpaid Employment Activities

The employment services provider must verify hours of unpaid employment activity in order to count these hours toward the work participation rate.

A time sheet or similar attendance document must be used to document hours a participant is engaged in an unpaid employment activity. The document used to verify hours of participation must include the days and number of hours worked each day.

Time sheets or other attendance documents must be submitted to the employment services provider no less than every two weeks. Verify work hours by reviewing the time sheet or other attendance documents.

Time sheets or attendance documents must be signed by a supervisor in order to be an acceptable form of documentation for unpaid employment activities. When a participant submits an unsigned time sheet or other attendance document, the employment services provider must contact the work site to verify the hours are correct or have the participant obtain the necessary signature in order for the hours to be countable. A signed release of information from the participant must be obtained prior to contacting the unpaid employment activity supervisor. When hours are verified by contacting the work site, an employment services staff person must sign the time sheet or attendance document and enter a case note in the participant’s file.

The number of hours a participant provides child care for another MFIP participant who is participating in a community service program must be verified in order for the hours to count towards the work participation rate.

For participants who provide child care to another MFIP participant in a community service program unpaid position, it is necessary to obtain a statement that supports the hours the participant provides child care. Acceptable documentation includes a statement from the participant in a community services program or another individual who has knowledge of the time spent providing child care. The document used to support the hours must be submitted to the employment services provider no less than every two weeks.

A statement from the MFIP participant who provides the child care is not an acceptable form of verification for this activity. An employment services provider that receives a statement or other document that is not signed by the participant who is participating in the community service program or other responsible individual must confirm with the participant in a community services program that the hours are correct in order for the hours to be countable. The employment services provider must write a case note to document the verification of hours.
Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)

Participants who are engaged in work experience or community service program activities are subject to the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. When developing a work schedule for a participant in an unpaid work experience, volunteer or Community Work Experience Programs position, hours are determined by dividing the participant’s actual MFIP grant (both cash and food portions) by the state minimum wage $6.15/hour.

For example, a participant’s MFIP grant is $400. Divide by $6.15/hour. The maximum number of hours the participant is permitted to work in an unpaid employment activity during the month is 65. Always round down to the nearest whole number of hours.

In the above example, the individual would fall short of the 87 hours per month core requirements. However, because of the FLSA restrictions, the new TANF regulations allow states to deem the participant to have met the TANF core hour requirement of 87 hours per month if he/she worked the maximum number of hours allowed under the FLSA.

Do not allow deeming of additional hours to meet the 130 hours per month requirement for families without a child under the age of six. These participants must be engaged in additional countable activities, not subject to the FLSA, in order to meet the 130 hour per month participation requirement.
This activity counts towards the participation rate as a core activity for a limited time. See the activity description for specifics. These activities should be coded accordingly and the hours should be tracked on WF1 (TEAMS for Hennepin).

**Job Search (Core Activity for 6 Weeks In A Fiscal Year)**

This activity is used for both the initial job search and all subsequent periods of job search. Each October a new 6-week period begins.

This includes:

- **Job search.** Includes filling out applications, submitting resumes, attending interviews with employers, as well as job clubs, job readiness and job placement.

- **Job readiness.** Includes preparing a resume or job application, training in interviewing skills, instruction on appropriate attire and behavior on the job, effective job seeking as well as life skills training.

- **Job readiness assistance for Chemical Health Treatment, Mental Health Treatment and Rehabilitation Services.**

Counties and employment services providers should ask for the least amount of information necessary to verify hours of participation.

Count hours in Chemical Dependency and Mental Health treatment and Rehabilitation Services for participants who are otherwise employable when the services are determined necessary by a qualified professional.

A participant is considered “otherwise employable” unless he or she has been determined to be unemployable by a vocational counselor or the county.

**NOTE:** Although Chemical Health treatment, Mental Health Treatment and Rehabilitation Services are subject to the 6 week limit for reporting purposes (with no more than four of the weeks being consecutive), the actual length of time services are allowable will be determined by a qualified professional based on the participant’s needs. The job search/job readiness activity can be used beyond the 6-week limit.
Daily Supervision of Job Search

Require participants who are engaged in job search and job readiness assistance to be supervised on an ongoing basis no less frequently than daily. Daily supervision can be provided by an employment services staff person, or other responsible individual.

At a minimum, daily supervision means the employment counselor and participant must have developed an agreed upon schedule of daily activities for the week. For mental health, substance abuse or rehabilitation activities, hours will be based on the recommendations or treatment plan signed by a qualified professional, or a schedule of group meetings.

Supervision also includes at least one in-person or phone check-in each week. During the check-in, the participant and the employment counselor must review progress, identify support service needs and make any necessary changes in the schedule of activities.

Documentation and Verification of Job Search

Hours of job search and job readiness assistance for each participant must be documented and verified in order for the hours to count towards the work participation rate. Acceptable documentation for the weekly check-in is a case note in the participant’s file.

Documentation for **On-Site** job search and job search readiness assistance. Acceptable documentation and verification for **on-site** job search and job search readiness assistance activity and hours includes:

- Schedules of the activities.
- Completed resumes.
- Workshop materials.
- Attendance records that include the dates, hours of activities and name(s) of the participant(s).

Documentation for **Off-Site** job search and job search readiness assistance. Acceptable documentation for **off-site** job search and job readiness assistance activity (other than chemical dependency or mental health treatment or rehabilitation services), includes:

- Attendance records signed by the provider of off-site activities.
- Copies of completed applications.
- Detailed activity logs of specific employment contacts made by the participant, along with other activities such as researching career opportunities.
The activity log must include the hours spent in each activity and the status or outcome. Documents used to support a participant’s time in job search and job readiness activities must be submitted to the employment services provider no less than once per week.

Verify **off-site** job search and job readiness assistance activity and hours by a review of:

- The schedule of daily activities.
- The attendance records.
- The activity logs for consistency.

The review should be done with the participant whenever possible. Attempt to verify inconsistent entries on the activity log. Items that cannot be verified should be crossed off the activity log. Return attendance records to the participant which are not signed by a provider of off-site services so that a signature can be obtained, or verified by contacting the supervisor. When the employment services provider contacts a supervisor for verification, the contact should be documented in case notes. DHS recommends that the review occur at least weekly.

**NOTE:** Hours a participant is engaged in a self-directed job search are not countable unless the hours are verified and documented.
Education and Training activities include secondary, post-secondary education and adult education. This also includes job skills training directly related to employment.

Encourage participants who participate in at least 20 hours of work activities to also participate in education and training activities in order to meet the federal hourly participation rates. Discuss when the participant’s employment services education plan is developed or reviewed. Employment plans must be reviewed every 3 months.

All of the following activities are either core or non-core activities. See the activity description for specifics. These activities should be coded accordingly and the hours should be tracked on WF1 (TEAMS for Hennepin). 

**NOTE:** One exception, for students under 20 completing a GED or High School, the hours are tracked in MAXIS.

**SECONDARY EDUCATION, ADULT EDUCATION & JOB SKILLS TRAINING:**

**High School Completion (Non-Core Activity)**

This activity is used for all participants who take classes that will earn credits necessary for a high school diploma. Supervised study time is also countable hours. Participation hours for teen parents less than 20 who do not have a high school diploma is coded in MAXIS as either full time, part time or half time students. Teen parents automatically meet the participation requirement when they are coded in any of these. Track hours on WF1 (TEAMS for Hennepin) for participants over 20 completing high school.

**GED Classes (Non-Core Activity)**

This category is for all participants who take classes necessary for a high school equivalency certificate. Supervised study time is also countable hours. No more than 1/2 of the participation requirements in the Employment Plan may be met through GED training. Participation hours for teen parents less than 20 who do not have a high school diploma or GED are coded in MAXIS as either full time, part time or half time students. Track hours on WF1 for participants over 20 taking classes for a General Educational Development (GED).

**English as a Second Language (ESL) Training (Non-Core Activity)**

This activity includes proficiency training for participants who need to improve their ability to speak, read or write English. Participants must be below a spoken language proficiency level (SPL) of SPL 6 for ESL to be an approved work activity. The combined total months of participation in ESL and FWL may not exceed 24 months. No more than half of the participant’s requirement can be met through ESL.
Functional Work Literacy (FWL) (Non-Core Activity)

This activity consists of participants in an intensive and work focused ESL program that offers at least 20 hours per week of class time. Participants must be below a spoken language proficiency level (SPL) of SPL6 for this activity to be approved. No more than 2/3 of the participant’s requirement can be met through FWL. The combined total months of participation in ESL and FWL may not exceed 24 months.

Adult Basic Education (ABE) (Non-Core Activity)

Courses of instruction designed to improve the employability of the students through instruction in reading, math, language, and workplace readiness. Remedial education involves repetition of such instruction previously given to the participant. Under state law, participants must have reading or math skills below the 9th grade level for ABE to be an approved work activity. Reasonable amounts of preparation or study time are also countable hours. No more than one-half of the participation requirements contained in the Employment Plan may be met through ABE training.

Skills training provided by county, Workforce Center or other employment services provider (for example, computer basics, keyboarding and communication skills/getting along with co-workers).

Job skills training directly related to employment (Non-Core Activity)

This includes training offered by the county or private contractor. Possible classes might include but are not limited to computer basics, keyboarding, and communication skills/getting along with co-workers.

Code baccalaureate or advanced degree programs under “Job Skills Training Directly Related to Employment”.

NOTE: Track Adult Basic Education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL) and Functional Work Literacy (FWL) training in the respective or corresponding category in WF1. ABE, ESL, and FWL will be reported on the TANF report to the federal government as non-core (job skills training directly related to employment). This will be done by DHS and will not require additional coding by employment services providers or counselors.

Post-secondary education

Post-secondary vocational education and training lasting 12 months or less (Core (12
months in a lifetime). Non-Core (lifetime limit has been exhausted). This activity includes training done by a private or state college or post-secondary educational institution or a program that results in an industry recognized certificate such as a Microsoft certificate. Training in this category is limited to programs that can be completed in 12 months or less if participants attend full-time. Months are still counted if the program designed to last 12 months takes participants longer than 12 months to complete. Extending a 12-month program most often occurs when participants combine education with part-time employment. Supervised study time may be counted under this activity.

NOTE: The length of the program determines the appropriate code. For example, if a participant is attending a 2 year program code them in the 13-24 month category starting with the first month. Do not code the first 12 months of a 2 year program in the 12 months or less code.

Post-secondary Vocational Training/Education, 13–24 Months (Core (12 months in a lifetime). Non-Core Activity (lifetime limit has been exhausted).

This activity includes programs that can be completed in 13 to 24 months, which are offered by a private or state college or post-secondary educational institution and programs that result in an industry recognized certificate such as a Microsoft certificate. Supervised study time may be counted under this activity.

NOTE: Regardless, of which category a participant is coded in, (12 months or less or 13-24 months), all the hours under either of these post-secondary codes will count as core hours unless a participant has already exceeded the 12 month limit. If a person has exceeded the 12 month “TANF” time limit for training any additional hours will be reported on the TANF report to the federal government as non-core. This will be done by DHS and will not require additional coding by employment service providers or counselors.

DAILY SUPERVISION OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Require participants who are engaged in education and training activities to be supervised on an ongoing basis no less frequently than daily. Supervision may be provided by a representative of the education or training institution, or another responsible individual, such as an employment services staff person. Supervision for all education and training activities, including secondary education, also includes at least bi-weekly telephone or in-person contact.

VERIFICATION AND DOCUMENTATION OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING
The number of hours of education and training activities must be verified in order for the hours to count towards meeting the work participation rate.

When skills training is conducted on-site at the employment services office or a Workforce Center, the training schedule along with attendance records, including monitored study time, is acceptable documentation of participation hours. Attendance record must include dates and hours of training activities for each participant. Verify participation hours by reviewing the training schedule and attendance records.

For all other education and training activities except secondary school, a statement or weekly schedule from the educational institution or training provider, activity logs, and signed statements or attendance records are acceptable documentation of participation hours.

Obtain statements and schedules from high schools, alternative schools and postsecondary institutions at the beginning of each quarter or semester. Obtain statements and schedules from all other education and training institutions at least once per month.

Participants in post-secondary education should record dates and hours of attendance on an activity log. The log must be submitted at least every two weeks. Verify participation hours by reviewing the activity log and the progress reports and grades issued by the institution.

Participants in GED, ABE, ESL, and FWL must submit a signed statement or attendance record from the instructor at least every 2 weeks. If the instructor or education provider will not provide documentation every 2 weeks, the participant should record dates and hours of attendance on an activity log that is submitted at least every 2 weeks, followed by a signed statement or attendance record submitted at least once per month. Unsigned statements and attendance records are not an acceptable form of documentation. Employment services providers may return unsigned documentation to the participant to obtain a signature, or they may contact the instructor if there is a signed release of information. If the employment services provider contacts an instructor, a case note should be included in the participant’s file.
This section includes social services as well screening and assessments that can lead to participation in social services. Hours tracked in these activities are not countable towards the participation rate.

**NOTE:** Chemical health, mental health or rehabilitation services may be counted as part of the first 6 weeks of “job readiness”. See §7.3.9 (Job Search & Job Readiness Activities).

**Assessment (Not Countable Activity)**

Assessment means the continuing process of gathering information related to employability. Although assessments may identify barriers to employment, the focus and tone should be based on identifying each participant’s strengths. See §7.9.6 (Strengths-Based Approach).

**Screening (Not Countable Activity)**

This activity includes using the MFIP Self-Screen (DHS-3482) and the Brief Screening Tool for Special Learning Needs (DHS-3504).

No hours are tracked in this activity on WF1. Open and close the activity on the day these screening tools are administered to indicate that the screening has been done.

**Employment Plan for Family Violence Waiver (Not Countable Activity)**

This activity includes the process where victims of family violence develop and utilize a plan to ensure the safety of herself/himself and his/her children. The plan should also include activities designed to lead to self-sufficiency, provided they do not endanger the participant or the children.

**NOTE:** Open the activity “alternative employment plan” indicating that the person has a modified plan due to a family violence waiver. (Alternative employment plan is an outdated term, but has not yet been replaced in WF1.) Track hours using the applicable categories (job search, part time employment, etc.). For activities related to safety and supporting the safety plan, those hours should be tracked in “participating in social services”.

**Participating in Social Services (Not Countable Activity)**

This activity is used for participants who are involved in all forms of social service interventions. Possible interventions include: child protection, chemical dependency assessment or treatment, mental health assessment or treatment, assessment for learning
disabilities, domestic violence services.

**Daily Supervision of Social Service Activities**

Daily supervision *may or may not be required* for someone who is in social service activities.

**Require** participants who are engaged in social services being tracked as job readiness (“job search” on WF1) to be supervised on an ongoing basis no less frequently than daily. Daily supervision can be provided by the service treatment provider, an employment services staff person, or other responsible individual.

At a minimum, daily supervision means the employment counselor and participant must have developed an agreed upon schedule of daily activities. For mental health, substance abuse or rehabilitation activities, hours will be based on the recommendations or treatment plan signed by a qualified health professional, and/or a schedule of group meetings.

Supervision also includes at least one in-person or phone check-in each week. During the check-in, the participant and the employment counselor must review progress, identify support service needs, and make any necessary changes in the schedule of activities.

Do *not require* daily supervision if the participant is only engaged in social service activities and are not being tracked for job readiness in WF1 under “job search”. Follow up with the participant no less than every two weeks. Update the employment plan at least every three months. If the employment plan warrants less frequent contact, case note why less contact is required and how often the follow-up will occur.

**EXAMPLE #1**: A participant has a family violence waiver. The modified plan written with the advocate only includes safety activities. This does not fit the definition of job readiness nor are there activities that can be tracked in any other category. **There is no requirement of daily supervision.** Follow up should be provided no less than every two weeks with the participant and the employment plan should be updated every three months.

**EXAMPLE #2**: A participant has a family violence waiver. The modified plan written with the advocate includes safety activities, job search and mental health counseling. Job search should be tracked under “job search” in WF1. The counseling can be tracked under “job search” because it fits the definition of “job readiness”. The safety activities should be tracked in “social services”. **In this case daily supervision of counted activities is required.**
VERIFICATION AND DOCUMENTATION OF SOCIAL SERVICE ACTIVITIES

Hours of social services being reported as job readiness assistance for each participant engaged in these activities must be documented and verified in order for the hours to count towards the work participation rate. You must have a signed release for the social service provider.

Acceptable documentation for the weekly check-in is a case note in the participant’s file or an indication on the activity log that the check-in was satisfactorily completed for each/all activities.

When daily supervision is not required, a general guideline for checking in with the participant is no less than every 2 weeks. If you have reason to check in less frequently, document the reason in a case note.
This section includes holding, holding sanction, other, and “integrated services project” activities.

Hours tracked in these activities are not countable towards the participation rate.

**Holding (Not countable Activity)**

This non-activity temporarily places a participant in “suspension”. Holding is commonly used to allow some time to pass before anticipated entry into another activity. It is also recommended to use this when someone already enrolled in MFIP takes the 12 week exception, in order to avoid a new referral process.

**Holding – Sanction (Not countable Activity)**

This non-activity is used when a participant is in sanction status for non-cooperation with MFIP Employment Services.

**Other (Not Countable Activity)**

This activity is used to track hours for activities not included in other activity categories. Efforts to stabilize the family by securing suitable housing, doctor appointments, etc. may be included.

**Integrated Services Project (Not Countable Activity)**

This activity is used for the pilot projects funded by the Integrated Services Project grants. It is simply an indicator that the participant is enrolled in 1 of the 8 grant projects, hours can not be tracked on WF1.

**Daily Supervision**

Daily supervision is not a requirement for these activities.

It is not uncommon for participants in the other activity to have a plan that has multiple activities. Department of Human Services (DHS) recommends follow-up on the “other” activities at the same time you are checking in with the rest of the plan.

**Documentation and Verification**

The following is a list of mandatory verification for holding and other activities:
Holding. Document in case notes why the holding activity is being used.

Holding sanction. Copies of the Notice of Intent to Sanction should be in the case as well as any other supporting case notes documenting the reason for the sanction. Attempts to contact participants to discuss how to cure their sanctions should also be documented in case notes. Although the participant may choose not to respond to your contacts, continue contact at least once per month.

Other. Document in case notes why the other activity is being used.

Integrated Services Project. Usage of this code documents that the participant is enrolled in one of the pilot projects.
Participants in the activities listed below may be credited for holidays, plus a limited number of days for other excused absences (OEA).

- Community Work experience program.
- Unpaid Work experience.
- Job Search and Job Readiness Assistance.
- Community Service Programs.
- High School Completion.
- GED classes.
- Functional Work Literacy.
- English as a Second Language.
- Post-secondary Vocational Education Training lasting 12 months or less.
- Post secondary Vocational Education Training, 13 – 24 months.
- Job Skills Directly Related to Employment.
- Providing Child Care to Community Service Program Participant.

NOTE: It is also allowable to use holiday and excused absence for activities not counted towards the TANF participation rate. Using holiday or excused absences for activities such as “social services” or “other”, count towards the 10 day holiday and other excused absence limits.

Excused Holidays

Participants will be credited as participating on the holidays listed below. Participants must be credited with the number of hours they would have been scheduled for if the day had not been a holiday.

- New Year’s Day (January 1st).
- Martin Luther King Day (3rd Monday in January).
- President’s Day (3rd Monday in February).
- Memorial Day (Last Monday in May).
- Labor Day (1st Monday in September).
- Veterans Day (November 11th).
- Thanksgiving Day (4th Thursday in November).
- The Day after Thanksgiving (4th Friday in November).
- Christmas Day (December 25th).

When New Year’s Day, Independence Day, Veterans Day, or Christmas Day falls on Sunday, the following Monday shall be a holiday. When New Year’s Day, Independence Day, Veterans Day, or Christmas Day falls on Saturday, the preceding Friday shall be a holiday.
To correctly apply the holiday hours correctly, follow the guidance below.

1. To determine whether or not a participant can be credited with holiday hours the participant must be scheduled to participate in one or more unpaid activities on the date of the holiday, but was unable to participate because the office/location where the activity was to occur was closed due to the holiday.

2. Refer to the participant’s employment plan activity schedule to determine the number of holiday hours to credit the participant and the corresponding activity.

3. The holiday hours should be proportionately split between multiple activities when the participant was scheduled to be engaged in multiple activities on a holiday.

Other Excused Absences (OEA) for Participants in Education and Training Activities

Participants engaged in Education and Training Activities, including Vocational Educational Training, Adult Basic Education (ABE), Functional Work Literacy (FWL), English as a Second Language (ESL) and General Education Development Certificate (GED) Training will be credited with up to 10 days of excused absences over a 12 month period, with no more than 2 days credit for excused absences over a 1 calendar month period. Participants will be considered to be meeting the attendance requirements and credited with excused hours when the educational institution is not in regular session, including holiday breaks. This policy does not apply to summer breaks.

Granting Excused Absence Credit

Participants do not have to accrue excused absence hours. A participant is eligible for the full excused absence policy as soon as they become engaged in one of the activities listed at the beginning of this section.

Credit a participant with up to 2 days per month for excused absences, with no more than 10 days of excused absences over a 12 month period. The 12 month period is a rolling period. To determine whether the participant is eligible for an excused absence credit, look back over the previous 11 months. If the participant has been granted other excused absences for 10 days over the previous 11 months, the participant is not eligible for any additional hours of OEA in the 12th month.

If the participant has been granted other excused absences for less than 10 days over the previous 11 months, the participant is eligible to be credited with the number of days equal to 10 minus the number of OEA days credited in the previous 11 months.
Participants are eligible for up to the number of hours they were scheduled for on the OEA day(s). A participant may use as little as one hour of OEA per occurrence.

Hours must be recorded in the activity category where the hours were missed.

Case note the reason for the other excused absence and reference giving the participant an “other excused absence” or “OEA” allowance for that day.

To correctly apply the Other Excused Absences (OEA) hours correctly, follow the guidance below.

To determine whether or not a participant can be credited with OEA hours the participant must:

1. Check the previous 11 months to determine that they are eligible for OEA Hours.

2. Refer to the participant’s employment plan activity schedule to determine the correct number of OEA hours to credit the participant and the corresponding activity. If the plan is written for 25 hours a week. The participant would be credited 5 hours for the day.

3. The OEA hours should be proportionately split between multiple activities when the participant was scheduled to be engaged in multiple activities on the date the participant was unable to participate.

4. Use Good Cause Reasons to grant Other Excused Absence (OEA) Hours. A participant may be credited with OEA hours for any good cause reason. (Good cause manual reference 5.3).

**NOTE:** The “other excused absence” for work participation purposes should not be confused with good cause as it relates to the sanction policy. Good cause is not limited to 2 days per month or 10 days per 12 months. Participants must not be sanctioned if they have good cause.

**WF1:** On WF1, hours should be tracked for the entire month in the appropriate column. A corresponding case note should be written documenting the need.

Because participants are ONLY eligible for up to the number of hours they were scheduled for on the excused absence day(s). A participant may use as little as one hour of excused absence per occurrence.
Counties must provide Employment Services within 30 days after a caregiver is determined eligible for MFIP, or within 10 days when the caregiver participated in the Diversionary Work Program (DWP) within the past 12 months.

FUNCTION OF THE OVERVIEW

It is critical that the MFIP program be presented as an opportunity. Participants must be given a clear, uniform message that MFIP expects, supports, and rewards work. Participants are expected to work, search for work, and/or meet other program requirements. MFIP provides the supports necessary to meet these expectations, and ensures that a job will increase family income and serve as a step toward financial independence.

REQUIREMENT TO ATTEND THE OVERVIEW

All MFIP caregivers, with the exception of participants who have or are in the process of qualifying for a family violence waiver, are required to attend an ES overview.

Participants who have or are in the process of qualifying for a family violence waiver must be provided the same information but cannot be required to attend an overview done in a group setting. In these cases the information is usually presented in the overview must be covered during the development of the Employment Plan. For more information, see §7.15 (Employment Plans (EP)), §7.29 (Family Violence Waiver Option).

Child care cost should be covered for attending the overview.

CONTENT OF THE OVERVIEW

Prior to the overview, most participants will have attended an orientation to financial assistance as part of the MFIP intake or recertification process. Although the messages are similar, the orientation focuses on the financial work incentives and the income maintenance portion of the program. Overviews, which may be offered in a group setting or on an individual basis, should focus on providing specific information about the Employment Services portion of the program and the supportive services available to help the participant transition to work. However, the overview also provides an opportunity to repeat the very important message that “work pays”. Repetition of information about the work incentives increases the likelihood that participants will understand and take advantage of the program. The overview should convey a sense of the urgency and opportunity of obtaining employment, review the financial assistance information from the orientation, and explain resources available to facilitate a transition to employment.
Specifically, the overview should cover:

- **The expectation to work**

  MFIP is primarily a work program. The purpose of the program is to help participants move into the labor market quickly. Support services and cash assistance are provided to facilitate a transition to employment.

  Inform participants that there may be probationary periods new employees must serve after being hired and that job retention services may be available at the ES provider or county.

- **The necessity and opportunity of working**

  Under federal law, cash assistance is limited to 60 months in a lifetime. Going to work immediately increases the chance of going off assistance completely or reducing assistance to the MFIP food portion only and preserving the limited months of assistance for times when no work is available.

  MFIP expects, rewards, and supports work. MFIP participants are expected to work or participate in work-related activities. Doing so provides significant rewards. Participants must clearly understand how MFIP policies make work pay and that they are always financially better off working than not. Work also provides other less tangible rewards such as enhanced self-esteem and a positive role model for children. Participants have access to child care assistance and other supports necessary to obtain and retain employment.

  Families do not have to choose between welfare and work. Under MFIP, any job increases family income, and provides valuable work experience and a step up the ladder to a better job. Tax credits can also substantially increase family income. See §10.18 (Budgeting Policies), §10.24 (Actual Budgeting).

- **The range of allowable Employment Services work activities**

  Participants need to know that activities necessary to move them toward employment and self-sufficiency may be included in their plan, with job counselor approval. Provide this information in the context of the general sequence of services, order of preference for work activities, and hourly participation requirements. Retain the basic message that participants are expected to take the most direct route to employment. Work-related activities should be seen as supplementary and should not routinely replace job search and employment.
You may want to include the list of 9 approvable activities in an information packet to supplement your verbal explanation. See §7.3 (Allowable Activities).

- **Modified Employment Plans**

  Participants who meet certain criteria may develop an EP with hours below required participation levels and with activities tailored to meet specific needs. See §7.15.15 (Modified Employment Plans).

- **Training opportunities**

  Training opportunities are available to participants who meet specific criteria. Include the Education and Training in MFIP brochure (DHS-3366) in the caregiver’s information packet as a source of reference. This brochure explains the general parameters of MFIP education and training.

  While you should cover general information about education and training opportunities during the overview, it is recommended that detailed and serious discussion of specific educational plans be done during the assessment.

- **Child care resources and referral**

  Child care expenses are paid for MFIP families who work or participate in other activities in an approved Employment Plan as long as child care program requirements are met, for example: complete an application timely; use a licensed or legal non-licensed provider. Participants may be responsible for a small co-payment. See §8.39 (Accessing and Coordinating Support Services). Participants should be informed about the child care resources available to enable them to participate. For child care assistance for victims of family violence, see §7.15 (Employment Plan (EP)).

- **Rights, responsibilities, and obligations of participants**

  MFIP has high expectations for participants but offers ongoing support to enable them to meet those expectations. The program sets up a shared responsibility among families, the Employment Services system, and the county. Job counselors are responsible to help participants develop a realistic plan for the future and for supporting the plan with the full range of available resources. Participants are responsible to develop and follow through with the plan and for working toward the greatest level of self-support possible. Employment Services - Rights and Responsibilities (DHS-3172) is a concise summary of the participant’s protections.
and obligations.

- **Rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**
  
  Job counselors can use DHS brochure “Do you have a disability?” (DHS-4133). See §4.12 (Civil Rights and the Americans with Disabilities Act).

- **Consequences for failure to meet requirements.** See §9.3 (Non-Compliance).

- **Eligibility for Transition Year Child Care.** See §8.63 (Continuation of Employment Services), §8.63.3 (Transition Year Child Care).

- **Family violence referral information.**
  
  - Provide information on exemption from the 60-month time limit based on family violence. See §7.29 (Family Violence Waiver Option). Provide the MFIP Family Violence Waiver (DHS-3477) brochure.
  
  - Provide caregivers with a Family Violence Referral (DHS-3323). You may include this form with other information distributed at the overview or provide it during the 1st meeting with a job counselor. For more information, see §7.15 (Employment Plan (EP)), §7.29.3 (Person Trained in Domestic Violence).
  
  - Provide information about battered women’s community shelter programs and other services for victims of family violence.

- **Availability of all health care programs, including transitional Medical Assistance.** See §8.63.9 (Transitional MA Programs).
An assessment is a continuing process of gathering information related to employability for the purpose of identifying both the participant’s strengths and strategies for coping with issues that interfere with employment.

**TIMING OF AN ASSESSMENT**

To reinforce the message of urgency, complete an assessment as soon as possible after the overview for caregivers who are mandatory in MFIP Employment Services. Delays between the overview and the assessment for mandatory caregivers should only occur in limited circumstances.

**PURPOSE OF AN ASSESSMENT**

MFIP Employment Services focuses on helping participants make a successful attachment to the labor force as quickly as possible. The assessment supports this intent. The primary purposes are to:

- Use information from the assessment process to develop and update the Employment Plan.
- Assess the participant’s ability to obtain and retain employment.
- Identify the participant’s strengths and strategies for coping with issues that interfere with finding employment.
- Identify participants with barriers to obtaining and retaining employment that won’t be overcome by 6 weeks of job search.
- Evaluate proposals for education and training.

For additional information, see:

- §7.9.3 Contents of an Assessment.
- §7.9.6 Strengths-Based Approach
- §7.9.9 Requirements for Teen Parents.
- §7.9.12 Chemical/Mental Health/Learning Needs Screening
- §7.9.15 Intervention Levels
- §7.9.18 Intervention Levels - Obtaining/Exchanging Information
- §7.9.21 Chemical & Mental Health Assessments: Referrals/Costs
- §7.9.24 Intervention Documentation & Plans
- §7.9.27 Chemical/Mental Health Assessment Support Services
- §7.9.30 Accommodations for Disabled Participants
MFIP ES assessment is an ongoing process of gathering information related to employability for the purpose of identifying a participant’s strengths, as well as strategies for coping with issues that interfere with employment. The assessment process begins at the first meeting between the participant and a job counselor, and continues throughout participation in Employment Services. This information serves as the basis for the initial Employment Plans, as well as updates and revisions.

The approach to assessment should be based on the participant’s strengths. Understanding each person’s abilities and capacity to cope with both immediate and future challenges is an essential part of developing an effective plan to find employment and transition to economic stability.

CONTENTS

Cover these 3 areas during the continuing process of assessment for MFIP participants:

- Obtain basic information about the participant’s ability to obtain and retain employment, including educational level; interests, skills, and abilities; work history and experience; transferable work skills; and child care and transportation needs. The assessment MAY include basic skills and English language skills testing.

- Identify personal and family circumstances that impact the participant’s ability to obtain and retain employment, including any special needs of the children; level of English proficiency; family violence issues; or involvement with social services or the legal system.

NOTE: Use information obtained through the assessment process to determine whether a participant qualifies for a family violence waiver, and to develop or update Employment Plans as appropriate.

If a participant is a victim of family violence and this is documented, give the Family Violence Referral (DHS-3323) and Domestic Violence Information Brochure (DHS-3477) to the participant. For information on Employment Plans for victims of family violence, see §7.15 (Employment Plan (EP)), §7.15.12 (Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence).

- Discuss results of the MFIP Self Screen (DHS-3482) and the Brief Screening Tool for Special Learning Needs (DHS-3504). Screening tools must be completed by participants who are unable to find suitable employment after 6 weeks of job search, and participants who have barriers to employment that will not be overcome
by 6 weeks of job search. See §6.3 (Requirements and Sequence of Services).

Screening tools may only be administered by job counselors or county staff trained in their use. See §7.9.12 (Chemical/Mental Health/Learning Needs Screening).

COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

Conduct a comprehensive review of participation and progress with participants who received MFIP assistance but did not work in unsubsidized employment during the past 12 months. Whenever possible conduct this review together with the financial worker or other county staff (for example, during the annual recertification).

The purpose of the review is to determine the need for additional services and supports, including placement in a paid or unpaid work experience.
Minnesota agencies have been successful using a strengths-based approach in working with participants in the Child Welfare and Child Protection systems. DHS is also recommending using this approach when working with MFIP participants.

What is a strengths-based approach?

A strengths-based approach looks at each individual to see what his or her strengths are and then builds on those strengths. This is significantly different from a barrier identification approach, which emphasizes problem identification and elimination before placing the client in employment or other work activities. A strengths-based approach does not ignore or deny the existence of barriers; instead it asks where an individual’s strengths or greatest potential lie and then builds on those strengths. It is a positive approach to working with participants in a more respectful and possibility-focused manner.

A strengths-based approach starts with the very first interaction with the participant. First interactions are very important and set the stage for all future interactions. A positive approach that encourages client participation, and emphasizes the possibility of change, will help facilitate a positive response from the participant. It is important to remember that each individual has both strengths and barriers, but it is human nature to respond more positively when the strengths are emphasized rather than the barriers. Conveying a belief that working with MFIP Employment Services is a positive experience and using a strengths-based model will increase the chances for improved relationships and outcomes.

As stated earlier, a strengths-based approach does not ignore or deny the existence of barriers, but instead gauges the severity of the barrier compared to the individual’s strengths. Unless the barrier is overwhelming, such as severe mental or physical health, or chemical dependency issues so great that the mental, physical or chemical dependency issues put the individual at risk of harming him/herself or others, generally a strengths-based approach will be more effective than pursuing a barrier identification and reduction model.

Key ideas and concepts for implementing a strengths-based approach with MFIP participants include:

- Philosophy is important. Encourage client participation and emphasize change.
- The aim is NOT to have “perfect”, problem free lives.
- Look for change early. Change is predictable, with the most significant change occurring early in the process.
- Identify small indicators of change or improvement and amplify those changes. (How did you get that job? What did you do? What needs to be in place for you to continue to be employed?).
- If something is not working, take a few steps back and reconsider your approach, rather
than just doing more of the same unsuccessful activities.

- Approach each meeting or interaction as if it will be the only one.
- Opening moments and interactions are crucial because they set the stage for all future interactions.
- Be genuine and promote accountability for both you and the participant.
- Build on the expectancy that accompanies the start of services. This can promote hope.
- Be as clear as possible about your expectations.
- Get to know the participant.
- Use the assessment processes as opportunities to promote change and explore strengths and exceptions to problems.
- Recognize that participant support systems are the most significant contributors to their own outcomes.
- Identify internal strengths and abilities, including resilience and coping skills.
- Identify and tap into past, present and potential social and community resources.
- Explore competencies, resources and possibilities without minimizing challenges and problems.
- Convey empathy and an unconditional positive approach.
- Use language focused on possibility.
- Focus on the present and future, without ignoring the past.
- Collaborate and work toward agreement on goals and approaches to achieve those goals. If your participant knows the goals and agrees with them, you will increase the likelihood of a positive outcome.
- Avoid ambiguity. Make sure the goals are clear, observable, measurable and realistic.
- Learn how participant successes have occurred in the past, how they may occur again, and what is changing already.
- When possible, provide a range of options.
- Assist with improving social and vocational skills.
- Focus on change rather than the current situation where the client is “stuck” on welfare.
- Use approaches that encourage hope.
- Assist them by attributing the majority of change to their own qualities and actions. They are mainly responsible for their own successes.
- If you are not making progress with a participant, consult with the participant rather than resorting to theories. Theories tell you what can’t happen, clients will tell you what can happen.
- Consult with colleagues, use a team approach.
- Believe in what you do and how you do it.
Example:

Anna is an MFIP participant who is 30 years old and has a high school diploma. She has three children ages 12, 10 and 9, was never married, and receives no child support. She has a spotty work history and is not motivated to find work or change her current situation. Anna has been on MFIP for the past 4 years, and has been working with the same job counselor for the past 3 years. Anna’s last employment was in retail 4 years ago before she came on assistance.

Strengths-based approach:

Get to know the participant. You have been working with Anna for the past 3 years, but since no real progress is being made, it is likely there are important things you do not know about her life. She has been in unstructured job search for the past 3 years, and has been unsuccessful in finding work.

Take a new approach. You have evidence that unstructured job search does not work. Begin by stopping the unsuccessful activity and starting something new. For example, implement a structured, group-based job search that models a real life work situation. The model is a small group of 10 to 15 MFIP participants who meet at 8:00 each morning 5 days a week at the Workforce Center. Each day the group does 1 to 2 hours of activities, and then plans out their strategies for a day of job search. After the group activity, each participant goes out into the community searching for work, applying, and interviewing in a thoughtful manner. The group then reconvenes at 3:30 each day to discuss successes, to network and to share lessons learned. They then start planning for the next day’s job search.

This structure allows you to get to know your participants. You are meeting with them daily, coaching and modeling successful work behavior for them. This intensive model will provide opportunity to observe what works and what does not work. It gives you the opportunity to expand on what does work, using a strengths-based approach, and to stop doing what does not work. The structured job search, strengths-based approach will provide you with much more information about the participant, and increased opportunities to be successful at an earlier stage. Using this model, it is clear to everyone involved that looking for work is a full-time job that demands each job seeker’s full-time attention. It also sends the important message that you are committed to helping them to be successful.

Old barrier-focused model:

The old barrier-focused model would basically have Anna continue doing more of the same activities that had not worked for three years. She would continue to be assessed and informed of all of the barriers that prevent her from being successful. This approach could
cause her to see herself as a failure and she might withdraw even more from the work world.

**In conclusion:**

You may find that a strengths-based approach results in more work initially for you because you are spending more time with the client, designing a plan that is tailored to meet his or her needs, rather than taking a generic approach to working with your participants. However, you should see significant progress for most of the participants you work with. Both you and the MFIP participants will find the strengths-based approach to be much more positive.
PARENTS UNDER AGE 18

Minor participants who have not obtained a high school diploma or the equivalent, and who are not exempt from the requirement to attend school, must develop a plan which includes completion of an appropriate educational program as the 1st goal.

County financial workers will refer minor parents (under 18 years of age) to the county social service agency immediately upon approval of MFIP assistance for assessment and development of a social services plan.

Assessments of minor parents must also consider the results of the early childhood health and developmental screening (for the minor parent and/or the minor’s child) if available, and the effect of the child’s developmental and educational needs on the minor parent’s ability to participate in Employment Services.

If the county social services agency determines that school attendance is not appropriate for a minor parent, the county agency must refer the caregiver to social services for services as provided in Minnesota Statutes, section 257.33.

When minor parents without a high school diploma or GED turn 18, they have the option to continue to receive services from the county social services agency or to switch to an MFIP Employment Services Provider.

Minor parents who obtain a high school diploma or GED prior to their 18th birthday will be referred to ES or the appropriate agency in your area by the county agency.

18- & 19-YEAR OLD PARENTS

18- or 19-year old participants who have not obtained a high school diploma or the equivalent, must complete an individual assessment which provides an initial examination of educational progress and needs, literacy level, child care and supportive needs, family circumstances, skills, and work experience. The county has the option to have the educational assessment and the Employment Plan for 18- and 19-year old participants without a high school or a GED who choose an education option completed by either an Employment Services Provider or by county social services.

The county must allow 18- & 19-year old teen parent participants who do not have a high school diploma or its equivalent to choose an Employment Plan with either:

- An education option.
- OR
A work option.

The education option means that the Employment Plan includes education requirements (high school or its equivalent). The 60-month clock stops for teen parents who choose this option. Employment Plans that include both secondary school attendance and work fall under this option. Income is not counted toward the MFIP grant under this option.

The work option means the Employment Plan includes activities under the regular Employment Services track. The 60-month clock does not stop for teen parents who choose this option. Earned income does count for teens who choose the employment option. County and Employment Services staff working with 18- and 19-year old parents should explain the new option and make specific efforts to inform those who are in sanction for not attending school that there is a new way to come into compliance. Review available school and work options and, together with the participant, select the most appropriate option.

MINOR PARENTS AND 18- & 19-YEAR OLD PARENTS WHO CHOOSE AN EDUCATION OPTION

Minor parents, and 18-and 19-year old parents who choose an education option, must meet educational requirements unless 1 of the 5 conditions below applies or an Employment Plan (EP) indicates education requirements are waived due to safety. Education requirements apply to the individual. In the case of 2-parent families where both parents are under age 20, each must meet the educational requirements.

- No appropriate educational program is identified.
- Transportation services needed to attend school are not available.
- Appropriate child care services are not available.
- The parent is ill or incapacitated seriously enough to prevent school attendance.
- The parent is needed in the home because of the illness or incapacity of another household member. This includes a caregiver of a child who is younger than 6 weeks of age.

Meeting educational requirements means the parent is enrolled in a secondary education program and must meet the program’s attendance requirements.

When school is in session, you have the discretion and are strongly encouraged to include additional hours of participation beyond school activities for teen parents who are only in
school part-time. These requirements should not interfere with completion of school. You may require teens who do not attend school over summer break to participate in work activities and may sanction them for failure to comply.

If the participant chose an education option, the Employment Plan must specify:

- The school or educational program and hours required.
- That school attendance is mandatory.
- The services that will be provided.
- Other activities in which the participant will take part.
- The child care and supportive services that will be provided.

Ensure that the participant understands the consequences for not attending school or following through with the other requirements in the plan.

NOTE: When an 18- or 19-year old caregiver who chose an education option subsequently turns 20 or receives his/her high school diploma or GED, he/she must participate in Employment Services, unless exempt, and is subject to the requirements for other adult participants.

ON-LINE PROGRAMS

Make a referral to the local school district when a minor parent is enrolled in, or has graduated from, an on-line secondary or high school program that is not approved by the MN Dept. of Education. For additional information on on-line learning, go to this MN Department of Education web site: Online Learning. For information on approved on-line learning providers, scroll down. Each district has a transfer specialist who will determine whether the program is acceptable or whether a teen who completed an on-line program meets graduation standards. See the definition of ON-LINE DIPLOMA in §3.33 (GLOSSARY: O-Q...).

Use the work option when an 18- or 19-year old parent is enrolled in, or has graduated from, an on-line secondary or high school program that is not approved by the MN Dept. of Education. These teens may continue the on-line program on their own, but it should not be included in the Employment Plan or counted toward the participation rate.

If the program is not approved, any earned income is counted toward the MFIP grant.
18- & 19-YEAR OLD CAREGIVERS WHO CHOOSE A WORK OPTION

18- and 19-year old caregivers who choose a work option have the same requirements as other adult participants. See §6.3 (Requirements and Sequence of Services), §6.6 (Minimum Hourly Activity Requirements), 7.9.3 (Contents of an Assessment), and §7.15 (Employment Plan (EP)).

SWITCHING FROM/TO EDUCATION OR EMPLOYMENT OPTION

Switch From Education to Employment:
Clients who are 18 or 19 years old may switch from an education option to a work option unless a sanction has been imposed or the NOITS and the Notice of Adverse Action (NOAA) have been sent. If a sanction has been imposed or the NOITS and NOAA have been sent, the client must attend the ES Overview before the sanction process is stopped and sanction lifted. Client will then be required to follow Employment Option requirements.

Switch From Employment to Education:
Clients who are 18 or 19 years old may switch from a work option to an education option unless a sanction has been imposed or the NOITS and Notice of Adverse Action (NOAA) have been sent. If a sanction has been imposed or the NOITS and NOAA have been sent, the client must enroll in and start attending school before the sanction process is stopped and the sanction lifted. Allowances may be made during the summer months if school attendance is not an option. In that case, registration would suffice. Clients will then need to follow education option requirements.
Employment Services staff are often aware that something is interfering with a participant’s ability to follow through with program expectations. However, the precise nature of the barrier is often not clear. Although signals which raise concerns are not necessarily indicators of mental or chemical health issues, they may be signs that the participant could benefit from a professional assessment.

The MFIP Self Screen (DHS-3482), MFIP Self-Screen Scoring Form (DHS-3482A), and the Brief Screening Tool for Special Learning Needs (DHS-3504) are available to chemical and mental health issues, and learning problems earlier and more accurately. Employment services staff are also strongly encouraged to use the DWP/MFIP Observation Checklist (DHS-3483) as a supplement to screening tools. The MFIP Self Screen is available in English and 10 other languages. The Brief Screening Tool for Special Learning Needs (DHS-3504) is available in English only, and SHOULD NOT be used with participants who speak limited English.

The MFIP Self Screen (DHS-3482) and Brief Screening Tool for Special Learning Needs (DHS-3504) must be completed by participants who are unable to find suitable employment after 6 weeks of job search, and by participants who you determine have barriers to employment. Screening tools may only be administered by staff who have been trained in their use. Participants must be told the purpose for screening and how the information will be used to identify and overcome barriers to employment.

For screening protocols and related information, see §7.9.15 (Intervention Levels).
The MFIP Self Screen and Brief Screening Tool must be completed by participants who are unable to find suitable employment after 6 weeks of job search, and by participants who you determine have barriers to employment. Participants must be told the purpose for screening and how the information will be used to identify and overcome barriers to employment.

The intervention levels outlined below are intended to help you approach screening in a fair and consistent manner, sort through issues and develop appropriate Employment Plans. Although the levels are sequential, you should use professional judgment to determine how quickly to move from one level to the next. A clear message should be communicated to participants about options, choices, and consequences at each level.

The signals listed in the Intervention Levels below cover a wide variety of behaviors and experiences that may be indicative of a chemical or mental health problem. You should consider your overall experience working with the participant when making decisions about requiring assessments, and seek input or guidance from co-workers and supervisors when making decisions about how to proceed.

These procedures DO NOT apply, in cases when:

- A professional assessment of chemical or mental health has been obtained in the past year. When a professional assessment has already been obtained, you must work with the participant and other professionals involved with the case to develop an appropriate plan.

- It is clear that an immediate response is necessary to ensure the safety of the participant, staff, or others. Follow your agency’s procedures in cases where it is clear that an immediate response is necessary.

**LEVEL 1 INTERVENTION - AWARENESS THAT ISSUES MAY BE PRESENT:**

A Level 1 intervention occurs when observations and/or available information indicates that chemical or mental health issues may be present and are impacting participation in activities included in a plan.

Signals that may trigger a Level 1 intervention include:

- **Observed behaviors:** Slurred speech, unsteady gait, alcohol on the breath, inability to focus, lethargy, excessive nervousness or agitation, flat affect, inappropriate responses, inappropriate anger or hostility, excessive worry, facial tics or muscle spasms, erratic attendance, lack of follow through.
INTERVENTION LEVELS

- **Self-reported behaviors:** Fighting or arguments related to drug or alcohol use, blackouts or memory loss; concern about use of alcohol or drugs, driving while intoxicated, depression or anxiety; worried that something is wrong with their thinking or mind.

- **Self-reported involvement with other systems:** Past attempts to get help for problems associated with alcohol or drugs; past involvement with a mental health center, agency, or private counselor, legal issues, open child protection case.

Use the DWP/MFIP Observation Checklist ([DHS-3483](#)) to record this information for the case file. The checklist is an important part of documentation supporting actions taken with the participant and requirements included in a plan. See §7.9.24 (Intervention Documentation & Plans).

INTERVENTION AND OUTCOMES

Intervention at this level consists of a conversation with the participant about the observations and/or information that raised concerns.

Possible outcomes of the conversation include:

- Provide resource and referral information.
- Continue with an Employment Plan (EP) as currently written.
- Revise the plan.
- Level 2 intervention.

Stress other available resources and clearly explain that a professional assessment and other activities that address personal issues may be included in an Employment Plan as an alternative to, or in conjunction with, job search, work, and other activities.

LEVEL 2 INTERVENTION - SCREENING AND VOLUNTARY ASSESSMENT:

A Level 2 intervention occurs when continued observations of behavior and/or available information more strongly indicate that:

- Chemical or mental health issues may be present.
- Are interfering with the participant’s ability to obtain or retain employment.
INTERVENTION LEVELS

AND/OR

➢ Affecting progress/compliance with activities in the plan.

In addition to those listed under Level 1, signals that may trigger a Level 2 intervention include:

➢ **Interference with ability to obtain/retain employment:** Participant is unable to obtain employment after 6 weeks of job search, poor follow-through on job search activities, feedback from employers, cycling through jobs, poor attendance at work; not getting along with supervisors or co-workers.

➢ **Non-compliance:** Participant was fired or quit work, failed to attend required program activities, is not meeting participation requirements, is not progressing in activities included in the plan, other failure to follow through on requirements in the plan.

INTERVENTION AND OUTCOMES

Intervention at this level MUST include the MFIP Self-Screen (DHS-3482) and the Brief Screening Tool for Special Learning Needs (DHS-3504). Explain the purpose of screening and how the information will be used to provide assistance. Basic skills testing and questions to identify physical disabilities should be included if this has not already been done. Screening tools may be readministered as necessary. Participants who fail to complete screening tools without good cause may be sanctioned.

Discuss with the participant the observations and/or information that raised concerns, and the results of the screening.

Possible outcomes of this meeting and the assessment include:

➢ Providing resource and referral information.

➢ If the MFIP Self-Screen (DHS-3482) score is 3 or more, revising the participant’s plan to include voluntary completion of a professional assessment.

➢ Revising the EP (revisions other than a professional assessment), with the understanding that continued lack of progress or non-compliance will result in sanction.

➢ Continuing the EP as it is currently written, with the understanding that continued lack of progress or non-compliance will result in sanction.
INTERVENTION LEVELS

- Level 3 intervention.

NOTE: Whenever a chemical use or mental health screen indicates that issues may be present, the participant must be offered at least 1 opportunity to voluntarily complete a professional assessment.

LEVEL 3 INTERVENTION - REQUIREMENT TO COMPLETE PROFESSIONAL ASSESSMENT:

Level 3 interventions occur when:

- The MFIP Self-Screen (DHS-3482) score was 3 or more.
  AND/OR
- Behaviors of concern recorded on the DWP/MFIP Observation Checklist (DHS-3483) indicate that chemical or mental health issues may be present.
  AND
- The participant declined to complete an assessment on a voluntary basis.
  AND
- A sanction for non-compliance is in effect or is imminent.

In addition to those listed under Levels 1 and 2, signals that may trigger a Level 3 intervention include:

- **Results of the MFIP Self-Screen (DHS-3482):** The results of the screen indicate a chemical or mental health issue may be present.

- **Professional chemical or mental health assessment not completed on a voluntary basis:** The participant declined to complete an assessment or the participant claims an assessment was completed but refuses to provide documentation or sign a release of information.

- **Sanction is in effect or imminent:** An MFIP Notice of Intent to Sanction (DHS-3175) (NOITS) has been or will be sent; the participant is responding to a NOITS or a Notice of Adverse Action, or a sanction has been imposed and a professional assessment must be completed in order to lift the sanction.

INTERVENTION AND OUTCOMES

Intervention at this level consists of reviewing the results of the screens, the reasons a sanction was or will be imposed, and what is necessary to cure or avoid sanction. See
Chapter 9 (Non-Compliance and Sanctions).
When the participant’s screening indicates chemical or mental health issues may be present, a professional chemical (Rule 25) or mental health assessment may be required as part of the Employment Plan.

When a professional assessment is required, the participant must verify that the assessment was completed by either providing a copy of the results of the assessment or signing a release of information. Failure to verify that the assessment was completed may result in sanction.

When the participant’s screen DOES NOT indicate that a chemical or mental health issue may be present, a chemical or mental health assessment may be required based on observations and information recorded on the DWP/MFIP Observation Checklist (DHS-3483), and a case review conducted by an Employment Services supervisor.

If a professional assessment is not required, continue or revise the EP (revisions other than a professional assessment), and explain that continued lack of progress or non-compliance will result in sanction.

DATA PRIVACY

For information on obtaining and exchanging information regarding intervention levels, see §7.9.18 (Intervention Levels - Obtaining/Exchanging Information).
Employment Services staff must obtain signed written consent from the person in order to obtain information from an assessor or treatment provider. Employment Services Providers should use the MFIP Employment Services Authorization for Release of Information (DHS-4093) or one of their own design which includes the components of this form, unless something comparable has been developed and approved by the county.

Every effort should be made to ensure that participants understand the release of information form they are being asked to sign. This may mean using an interpreter when the participant has limited English language skills, or reading and explaining the form to a participant with reading ability below the 9th grade level.

**REFUSAL TO SIGN A CONSENT TO OBTAIN OR EXCHANGE PRIVATE INFORMATION**

Participants must be informed that failure to either sign a release of information OR provide some other verifiable documentation will affect the contents of the plan and/or may result in a sanction.

- If the participant does not provide documentation acceptable to the Employment Services Provider or refuses to sign a release of information related to a voluntary Level 2 chemical or mental health assessment, consider this to mean the person did not complete the assessment. Either proceed to a Level 3 intervention or revise the plan as appropriate. Do not impose a sanction.

- If the participant does not provide documentation acceptable to the Employment Services Provider or refuses to sign a release of information related to a required Level 3 chemical or mental health assessment, a sanction may be imposed. The Notice of Intent to Sanction should include specific information about what the participant did not do and what she/he must do to prevent the sanction.

- If the participant does not provide documentation acceptable to the Employment Services Provider or refuses to sign a release of information related to participation in chemical or mental health treatment:
  - **During the 1st 60 months:** Treatment (including continuation of care activities) should not be included or continued in the person’s plan, and any claimed hours should not be counted toward the participation requirement. Revise the plan to replace these activities.
  - **During an extension to the 60-month limit under the ill/incapacitated category** (cases where Employment Services staff are responsible to monitor
the extended case): Notify the county immediately. Participants extended in this category must follow treatment recommendations. Failure to do so means the extension will end unless criteria for another extension category are met.

RELEASING INFORMATION

Employment Services Providers **MUST NOT** release case file information to any party outside of the welfare system prior to receiving a release of information signed by the participant.

If a request for chemical or mental health information comes to the Employment Services Provider from someone within the welfare system (for example: county financial assistance office, county social services), the Employment Services Provider may want to consult the county attorney for advice unless a signed release of information has been provided.

For information on intervention levels, see §7.9.15 (Intervention Levels).
DO NOT use TANF funds to pay for medical services, including mental health diagnosis, psychological testing to make a learning disability determination and chemical dependency assessments. All mental health diagnostic assessments have an integral functional component necessary for diagnostic purposes but which is not in and of itself a billable service. A diagnostic assessment is a specific medical service that can only be conducted by a licensed mental health professional.

**NOTE:** A functional assessment conducted for the sole purpose of determining the impact of a barrier on an individual’s employment is NOT a medical service nor is it equivalent to a mental health diagnostic assessment. Use TANF funds for these assessments.

**IN MANAGED CARE COUNTIES:**

Participants who are enrolled in health plans or Managed Care programs should be assessed through the behavioral health network used by that plan. The cost will be covered for enrolled participants as long as the assessment is completed within the health plan’s network of providers.

Use the health plans to get the health-related assessments your participants need. Be sure to use the correct terminology to ensure that health plans recognize the request as a covered service.

- Use the MFIP Self Screen (**DHS-3482**) and DWP/MFIP Observation Checklist (**DHS 3483**) to help evaluate whether a participant has mental health and/or chemical dependency problems. Use the MFIP Self-Screen Scoring Form (**DHS 3482A**) to record a participant’s score from the MFIP Self Screen (**DHS-3482**).

- Find out from the participant which health plan he or she is enrolled in.

- Use the Greater Minnesota PMAP and MinnesotaCare Contact Grid for Mental Health and Chemical Health Services (**DHS-4484**) to determine how to find a provider to complete the needed professional assessment.

- If the plan requires authorization, help the participant contact the health plan if possible. You should identify yourself and your client, and explain what you are looking for. The participant should also speak directly to the staff.

- For mental health issues ask for a **mental health diagnostic assessment**. “Work” or “vocational” assessments are **not** covered by MA.
For intelligence testing, ask for a psychological assessment for the purpose of determining mental retardation.

For a learning disability, ask for a psychological assessment for the purpose of determining a learning disability.

For a chemical health issue, ask for a chemical dependency assessment.

Let the behavioral health provider for the health plan know if you believe the participant needs a mental health assessment, or a chemical dependency assessment, or both, or if you are not certain which type of assessment needs to be done.


Send the assessor the MFIP Employment Services Authorization for Release of Information (DHS-4093), as well as a copy of the MFIP Self Screen (DHS-3482), DWP/MFIP Observation Checklist (DHS-3483), and any other relevant information.

NOTE: Do not forward third party information unless specifically detailed in the release of information.

Health plan providers will apply the “medically necessary” criteria when determining whether a service is covered. To help ensure that mental and chemical health assessments are recognized as covered services, participants should understand why they are being referred and be able to convey that information to the assessor. You should also develop a cover letter that can be sent to the assessor when a referral is being made, along with a copy of the MFIP Self-Screen Scoring Form (DHS-3482A) when the total score is 3 or more (requires a signed release of information).

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- Assessing work functionality is not a core competency for professionals who administer psychological or behavioral assessments. Some professionals do have skills in this area, but it is a specialty. You can request an assessor with that specialty or specialization in Social Security disability assessment. Some health plans are able to identify their network providers with these specialties.

- Asking for an IQ test is sometimes rebuffed; it is better to ask for a psychological...
assessment to determine mental retardation or a learning disability. That will typically result in an IQ test being completed.

- ARMHS is a benefit for adults with severe mental illness. These are not covered services under the health plans but PMAP members still have this benefit through straight MA.

- Care managers at the health plans are available for difficult or complicated cases. Ask to speak with a care manager, but only if the intake or customer service staff can’t address your client’s needs.

- ES providers have reported that if you take the participant to the assessment, the “no-show” rate drastically declines.

- Create a relationship with the mental health provider and if the needed assessments are numerous enough, some ES providers have negotiated standing appointments they can fill with participants.

- If the participant is recently out of school, many times learning disabilities have already been documented. Attempt to access any records there might be through the public school district last attended.

**USEFUL TERMINOLOGY:**

**Prepaid Medical Assistance Program (PMAP):** DHS contracts with and makes payments to health plans to deliver health care to eligible MA and GAMC recipients. Health plans must provide all medically necessary MA/GAMC covered services.

**Adult Rehabilitative Mental Health Services (ARMHS):** This is an option under MA that allows for greater flexibility in how and by whom services can be provided. The ARMHS services are mental health services which are rehabilitative and enable the recipient to develop and enhance psychiatric stability, social competencies, personal and emotional adjustment, and independent living and community skills, when these abilities are impaired by the symptoms of mental illness. ARMHS are also appropriate when provided to enable a recipient to retain stability and functioning, if the recipient would be at risk of significant functional decompensation or more restrictive service settings without these services.

ARMHS instruct, assist, and support the recipient in areas such as, interpersonal communication skills, community resource utilization and integration skills, crisis assistance, relapse prevention skills, health care directives, budgeting and shopping.
skills, healthy lifestyle skills and practices, cooking and nutrition skills, transportation skills, medication education and monitoring, mental illness symptom management skills, household management skills, employment-related skills, and transition to community living services.

ARMHS services are carved out of the health plans so providers bill straight MA when giving these services to PMAP members.

For a full list of ARMHS providers from the DHS website, go to this link: [http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/id_004956](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/id_004956). Or go to the DHS home page [www.dhs.state.mn.us](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us) and type in “ARMHS” in the Search area. It will give you several options. One of the options is a list of all the ARMHS providers in the state.

**Work Assessment, Vocational Assessment, Functional Assessment:** These types of assessments are typically used by Mental Health Supported Employment or Rehabilitation Services Counselors. It combines a psychological assessment with a functional work assessment. They are used by the counselor to help make vocational recommendations about the type of work that might be appropriate for a participant as well as limitations.

**Mental Health Diagnostic:** This type of assessment is primarily for mental health but uses a more comprehensive approach in order to screen for other factors such as physical concerns and chemical use. When seeking a diagnostic assessment for suspected mental health issues, a “diagnostic or behavioral health assessment” should be requested. If it is unclear whether the issues are stemming from chemical abuse or mental health issues, this type of assessment would be able to screen for chemical dependency issues as well. It is best to advise the assessor if chemical issues are suspected.

**Rule 25 Assessment:** When seeking a chemical health assessment, do not ask a health plan for a Rule 25 assessment, just ask for a chemical dependency assessment. Only counties can provide Rule 25 assessments. Health plans may be contracted with other facilities to do such assessments.

**Learning Disability Assessment:** If you need an IQ determined, ask for psychological assessment for determination of mental retardation or learning disability.

**IN FEE-FOR-SERVICE COUNTIES:**

Participants who are NOT enrolled in health plans or managed care programs should be assessed by a qualified professional who will accept Medical Assistance (MA) reimbursement.
Refer or direct participants who have been determined to need a professional assessment to call a qualified MA enrolled professional. It is important to request “mental health diagnostic testing” and/or a “chemical dependency assessment”. Use the correct terminology to ensure that MA enrolled providers recognize the request as a covered service. A copy of the screening tool and scoring form should accompany the referral.
Use the DWP/MFIP Observation Checklist (DHS-3483) to record behaviors of concern and related information as you work with participants who may be experiencing mental or chemical health issues. Document the following items in the case file:

- Signals that triggered an intervention.
- Level of intervention.
- A summary of conversations with the participant, including results of screening, as well as substantial impacts on employment that were identified.
- Whether a professional chemical use or mental health assessment was agreed to voluntarily or is being required.

Update Employment Plans to:

- Incorporate assessment activities.
- Include treatment recommended as a result of the assessment and any other changes to activities resulting from an intervention.

Treatment (including continuation of care activities) may be included in the Employment Plan on a voluntary basis for participants in the 1st 60 months on assistance. If Employment Services staff remain responsible for the case after an extension to the 60-month time limit is approved under the ill/incapacitated category, include and require treatment recommendations in the Employment Plan as a condition of the extension. See §10.33.3 (Ill/Incapacitated Extensions). Clearly indicate on the plan whether the activity is required or voluntary.
When you require a mental and/or chemical health assessment in an Employment Plan, you must ensure that the necessary support services, such as child care and transportation, are available for such an assessment.

MFIP child care funds may be used to cover child care expenses related to chemical or mental health assessments, treatment, therapy, and those related to mental health case management or mental health extended Employment Services. Note that child care costs associated with inpatient treatment may be available under the child care fund 30-day medical leave policy. Contact local child care staff for additional information.
People with disabilities have the right to participate in, and benefit from, the MFIP program. People with disabilities, including mental illness or, under certain circumstances, chemical dependency, are considered disabled if the condition affects 1 or more basic life functions, including the ability to work. After a disability is documented, you and the participant should develop a plan which includes reasonable accommodations if requested or agreed to by the participant. When designing accommodations, you should seek input from those professionals who assessed the participant and can evaluate his or her ability to perform various activities. Inform participants with disabilities about their rights to reasonable accommodations.

Tailor job search and employment activities to meet the needs of the disabled participant. For example, job search could be limited to certain geographical areas for a participant whose recovery from drug dependence would be compromised if he/she is required to look for work in certain neighborhoods. A participant with a disability should not be required to accept a job that aggravates a condition or requires skills which the disability prevents the participant from acquiring. For example, a participant with a stress-related mental disorder should not be required to accept a position which will increase exposure to stress because of a demanding workload or constant deadline pressures. Another accommodation may be to include fewer hours of work or work activities in the plan.

In the area of chemical dependency, federal requirements to make accommodations apply to participants who do not currently use illegal drugs or abuse legal drugs (alcohol and/or prescription AND:

- Have successfully completed a drug rehabilitation program.
- Are participating a supervised drug rehabilitation program.
- Are mistakenly regarded as engaging in drug use.

NOTE: Federal requirements do not apply to participants who are currently using drugs, possession or distribution of which is illegal, or who are abusing legal drugs under the Federal Controlled Substances Act. Services can be denied if the denial is based on current use of illegal drugs or abuse of legal drugs UNLESS the current abuser is otherwise disabled. For example, if the denial is based on a hearing impairment. In these cases, ES Providers should do whatever is reasonable to facilitate assessment, treatment, and ongoing recovery.
Most caregivers will participate in job search activities at some point during their involvement with Employment Services. Job search is an important and central activity that should be designed not just to help locate a job, but also to prepare participants for work. See §7.12.3 (Structured Job Search).

FIRST 6 WEEKS OF JOB SEARCH

At enrollment in Employment Services, participants that you determine possess sufficient skills to succeed in obtaining unsubsidized employment must job search at least 30 hours per week for up to 6 weeks, and accept any offer of suitable employment. Additional work activities necessary to meet hourly requirements should also be included in the Employment Plan (EP). The goal is to actively engage each participant in intensive job search activities that meet the minimum requirements of §7.15 (Employment Plan (EP)). Job search activities should be tailored to meet local economic conditions, and the participant’s individual needs when possible. See §7.12.3 (Structured Job Search). Participants who are unable to find suitable employment after 6 weeks must complete the MFIP Self Screen and the Brief Screening Tool for Special Learning Needs, and meet with a job counselor to determine whether other activities should be incorporated into the plan. See §7.9.3 (Contents of an Assessment) and §7.9.12 (Chemical/Mental Health/Learning Needs Screening).

Upon agreement by the job counselor and the participant, an Employment Plan may limit a job search to jobs that are consistent with the participant’s employment goal. Participants may search for any currently available job that matches their current skills and abilities. For example, a participant with graphic arts skills and/or experience may limit job search to businesses that hire graphic artists, as long as there are jobs currently available in those firms. However, if the participant is unable to obtain employment among the firms with current openings, the search must be expanded to other employers with current openings, regardless of whether the job matches the participant's interests, skills, or training. Make clear to participants when the job search must be expanded to include other employers and what constitutes “suitable employment”.

JOB SEARCH AFTER 6 WEEKS

Job Search activities which are continued after 6 weeks must be structured and supervised. Participation in job search activities beyond 6 weeks should be continued as necessary, and recorded in WF1, even though these hours do not count toward the participation rate. It may also be necessary to add job search into an EP at a later time for participants who were initially determined unable to obtain unsubsidized employment, after a job loss, or for participants who are not meeting participation requirements though unsubsidized employment after completion of an education or training activity. See §7.12.3 (Structured Job Search).
Job search activities may be terminated or reduced if it becomes obvious that the job search is not appropriate or the participant is having difficulty successfully following through with activities in the Employment Plan. Revisions of the plan should take into account relevant issues identified during any additional assessment and any changes in circumstances.

**NOTE:** In some cases up to half the hourly requirements in a participant’s Employment Plan may be ESL, FWL, GED or ABE activities. For more information on policies and limits for these activities, see §7.22 (Limits on ESL and Functional Work Literacy (FWL)) and §7.23.3 (Basic Education or GED).
Job search is difficult for anyone, and even more difficult for inexperienced job seekers. For that reason counties and ES providers are encouraged to implement structured job search for most, if not all, MFIP job-seekers.

Structured job search is more a philosophical approach than one single model for helping participants develop the skills to successfully find and keep a job. In general, structured job search is a continuum of organized, intensive, and supervised activities that help identify work skills, develop soft skills, build confidence, coach, and provide peer support. Expectations for participants in job search activities should parallel expectations they will encounter in real life employment.

COMMON FEATURES

Most structured job search components include:

- **Requirement to participate in on-site activities.** Participants are expected to treat job search as their job, until they find a job. This means there is significant involvement in structured, on-site activities when the participant is not interviewing or doing other approved off-site activities. At a minimum, participants start and end their day at the Employment Services office.

- **Workplace expectations.** Participants are expected to model workplace behavior. Expectations such as appropriate dress, timeliness, and engaged participation should be established and enforced. The job search group usually helps to develop and enforce these expectations.

- **Skill building workshops.** Skill building workshops cover a wide variety of topics under the umbrella of “job seeking and keeping skills”. Suggested workshop topics include preparation for job search and work activities such as organizing child care and transportation, and identifying a support network for the participant. Skills identification, including soft skills, work history, and basic skills testing, if appropriate. Job seeking skills, including how to fill out applications, how to write a resume, networking, cold calling, and job fairs. Job retention skills including attendance, conflict management, diversity, employee rights, and career advancement. And lastly, life skills such as budgeting, taxes, stress management, parenting, and mentoring opportunities.

- **Job club.** Job club is generally the daily group meeting that participants must attend after completing workshops, or in combination with attendance at workshops. Job club meetings are often used to discuss the successes and difficulties participants encountered during their daily job search; to share job
leads; to provide group support. Documentation of the day’s job search activities can be turned in at this meeting, and form the basis for both the group discussion as well as the plan for the next day’s job search. The level of structure in the job club varies greatly and can be tailored to meet the needs of the MFIP job seekers in your county.

- **Frequent evaluation of progress and feedback to the participant.** Consistent, constructive feedback on progress, and assistance with ongoing planning, are critical pieces of structured job search. This can happen during daily check-ins, job club, and individual meetings with a job counselor.

In general, successful job search programs offer a variety of hard and soft skills training, as well as regular job club and networking opportunities. Requirements and expectations parallel as closely as possible the work environment and the expectations participants will encounter when they begin working. Participants are required to engage actively in specific activities for the full number of hours specified in their plan. These activities effectively become the participant’s “job” until paid employment is found. Operating an effective structured job search component has the potential to improve the effectiveness of skill and needs assessments; help staff develop more effective Employment Plans; increase accountability.

For more information, see §7.12 (Job Search Activities and Time Lines), §6.9 (MFIP Participation Rate).
Do not routinely refer participants to a single employer, or a select set of employers, to the exclusion of other employers with current job openings. Consider the individual needs and abilities of individual participants when referring them to employers. Make referrals to employers with the best interests of the participant in mind. The participant is free to seek employment from all employers in the area.

The above notwithstanding, in certain circumstances you may refer a participant to a single employer known to be hiring, for example, when a participant appears to be purposely failing to obtain employment. Participants may be sanctioned for failure to follow through on this referral or for failure to accept an offer of suitable employment.

While permanent employment should be the primary goal, temporary employment (when it meets the definition of suitable employment) is 1 option participants may pursue to meet participation requirements. Temporary jobs can provide work experience, increase the participant's income, and lead to a permanent job. Use professional judgment when deciding if a referral to a temporary agency should be used as a method to help ensure that the participant accepts suitable employment. You are responsible for making referrals to reputable temporary agencies which ensure placements that meet the definition of suitable employment. Participants may be sanctioned for failure to accept suitable temporary employment. See SUITABLE EMPLOYMENT in §3.39 (Glossary: S...).
An Employment Plan (EP) is a social contract between the county/ES provider and each participant. The purpose of the EP is to identify for each participant the most direct path to unsubsidized employment and any subsequent steps that support long-term economic stability. The plan should clearly outline commitments on the part of both the county/ES provider and the participant. See §3.15 (Glossary: E...) for the definition of Employment Plan.

WHO MUST COMPLY WITH AN EP

All MFIP participants are mandatory and must develop and comply with an EP, unless they have a child under the age of 12 weeks and they have not previously used this exception. See §5.6 (Timing for Employment Services).

Failure on the part of mandatory participant to develop or comply with hourly requirements in an EP may result in a sanction. Failure to sign an Employment Plan is considered failure to develop an EP and should result in a sanction. See §6.6 (Minimum Hourly Activity Requirements), §9.18 (Guidelines for Working with Sanctioned Participants). Failure to develop or comply on the part of a voluntary participant may result in closure of the Employment Services case. See §9.3 (Non-Compliance).

WHEN TO DO AN EP

Employment Plans are based on information gathered during the assessment process and throughout participation in the program. Development of a basic EP should begin during the first meeting with a job counselor, or shortly thereafter. The EP is a “living document” that should be reviewed at least every 3 months and revised whenever necessary. See §7.9 (Assessment). For additional information, see:

- §7.3 Allowable Activities
- §7.15.3 Functions of the Employment Plan
- §7.15.6 Goals in the Employment Plan
- §7.15.9 Order of Preference for Work Activities
- §7.15.12 Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence
- §7.15.15 Modified Employment Plans
- §7.15.18 Employment Plans for Participants With a Disability

CONTENTS OF THE EP

The EP must include:

- The participant’s overall employment goal.
EMPLOYMENT PLAN (EP) 7.15

- Activities and steps necessary to reach that goal.
- Hours of participation and a time line for each activity.
- Expectations and measure(s) used to determine satisfactory progress.
- Meetings with the job counselor.
- Documentation/verification requirements.
- The support services that will be provided.

Whenever job search is included in an EP, indicate whether it will be supervised or unsupervised (must be supervised after 6 weeks).

Clearly indicate that all activities in the plan are mandatory unless otherwise specified. See §7.3 (Allowable Activities). EPs must be signed and dated by you and the participant. Revisions to an existing EP should also be initialed and dated by both.

EPs should include enough hours to meet participation requirements unless a compelling reason to do less is case-noted in the participant’s file. See §6.6 (Minimum Hourly Activity Requirements). Note that teen parents meet secondary education requirements by enrolling in and attending school, and that plans developed for a volunteer may include less than the hourly participation requirement for mandatory single or 2-parent families. See §7.9.9 (Requirements for Teen Parents) and §6.6 (Minimum Hourly Activity Requirements).

Employment Plans may include any work activity, however, participation in activities that meet core hourly requirements are a primary consideration when developing or revising an EP. Use the information in §7.12.3 (Structured Job Search) to determine core and non-core activity hours, and the Levels of Activities list in §7.15.9 (Order of Preference for Work Activities) as a guide to selecting activities.

VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

Victims of family violence who want to be exempt from the 60-month lifetime limit MUST request a Family Violence Waiver Option and develop an Employment Plan. See §7.15.12 (Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence), §7.29 (Family Violence Waiver Option), §7.29.3 (Person Trained in Domestic Violence).
The Employment Plan:

- Identifies the participant's self-support and employment goals, breaks those goals into smaller objectives, and lists the steps the participant must take to achieve the goals in the shortest time reasonably possible.

- Documents the partnership between the participant and you. It specifies what each of you will do and when each is expected to do it.

- Helps gauge progress. It serves as a tool for determining participant progress and compliance with the expectations of MFIP Employment Services.

- Identifies the parameters that are used to determine non-compliance.
An important part of your job is helping participants set goals. The primary goal for participants is employment, but other goals may be included in the Employment Plan to fit the participant’s circumstances.

Goals should be SPECIFIC, REALISTIC, and ACHIEVABLE.

- **SPECIFIC**: Describe the goal in such a way that both the participant and you will know when the goal has been reached.

- **REALISTIC**: The goal must represent a measurable step toward self-sufficiency and must be acceptable to the participant and you.

- **ACHIEVABLE**: The goal must be within the participant’s abilities. It must not require resources beyond what you can provide.

For goals for victims of family violence, see §7.15.12 (Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence).
When selecting activities to include in an Employment Plan, select activities as high in the following hierarchy of activities as possible:

1. Unsubsidized employment.
2. Job search.
3. Subsidized employment or unpaid work experience.
4. Unsubsidized employment and job readiness education or job skills training.
5. Unsubsidized employment or unpaid work experience and activities related to a family violence waiver or pre-employment needs.
6. Activities related to a family violence waiver or pre-employment activities.

The above hierarchy is intended as a guide as you work with participants to develop Employment Plans. It does not provide specific guidance about what to include in every participant’s Employment Plan. The assumption behind the hierarchy is that it will not be possible for every participant to work full-time at every point during their time on financial assistance.

**NOTE:** Any activity listed above may not be achievable without identifying several smaller steps. Transitioning from 1 level of activity to another may also require identifying several smaller steps for the participant. The Employment Plan must also include these specific steps.

Participants who pursue training options must include part-time work in their plan.

Participants whose Employment Plans contain social and health services should consider the benefits of combining these services with employment.

When selecting activities to be included in an Employment Plan, you should consider the following additional criteria:

- With few exceptions, all activities must put the participant on the most direct path to employment.
- All activities in the Employment Plan should build upon prior steps.
- All activities must contribute to the participant's overall employment goal.
VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

Participants with a Family Violence Waiver may have a modified order of preference, depending on their safety needs. Employment Plans developed for participants with an approved Family Violence Waiver must ensure the safety of the caregiver and children. The plan must include work activities designed to lead to economic stability. The expert trained in domestic violence and the participant determines whether a work activity endangers the safety of the participant and/or children.

For a list of allowable activities, see §7.3 (Allowable Activities).
Victims of family violence may be exempt from the 60-month time limit when they comply with a modified Employment Plan (EP) under the Family Violence Waiver Option.

Employment Plans for participants with Family Violence Waivers should include activities designed to lead to economic stability when these activities do not endanger the safety of the participant or the children.

DEVELOPING A MODIFIED EMPLOYMENT PLAN

The modified Employment Plan (EP) for a participant with an approved Family Violence Waiver (FVW) must be developed, or revised, with:

- The job counselor.
- The participant.
- A person trained in domestic violence.

See person trained in domestic violence in §3.33 (Glossary: O-Q...).

Every EP for victims of family violence should be:

- Focused on safety first.
- Realistic and achievable.
- Individually created, based on the participant’s circumstances.

Development of an EP must include the understanding that participants should contact their job counselor immediately if they are having difficulty complying with the activities in the EP. If issues related to family violence impact the participant’s ability to comply, the EP should be revised.

POSSIBLE WORK ACTIVITIES TO BE INCLUDED IN AN EP FOR VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

Use the work activities in §7.3 (Allowable Activities), and levels of work activities in §7.15.9 (Order of Preference for Work Activities). The list below is provided as guidance only.

Safety-related items:
- Checking in with a domestic violence advocate.
- Carrying a cell phone (if available).
- Changing phone numbers.
- Changing locks and improving security of building/apartment. (Funding is
sometimes available for these purposes through victim/witness projects.)  
➢ Investigating the possibility of court action (Order for Protection or criminal prosecution).  
➢ Assuring that school or day care is aware of the current situation, and that the abuser is not authorized to pick up the children.  
➢ Setting up code words or arrangements at work to call police if necessary.  
➢ Making a police report.  

Other supports:  
➢ Having children work with a children’s advocate from the community or battered women’s program.  
➢ Providing additional time for counseling appointments or support groups  

Employment activities:  
➢ Having independent job search activities, such as searching the Internet, or volunteer work activities in community or school.  
➢ Continuing work, if proper safety precautions are followed by management.  
➢ Changing job sites or duties.  
➢ Changing jobs to a place unknown to the abuser.  

NOTE: A participant cannot be required to have or obtain an Order for Protection or to attend counseling when developing an EP. A participant also cannot be required to move away from the abuser.  

EXEMPTION FROM 60-MONTH TIME LIMIT  
As long as a participant has an approved EP and is complying with it, he/she is exempt from the 60-month time limit. There is no limit on the number of months a participant may be exempt from the time limit. It is extremely important that all parties involved inform each other about the status of the EP so that information in the computer systems is current. 

APPROVAL OF AN EMPLOYMENT PLAN (EP)  
Approval of the EP should only be made after careful consideration and consultation with the participant and the person trained in domestic violence to ensure that decisions made are in the best interest of the participant and children.  

REVISING/REVIEWING A MODIFIED EMPLOYMENT PLAN  
The purpose of the review is to determine if the activities are still appropriate and the participant is able to safely comply with the EP.
Take into consideration any changes in the participant’s safety level, when reviewing the EP. Discuss possible revision or modifications with the client and the person trained in domestic violence. Not all participants will be able to engage in employment work activities. You and county staff will need to rely on the expertise of the person trained in domestic violence and the victim to determine what is appropriate and safe. You must grant “good cause” when incidents beyond the participant’s control interfere with their ability to comply with activities mutually agreed to in the EP.

Whenever an EP is developed or revised, you or the county must include the person trained in domestic violence and the participant in determining what activities to be include in the EP.

FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH A MODIFIED EMPLOYMENT PLAN

When a participant fails to comply with the EP, review the plan to determine whether the plan is still appropriate. If the participant is unable to safely comply with activities, the plan should be revised. If the participant is able to comply with activities, but fails to do so, the exemption from the 60-month limit ends and the participant is subject to sanctioning.

For information on non-compliance and sanctions, see Chapter 9 (Non-Compliance and Sanctions).
The law allows modified Employment Plans based on the special needs of the family, such as limitations due to illness or disability of the caregiver or another member of the household.

Those caregivers identified below may develop a modified Employment Plan (EP) that includes reduced hours or participation below requirements in §6.6 (Minimum Hourly Activity Requirements), and activities that address their specific needs.

- A participant who has been diagnosed by a qualified professional as suffering from an illness or incapacity that is expected to last for 30 days or more.

- A participant who is determined by a qualified health professional as being needed in the home to care for an ill or incapacitated family member.

- A woman who is pregnant if the pregnancy has resulted in an incapacity that prevents the woman from obtaining or retaining employment and the incapacity has been certified by a qualified health professional.

- A caregiver with a child or an adult in the household who meets the disability or medical criteria for home care services or a home and community based waiver services program or meets the criteria for severe emotional disturbance or serious and persistent mental illness.

- A participant who is age 60 or older.

For all participants who have a modified EP, review their status every 3 months to see if their circumstances have changed. This review can be accomplished through a file review, a phone call, a letter or a face to face meeting. If the modified EP is no longer necessary, meet with the caregiver within 10 days to revise the EP. For information on EPs for participants with a Family Violence Waiver, see §7.15.12 (Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence). For information on EPs for teen parents, see §7.9.9 (Requirements for Teen Parents). Also see §5.6 (Timing for Employment Services).
When the caregiver has a documented disability the job counselor and participant should develop a plan that includes reasonable accommodations. When designing the plan, job counselors should seek input from those professionals who assessed the participant and can evaluate his or her ability to perform the activities in the plan. It is the responsibility of the job counselor to inform all participants of their right to reasonable accommodations per guidance under the Americans With Disabilities Act. See §4.12 (Civil Rights and the Americans with Disabilities Act).

EXAMPLES OF EMPLOYMENT PLANS

- **Ill or incapacitated for more than 30 days:**
  Caregivers in this category should have documentation from a qualified medical professional on file stating the nature and duration of the illness or incapacity. The Employment Plan should be based on this documentation until it is either updated or expires. If the participant is unable to participate for 30 days or more, verification in the file should say he or she is totally unable to participate for a certain length of time. This plan should include follow through with treatment recommendations, regular meetings with the job counselor, and the date when the verification must be updated.

  Employment Services providers should help with any special transportation requirements and make other accommodations as necessary.

  **NOTE:** Medical Assistance can reimburse participants for the cost of transportation for medical services covered by Medicaid. Refer participants to their financial worker for information about MA reimbursement.

  Alternate arrangements should be made if the participant’s condition prohibits him or her from coming to the Employment Services office. Alternate arrangements also include home visits, telephone interviews, and mailing the Employment Plan for signature if necessary.

  The Employment Plan should only contain activities and hourly requirements appropriate to the participant’s circumstances. If appropriate, an application for SSI should be pursued.

**Non-Compliance:**
Participants may not be sanctioned for failure to follow through with treatment recommendations. However, a sanction may be imposed for non-compliance with developing a plan or other activities in the plan (required meetings, maintain
contact, verifications, etc.) as long as those activities are within the participant’s abilities and necessary accommodations have been made. The participant may also be eligible to claim good cause if unable to meet the requirements of the plan. See §9.6 (Good Cause for Non-Compliance).

- **Participant is unable to participate for less than 30 days:**
The EP for a participant with verification of an illness or incapacity that expires within 30 days will most often include the same activities listed in the example above, as well as activities that will be required after the verification of illness expires.

Some participants may have recovered fully and will not need a modified EP. Others may be able to participate but on a more limited basis. Activities included in the plan should be based on recommendations from the medical or other qualified professional who treats the participant. Continued treatment or therapy should be included in the plan as necessary and with the participant’s agreement. The EP should not include an expectation that the participant will accept a job that aggravates an identified disability/condition or that requires skills the disability prevents the person from acquiring. For example, an individual with a stress related mental health disorder should not be required to accept a position that would increase exposure to a stress level (demanding workload; deadline pressure) that would negatively impact the participant’s recovery.

The Employment Plan should only contain activities and hourly requirements appropriate to the participant’s circumstances. Employment Services providers should help meet any special transportation requirements and make other accommodations as necessary.

**NOTE:** Medical Assistance can reimburse participants for the cost of transportation for medical services covered by Medicaid. Job Counselors should refer participants to their financial worker for information about MA reimbursement.

**Non-Compliance:**
Participants may not be sanctioned for failure to follow through with treatment recommendations. However, a sanction may be imposed for non-compliance with developing a plan or other activities in the plan as long as those activities and hourly requirements are within the participant’s abilities and necessary accommodations have been made. A participant may have good cause for failure to comply. See §9.6 (Good Cause for Non-Compliance).
Participant is needed in the home to care for a disabled household member:
The Employment Plan for participants with verification from a qualified professional should include information about the level of participation that can be reasonably expected from the participant given the family circumstances and the extent to which the caregiver is needed in the home.

If the household member is a child active in an educational program during part of the day, activities may be scheduled during the time the child is not under the parent’s supervision. For example, the Employment Plan may require the caregiver to attend parenting classes 2 days a week from 11:00 to 2:00 or could require the participant to seek part-time work that does not interfere with the caregiver’s ability to care for the disabled household member.

The EP should only contain activities and hourly requirements appropriate to the participant’s circumstances.

Non-Compliance:
The participant can be sanctioned for non-compliance if he or she fails to cooperate with developing a plan or with activities in the plan that do not interfere with their responsibilities for providing care for the disabled household member. In situations where their plan conflicts due to changes in the needs of the household member, the plan should be modified. Good cause policies remain in effect. See §9.6 (Good Cause for Non-Compliance).
For the definition of self-employment, see §3.39 (Glossary: S...).

All participants should be encouraged to look for employment that will lead to their self-sufficiency. Participants with an approved Employment Plan that includes self-employment must meet the participation requirements. Count only the hours when the participant earns at least the federal minimum wage toward the participation requirements. Participants who earn less than the state minimum wage multiplied by their required number of hours per week must work or job search for a number of hours which, when added to their earnings divided by the minimum wage, totals the required number of hours. See §7.18.6 (Calc. Hours of Add’l Work/Job Search Required) for information on calculating hours of additional work/job search requirement. This applies regardless of the actual number of self-employed hours worked.

**Business Plans**

Self-employment activities may be included in an Employment Plan contingent on the development of a business plan.

Business plans establish a timetable and earning goals that will result in the participant exiting MFIP. Business plans MUST be developed with assistance from an individual or organization with expertise in small business as approved by the job counselor.

Participants who are already self-employed when they are referred to Employment Services should be offered the opportunity to work with an organization with staff training to assist in the development of business plans. The business professional should offer these participants suggestions on how to revise their business plans so they result in greater profitability and hopefully a level of income that would allow the family to leave assistance. Those who do not want to access these services should work with the job counselor to determine other ways to move toward greater self-sufficiency. For information on handling plans for farming, see §7.9.3 (Contents of an Assessment), §7.15 (Employment Plan (EP)).

Revise the Employment Plan for participants who fail without good cause, to make satisfactory progress as established in their business plan and replace self-employment with other approved work activities.

**NOTE:** When 1 parent in a 2-parent family is self-employed, he/she may employ the other parent (regardless of marital status). However, wages will be counted against the MFIP grant and yet cannot be deducted as a business expense in the grant calculation. This means the family would most likely be better off if both parents are not jointly self-employed. Job counselors should contact the financial worker for help determining the financial impact on the family.
Monitoring Self-Employment Plans

Work with the participant to develop an Employment Plan. Depending on how the business plan is written, the Employment Plan will resemble or incorporate it completely.

Work with the county child care office to ensure that child care is provided.

Meet at least the minimum standards for client/job counselor contact.

Take appropriate and timely steps to sanction participants who are out of compliance with their plans.

Every 3 months following development of the Employment Plan, work with the participant and the organization responsible for the business plan to evaluate whether self-employment will continue to be the overall employment goal.

Organizations that work with small business owners

The U.S. Small Business Administration assists small businesses to start up and grow. The MN District office offers free counseling and technical assistance, pre-business planning workshops and information on starting and managing a small business through the SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTERS, WOMEN'S BUSINESS CENTERS, the BUSINESS INFORMATION CENTER, TRIBAL BUSINESS INFORMATION CENTER and SCORE. A full range of financial assistance programs is also available. Links to various resources are below:

- SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION/MINNESOTA
  http://www.sba.gov/mn/

- MINNESOTA SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTERS
  http://www.bplans.com/sb/index.cfm?a=state&s=mn

- SCORE: http://www.scoremn.org/

- UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS/SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER
  http://www.stthomas.edu/sbdc/

- SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCE GUIDE/MINNESOTA
DEED SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTERS:
http://www.mnsbdc.com/

TRIBAL BUSINESS INFORMATION CENTERS
http://www.sba.gov/naa/tribes/

Rent in Return for Work

If families can produce either a check stub or statement from the landlord indicating that they have worked in exchange for rent reduction, the household can count the earnings as earned income. Hours of participation are calculated using the self-employment method outlined above. These hours will be taken from MAXIS. Code WF1 as either part-time or full-time employment. Business plan is not needed.

If the family makes a good faith effort to receive the rent reduction as cash or to produce evidence that they are working in exchange for rents and are unable to do either, the earning are considered “in-kind” income and are not counted against the grant. Job counselor can code as unpaid work experience if it can be shown that participation in this activity is a meaningful activity that will provide marketable job skills and will assist the client in obtaining paid employment in the future. For verification and documentation requirements, see §7.3.3 (Paid Employment Activities).
Self-employed participants’ monthly earnings are used to determine ongoing exemptions as well as participation requirements for self-employed participants who are not exempt.

A participant's earnings are calculated by taking reported income from self-employment and subtracting reported self-employment expenses. The financial worker will gather and share this information.

Use the actual amount of earnings counted against the participant’s grant in a given month to determine participation hours for that month. This figure is taken from the MAXIS system. It can represent either the actual earnings for a previous month or a rolling average of earnings over the year, depending on how the participant's income is counted against the grant. Communicate each month with the financial worker so that you know what earnings figure was used that month in calculating the participant's additional work/job search requirement.
Use the monthly earnings figure calculated by the financial worker to determine how many hours self-employed participants are required to work or participate in other work-related activities:

1. Start with the participant's monthly earnings figure, as calculated by the financial worker. Call the financial worker for this figure if it is not provided on a Status Update form.

2. Divide that number by 4.3 to arrive at a weekly earnings figure (there are an average of 4.3 weeks in a month).

3. Divide that figure by the federal minimum wage to arrive at the number of hours per week for which the participant is earning minimum wage.

A participant's counted earnings are $460 in a given month.

\[
\begin{align*}
$460.00 & \quad \text{Earnings} \\
\div 4.3 & \quad \text{Weeks per month} \\
$106.98 & \quad \text{Weekly earnings} \\
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
$106.98 & \quad \text{Minimum wage} \\
\div $5.85 & \quad \text{Hours of minimum wage work equivalent} \\
$ 18.28 & \quad \text{Hours of participation requirement} \\
30 - 35 & \quad \text{Hours additional work requirement} \\
\end{align*}
\]

In this case, the expectation should be that the participant will find additional work or participate in job search for at least 12 hours per week in this month, unless there is a compelling reason to expect fewer hours.

Participant’s income from self-employment will fluctuate. This will be particularly true in the case of people who are seasonally employed and choose not to use the rolling average to calculate their earnings. This means that the required number of hours of work will also fluctuate from month to month.

**NOTE:** Participants are required to fulfill this work requirement regardless of how many hours they actually work in self-employment. Many small businesses require long hours of work for very little economic return, especially when they are just starting out. However, even if a participant is working 60 hours per week in self-
employment, if he/she is not earning the equivalent of minimum wage for the required number of hours, he/she will be subject to additional work requirements or face sanction. Make this aspect of MFIP clear to participants who are considering self-employment.
Participants can receive child care for approved activities in an Employment Plan, including hours necessary to develop a business plan and a reasonable amount of start-up time where the business may be generating little or no income.

A reasonable amount of start-up time should be determined with assistance from the organization helping to develop the business plan. In general, Department of Human Services (DHS) recommends reviewing the plan after 3 to 6 months to determine whether the plan is still appropriate. After this period of time, only hours where the participant is earning minimum wage should be approved. These hours are arrived at by dividing the net gross income by the applicable minimum wage.

When 1 parent in a 2-parent family is self employed, child care necessary for the other parent to participate in activities in their plan can only be approved for hours in which the parents' work-related activities conflict.
While it may be more difficult to find work, there are jobs that are available to participants with limited English proficiency (LEP). Inform participants who are not proficient in English, with the use of an interpreter if necessary, that MFIP provides them the opportunity to increase their income through work. Encourage and assist them with job search if they are able to work immediately. Inform participants that they have the right to an interpreter in their job search activities if they have difficulties speaking, reading, writing, or understanding English.

Always consult your agency’s LEP plan to know what language assistance services are available (for example, bilingual staff, language line telephone interpreter services, etc.). Know who your agency LEP contact is if you have questions about the client’s rights and the extent of your agency’s language assistance services available to the public.

Participants with limited English proficiency may require additional assistance in order to obtain and retain employment. Examples of additional assistance includes: job coaching, providing support to the employer and participant to make the transition to work easier for both, providing an interpreter if necessary, and assistance with problem solving. Make sure participants understand that they have the right to have an interpreter present and the extent of the language assistance resources available to them.

The following are effective strategies that have been found to work with participants with limited English proficiency:

- Job development. The most basic job development tool is a job bank which lists available jobs.

- Develop partnerships with employers to facilitate the placement of participants with limited English proficiency.

- Provide ongoing support to both the participant and the employer. Examples of ongoing supports include providing interpreters to help improve communication between the participant and the employer, serve as a mentor to the participant, help orient the participant to the new work site, “shadow” them on their 1st days at work, and provide ongoing follow-up and assistance with problem-solving.
Participants should enroll in ESL classes offered by a state approved provider. The MN Department of Education/Adult Basic Education maintains a list of state approved public and non-profit ESL providers. Most of these providers are public schools or non-profits that are associated through partnerships/collaborations with approved providers. All approved programs and their partners must follow state requirements to maintain their approved status and funding through the Department of Education.

The Department of Education funds a “literacy hotline” database at the Minnesota Literacy Council that includes all ABE consortia, their partner providers as well as “unaligned” providers who are considered state approved public and non-profit ESL providers. To determine whether an ESL provider is in the database call 1-800-222-1990 and give the hotline operator the zip code for the area you are interested in. The operator will provide information about the nearest programs, operating hours and contact information. Hotline information can also be found at: http://www.themlc.org/hotline/index.htm

Limits on English as a Second Language (ESL) and Functional Work Literacy (FWL) activities in the Employment Plan (EP) are as follows:

- In order for ESL or FWL to be an approved work activity, the participant must be below a student proficiency level (SPL) of SPL 6 or its equivalent as measured by a nationally recognized test (for example, CASAS). As part of monitoring progress for ESL and FWL activities, testing procedures should be in place so that a participant’s SPL can be gauged on a regular basis. If the participant’s proficiency exceeds SPL 6 or the equivalent and the approved plan includes ESL or FWL, allow the participant to continue ESL or FWL for the remainder of the period approved in the EP, not to exceed 3 months.

- No more than 24 months of participation in ESL or FWL may be approved while a person is on MFIP. This is the outside limit—the actual time allowed is governed by the Employment Plan. There is no entitlement to 24 months. An Employment Plan with ESL or FWL as an approved activity should include clear measures for Progress and be reviewed quarterly.

- Participants may fulfill no more than half of the required hours of participation in an Employment Plan by attending ESL classes.

- Participants may fulfill no more than 2/3 of the required hours of participation by attending FWL classes.

- When deciding whether to enroll a participant in an ESL or FWL program, give preference to enrollment in an FWL program if one is available.
Advise participants of these limits prior to approving ESL or FWL in their plan. At the point when ESL or FWL is no longer approved, rewrite the participant’s plan to include other appropriate activities.

Participants must have an approved Employment Plan in order to access support services such as child care or transportation for ESL classes.

See §3.15 (Glossary: E...) for the definition of English as a Second Language. See §3.18 (Glossary: F...) for the definition of Functional Work Literacy (FWL).
The primary focus of MFIP is to move participants into the labor market as quickly as possible. Although training and education programs are often not the most direct path to unsubsidized employment, these activities are appropriate in some cases and may be approved in an Employment Plan.

For additional information, see:

§7.23.3 Basic Education or GED.
§7.23.6 Post-Secondary Training and Education.
§7.23.9 Approving Post-Secondary Training/Ed. at Assessment.
Although many participants may be able to find a job with the skills they possess when they enter the program, in some circumstances Adult Basic Education (ABE) or GED classes are appropriate.

In order to include ABE or GED in an Employment Plan (EP), the following criteria must be met:

- With the exception of classes related to obtaining a General Educational Development (GED), participants must have reading or mathematics proficiency below the 9th grade level in order for ABE classes to be an approved work activity.

- When ABE or GED are included in an EP, participants may fulfill no more than half the required hours through these activities.

Prior to including basic education in an Employment Plan, discuss with the participant:

- The participant’s interest and motivation to be in school.

- The participant’s history of participation and progress in similar educational activities.

- Whether there is a reasonable expectation that the participant will make sufficient improvement in a short time to noticeably increase his/her marketability.

- Any intellectual impairments or learning disabilities which may indicate the need for more specialized services.

- What other activities will fulfill the remaining required hours.

Approve basic education in blocks of 3 months or less to allow for a review of progress prior to continuation of the activity.
APPROACH TO LONGER-TERM SELF-SUFFICIENCY

While getting people to work is the clear short-term goal for MFIP, longer-term self-sufficiency is also important, especially with a 60-month lifetime limit on assistance. Central to a labor force attachment model like MFIP Employment Services is the notion that work experience is the best way to build toward employment that can support a family. Particularly important in MFIP is that work experience can be built through part-time and low-wage jobs without sacrificing family income. MFIP will continue to supplement earnings so family income will increase while the parent gains experience.

Critical to this model is a focus on helping people retain jobs and progress into better jobs. Counties will need to consider whether and how education and training should be part of helping participants make this progression, or whether work experience alone will be effective. The obvious answer may be that it depends on the person, the labor market, and other individual factors. However, these factors can be difficult to sort out and can potentially muddy the work-focused message the program needs to convey. In the context of the restrictions on education (length of the program and approval criteria), and considering the other factors listed below, counties should consider what kind of guidance they will give to job counselors about strategies to use in helping participants move to a level of employment that will support their family.

BALANCING RESOURCES FOR THOSE LIKELY TO SUCCEED WITH THE HARDER TO SERVE

One conflict that arises when considering training and education in a labor force program model is deciding which participants will benefit from it the most. Participants who may benefit most from training and education are those with the greatest work experience and the best potential to move quickly into relatively high-paying jobs through job placement services. This conflict is most problematic in the 1st 6 weeks of participation when most participants are expected to move into job search, but training or education can be considered as an option.

Counties need to consider how best to help counselors handle this conflict. One consideration may be whether the participant can be reasonably expected, without further training, to get a job that pays enough to get them off assistance. The order of preference for work activities prioritizes certain employment activities over education and training. See §7.15.9 (Order of Preference for Work Activities). This allows you additional flexibility when evaluating a request for approval of a post-secondary education or training plan. You should determine whether the participant already has the skills and abilities to obtain employment that will result in exiting MFIP without additional training, given his or her work history and the current job market, as part of the assessment and approval process.
The converse presents another problem: Participants who are not making much progress in the job market may also be those not likely to benefit from training or education. Education and training should be used cautiously with people who have poor track records with finishing training programs or have very low ability. Special education programs may be able to help some who have learning disabilities or other barriers. However, education and training should only be used when it is clearly tied to the enhancement of a participant’s employability. See §7.23.9 (Approving Post-Secondary Training/Ed. at Assessment) for more information on approving post-secondary education.

Even when training or education is not formally included in a plan, participants can be encouraged to pursue these activities in the same way as others who are not on public assistance.

LABOR MARKET CONDITIONS

For several years the labor market in Minnesota essentially precluded, with some exception, the need for training or education as a prerequisite to get a job. Most participants were able to find jobs with job search assistance and/or soft skills training, and many were also able to progress into better jobs.

When the economy makes a downward shift, training and education could play a more prominent role in MFIP Employment Services. Counties should assess their local labor market in making the determination about the need for training services. Reviewing the types of job openings can also help reveal occupations that might have many openings, some of which might be appropriate for MFIP participants with some additional short-term training.

OPPORTUNITY COSTS OF TRAINING FOR THE INDIVIDUAL

Counties and Employment Services Providers should also consider the “opportunity costs” for participants who wish to pursue additional training or education. For many, the best approach is to get into the labor market and begin building the experience that will help them move on to better jobs. Entering a training or education program -- particularly a longer-term program -- has costs. First, they may miss opportunities to get into jobs available to people with lower skills levels. This income can be substantial over a year or more (especially when income from tax credits for working families is included), and must be carefully considered when looking at the potential (not guaranteed) longer-term earnings gains from training.

TRAINING RESOURCES AVAILABLE
Counties need to look carefully at training programs that currently exist in their community. For MFIP Employment Services, the best programs are short-term programs that lead very directly to a real job. The latter condition probably means that the program has a very high placement rate, trains for an occupation with many openings, or is a customized training program that has a direct link to an employer. The former condition—short-term—means shorter is better, and a year or less is best.

Beyond assessing current available programs, counties should consider working with training institutions and employers to develop short-term programs that lead directly to jobs for MFIP participants.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION - POST 60-MONTH EXTENSIONS

Although continuation in an education plan is NOT a reason to extend participants beyond the 60th month of assistance, you can approve a training plan for more months than the caregiver has left on MFIP. See §10.33 (Hardship Extensions).

Apply the following guidelines when evaluating an education/training proposal that will continue beyond the participant’s 60th month:

- Education plans should generally not extend beyond the 1st 60 months of assistance.
- Education plans for participants should be considered long before they reach their 60th month of assistance, if appropriate.
- A training plan that goes beyond the participant’s 60th month could be approved providing the criteria for approving education plans are followed.
- The participant must provide evidence that he/she has the resources to complete the education program in the absence of MFIP cash assistance, AND the county/job counselor must agree that pursuing the education plan is the best way to prepare the participant for life after MFIP.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION AFTER WELFARE

The 1st goal of MFIP Employment Services is to get participants working. Historically, Minnesota has approached welfare-to-work as a sequence in which education or training preceded work. Now, we need to look at work first and education or training second, if and when it is appropriate. One aspect of this change in approach is connecting the concept of life-long learning to our welfare-to-work efforts. For more able MFIP participants (for
example: those who have already attended post-secondary training), school after welfare might be the best approach. These participants will need to meet work requirements. However, counselors should consider how they can help these participants plan for the future, thinking about how to work and go to school, or about when school might be an appropriate step for someone (for example, after children are in school, after work situation is stable enough for flexibility with supervisor). This is a very different role for counselors, as you will not be trying to solve every problem, but rather helping solve one--getting a job and getting off assistance--and providing guidance on putting together the longer-term pieces. It also involves helping participants think of creative ways to put together resources rather than providing every resource.
Requests for approval of post-secondary education or training should be evaluated at any point during the 1st 60 months on MFIP, using the following criteria and guidance:

### Basic Approval Criteria:

- You may approve post-secondary education or training programs lasting up to 24 months when the following criteria are met.
  - If the education and training activities do not meet the minimum hourly requirement for the work participation rate the employment plan MUST include additional work activities.
  - The participant’s EP specifies goals that can only be met with the additional education or training.
  - There are suitable full-time employment opportunities that require the training in the area where the participant resides or is willing to reside upon completion of the program.
  - The education or training will result in significantly higher wages than the participant could earn without the education or training.
  - The participant must be able to meet the requirements for admission into the program.
  - There is a reasonable expectation that the participant will complete the education or training program based on such factors as the participant’s current MFIP assessment, previous education or training and work history, current motivation, and changes in previous circumstance.

Participants must also maintain satisfactory progress as defined by the educational institution, or as in the Employment Plan.

### 24 Month Limit:

Education or training programs should be 24 months or less, as defined by the school. However, up to 2 years of a 4 year program may be approved if all other approval criteria (listed above) are met.

Participants may take longer than 24 months to complete a 24 months program, if necessary, with approval from the job counselor. Although extending completion
beyond 24 months should not be routine, it may be necessary, for example, when a participant needs to interrupt their education program due to physical illness.

Additional Work Activity Requirement:

If the education and training activities do not meet the minimum hours required to meet with **federal work participation rate** the employment plan must include additional work activities.

Additional work activities must come from core or non-core activities.

Example 1: A participant with a child under the age of six. Participant is attending school 13 hours per week; participant needs an additional seven hours of activity in order to meet the federal participation rate. The employment plan must be written to include a minimum of seven additional hours per week of core activities.

Example 2: A participant with youngest child over the age of six. Participant is attending school 22 hours per week; participant needs an additional eight hours of activity in order to meet the federal participation rate. The employment plan must be written to include a minimum of eight additional hours per week of core or non-core activities.

The additional work activity may be reduced or waived for participants who are disabled under the ADA, or who have a household member who is disabled under the ADA, when:

- The participant requests that work activity hours be reduced or waived as a reasonable accommodation.
- There is documentation that the participant, or the household member, is disabled as defined by the ADA, and reducing or waiving the additional work activity requirement is necessary in order for the individual to participate in post-secondary education.

If the participant did not meet all the required hours because, for example, the participant or the participant's child was ill or there was a transportation problem, review for good cause.

**Guidance on Using the Order of Preference for Activities:**
The order of preference for activities prioritizes certain employment activities over education and training, see §7.15.9 (Order of Preference for Work Activities). This allows job counselors additional flexibility when evaluating a request for approval of a post-secondary education or training program. As part of the assessment and approval process, job counselors should determine whether the participant already has the skills and abilities to obtain employment that will result in exiting MFIP without additional education or training, given his or her work history and the current job market.

Their request for approval of post-secondary education or training may be denied when the participant is determined likely to find employment at a level that will result in the family exiting MFIP assistance. Job counselors should carefully document this decision in the ES case file.

**Requirement After Completion of Approved Training:**

After completion of an approved education or training program, participants must continue to meet hourly requirements. If the participant was working while attending school they may choose to retain their job, and search for an additional part-time job in their field of training. If employment consistent with the field of training is not found after 6 weeks, the participant must accept any offer of suitable employment, or must meet with the job counselor to revise the employment to include additional work activities necessary to meet hourly requirements.

Participants who did not work during their education or training program must also continue to meet hourly requirements after completion of their approved program. If full-time employment consistent with the field of training is not found after 6 weeks, the participant must accept any offer of full-time suitable employment. Participants who are only able to find part-time employment must meet with the job counselor to revise the employment to include additional work activities necessary to meet hourly requirements.

For guidance on requests to approve an education or training program when the participant is approaching the 60-month time limit, see §7.23.6 (Post-Secondary Training and Education).
When intervention exceeding your expertise is required, make a referral to the appropriate county or community agency. Issues you are likely to identify which require a referral include chemical dependency, mental or emotional health problems, family violence, physical health problems, and legal problems.

A wide variety of work-related activities can be in a Plan in order to help the participant move beyond social, legal, and health issues to employment. See §7.3 (Allowable Activities), and §7.15.9 (Order of Preference for Work Activities). Participants who receive social services or health-related services should also participate in concurrent job search or work unless you determine this is not a realistic expectation. Although these are non-countable activities for purposes of the participation rate, see §6.9 (MFIP Participation Rate), the hours of participation in social, legal, and health-related services should be entered on WF1.

When the current Employment Plan is limited to only social, legal, or health-related services, include a date for reassessment and specify any required meetings with you.

Child care is available to cover costs associated with participation in social service activities included in an Employment Plan, even if these are the only activities included in the plan.
The Family Violence Waiver Option, which allows victims of family violence the participant to develop an Employment Plan (EP) with special provisions and stop the 60-month time clock. To qualify, the participant must take the following steps:

1. **Request a Family Violence Waiver.**

   - **Financial Worker Responsibility**

     If a participant reveals to the financial worker that he/she is a victim of family violence and requests a Family Violence Waiver, the financial worker must identify the participant (with the participant’s written permission) as someone needing help or assistance to develop an Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence. For procedures on developing the plan, see §7.15.12 (Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence). The financial worker must ensure that the participant with access to a person trained in domestic violence. See §7.29.3 (Person Trained in Family Violence).

   - **Job Counselor Responsibility**

     If a participant reveals to the job counselor that (s)he is a victim of family violence and requests a Family Violence Waiver, the job counselor must refer the participant to a person trained in domestic violence if the participant is not already working with a domestic violence advocate. The job counselor must ensure the participant has access to a person trained in domestic violence. The job counselor, in collaboration with the person trained in domestic violence, must assist the client in developing an Employment Plan. See §7.15.12 (Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence).

     Once the employment plan has been approved, inform the financial worker. Financial workers must enter an approved Family Violence Waiver in MAXIS.

2. **Provide Documentation of Family Violence.**

   The financial worker or job counselor must advise the participant about documentation required to substantiate a claim of family violence. Refer to the list below for acceptable documentation. The county must assist the client if (s)he has difficulty in securing any of these items. The client may also be referred to a domestic violence advocate or legal services for assistance. DO NOT require the participant to comply with regular Employment Services activities or impose an ES sanction during the period of time that a participant is
obtaining documentation.

Consider any 1 of the following items as an acceptable verification of family violence:

- Police, government agency, or court records.
- Statement from a battered women’s shelter staff person or a sexual assault or domestic violence advocate with knowledge of the circumstances or credible evidence that supports the participant’s statement.
- Statement from a professional from whom the client has sought assistance about the abuse.

OR

- Sworn statement from the participant.

AND

- Sworn statement from any other person with knowledge of the circumstances or credible evidence that supports the client’s statement.

NOTE: A notarized statement is recommended from the participant and other person with knowledge of the circumstances, but it is not required. A sworn statement is needed at the minimum. For the definition of a sworn statement see, §3.39 (Glossary: S…).
A “person trained in domestic violence” is a person who works for an organization designated by the Minnesota Center for Crime Victim Services as providing services to victims of domestic violence, a county staff person who has received similar specialized training (generally, this will be a domestic violence advocate) or any other person or organization designated by a qualifying organization.

A person trained in domestic violence could also be a county or Employment Services staff person who previously received training as an advocate while working at an organization designated by the Center for Crime Victim Services, or it could be someone from Legal Aid or another agency who has been designated by a qualifying organization. Each county must identify locally trained people in order to ensure access for all MFIP participants.

Counties should contact the Minnesota Center for Crime Victim Services, 1-888-622-8799, for more information about agencies in their area.

ACCESS TO A PERSON TRAINED IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Whenever a participant reveals he or she is a victim of family violence and requests a Family Violence Waiver Option, the county must provide the participant access to a person trained in domestic violence. Refer the participant to a domestic violence advocate or someone trained in domestic violence. Legal services can also be an additional resource for victims of family violence. The legal services statewide referral number is 1-888-354-5522.
Many counties and their Employment Services Providers are using work experience placements as a means of helping MFIP participants develop skills and build a work history, as well as boost the county's participation rate. The following information is intended to help explain federal and state "non-displacement" requirements for paid and unpaid work experience placements.

FEDERAL LAW

Federal law places restrictions on the state’s use of federal funds to place MFIP recipients in jobs where they would be, in essence, displacing a regular employee (42 U.S.C., section 607(f)).

In general, no adult in a work activity funded in whole or in part by federal funds should be employed or assigned when any other individual is on layoff from the same or any substantially equivalent job, or if the employer has terminated the employment of any regular employee or otherwise caused an involuntary reduction of its workforce in order to fill the vacancy with an MFIP recipient(s).

The federal TANF non-displacement statute applies to, and would prevent an MFIP recipient from being placed in an unpaid or voluntary work experience position that was previously held by someone who was laid off. It would also prohibit placing an MFIP recipient in a position which is similar to a position held by an employee who is now laid off. It does not matter, under the federal law, whether the organization is public or private. It also does not matter whether the organization is covered by a collective bargaining agreement.

States must maintain a grievance procedure for resolving complaints of alleged violations.

STATE LAW

We must also meet the requirements set out in the state law (M.S. 256J.72) when union workplaces are involved.

- Notification and Consent from Bargaining Representatives

State law requires counties to provide written notification to and obtain the written concurrence of the appropriate exclusive bargaining representatives regarding job duties covered under the collective bargaining agreements, and ensure that no MFIP recipients will be placed in a work assignment that results in:

- Termination, layoff, or reduction of the work hours of an employee for the purposes of hiring an MFIP recipient.
- The hiring of an individual if any other person is on layoff, including seasonal layoff, from the same or a substantially equivalent job.
- Any infringement of the promotional opportunities of any currently employed individual.
- The impairment of existing contract for services of collective bargaining agreements.
- A participant filling an established unfilled position vacancy, except for on-the-job training.

➢ Temporary Public Service Placements.

Written notification to the appropriate bargaining representatives must be provided at least 14 days in advance of placing an MFIP recipient in temporary public service. The notice must include the number of individuals involved, their work locations and anticipated hours of work, a summary of the work to be performed, and a description of how the individuals will be trained and supervised.

➢ Limit on length of placement in temporary public service or community service jobs.

Participants may not work in temporary public service or community service jobs for a public employer for more than 67 working days, or 536 hours, whichever is greater, as part of a work program under MFIP. A participant who exceeds the time limits is a public employee, as the term is used in Chapter 179A. Upon the written request of the exclusive bargaining representative, a county or public service employer must make available to the bargaining representative a report of hours worked by participants in temporary public service or community service jobs.

➢ Dispute Resolution.

If there is a dispute between an exclusive bargaining representative and a county or an employer over whether job duties are within the scope of a collective bargaining unit, the bargaining representative, the county, or the employer may petition the bureau of mediation services to determine if the job duties are within the scope of a collective bargaining unit, and the bureau shall render a binding decision.

If there is a dispute over whether there has been a violation of the non-displacement provisions, the parties may use a grievance and arbitration procedure of an existing collective bargaining agreement to process the dispute. If no grievance and arbitration procedure is in place, either party may submit the dispute to the bureau.
The commissioner of the bureau of mediation services shall establish a procedure for a neutral, binding resolution of the dispute.

GUIDANCE

MFIP participants should NOT be placed in a position vacant as a result of lay off or earlier downsizing/termination, regardless of the amount of time that has elapsed, UNLESS the employer first offers the position to the employee who was laid off or downsized/terminated AND current employees for whom the position would be a promotion. If these individuals refuse the position, the participant may be placed. However, the collective bargaining unit must be notified and agree in writing to the placement. If the position is public or community service with a public employer, the participant would become a public employee if s/he works more than 67 days or 536 hours.
INJURY PROTECTION PROGRAM

Use the instructions below to determine payment of any claims resulting from an alleged injury or death of a person participating in a county or a tribal unpaid work experience program that is approved and operated by:

- The county agency.
- The tribe.
- A department of the state.

OR

- A community-based organization under contract, prior to April 1, 1997, with a county agency to provide a community work experience program or a Food Support community work experience program, provided the organization has not experienced any individual injury loss or claim greater than $1,000.

This determination method is available to the community-based organization identified in the 4th bullet above only for claims incurred by participants in the community work experience program, unpaid work experience, or the Food Support Community Work Experience Program.

Injury Protection Program (IPP) covers unpaid work experience for the following programs:

- MFIP including CWEP.
- DWP.
- FSET.
- Tribal unpaid work experience.
- Other unpaid work experience programs approved by the Commissioner of DHS.

**NOTE:** Do not use IPP to cover volunteer placements with employers who have other volunteers, or volunteer positions, that are, or should be, covered under workers’ compensation. If you have questions or concerns about a client’s placement and whether Minnesota Workers’ Compensation laws covers the work site, contact the Department of Labor and Industry customer assistance line at 651-284-5030 or 800-342-5354.

**INVESTIGATION OF THE CLAIM**

Claims must be investigated by the county agency or the tribal program responsible for supervising the work to determine whether the claimed injury occurred, whether the claimed medical expenses are reasonable, and whether the loss is covered by the claimant's insurance. If insurance coverage is established, the county agency or tribal program shall submit the claim to the appropriate insurance entity for payment. However, medical bills associated with work related injuries should not be submitted to medical assistance. The investigating county agency or tribal program shall submit all valid claims, in the amount net of any
insurance payments, to the Department of Human Services. Claims should not be submitted to the Department of Human Services until all bills associated with the work related injury have been received and treatment for the injury has been completed.

**SUBMISSION OF CLAIM**

The Commissioner shall submit all claims for permanent partial disability compensation to the Commissioner of Labor and Industry. The Commissioner of Labor and Industry shall review all submitted claims and recommend to the Department of Human Services an amount of compensation comparable to that which would be provided under the permanent partial disability compensation schedule of Minnesota Statutes §176.101, subdivision 2a.

**CLAIMS LESS THAN $1,000**

The Commissioner shall approve a claim of $1,000 or less for payment if appropriated funds are available, if the county agency or tribal program responsible for supervising the work has made the determinations required by this section, and if the work program was operated in compliance with the safety provisions of this section. The Commissioner shall pay the portion of an approved claim of $1,000 or less that is not covered by the claimant's insurance within 3 months of the date of submission.

**CLAIMS MORE THAN $1,000**

On or before February 1 of each year, the Commissioner shall submit to the appropriate committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives a list of claims in excess of $1,000 and a list of claims of $1,000 or less that were submitted to but not paid by the Commissioner, together with any recommendations of appropriate compensation. These claims shall be heard and determined by the appropriate committees of the Senate and House of Representatives and, if approved, must be paid under the legislative claims procedure.

**COMPENSATION FOR CERTAIN COSTS**

Compensation is limited to reimbursement for reasonable medical expenses and permanent partial disability compensation for disability in like amounts as allowed in section Minnesota Statutes §176.101, subdivision 2a. Compensation for injuries resulting in death shall include reasonable medical expenses and burial expenses in addition to payment to the participant's estate in an amount up to $200,000. No compensation shall be paid under this section for pain and suffering, lost wages, or other benefits provided in Minnesota Statutes §176. Payments made under this section shall be reduced by any proceeds received by the claimant from any insurance policy covering the loss. For the purposes of this section, "insurance policy" does not include the medical assistance program authorized under Minnesota Statutes
§256B or the general assistance medical care program authorized under Minnesota Statutes §256D.

EXCLUSIVE PROCEDURE

This procedure is exclusive of all other legal, equitable, and statutory remedies against the state, its political subdivisions, or employees of the state or its political subdivisions. The claimant shall not be entitled to seek damages from any state, county, tribal, or reservation insurance policy or self-insurance program.

INVALID CLAIMS

A claim is not valid for purposes of this section if the county agency responsible for supervising the work cannot verify to the Commissioner:

- That appropriate safety training and information is provided to all persons being supervised by the agency under this section.
- AND
- That all programs involving work by those persons comply with federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration and state Department of Labor and Industry safety standards.

A claim that is not valid because of failure to verify safety training or compliance with safety standards will not be paid by the Department of Human Services or through the legislative claims process and must be heard, decided, and paid, if appropriate, by the local government unit or tribal program responsible for supervising the work of the claimant.

FORMS REQUIRED FOR FILING A CLAIM

The following forms are required to file an Injury Protection claim for unpaid work experience participants. The forms are created so you may type the information directly onto the form before printing:

- Injury Protection Program (IPP) - Participant Medical Referral and Medical Care Provider Information Letter (DHS-3996).
Injury Protection Program (IPP) - Participant Injury Status Report (DHS-3997).

NOTE: The client must also receive a copy of the Notice of Privacy Practice (DHS-3979).
The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide an efficient method for transfer of electronic case records.
- Define county financial assistance and Employment Services Provider responsibilities to ensure good communication and consistent provision of services to families who move between counties.
- Enhance performance on the statewide participation rate.

**MFIP EMPLOYMENT SERVICES CASE TRANSFER POLICY:**

Communication between MFIP ES Providers and between ES Providers and county agencies is critical to successfully manage case records and provide services when clients move from one county to another. Use the process outlined below to improve coordination and communication and to ensure continuity of Employment Services.

1. When the receiving county gets notice on MAXIS of a client’s move, submit an Employment Services referral within 7 working days (in Hennepin County within 7 working days after the designation of the Employment Services Provider). A case is added to the denominator for the county’s participation rate on the date the receiving county issues benefits.

2. Once you receive the ES referral, you have full authority to require the client to participate in all activities, including developing a plan, attending job clubs and workshops, and monthly reporting. You have full authority to impose sanctions for failure to comply with any of these activities, within the provisions of MFIP policy. For cases that have an ES sanction when transferred, you are responsible for managing the sanction resolution process.

3. Once you receive the ES referral, notify the departing county’s ES provider within 7 working days. The departing county’s ES provider will complete the case termination on WF1 (TEAMS in Hennepin County) within 7 working days, unless otherwise agreed upon between the 2 providers. This will allow you to establish a case on WF1.

4. Once the departing county’s provider has terminated the case on WF1, you will be responsible for:
   b. Making case management decisions, including sanctions.
c. Authorizing child care assistance (once a new Employment Plan has been completed).
d. Tracking participation hours (See item #5, below.)
e. Providing support services.

5. The departing county must record participation hours for the weeks up to the date that service is closed on WF1; they have up to 2 calendar months after the date of closure to do this, as with other MFIP cases. You must record participation hours beginning with the week you open services on WF1.

6. Within the constraints of HIPPA and other privacy laws, and with a signed release from the client, old and new ES providers may share copies of relevant assessments and other paper records.

NOTE: Once you develop a new Employment Plan, authorize and implement necessary childcare through your county’s child care assistance program. The departing county is no longer responsible for administering child care assistance to that family.

There are some instances where the child care case would stay with the departing county, for example, when a working participant continues to use the same provider but has not yet developed a new Employment Plan in the receiving county.
You play a critical role in helping participants access child care funds necessary to work, search for work, or participate in other activities that support progress toward an employment goal.

Parents should get information from their financial worker or other county staff on how to locate child care providers and access funds prior to participating in Employment Services (ES).

Identify necessary hours of child care, both for employment and other activities, in the Employment Plan (EP). You will also have primary responsibility for monitoring participation in activities for which child care is authorized, with assistance from child care staff and financial workers. Caregivers should not be required to report the same information to more than 1 staff person. Staff has a responsibility to share information affecting child care assistance with all other affected staff.

Child care assistance for MFIP participants is available through the child care fund as follows:

- Participants and child care providers must meet the requirements of the child care fund.
- Child care assistance is available to support clients for participating in authorized activities in MFIP.
- Approved child care expenses, minus the parent's co-payment fee, are paid by Child Care Assistance.
- Child care assistance to support social service activities is available if included in an EP.

**NOTE:** The parent co-payment fee is $10 per month for families with income between 75% and 100% of the Federal Poverty Guideline (FPG) for the applicable family size. Once the family’s income is above 100% of the FPG, the child care fund sliding fee schedule is used. For co-payment charts for all income levels and household sizes, refer to DHS Bulletin #07-68-07 (DHS Announces State Fiscal Year 2008 Copayment Schedules for the Child Care Assistance Program).

**CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE FUND**

Child care assistance for families receiving MFIP cash assistance operates as a fully funded program. In general, MFIP participants may receive child care assistance necessary to:
Attend an orientation.

Attend an overview.

Develop an Employment Plan (EP).

Comply with activities in an Employment Plan (EP).

Attend assessments.

Child care assistance must be authorized for any activities included in the EP. These could include such activities as counseling or treatment instead of, or in addition to, work activities such as employment, job search, education and vocational training.

While child care for employment and job search is available to all MFIP participants, child care for education/training or other approval activities is only available after enrollment in MFIP Employment Services.

Specific rules and limits on child care are discussed in more detail in the sections on work, education, other activities, and 2-parent families which follow in this chapter.

Payment of child care assistance for work or job search is effective the date employment or job search starts, or the date of MFIP eligibility, whichever is later. Payment of child care assistance for activities (other than work and job search) in the Employment Plan is effective the date it is authorized in the plan. This means that the child care expenses incurred for activities other than work or job search will be paid only when they are included in a plan and the participant is considered to be in compliance with those activities. Note, however, that child care expenses can only be paid if the participant completes an application.

**MAXIMUM CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE IN A 2-WEEK PERIOD**

The maximum amount of child care assistance that may be authorized in a 2-week period is 120 hours per child. The maximum number of hours covers job search activities, employment, education/training, other activities in the plan, or any combination of these activities.

Other activities may include pre-employment or social service activities needed to help families reach their employment goals and enhance their ability to care for their children. Child care necessary to participate in these types of activities should be authorized in the participant’s plan.
WORK

When a parent is receiving an MFIP grant but DOES NOT have an Employment Plan, child care for employment is available as long as the participant works an average of 20 hours per week, receives at least the applicable minimum wage, and meets all other requirements of the child care assistance fund rule and law. When the parent has an Employment Plan, child care for employment is available as determined in the plan. For additional information, see §8.21 (Child Care for Employment), §7.15.12 (Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence).

Child care payments through the child care assistance fund are usually made on a reimbursement basis. Counties make payments to child care providers or to the parent for in-home child care.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- All participants must cooperate with child support enforcement.
- Parents must use legal providers. Legal non-licensed providers must be registered with and authorized by the county before payments for child care may be made.
- Child care assistance for job search is available for up to 240 hours in a calendar year without an Employment Plan.
- Child care assistance for job search that is included in the Employment Plan is available as identified in the plan.
- Child care assistance is available up to 120 hours in a 2 week period per child.

CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL

Counties must inform all MFIP applicants and participants of the Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) services available to them. Minnesota law requires counties to:

- Insure that child care services available to eligible residents are well advertised. AND
- Inform all MFIP applicants and participants of training and employment opportunities and programs, including child care assistance and child care resource and referral services.
Minnesota has a Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agency for each region in the state. In the metro area there is a CCR&R agency for each county. State law requires these agencies to provide up to date information on all types of licensed child care, including family day care, center care, half-day programs, Head Start, drop-in programs, and school-age programs.

Clients calling the designated CCR&R agency for their area will receive a computerized list matching their child care needs to those providers with openings to meet their needs. Information includes hours of care needed, ages of children, openings, rates, location, school districts, pets, smoking or non-smoking, special needs, training of provider, transportation, and program philosophy.

Clients will receive detailed information, both through phone counseling and written materials, on how to choose child care, parents' rights in choosing care, indicators of quality, how to set up a good parent/provider interview, and how to negotiate a good parent/provider contract.

For more information on the CCR&R program or agencies, contact the Child Care Resource and Referral Grants Administrator, Department of Human Services (DHS).
When a participant has employment included as an approved activity in the Employment Plan, you must:

- Provide participants with information about child care resource and referral agency services.
- Help the participant complete an application for child care assistance if one has not already been completed.
- Identify and verify hours of child care necessary to follow through with activities in the plan.

Clearly note on the county’s child care authorization form the following information:

- The hours per day (for example: from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.) and days per week of participation in authorized activities.
- Whether child care is for:
  - Job search or employment.
  - Education only.
  - Social services.
  - Combination of activities (specify which activities).
  - Pre-employment activities.
- Whether the child care is for post-secondary education.

If the county child care authorization form is not designed to record information in the manner described above, you must write or type in the correct information.

It is important to provide accurate information to county child care staff for 3 major reasons:

- Child care staff uses the information to complete MFIP child care reports.
- The total time of child care assistance used for education and training is limited. Child care statute restricts total time (including child care used while on MFIP and/or basic sliding fee) to the time necessary to complete an associate or baccalaureate degree as determined by the educational institution, excluding basic or remedial education programs need to prepare for post-secondary education or employment. See §8.24 (Child Care for Training and Education).
Effective provision and monitoring of child care funds requires you, child care workers, and financial workers to be in close and regular contact. Any county or Employment Services agency staff who become aware of a change in the participant's situation that affects the authorization or payment of child care, must notify other affected staff immediately. If notification is verbal, counselors should follow up with a Diversionary Work Program/Minnesota Family Investment Status Update form (DHS-3165).

For information on the job counselor’s role with victims of family violence, see §7.15.12 (Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence).
Most participants will need child care assistance to participate in Employment Services. Assistance with child care expenses must be provided when necessary and requested because participation is required. Child care may be authorized for most activities included in an Employment Plan. See §8.15 (Allowable Child Care Expenses) for information about which expenses are covered by the MFIP child care fund. Child care is also covered when necessary for financial assistance orientation, the overview, and meetings with job counselors to develop an Employment Plan (EP). Arrangements for child care prior to development of a plan may be the most difficult situation to coordinate.

Such situations may include:

- Participants must complete an application, locate a provider, and have the provider complete registration requirements. The child care funds must be authorized. All of these steps may delay reimbursement to the child care provider or participant.

- Participants may use a child care provider that the county is unable to reimburse because the child care provider will not or cannot meet registration requirements.

- Participants may not have the money to pay for child care, and reimbursement could take a few weeks or more.

- Inability to find child care may become a common "good cause" reason for failure to attend the necessary meetings to develop an Employment Plan. See §8.36 (Good Cause - Inability to Obtain Child Care).

- Participants may be working before the EP is developed. The county should address this issue by expediting referrals to MFIP Employment Services and to Child Care Assistance. When that is not possible, the job counselor can back date the EP to the date of employment or the date of MFIP eligibility, whichever is later.

Information about child care assistance availability, arrangements, and reimbursement for child care must be provided during an orientation to financial assistance or at application, and must also be included in the Employment Services overview.
ALLOWABLE CHILD CARE EXPENSES

Child care may be authorized for job search, work and work-related activities when they are approved and included in an Employment Plan:

**ACTIVITY:**

- Assessment
- Training/Education 12 months or less
- Training/Education 13 to 24 months
- English as a Second Language (ESL) Training
- Adult Basic Education (ABE)/Remedial Training
- Functional Work Literacy (FWL)
- High School Completion
- General Educational Development (GED) Training
- On-the-Job Training (OJT) - Public Sector
- On-the-Job Training (OJT) - Private Sector
- Volunteer and Community Service
- Grant Diversion
- Community Work Experience Program (CWEP)
- Self Employment Investment Demonstration (SEID)
- Work Experience
- Unpaid Work Experience
- Job Search
- Employed less than 30 hours per week
- Employed 30 hours or more per week
- Participating in Social Services

**NOTE:** Child care expenses associated with these activities are allowable. These activities include chemical and mental health assessment (includes learning disabilities), counseling and treatment, or related support groups and continuation of care activities.

- Employment Plan for Family Violence Waiver

**NOTE:** This activity includes the process where victims of family violence develop and utilize a plan to ensure the safety of themselves and their children. The plan should also include activities designed to lead to self-sufficiency, provided these activities do not endanger the participant or the children. Track each activity included in the Plan.

- Other

**NOTE:** Child care expenses associated with pre-employment activities coded “Other” are allowable when they are considered essential to the participant becoming employed and included in an approved Employment Plan. Examples include budgeting or parenting workshops when they are directly related to the participant’s ability...
ALLOWABLE CHILD CARE EXPENSES

8.15
to go to work, or a limited amount of time approved for a participant to search for housing.
Give participants information about accessing child care during the Employment Services overview. Explain the participant’s responsibility to make arrangements for child care when it is needed to participate in job search activities.

DETERMINING HOW MANY HOURS OF CHILD CARE TO AUTHORIZE

Child care is available to cover up to 120 hours of child care in a 2-week period for authorized activities. The maximum number of hours includes job search activities, employment, education/training, and other activities in the plan (which may include social services activities), or any combination of these activities. See §8.27 (Child Care for Social Services in the Employment Plan).

Child care assistance rules limit payment of child care for job search to 240 hours per calendar year for caregivers without an Employment Plan. Participants with a plan may receive child care for all job search hours identified in the plan. Authorize all hours necessary to participate in job search activities.

Child care may be authorized for job search activities on or off the agency’s site. However, payment of child care for hours where participants are job searching at home should be by exception, not standard practice. In general, if job searching at home would require payment of child care, require the participant to complete this activity at the agency site instead.

MONITORING JOB SEARCH PARTICIPATION

Monitoring participation in job search activities may be a more difficult task than monitoring other authorized activities. Although identifying hours of child care necessary to attend a job search skills workshop or to participate in activities on the Employment Services agency site should not present a problem, hours used to conduct a job search off site may be much more difficult to handle.

In general, if a participant with a 30-hour participation requirement is on-site for 10 hours per week, consider 20 additional hours as the average needed. Some participants may do part of their job search at home and will not require child care, while others may have a series of tasks that will require more than an additional 20 hours. Use your professional judgment to make decisions about child care on a case-by-case basis. Some of the mechanisms for monitoring compliance with the requirements of job search may also be helpful to track child care use. See §8.54 (Monitoring Job Search Activities).
DETERMINING HOW MANY HOURS OF CHILD CARE ARE AVAILABLE

When the participant is working an average of 20 hours per week, paid on an hourly basis, and earns at least applicable minimum wage, child care assistance should be provided for the actual hours of participation, break and meal time during employment, and travel time up to 2 hours per day (travel time includes time from the site of child care to employment and return to the child care site).

When the participant does not work for an hourly wage (most often self-employment), child care assistance is available for the lesser of:

- The amount of child care determined by dividing gross earned income by the applicable minimum wage, plus up to 1 hour every 8 hours for meals and break time, plus up to 2 hours per day for travel time.
- The actual amount of child care used during employment, including break and meal time during employment, and travel time up to 2 hours per day.

CHILD CARE FOR EMPLOYMENT INCLUDED IN AN EMPLOYMENT PLAN

Employed caregivers who do not yet have an approved Employment Plan must work an average of at least 20 hours per week and receive at least applicable minimum wage for all hours worked in order to be eligible for child care assistance. Caregivers who are enrolled in Employment Services are exempted from these restrictions, and may receive child care for hours that are included in an Employment Plan. Follow guidelines used for determining hours for child care described in the above section.

CHILD CARE IN SUPPORT OF EMPLOYMENT

In certain situations, participants may request child care “in support of employment” to cover child care costs during non-working hours. An example when this type of child care could be authorized would be a participant working 3rd shift who does not need paid child care during work hours, but who does need child care costs covered during the daytime hours when s/he sleeps. These hours may not exceed hours that would be authorized for employment activities.

Child care assistance to support employment may be paid for hours other than actual work hours when all of the following conditions exist:

- The child care assistance for these activities does not exceed the amount of child care that would be granted for employment.
AND
➢ The participant is complying with his or her Employment Plan (if applicable).
AND
➢ The participant cannot reasonably modify her or his non-work schedule to provide child care.
When participation in basic education is included in an Employment Plan, you may authorize the number of hours necessary to enable the participant to attend class and to complete assignments (within child care policy limits). Basic education programs are not counted toward 24 month time limitations applied to post-secondary education.

CHILD CARE FOR BASIC EDUCATION

Examples of basic education programs include:

- High school.
- GED.
- Remedial course work.
- English as a second language.
- Adult basic education courses.

CHILD CARE FOR A POST-SECONDARY PROGRAM

When an education or training program is included in an Employment Plan, you may authorize child care assistance necessary for the participant to comply with this plan. For information on post-secondary education limits, see §7.23.6 (Post-Secondary Training and Education). You must clearly show on the Child Care authorization form, or Status Update form, when authorized hours are for post-secondary programs.

Rules about child care assistance for education and training were designed so that there is some flexibility to authorize an amount of child care needed by a participant, as long as it does not exceed 120 hours in a 2-week period per child.

Guidelines for authorizing child care for post-secondary training are as follows:

- Full-time students - Child care may be available on a half-day or full-day basis for the days of class and study, as determined by you and the participant. Total hours for all class time, study time, work hours (if applicable), travel, etc., may not exceed 120 hours per child in a 2-week period.

- Part-time students - Child care assistance required by a participant who is a part-time student should include:
- All hours of actual class time and credit hours for independent study and internships.

- Time periods between non-consecutive classes. When a part-time student has more than 1 hour between classes on any 1 day, reduce the study and academic appointment time by the number of hours between class.

- Up to 2 hours per day for travel time.

- Up to 2 hours per week per credit hour for post-secondary students for study and academic appointments.

Although post-secondary training in MFIP is limited to 24 months, child care assistance may be available to participants to continue working toward educational goals once they leave MFIP. The Basic Sliding Fee Program or the Minnesota Post-Secondary Child Care Grant Program (administered through the Higher Education Services Office) may provide help with child care costs for families. The maximum length of time a student is eligible for child care assistance for education and training under the Basic Sliding Fee Program is no more than the time necessary to complete the credit requirements for an associate or baccalaureate degree as determined by the educational institution. The student must be in good standing and be making satisfactory progress toward the degree.
For some participants in Employment Services, working on issues that interfere with obtaining or retaining employment may be the best course of action. Examples include chemical health, mental health, family violence, or issues identified through child welfare services. Child care assistance can be authorized for these activities if:

- Participation in the activity supports progress toward the employment goal.
- The activity has been included in an approved Employment Plan.
- Child care is necessary for the participant to engage in the activity.

Continuation of child care assistance for social services in the Employment Plan is based on your determination that the participant is attending the activity, making acceptable progress, and that child care assistance is still necessary.

Payment of child care assistance for social services in the Employment Plan is effective the date you authorize it. This means that the child care expenses incurred for social services will be paid only when they are included in an Employment Plan and the participant is considered to be in compliance with those activities. However, child care expenses can only be paid if the participant completes an application for child care.
Child care assistance can be made available to a 2-parent household when both parents have an Employment Plan, child care is needed to comply with the plan, the participants are in compliance with requirements in their plan, AND when 1 of the following circumstances applies:

- Both parents are working or in job search activities, and the hours of job search or the terms of employment make both participants unavailable to care for the minor child during the hours child care is requested.

- One parent is complying with an Employment Plan, and the other parent is working or in job search, and these activities make both parents unavailable to care for the minor child during the hours child care is requested.

- One parent is working or complying with an Employment Plan, and the other parent is unable to care for the minor child as determined by a medical doctor or by an assessment by the local social services agency.

- The need for child care is identified in an Employment Plan. See §.7.15.12 (Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence).

**NOTE:** Do NOT authorize child care funds for 2-parent families when a non-mandatory parent is not available to care for the children because:

- This parent is enrolled in a basic education program (includes ESL) that is not included in an approved Employment Plan.

OR

- This parent is enrolled in a post-secondary training or education program that is not included in an approved Employment Plan.
In general, child care assistance can be provided for children who are 12 years of age or younger. Consider a child to be 12 years of age until his or her 13th birthday. However, assistance can also be provided for handicapped children who are 13 or 14 years of age who are in the assistance unit, or who would have been in the assistance unit except for receipt of SSI. If a participant has concerns about care for a handicapped child who is age 15 or older, funding may be available through county social services.

Follow county policies related to provision of child care or other assistance for special needs children.
The Department of Human Services (DHS) defines the following terms for the county/provider’s use in determining good cause for failure to comply with orientation to financial services and any Employment Services requirements due to inability to obtain needed child care. Minnesota law prevents applying sanctions if the county/provider determines that an MFIP participant has good cause for not complying with program requirements because appropriate child care is not available. The definitions are:

- **Appropriate child care means:**
  - The provider of care is a licensed or legal non-licensed provider according to state standards.
  AND
  - The provider of care is able to meet a demonstrated need for language-specific care.
  AND
  - The care is appropriate to the child’s age and special needs. Special needs means disabilities as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 125A.02, subd.1, which defines a child with a disability. Counties should also accommodate demonstrated needs for culturally-specific services as resources allow.

- **Reasonable distance means** that the total commute time to the child care provider and to work does not exceed 2 hours round trip.

- **Unsuitability of informal care** means that the provider does not meet standards regarding health and safety of the child that would be applied to legal non-licensed providers.

- **Affordable child care arrangements** means the provider does not charge in excess of the maximum amount the county is allowed to pay, as established in a rate schedule set each year.
MFIP client services funds are available to cover a variety of employment-related expenses. In general, the county has discretion to determine policies and procedures governing client service expenditures. Listed below are some guidelines.

**FUNDING/ASSISTANCE AND NON-ASSISTANCE**

When providing supportive services, it is important to know whether the participant is eligible to receive services that are defined as “assistance”. Participants who are receiving federally funded MFIP cash ARE eligible for all support services, including those defined as assistance.

Participants who are NOT eligible for, or NOT receiving federally funded MFIP cash, are NOT eligible for support services defined as “assistance”, but they may receive help in the form of “non-assistance”. When the participant is neither eligible for nor receiving federally funded MFIP, use the criteria below to determine whether the type of support service being considered is defined as assistance or non-assistance.

- Determine whether the participant is working. Working participants include all permanently, temporarily, or occasionally employed participants, as well as participants who have a job start pending during the month the supportive services are received. Supportive services provided to working participants are considered to be non-assistance. Supportive services to non-working participants are considered to be assistance, unless the emergency criteria apply. The participant must be eligible for assistance in order to receive that type of supportive service. Examples of supportive services covered by these criteria are transportation and child care assistance.

- Determine whether the participant’s situation meets the definition of an “emergency”. To qualify as an emergency, 3 factors must be true:
  - There must be a qualifying emergency episode.
  - The emergency is expected to be resolved within 4 months.
  - The emergency is not EXPECTED to recur.

Supportive services, including housing support, that meet the emergency criteria are considered non-assistance. Supportive services that do not meet the emergency criteria are considered to be assistance. The participant must be eligible for assistance in order to receive that type of supportive service.

**NOTE:** Work subsidies, education-related support services, and employment-related supportive services (for example, work tools, uniforms, safety shoes, trade licenses,
interview clothes, and work incentive awards) are always considered to be non-assistance. Counseling and other social services are also not considered to be assistance.

For more information, see DHS Bulletin #07-68-11 (CYs 2008-09 County MFIP/CCSA Biennial Service Agreement Guidelines).

TRANSPORTATION

What is Covered

The participant’s plan should specify which transportation expenses will be covered by the provider. Under MFIP, these may include public transportation, car pooling, mileage, essential car repairs, insurance, driver's license, and parking fees that are necessary for the participant to take part in employment, training, job search, or other activities included in an approved plan.

How Much is Covered

MFIP does not require agencies to cover all out-of-pocket transportation expenses incurred by participants complying with their plans. Work with the participant to determine when, and how much, transportation assistance is required. Agencies may also need to establish limits based on funds available and the number of participants requiring transportation assistance.

Documentation

Keep verification of the expense and payment in the case file. Verification necessary for car repair and/or insurance payments includes evidence of car ownership, estimates, final bill, etc.

Suggestions

- Be reasonably sure the participant can cover on-going costs before authorizing payment for car insurance.
- Consider the overall value and condition of the vehicle before authorizing car repairs.
- Some counties limit payment for car repair and upkeep. For example, the limit may be $300 per participant in a calendar year.
OTHER EXPENSES

What is Covered

Generally, cover those expenses necessary for the person to obtain and retain employment, including, but not limited to:

- Expenses necessary to find a job, including interview clothing, resumes, etc.
- Cost of items not provided by an employer, which are needed to accept and retain a job, including safety equipment, uniforms or other special clothing, hand tools, etc.
- Costs of vocational testing and assessment.
- Educational expenses including application fees, activity fees, tuition, books, supplies, uniforms, tools, etc., which are required for participating in a training or educational program included in a plan. In rare instances, expenses also include remedial or prep classes required to enter an education or training program (literacy, basic skills, English as a second language, testing). MFIP will only cover educational expenses remaining after all available financial aid has been applied.

How Much is Covered

DO NOT use Employment Services funds when there are other resources available to cover an expense. Counties and ES Providers have discretion to determine how much to spend in each category. Some counties set limits. For example, the limit might be $100 for non-educational expenses per participant in a calendar year.

What is Not Covered

MFIP funds cannot be used to cover medical services, fines, parking tickets, restitution or other penalties, or payments on defaulted student loans. Federal regulations have generally prohibited use of funds by agencies for the cost of amusement, diversion, social activities, ceremonial, and related costs such as meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and gratuities. Generally, this means that ceremonial events, facility costs, and gifts for participants should not be covered with MFIP funds. However, costs for refreshments served during direct program activities are acceptable.
Documentation

Specify categories of expenses in the plan. Keep documentation of the expense and payment in the case file. Documentation includes bills and receipts, mileage charts, etc.

**NOTE:** The MFIP income disregard and budgeting system provides participants with an employment bonus. Therefore, DHS recommends that client services funds be used sparingly to cover start-up costs for work. See Chapter 10 (MFIP Financial Assistance Overview).
At the heart of MFIP Employment Services is a social contract between the participant and the government (represented by you). To ensure that the social contract is upheld, it is critical that you assume the role of monitoring participants in meeting program expectations.

Monitoring in MFIP has 2 separate objectives and requires that you play a dual role:

- The 1st objective of monitoring is to support the participant’s progress toward becoming employed, remaining employed, and transitioning to a job that will take him/her off assistance.

- The 2nd objective of monitoring is to ensure compliance with MFIP Employment Services policy and to ensure that federal participation requirements are met. Participation in Employment Services is mandatory for most MFIP participants, and they can be sanctioned for non-compliance.

While there is often tension in a job that combines these 2 objectives, the objectives are not mutually exclusive. The plan reflects the responsibilities of both the participant and you. You have the responsibility to support progress and ensure that participants make acceptable progress on their plan. Participants must develop and follow through with the activities they agreed to include in the plan. The plan is a mutually binding agreement.

If you break the agreement, the consequence may be a conciliation conference or fair hearing. If the participant breaks the agreement, the consequence may be loss of support services or sanction. Both you and the participant are more likely to accomplish the goals and objectives when the contents of a plan are carefully considered during development of this agreement and the nature of responsibility is clearly understood.

Although you provide what seems to be a straight-forward set of services, responsibility for evaluating progress and compliance can complicate the job. It is natural for emotions to become involved when "evaluating progress and compliance" is perceived as interference in personal affairs. Experience and sound professional judgment will be central to effectively meeting both objectives discussed above.

Employment Services teams, especially those that include staff from several disciplines, can provide an ideal setting to bring together the collective skills necessary to build relationships with participants which remain respectful and productive over time.
MFIP will be evaluated, both formally and informally, for many years to come. The Department of Human Services (DHS) looks at program components within Financial Assistance and Employment Services. Of particular interest in Employment Services is an evaluation of service delivery, barriers to employment, and the effectiveness of sanctions.

The state must also report participation data to the federal government on a quarterly basis, and beginning in 2005 counties will have to earn 5% of their consolidated fund allocation by meeting performance targets (MFIP participation rate and Self Support Index, each accounting for ½ of the 5%). Although data interfaces from MAXIS to WF1, hours of participation in other activities are obtained through data you collect and enter into WF1.

Accurate tracking of client activities play an important role in obtaining the information necessary to conduct evaluation, report accurately to the federal government, and to understand how the program is operating on a daily basis.
Counties have discretion to set minimum contact guidelines. Within county guidelines, you have the option to vary minimum contact requirements according to the activities included in a participant’s plan. Suggested guidelines include:

- Participants must attend all required job search activities and meet with you as scheduled.

- Participants who are working, but who continue to receive post-employment follow-up services, should make telephone contact with you once per month and meet with you in person once every 90 days. See §8.63 (Continuation of Employment Services).

- Participants in basic education, intensive English as a Second Language, or part-time post-secondary education activities, who also have a job search requirement, should meet with you at least once per week.

- Participants in basic education, English as a Second Language, or part-time post-secondary education activities, who are also working, should make telephone contact with you once per month and meet with you in person once every 90 days.

- Minor parents with an education requirement and participants who are in a full-time post-secondary education program should make telephone contact with you once per month and meet with you in person once every 90 days.

- Participants whose plan includes only social services activities should contact and/or meet with you according to a schedule in the Plan.
Mandatory participants must make satisfactory progress toward their overall employment goals and each objective in their plan, or face the possibility of sanction. It is important that objectives are broken into specific, easily measured steps that the participant must take to achieve each objective. The clearer both you and the participant are about these steps, the less likely it is that there will be disputes about satisfactory progress.

Volunteers are expected to follow through with steps in their plan, but failure to do so cannot result in a sanction. However, when a volunteer fails to comply or to make satisfactory progress, without good cause, you may reduce or withdraw support services.
There are no specific state standards for progress in job search. Expectations for participation and progress in job search activities should be discussed with the participant and clearly stated in the Employment Plan (EP). Failure to attend meetings or to follow through with job search activities in the plan may result in sanction. Frequent contact between participants and staff coordinating workshops and job search activities helps ensure that job search requirements are met.

The need for monitoring will differ depending on the activities in the plan and the individual participant. Possible methods of monitoring include, but are not limited to:

- Attendance and participation in workshop and job club.
- Job logs.
- Verification of contacts or copies of completed applications.
- Calling personnel offices to verify that participants have applied and/or interviewed.

When appropriate, you may also wish to get feedback from employers after an interview is completed.

**NOTE:** A range of verification, ranging from the above suggestions to something as simple as a signed client statement, may be acceptable. Employment Service providers should work with the county to determine the level of documentation necessary to verify job search activities.
It is critical to work with participants once they become employed to help ensure job retention and/or job laddering. In the case of part-time workers, help participants develop a plan for full-time employment and self-sufficiency.

Participants who are employed part-time must work with you to include enough other activities in the Employment Plan to meet hourly requirements. Those activities should support obtaining full-time employment as soon as possible.

When the Employment Plan is reviewed after 3 months (all plans must be reviewed every 3 months), progress toward full-time employment should be gauged and participation in a work experience considered.

VERIFICATION OF EMPLOYMENT

When participants accept employment, you will need some form of verification in order to confirm that they meet participation requirements. Some options include telephone verification, a weekly pay stub if available shortly after employment begins, and time cards. Either you or the financial worker (at county discretion) should also send the employer an employment verification form as soon as possible. Counties have the discretion to use current verification forms or to develop something specifically for MFIP.

If the financial worker sends this form, he/she should send a copy to you when it is returned by the employer. If you send the form, provide a copy of the returned form to the financial worker. Note that employer responses to these forms vary. Some employers complete and return the form quickly, others forward the form to their parent office, and some employers may refuse to complete the form. Counties have discretion to determine how to handle these situations.

HOUSEHOLD REPORT FORMS

The best record of continued employment and hours worked is pay stubs. Financial workers receive a monthly Household Report Form (HRF) from employed participants (for example: they receive information about August employment on the HRF due in September, including pay stubs to verify employment and hours). You and the financial worker should communicate changes in employment (change in employer, end work, start work, change in hours) as soon as possible. Information from the financial worker is available through the interface from MAXIS to WorkForce One. If you have information to share with financial workers or child care workers, use the Diversionary Work Program/Minnesota Family Investment Program Status Update Form (DHS-3165).
As with any other change in status, the person who first becomes aware of the change should communicate the information to all other affected staff. Note that participants are required to report changes that affect their MFIP grant to the county within 10 days of the change (then followed up with the HRF), so information about a change may be received prior to receipt of the HRF. Participants must also inform you within 10 working days regarding any changes related to their employment status.

ACCEPTABLE PERFORMANCE

Acceptable performance on the job will ultimately be determined by the employer. This means that working participants are considered to be making satisfactory progress as long as the required level of employment is maintained. However, if you learn that the employer is less than fully satisfied, contact the participant to discuss and resolve the issues before loss of employment results. This intervention could be invaluable in helping clients maintain employment.

SELF-EMPLOYMENT

For information on working with self-employed participants and work/job search requirements, see §7.18 (Self-Employment).

LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT

Participants must inform you within 10 working days regarding any changes in their employment status. When participants do not maintain employment, the reason for job loss will determine which policy you follow.

- If the participant quits suitable employment without good cause, or is terminated for non-performance, impose a sanction and follow the guidelines for working with sanctioned participants. See §9.18 (Guidelines for Working with Sanctioned Participants).

- In cases where a participant is terminated for reasons over which he/she has less control (for example: job incompatibility, inability to learn job), use professional discretion to determine whether a sanction is appropriate. The appeals process will likely be the arena in which some of these issues are resolved.

- If the participant is laid off, quits for good cause reasons, or is terminated through no fault of his/her own, the participant must contact you within 10 working days and schedule a meeting to revise the plan. Incorporate activities to replace the job in the revision.
For information on loss of employment or reduction in hours for participants extended as employed, see §10.39.3 (Employed Extension Criteria - 1-Parent Units), §10.39.6 (Employed Extension Criteria - 2-Parent Units).
Participants are expected to make satisfactory progress, as defined by the plan, for each activity in the plan. Although a form exists to assist with monitoring satisfactory progress in secondary education programs, Request for Verification of School Attendance/ Progress (DHS-2883), you have the discretion to decide how other education and training programs will be monitored. You and the participant should come to an understanding of the measures of progress and include them in the plan.

**BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

Organizations which provide Adult Basic Education, GED, or ESL to participants may not have a clear definition of satisfactory progress and may not track their attendance. You should work with instructors of these organizations to clarify expectations, and include those expectations in participants’ plans. Types of documentation that you should obtain include: attendance, grades, pass/fail statements, level of achievement, or a written description of the participant’s progress from an instructor. Because of the 60-month limit on TANF assistance, it is especially important for you to closely monitor progress in these programs. The plan for a participant who is not making adequate progress in a basic education program and incorporate activities that will replace those activities or address issues that are interfering with satisfactory progress.

**POST-SECONDARY PROGRAMS**

Common documents required from post-secondary students to measure satisfactory progress include verification of enrollment, financial assistance award letters, class schedules, and grades.

Most post-secondary institutions will have a definition for a “student in good standing”, which may be used as the measure of progress unless the student falls below a 2.0 grade point average (GPA). In addition to GPA, staff should consider specifying an attendance requirement (for example: attendance at 90%) and a restriction on dropping classes without prior notice to you.

In general, education and training activities should be authorized in 3-month blocks. Regular monitoring (at least quarterly) will help ensure that the participant continues to make satisfactory progress and will form the basis for reauthorization of the activity at the end of each 3-month period. Always include in the plan an anticipated completion date for the authorization period and requirements for contact with you.
Counties and their Employment Services Providers are not required to continue providing Employment Services to caregivers after the MFIP case (cash and food) is closed. However, counties have flexibility to use money from their MFIP Consolidated Fund Allocation to provide post-MFIP Employment Services for families who meet certain eligibility requirements and have income below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines. See §3.9 (Glossary: C...) for the definition of Consolidated Fund.

Check with your county to determine whether continued services should be provided.
Participants may have concerns about how to pay for child care when they take employment that will make them ineligible for MFIP. MFIP participants who have been on MFIP for at least 3 of the last 6 months before losing eligibility may be eligible for Transition Year Child Care (TYCC). TYCC provides a child care subsidy for low income working families. This child care program is for employment and job search activities.

TYCC will help pay child care costs for up to 1 year while the participant continues working or for job search activities up to 240 hours/calendar year. The TYCC program will pay for child care expenses minus the participant’s co-payment fee. The co-payment is based on gross income and family size. The co-payment begins at $10 per month per family when income is between 75% and 100% of the Federal Poverty Guideline (FPG). If the provider charges more than the county maximum amount, the difference is the parent’s responsibility. See Appendix C.

Participants are eligible for TYCC if the following conditions are met:

- They have received MFIP in at least 3 of the past 6 months. This includes families who request closure of MFIP, and those who are terminated from MFIP for failure to return their Household Report Form or recertification form. It does not include families with caregivers disqualified from MFIP due to fraud. If they recently moved to Minnesota from another state, the TANF they received in the other state will count as long as they received MFIP in Minnesota for at least the last month.

- They are working at least an average of 20 hours a week and earn at least the applicable minimum wage.

- The family income must not be more than 250% of the state median income.

- Families must have a dependent child, which is defined by the child care assistance programs as a child 12 years of age or younger, or a child 13 or 14 years of age who is handicapped. For additional information on TYCC, contact the county child care office or the Department of Human Services.

**2-PARENT ASSISTANCE UNITS**

If a 2-parent assistance unit has an extension under the MFIP employed category and 1 parent is permanently disqualified due to non-compliance, and if the unit meets transition year and other child care eligibility requirements, the unit would be eligible for TYCC.
Inform participants that after a year of Transition Year Child Care Program (TYCC), they may be eligible for Basic Sliding Fee Child Care (BSFCC). For more information on TYCC, see §8.63.3 (Transition Year Child Care). BSFCC helps with a portion of child care expenses. The parent co-payment fee is based on gross income and family size. If the provider charges more than the county maximum amount, the difference becomes the parent’s responsibility. There is a limit to the number of families that each county can serve through BSFCC, as this is a capped allocation. If the county has no openings, the participant's name will be added to a waiting list effective the date the family became eligible for Transition Year Child Care Assistance.

If a family on TYCC moves to a new county, the transition year will continue for the remainder of the 12 months, providing the family continues to be eligible. The waiting list date established by the original county transfers with the family.
Some people closed from Medical Assistance (MA) due to increased income may be eligible for Transitional Medical Assistance (TMA) or Transition Year Medical Assistance (TYMA).

- **Transitional Medical Assistance (TMA):** Up to 4 months of additional medical coverage provided to some people terminated from regular MA because of increased child or spousal support.

- **Transition Year Medical Assistance (TYMA):** Up to 12 months of additional medical coverage provided to some people terminated from regular MA due to increased earnings, loss of earned income disregards, or a combination of loss of child/spousal support and increased earnings/loss of earned income disregards.

Households must contain a parent or caregiver and a minor child. Both programs are person-based; thus, some households may have people receiving regular MA and/or TMA or TYMA. The MA program deeming rules, income deductions, and exclusions are used to determine eligibility for TMA and TYMA; thus, counties do not need to determine whether household income is within previous MFIP standards.

For specific provisions and eligibility criteria, see the Health Care Programs Manual.
UNLESS THERE IS GOOD CAUSE, consider a participant out of compliance with the requirements of MFIP Employment Services under these circumstances:

- The participant fails to attend the overview. See §7.6 (Employment Services Overview).

- The participant fails to conduct the required job search. See §7.12 (Job Search Activities and Time Lines).

- The participant fails to cooperate in the development of an Employment Plan. See §7.15 (Employment Plan (EP)), §7.15.12 (Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence). This includes failure to attend the initial appointment with the job counselor, or failure to attend all sessions necessary to develop a signed Employment Plan.

- The participant fails to comply with or make satisfactory progress in the activities specified in the Employment Plan. The Employment Plan must clearly specify the criteria for satisfactory progress.

- The participant fails to accept or terminates suitable employment. See §8.57 (Monitoring Employment), §10.39.3 (Employed Extension Criteria - 1-Parent Units), §10.39.6 (Employed Extension Criteria - 2-Parent Units).

- The participant fails to meet school attendance requirements. See §7.9.9 (Requirements for Teen Parents).

A participant cannot be sanctioned if the participant is unable to meet participation hours because their place of employment is closed and the participant is not eligible for holiday pay. In addition, do not increase the hours of participation to offset hours that were missed due to the holiday.

For non-compliance with an Employment Plan for victims of family violence, see §7.15.12 (Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence). “First” and “subsequent” occurrences of non-compliance with program requirements are subject to different sanctions, see §9.3.3 (Pre 60-Month Type/Length of ES Sanctions). For information on drug felons that are non-compliant, see §9.3.6 (Drug Felons Sanctions - Job Counselor Responsibilities). For information on good cause, see §9.6 (Good Cause for Non-Compliance). For post 60-month sanctions, see §10.42 (Post 60-Month ES Sanctions - General Provisions), §10.42.3 (Post 60-Month ES Sanctions - 2-Parent Units).
The policies in this section apply to participants who have **NOT** reached their 60-month lifetime limit as specified in §10.30 (60-Month Lifetime Limit).

Employment Services (ES) sanctions and child support sanctions count towards closure of the MFIP financial case. Closure under this sanction policy is not permanent as participants may reapply for MFIP at any time.

Use a sanction tracking sheet to count occurrences and contact the financial worker if there is a discrepancy.

The count toward closure does **NOT** start over, even if the participant goes off assistance, comes into compliance, and remains in compliance.

Each month that a participant fails to comply with a requirement is considered a separate occurrence of non-compliance. However, if both parents in a 2-parent assistance unit are out of compliance in the same month, it counts as 1 occurrence. The financial worker will close the MFIP financial case in the participant’s 7th occurrence of non-compliance. The Employment Services case should be closed on WF1 (Off Welfare).

**FOR THE 1ST OCCURRENCE OF NON-COMPLIANCE**

The financial worker reduces the family's grant by 10% of the Transitional Standard or Shared Household Standard, whichever applies for the family's size. This sanction applies when a participant in a single-parent household or 1 participant in a 2-parent household does not comply. The grant reduction must be in effect for a minimum of 1 month and must be removed in the month after the month the participant returns to compliance. For more information, see §9.12.3 (Time Lines for Curing the Sanction).

**EXAMPLE:**

3 person household:
- Transitional Standard = **$910** (10/1/07 standards)
  - Cash portion = **$532**
  - Food portion = **$378**
- Rent: **$450** per month
- County has chosen to vendor utilities, which are **$50** per month.

**1ST OCCURRENCE SANCTION:**

**$91** (10% of Transitional Standard) (truncated).
FOR THE 2ND THROUGH THE 6TH OCCURRENCE OF NON-COMPLIANCE

The shelter costs are vendor paid up to the amount of the cash portion of the grant. At county option, the financial worker may vendor pay utilities up to the amount of the cash portion of the grant.

The residual amount of the cash grant after vendor payment, if any, and the food portion must be reduced by an amount equal to 30% of the Transitional Standard or Shared Household Standard, whichever applies, for the family's size.

EXAMPLE:

1. Vendor rent up to the CASH portion of grant (subtract $450 from $532).
2. At county option, vendor utilities out of any remaining CASH portion of the grant. (In this example, $50 is vendored for utilities.)
3. Reduce remaining grant ($910 - $450 - $50 = $410) by 30% of Transitional Standard ($410 minus $273 (30% of $910) = $137).
4. At this level, the family receives $137 in MFIP (in the form of food benefits).

The reduction in the grant must be in effect for a minimum of 1 month and must be removed the month after the month the participant returns to compliance. For more information, see §9.12.3 (Time Lines for Curing the Sanction). If both parents in a 2-parent household are out of compliance, the grant reduction is removed in the month following the month both participants return to compliance.

The financial worker continues to vendor pay the shelter (and utilities, if applicable) for 6 months after the month in which the participant(s) return to compliance.

Participants may only be sanctioned for failure to accept suitable employment or for terminating suitable employment after enrollment in MFIP Employment Services (MFIP-ES). When a job counselor determines that a sanction is appropriate for failure to accept or for terminating suitable employment, s/he will notify the financial worker using the Diversionary Work Program/Minnesota Family Investment Program Status Update form (DHS-3165).

See §3.39 (Glossary: S...) for the definition of SUITABLE EMPLOYMENT.

For the 2nd occurrence of non-compliance with MFIP Employment Services, review the participant's case file to determine if:

- The Employment Plan is still appropriate.

OR
- The continued non-compliance can be cured by providing a needed pre-employment activity. This includes activities such as volunteer work, literacy programs and related activities, citizenship and English as a second language classes, or participation in dislocated worker services, chemical dependency treatment, mental health services, peer group networks, displaced homemaker programs, strength-based resiliency training, parenting education, or other programs designed to help families reach their employment goals and enhance their ability to care for their children.

OR

- The participant qualifies for a good cause exception.

If the lack of an identified activity can explain the non-compliance, the provider must work with the participant to provide the activity. Also, the county must restore the participant's grant amount to the full amount retroactive to the 1st day in which the participant was found to lack pre-employment activities or to qualify good cause exception. If the participant's grant is restored, the vendor payment of shelter (and utilities, if applicable) is removed.

7th OCCURRENCE OF NON-COMPLIANCE

The financial worker will close the MFIP case (100% sanction). Closure during the 1st 60 months is not permanent. The case must be closed for 1 full month but can be reopened after 1 month if the participant demonstrates compliance for up to 1 month.

A case review is required when the case is sanctioned at 30% and an attempt at a face-to-face meeting is required prior to case closure, see §9.12.9 (Case Review Requirements for Occurrences of Sanctions).

A 2-parent assistance unit gets a total of 6 occurrences before closure. For example: if Mom has 3 occurrences and Dad has 3 occurrences in different months from Mom, the next (7th) occurrence results in case closure. However, if both parents in a 2-parent assistance unit are out of compliance during the same month, it counts as 1 occurrence. Closure for non-compliance does not make the participant ineligible for Food Support, if otherwise eligible. Case closure also does not affect health care eligibility.

If a case that has been closed for the 7th occurrence of non-compliance is reopened and has another occurrence of non-compliance, sanction the case at 30%. A 2nd occurrence of non-compliance for a case reopened after closure for non-compliance will result in case closure.
REGAINING ELIGIBILITY

An MFIP applicant must file a new application with the county.

The county must coordinate with Employment Services to develop an Employment Plan for the applicant that identifies the specific activities and time frames required to be considered compliant. It may include activities that last between 1 and 30 days. The 30-day period should be consecutive and begins the date the applicant meets with Employment Services.

EXAMPLE:

A case is closed effective 2/1/05, after a 6th occurrence of non-compliance. If the applicant reapply on 2/5/05, and meets with ES on 2/10/05, schedule any activities the applicant must complete in order to come into compliance between 2/10 and 3/10. The case could be opened between 3/1/05 and 3/10/05, depending on the date of compliance. The case may not be reopened in February (unless good cause is determined) as this is the 1-month mandatory closure period.

EXAMPLE:

Alternatively, if the application is filed 3/1/04, and the applicant meets with ES on 3/5/04, the activities must be scheduled between 3/5 and 4/5. The compliance date would be no sooner than 3/5, depending on what the Employment Plan required the applicant to do. For example, if the applicant is required to participate in 2 weeks of structured job search beginning 3/8, and ending 3/19, the case may be reopened 3/19 if all requirements in the EP are met.

While it is more likely that the 1st step in the process to regain MFIP eligibility is for a client to file an application with the county, it is possible that a client may meet with Employment Services BEFORE filing an application. For example, if a case is set to close for non-compliance March 1st, but the client makes direct contact and meets with Employment Services February 26th, and THEN applies a week later on March 3rd, the 30-day compliance period could begin on 2/26 when the client met with ES.

Deny the application if the applicant does not comply with ES requirements within the time frames laid out in the EP. The application may pend longer than 30 days if the scheduled activities run longer than the average 30-day MFIP processing period.

NOTE: Subsequent case closings and reopens due to non-compliance with ES
should follow the same process and guidance described above.

➢ DUAL SANCTIONS OF NON-COMPLIANCE

Sanctions are imposed as follows for participants who refuse to comply with child support requirements AND have a concurrent sanction for failure to attend orientation, or to develop or to comply with their Employment Plan

1. If the child support non-compliance and other program non-compliance occur in the SAME month, reduce the Transitional Standard or Shared Household Standard and MFIP food portion, whichever applies, by 30% for the 1st month, then vendor pay shelter costs (and utilities, if applicable) for the 2nd month.

2. The participant remains subject to vendor payments and 30% sanction until BOTH issues of non-compliance have been resolved.

NOTE: Participants with an approved family violence waiver who are sanctioned for non-compliance with Employment Services requirements lose the waiver and the 60-month time clock resumes ticking.

For information on participants who HAVE reached their 60-month lifetime limit and qualify for a hardship extension, see §10.33 (Hardship Extensions). For post 60-month sanction information, see §10.42 (Post 60-Month ES Sanctions - General Provisions).

For information on preventing, starting, stopping, and removing sanctions, see §9.9.6 (Options for Preventing a Sanction), §9.6 (Good Cause for Non-Compliance), §9.12.6 (Removal of a Sanction).
There are certain MFIP sanction policies for drug felons. Job counselors have special responsibilities for working with drug felons.

When a sanction for failing a drug test is in effect, prior to disqualifying the caregiver and sending a notice of adverse action for a 2nd failure, the job counselor must:

- Attempt to meet face-to-face with the caregiver. See §9.12.9 (Case Review Requirements for Subsequent Occurrences of Sanctions).

- Explain the consequences of failing a subsequent drug test. (A participant who fails a subsequent drug test is permanently disqualified from MFIP cash and food.) For the definition of DISQUALIFICATION, see §3.12 (Glossary: D...).

- Explain the right to appeal. See APPEAL in §3.3 (Glossary: A...).

- Identify other resources that may be available to the family.

If a face-to-face meeting is not possible, let the county know so the county can provide the above information in writing.
Caregivers may claim the following good cause reasons for failure to comply with the expectations of MFIP Employment Services. Good cause exists when:

- Appropriate child care is not available. For the definitions which govern good cause, see §8.36 (Good Cause - Inability to Obtain Child Care).

- The job does not meet the definition of suitable employment. See §3.39 (Glossary: S...) for the definition of Suitable Employment.

- The participant is ill or injured.

- A member of the unit, a relative in the household, or a foster child in the household is ill and needs care by the participant that prevents the participant from complying.

- The participant is unable to secure needed transportation.

- The participant is in an emergency situation that prevents compliance with the Employment Plan.

- The schedule of compliance with the Employment Plan conflicts with judicial proceedings.

- A mandatory MFIP meeting is scheduled during a time that conflicts with a judicial proceeding or a meeting related to a juvenile court matter, or a participant's work schedule.

- The participant is already participating in acceptable work activities.

- The Employment Plan requires an educational program for a participant under the age of 20, but the educational program is not available.

- Activities identified in the Employment Plan are not available.

- The participant is willing to accept suitable employment, but employment is not available.

- The participant documents other verifiable impediments to compliance with the Employment Plan beyond the participant’s control.
GOOD CAUSE FOR NON-COMPLIANCE 9.6

Follow the guidelines below for determining good cause:

- It is the participant’s responsibility to offer “good cause” reasons for failure to comply. Information on the opportunity to show good cause is provided at the overview of Employment Services on the Employment Services Rights and Responsibilities (DHS-3172) and on the MFIP Notice of Intent to Sanction (DHS-3175) form. If you are aware that good cause applies, even if the participant has not claimed good cause, verify and document the reason and work with the participant to decide on what the next step should be. Do not impose a sanction.

- Use professional judgment in deciding what circumstances justify verifying a good cause claim and determining the length of the claim. Bear in mind shorter is better than longer. Request formal verification, for example: medical statements, proof of judicial proceedings, documentation of participation in acceptable activities, if the good cause claim is questionable or if using good cause claims becomes a pattern. For long term disabilities, make a referral to the Social Security Administration when appropriate.
Employment Services Providers and the county including child care, should establish clear and consistent procedures to make sure that all workers coordinate their actions. The Diversionary Work Program/Minnesota Investment Program Status Update Form (DHS-3165) is available to facilitate communication.

Good communication between all staff working with the same participant is critical to ensure that all sanctions are imposed and lifted correctly and consistently. If there is an unclear case situation, workers and counselors should contact their counterparts immediately to make sure they understand the situation fully.
You are responsible for sending the participant an MFIP Notice of Intent to Sanction (DHS-3175) form (NOITS) when there is a determination of non-compliance.

This form must note the category of non-compliance. Options are:

- You failed to attend the overview.
- You failed to meet with your job counselor.
- You failed to develop an Employment Plan.
- You failed to meet school attendance requirements.
- You failed to follow through with the Employment Plan.
- You failed to accept suitable employment.
- You quit employment without good cause.

The form also has space to describe what the participant must do to come into compliance. Be specific so that the participant understands EXACTLY what action must be taken and the deadline for those actions. Allow a minimum of 10 days for the participant to comply.

**EXAMPLE:** A participant quits employment without good cause. Indicate on the form that the participant must contact you by (date), meet with you by (date), and start job search by (date).

OR

A participant failed to follow through with the Employment Plan. Indicate on the form the specific component of the Employment Plan the person did not comply with and what he or she must do to demonstrate compliance.
As indicated on the MFIP Notice of Intent to Sanction (DHS-3175) (NOITS), the participant has the following options to prevent a sanction. Allow a minimum of 10 days when giving the participant the options for complying. The participant may:

- Comply by following through on instructions on the MFIP Notice of Intent to Sanction (DHS-3175) form, including those written in the “other” section when applicable. See §9.9.3 (Notifying the Participant).

- Demonstrate that he or she is actually already in compliance and that the job counselor’s information indicating non-compliance is incorrect.

- Show good cause for not complying with requirements.

- Request a fair hearing or a conciliation conference.

**NOTE:** Once the sanction is applied, you or the county agency must review the participant’s file no later than the 2nd month to determine if there is reason to remove the sanction. See §9.12.6 (Removal of a Sanction).
FAILURE TO RESPOND AND NOTICE OF ADVERSE ACTION 9.12

Send a Diversionary Work Program/Minnesota Family Investment Program Status Update Form (DHS-3165) notifying the financial worker to impose a sanction if the participant does not respond to the MFIP Notice of Intent to Sanction (DHS-3175) within the time allowed.

A list of reasons to impose a sanction is printed on the back of the Diversionary Work Program/Minnesota Family Investment Program Status Update Form (DHS-3165). The reason given to the participant for imposing a sanction should correspond with 1 of these options. It is important that the financial worker gets this information in order to code MAXIS correctly.

Upon receipt of the Diversionary Work Program/Minnesota Family Investment Program Status Update Form (DHS-3165), the financial worker must send the caregiver a notice of adverse action.
The financial worker must send a notice of adverse action at least 10 days before a sanction for non-compliance with Employment Services requirements is imposed.

When a sanction has been imposed, it must be in effect for a minimum of 1 month and may be removed in the month after the month the participant comes into compliance.

Participants may cure an Employment Services sanction by complying with the ES requirements during the time frames indicated below:

- **1ST OCCURRENCE OF NON-COMPLIANCE:** The sanction can be cured ON OR BEFORE 10 days prior to the EFFECTIVE date of the sanction.

- **2ND OCCURRENCE OF NON-COMPLIANCE:** The sanction can be cured ON OR BEFORE 10 days prior to the EFFECTIVE date of the sanction.

- **3RD THROUGH 6TH OCCURRENCES OF NON-COMPLIANCE:** When the 30% sanction has been imposed for 1 month, ALL subsequent consecutive months in which a 10-day notice is not required may be cured up to the day prior to the effective date of the sanction. When subsequent months are not consecutive, a notice of adverse action is sent out and the sanction must be cured ON OR BEFORE 10 days prior to the EFFECTIVE date of the sanction.

- **7TH OCCURRENCE OF NON-COMPLIANCE (MONTH OF CLOSURE):** The sanction can be cured ON OR BEFORE 10 days prior to the EFFECTIVE date of the sanction (case closure) unless good cause is granted or pre-employment activities are found to exist.

**NOTE:** For information on regaining eligibility after a 100% sanction case closure, see §9.3.3 (Pre 60-Month Type/Length of ES Sanctions).

If good cause is granted or pre-employment activities are found to exist, restore the MFIP grant to the 1st of the month in which good cause is granted or pre-employment activities are found to exist.

**WF1 CODING FOR A CASE IN SANCTION**

Do NOT close Employment Services cases for participants in a sanction (unless the participant exits MFIP). Place sanctioned participants in “Holding – Sanctioned” on the Workforce One (WF1) System.

See §9.12.6 (Removal of a Sanction).
REMOVAL OF A SANCTION

9.12.6

A participant must be in compliance with all program requirements before a sanction can be lifted. A sanction must not be lifted if the participant schedules and attends a meeting with the job counselor unless this meeting was the ONLY thing required for the participant to be considered in compliance. The participant must actually follow through with the original activities before the sanction can be lifted, if no revisions are made to the Employment Plan.

Notify the financial worker by phone and follow the telephone notification with the Diversionary Work Program/Minnesota Family Investment Program Status Update Form (DHS-3165), as soon as the participant comes into compliance. The financial worker must lift the sanction the 1st of the month following the month in which the participant came into compliance, and must lift the vendor payment sanction beginning with the 7th month after the participant has come into compliance.

If there is a dual sanction for non-compliance with both Employment Services and child support or another program requirement, each sanction is lifted separately.

- If the child support sanction is cured but the Employment Services sanction is not, the grant reduction remains at 30% of the grant remaining after vendor payments.
- If the Employment Services sanction is cured but the child support sanction is not, the 30% child support sanction remains until the month following compliance with child support requirements.

In either case, the vendor payment sanction is lifted only after the participant has been in compliance with BOTH Employment Services and child support for 6 months. See §9.12.3 (Time Lines for Curing the Sanction) for information about curing sanctions.

ONE MONTH MINIMUM SANCTION

MFIP statutes require a minimum 1-month sanction for failure to comply with Employment Services program requirements. The sanction is normally imposed in the month following non-compliance and lifted in the month after compliance.

However, an EXCEPTION may occur when the sanction is not imposed until the 2nd month after non-compliance because of a delay in sending a 10-day notice of adverse action, and the participant complies before the effective date of the sanction.

EXAMPLE: If the non-compliance occurs in January and the financial worker receives the Status Update Form on January 21st, it is too late for the financial worker to give the participant a 10-day notice of adverse action for February 1st. In this example, the sanction cannot be imposed until March 1st. If the participant
actually comes into compliance on or before February 18th, he/she will not be sanctioned in March.
Conduct a case file review no later than the 2nd month of sanction (30%). The purpose of the review is to determine whether the Employment Plan is still appropriate.

In addition to the case file review, a good faith effort must be made to meet with the participant face-to-face, prior to case closure for non-compliance. The purpose of the meeting is to ensure that the reason for sanction is accurate and if so, encourage participants to come back into compliance. During the meeting, the county or job counselor must:

- Determine whether the participant has good cause for continued non-compliance. See §9.6 (Good Cause for Non-Compliance).
- Determine whether the participant is in non-compliance due to the need for a pre-employment activity.
- Ensure the participant understands the sanction status and the consequences of continuing non-compliance. See §9.3 (Non-Compliance).
- Inform the participant of other identified resources that may be available to help meet the needs of the family.
- Ensure the participant understands the right to appeal.

The above information must be provided in a written notice to the participant when a face-to-face meeting cannot be conducted.

The grant must be restored to the full amount, retroactive to the 1st day of the month in which good cause or the need for an activity was found to exist, or the participant was found eligible for a family violence waiver. If the need for a pre-employment activity was determined, the county or job counselor must work with the participant to provide that activity.
Reduce or discontinue support services such as transportation and child care assistance for applicable activities, if the participant is not cooperating or making satisfactory progress in required activities. Consult with financial workers, child care workers, and other program staff, as required by county procedures.

Child care assistance for EMPLOYMENT may only be reduced or terminated when the participant:

- Stops working.
- OR
- Is not actually working the number of hours reported to the job counselor, child care worker, or financial worker.

Child care assistance for employment may not be reduced or terminated because the participant is out of compliance (and/or is being sanctioned) with ANOTHER Employment Services activity.

Contact county child care staff immediately when there is a change in the participant's hours of employment, or when a participant is out of compliance or not making satisfactory progress in employment.

If a timely request for a conciliation conference or fair hearing was made regarding satisfactory progress, continue support services until a decision is made at the conciliation conference or fair hearing. Withdraw support services ONLY for the activities in which they are out of compliance, if the dispute resolution process confirms that the participant is out of compliance.

Whether support services were withdrawn for failure to participate or failure to make satisfactory progress, you may re-authorize them once the participant begins participating in the activities necessary to come into compliance.
Standard procedures for notifying mandatory participants that they are out of compliance do not apply to voluntary participants. Voluntary participants cannot be sanctioned. However, support services may be reduced or terminated, and the Employment Services case may be closed if a volunteer fails to make progress or is out of compliance with his or her Employment Plan.

If a voluntary participant is not participating or making satisfactory progress, contact the participant. If it is impossible to contact the participant, send a letter noting what action will be taken (for example: supportive services will be discontinued or reduced; the Employment Services case will be closed if the participant does not demonstrate that he/she is in compliance or show good cause for non-compliance).

If a response is not received within 10 days, follow through with the appropriate action. Send a Diversionary Work Program/Minnesota Family Investment Program Status Update Form (DHS-3165) to the county child care office and the financial worker and note the appropriate change in child care hours in the “child care” section. The county will send notice that child care services will be reduced or discontinued.

Voluntary participants who contest these actions may request a fair hearing.
FRAUD

Notify the financial worker whenever you believe a participant intentionally misled the county or provider to get payments or services. The county may conduct a fraud investigation and/or initiate the process of recovering fraudulently obtained payments.

Recovery actions are the responsibility of the county agency. The financial worker will notify Employment Services staff through a Status Update Form (DHS-3165) if a participant is found guilty of fraud and is disqualified from receiving a grant for a period of time.
Months when a participant is sanctioned count toward the 60-month limit. Serious efforts should be made to ensure the family understands what must be done to come back into compliance. Schedule a meeting with sanctioned participants as soon as possible to discuss ways to remove the sanction. Coordinate your efforts with the financial worker and other appropriate county or community agency staff in planning a strategy to assist the family. Record in case notes all contact with the participant and the outcome of team meetings dealing with the sanctioned participant.

Although the participant may choose not to respond to your contacts, continue contact at least once per month. Provide the client every opportunity to cure the sanction and offer the necessary support and assistance. Remind the participant of the 60-month lifetime limit.

MFIP staff have the option to make only written contact with participants who have been verbally or physically abusive in the past and with participants who become abusive during telephone contact. Although the program supports consistent efforts to bring sanctioned families back into compliance, it is also important to reserve scarce resources for families who are able and willing to benefit from the opportunities available in Employment Services.
MFIP offers clients 2 types of dispute resolution:

- **A conciliation conference** is an informal meeting in which you and the participant discuss their disagreement. The purpose of the meeting is to try to reach mutual agreement on how to settle the disagreement. Your supervisor or a designee must review the outcome of the meeting. Participants who disagree with the outcome of conciliation can request a fair hearing.

- **A fair hearing** is the more formal of the processes. It is a legal process in which an appeals referee settles the disagreement. The fair hearing is conducted according to Minnesota Statutes, section 256J.40.

Participants can request a CONCILIATION CONFERENCE when they:

- Have a disagreement with you over the contents or interpretation of their Employment Plan.
- OR
- Receive an MFIP Notice of Intent to Sanction ([DHS-3175](#)).

Conciliation is an optional step. The participant is not required to use it prior to a fair hearing.

Participants can request a FAIR HEARING when they:

- Disagree with the content or interpretation of a plan.
- Do not reach agreement with you in a conciliation conference.
- Receive an MFIP Notice of Intent to Sanction (NOITS) and do not request a conciliation conference.
- Receive a notice of adverse action.

Whenever possible, conciliation should be the 1st method of dispute resolution. Conciliation conferences are less formal, less bureaucratic, and less procedurally complex than fair hearings. Conciliation conferences may offer a quicker process to settle disagreements, allowing the participant to move forward with activities in the plan.

Participants who receive a NOITS or a notice of adverse action may request a fair hearing. Issues that may be appealed include:
The amount of the assistance payment.

A suspension, reduction, denial, or termination of assistance.

The basis for an overpayment, the calculated amount of an overpayment, or the level of recoupment.

Eligibility for an assistance payment.

The use of protective or vendor payments.

Disagreements over the contents or interpretation of an Employment Plan.

Denial of an education plan.

A county agency cannot reduce, suspend, or terminate payment when a participant requests a fair hearing within 10 days of the mailing of the notice of adverse action, unless the participant requests in writing not to receive continued assistance pending a fair hearing decision. Assistance issued pending a fair hearing is subject to recovery, when as a result of the fair hearing decision, the participant is determined ineligible for assistance or for the amount of the assistance received. The county agency may increase or reduce an assistance payment pending an appeal when the circumstances of the participant change in ways unrelated to the issue on appeal.

Requests for fair hearings must be submitted in writing to the county human services office or to DHS. The request must be mailed within 30 days after a participant or former participant receives written notice of the county's action, or within 90 days of when a participant or former participant shows good cause for not submitting the request within 30 days.

If a participant returns the request to you in error, route it to the county agency immediately. The county agency must complete a form requesting a hearing from DHS.

The county agency must reimburse participants for reasonable and necessary expenses of attendance at the hearing, such as child care and transportation costs and for the transportation expenses of the appellant's witnesses and representatives to and from the hearing. Reasonable and necessary expenses do not include legal fees.

Fair hearings must be conducted at a reasonable time and date by an impartial referee. The hearing may be conducted by telephone or at a site that is accessible to participants with
disabilities. In most cases you should be prepared to attend the fair hearing and provide any records requested by the referee.

If the county action is upheld, the sanction is applied beginning with the next payment month. No additional notice is required before beginning the sanction.

If the participant’s appeal is upheld, benefits previously reduced must be restored.
Basic MFIP eligibility factors include who can or must be in the assistance unit. The MFIP assistance unit includes minor children under the age of 18, or age 19 and in school full-time in a secondary school. All minor siblings, and step siblings must be included in the unit, as well as natural and adoptive parents and stepparents.

Stepparents are also mandatory members of the unit whether or not there are children in common.

Eligible relatives and legal custodians (whether relatives or not) can also receive MFIP benefits for minor children, if the children have no parent present in the home. Eligible relatives include, but are not limited to, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and siblings. An eligible relative can choose to be in or out of the assistance unit. If an eligible relative chooses to be in the unit, her or his spouse (if living in the home) must also be included in the unit. When an eligible relative chooses to be in the unit, all of her or his income, as well as the income of the spouse, will be counted toward the grant. Eligible relative caregivers must also participate in Employment Services, unless exempt.

Pregnant women and their spouses are also mandatory members of the assistance unit.

Other people may be eligible to receive MFIP but are not mandatory unit members, including some optional caregivers. Consult with the financial worker if you have questions about who is in the MFIP unit.

For information on an additional child due to the birth of a baby, see §10.3.3 (Family Cap).
The birth of an additional child to a family already receiving MFIP will not result in an increase in cash assistance, unless certain conditions are met. See “Children not Subject to the Family Cap” below.

The Family Cap applies to the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) and the Diversionary Work Program (DWP). Counties must inform applicants about the Family Cap at the time of each MFIP or DWP application and at MFIP recertification. You may use the flyer: Important Information About the Family Cap (DHS-4198).

The Family Cap only applies to the cash assistance portion of MFIP that the newborn would get. The baby will be eligible for the food portion of MFIP. The Transitional Standard will be different than regular MFIP standards when there is a child not eligible for cash due to the Family Cap. For example, if a new child who is NOT subject to the Family Cap is born to a household consisting of a mother and one other child, the Transitional Standard will go from a household of 2 at $698 ($437 cash and $261 food) to a household of 3 at $910 ($532 cash and $378 food). If the new child is subject to the Family Cap, the Transitional Standard will go from a household of 2 at $698 ($437 cash and $261 food) to a household of 3 at $815 ($437 cash and $378 food). The Family Wage Level (FWL) for a household with a child subject to the Family Cap will be based on the family size used to determine the food portion of the Transitional Standard. In the examples, the FWL would be that of a household of 3, or $1,001.

CHILDREN NOT SUBJECT TO THE FAMILY CAP:

- A child (or children) conceived as a result of a sexual assault or incest. The mother must verify that the incident was reported to a law enforcement agency.

- The 1st child (or children of a multiple birth) born to a minor caregiver. This will mainly apply to a pregnant minor who receives DWP or MFIP as a “MINOR CHILD” before applying for her own MFIP grant as a minor caregiver.

- Children who are born within certain time frames:
  - For families receiving MFIP assistance on July 1, 2003, any child born to the adult parent before May 1, 2004.
  - For families who apply for the DWP or MFIP programs on or after July 1, 2003, any child born to the adult parent within 10 months of the date the family is eligible for assistance.

- An adopted child or a child living elsewhere who returns to the parent’s home.
A relative’s child that an MFIP caregiver may apply for.

Any child who had been subject to the Family Cap (and not receiving cash assistance) could receive the cash portion if the adult parent(s) has NOT received benefits from DWP or MFIP assistance in the previous 10 months and is reapplying for DWP or MFIP.

An adult parent(s) who reapplies and has received benefits from DWP or MFIP within 10 months is under the 10-month newborn eligibility period of the previous application. Therefore, a child born to the adult parent(s) within the original 10-month period is eligible for cash assistance.

The child who is subject to the Family Cap is considered an assistance unit member in all ways except that any child support received or distributed on behalf of the child is excluded. Otherwise, all other income and resources of the child subject to the Family Cap must be counted the same as they are for other children who are not subject to the Family Cap. The caregiver must assign support for the child subject to the Family Cap and cooperate with the child support enforcement agency or be subject to sanction. Workers will continue to receive CSES DAIL messages detailing support distributed on behalf of the child who is subject to the Family Cap. Children who are subject to the Family Cap will be eligible for child care benefits the same as children who are receiving MFIP.
INITIAL INCOME TEST

MFIP uses an “initial income test” when a family applies for MFIP. A “monthly income test” is used to determine ongoing income eligibility and the payment amount. See Appendix A for the MFIP Assistance Standards. See §7.18.3 (Calculating Self-Employment Earnings) for information on determining income from self-employment.

To determine initial eligibility when a family applies for MFIP, the family's income is compared to the MFIP Transitional Standard after allowing the following deductions:

- 18% of gross earnings, or 39% of the unit's gross earnings if anyone in the unit was a Minnesota participant of MFIP in any 1 of the previous 4 months.
- Child care costs up to $175 per child for children age 2 and older, and up to $200 per child for children under age 2.
- All court-ordered child support being paid for the support of children not living in the assistance unit’s household.
- An allocation for the unmet need of an ineligible spouse or children.

The family is eligible if it:

- Has income less than the Transitional Standard after completing the initial income test.
- Meets other MFIP eligibility requirements including the asset limits.
- Has provided necessary verifications.

MONTHLY INCOME TEST

Families who meet the initial eligibility test have the opportunity to use the work incentives for the duration of their time on MFIP assistance. When a family has earned income:

- 39% of gross earnings are disregarded to arrive at the "net earnings".
- The "net earnings" are subtracted from the Family Wage Level, which is 10% higher than the Transitional Standard.
- Child care is paid out of the MFIP Child Care Program. MFIP participants may
have a small child care co-payment.

Families are ALWAYS better off financially when they work. Working families can also increase their income by claiming for the federal Earned Income Credit (EIC) and the Minnesota Working Family Credit (MWFC) when they file their taxes. Use the tax credit calculation to show families the approximate amount they can expect to receive by claiming the EIC and MWFC. Families lose eligibility for MFIP when their earnings reach approximately 115% of the Federal Poverty Guideline.

**NOTE:** Families who do not work or who receive only unearned income will get an MFIP grant based on the Transitional Standard.

**LUMP SUM PAYMENTS**

MFIP treats lump sum payments as income in the month received and an asset in the 3rd month after receipt. If the lump sum income exceeds the applicable standards, the family will be suspended for 1 month.

**TREATMENT OF THE FOOD PORTION OF MFIP**

Some assistance programs exclude Food Support benefits when they look at a family's income. For instance, HUD housing programs and fuel assistance do not count Food Support as income when determining program eligibility or the amount of a monthly subsidy. Although MFIP is considered 1 program, a part of the grant is designated as the “food portion” and will be issued as EBT benefits. The food portion is identified on the "Notice of Action and Budget Calculation" issued by MAXIS. All local, state, or federal programs that do not count Food Support as income MUST NOT COUNT the food portion of MFIP as income. This amount will be issued in EBT benefits and will be shown separately from the total grant to determine the amount of income to count for these programs.

When a family receives only the food portion of MFIP in a month, that month does not count toward the family’s 60-month limit. Families who receive only a small amount of cash portion of MFIP benefits can opt out of receiving the cash portion to preserve their 60-month limit.

**TREATMENT OF HOUSING SUBSIDIES**

The value of public housing, HUD project-based properties, and Section 8 rental subsidies provided through HUD is counted up to $50, as unearned income toward the cash portion of the MFIP grant. The full amount of the subsidy is counted if it is less than $50.
Several types of housing that DO NOT count as income include: RAFS, Bridges, Shelter Plus Care, HOPWA, Mainstream Vouchers, Section 236, or tax credits.

EXEMPTIONS:

The policy does not apply to an MFIP assistance unit which includes a participant who is:

- Age 60 or older;
- OR
- A caregiver who is suffering from an illness, injury, or incapacity that has been certified by a qualified professional when the illness, injury, or incapacity is expected to continue for more than 30 days and prevents the caregiver from obtaining or retaining employment.
- OR
- A caregiver whose presence in the home is required due to the illness or incapacity of another member in the assistance unit, a relative in the household, or a foster child in the household when the illness/incapacity and the need for the participant’s presence in the home has been certified by a qualified professional and is expected to continue for more than 30 days. This includes participants who have family members in the home who meet the Special Medical Criteria or receive waivered services.
- OR
- A caregiver who is an SSI recipient.

The following procedures for someone who lives in public housing, a HUD project-based property, or a Section 8 rental property apply:

- Deny the application when applicants do not provide verification of the amount of the subsidy.
- Close the case when participants fail to provide verification of the rent subsidy amount:
  - At the time of the recertification.
  - OR
  - When there is a change in the amount of the subsidy.
  - OR
  - When the participant moves to a property that provides a subsidy to the MFIP unit.
TREATMENT OF SSI INCOME

Effective November 1, 2005, reduce the cash portion of the MFIP grant or the DWP benefit by up to $125 per MFIP assistance unit or DWP family unit that includes 1 or more SSI recipients in the household who would otherwise be mandatory (adult or child), but are excluded solely due to receiving SSI. If the SSI recipient or recipients in an MFIP or DWP unit receive less than $125 of SSI, budget only the SSI amount received against the MFIP cash portion or the DWP benefit.

Do not budget more than $125 per assistance unit regardless of the number of SSI recipients in the household.

This provision does not apply to optional relative caregivers unless the caregiver’s children or stepchildren are included in the MFIP or DWP unit.

MAXIS budgets countable income from the case toward the cash portion of the MFIP grant in the following order:

- Earned income.
- Unearned income.
- Housing subsidy and SSI income.

Do NOT count the SSI income of the parent(s) of a minor caregiver against the minor caregiver’s MFIP because the minor caregiver’s parent(s) is required to be a separate assistance unit from the minor caregiver and her child.

Do NOT budget SSI retroactive lump sum payments or other income the SSI recipient receives, such as RSDI or earnings. Budget the SSI income prospectively and retrospectively the same as other unearned income.
The asset limit for MFIP applicants is $2,000. Once on MFIP, the family can accumulate a total of $5,000 in assets. Assets of people in the unit are counted. In addition, assets of the following people are counted:

- Ineligible mandatory unit members.
- Parents and stepparents in the home but not on MFIP.
- Immigrant’s sponsor and the sponsor’s spouse.

The counted value of most available assets is the equity value (fair market value minus any encumbrances). There are special policies for determining the value of some assets (for example, vehicles).

Following are some of the most common excluded assets:

- All life insurance policies, as well as 1 burial plot per member of the assistance unit.
- 1 vehicle up to a loan value of $7,500.
- The home which is owned by and is the usual residence of the family, including surrounding land and buildings.
- Household and personal goods, including pets, furniture, clothing, jewelry, appliances, and other tools and equipment used in the home.
- Assets used in self-employment or for self-support, EXCEPT for non-homestead real property used for self-employment.
- Disaster relief funds.
- Tax credits, refunds, and rebates.
- Student financial aid.
The MFIP program offers families who are employed a great advantage by providing 2 work incentives:

- A 2-tiered payment standard that uses a higher standard (Family Wage Level) whenever there is earned income.
- A 39% disregard of gross earnings which is available as long as the family receives MFIP.

Both entry-level jobs and part-time jobs are realistic alternatives. The Family Wage Level and 39% earnings disregard ALWAYS result in participants being better off when they work.

The federal Earned Income Credit (EIC) and the Minnesota Working Family Credit (MWFC) can add additional income for the family and are excluded when determining eligibility and benefit levels. In 2001, Minnesota families received an average combined credit of more than $1,900.

See Appendix A for MFIP Assistance Standards and tables comparing family size, grant amounts, income amounts, and “exit levels”.
Work incentives and tax credits provide families with new opportunities. They can make choices which can increase their income and make self-sufficiency a reality. Participants can enter the job market slowly and with entry-level jobs still see a benefit to their family in terms of increased income. See DHS Bulletin #06-11-03 (DHS Updates Work Will Always Pay…With MFIP Handout to show changes effective October 1, 2006). Also see Appendix A for MFIP Assistance Standards and tables comparing family size, grant amounts, income amounts, and “exit levels”.

A general description of the components that affect the MFIP grant are as follows:

- **TRANSITIONAL STANDARD**

  The MFIP Transitional Standard is the base standard issued for most families with no earnings or with only unearned income. The Transitional Standard has a cash portion and a food portion. The MFIP grant is issued as cash through Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) and food through EBT at the grocery store. In a small number of cases, where unrelated people reside in the same household, families receive a reduced benefit called a Shared Household Standard.

- **FAMILY WAGE LEVEL**

  Whenever a family has earnings, 39% of the earnings are disregarded and the resulting net is subtracted from the Family Wage Level (which is 110% of the Transitional Standard). This means that, up to a certain level of earnings, a family may not experience a reduction in the grant amount. For example, a family with 1 adult and 2 children could have $149 in gross earnings and would still receive the full Transitional Standard of $910. A family will never receive a grant payment greater than the Transitional Standard.

- **EARNINGS DISREGARD**

  The earnings disregard of 39% is applied every month the family has earnings. The disregard is available to each working member of the unit.

**NOTE:** Families receiving cash benefits are limited to 60 months of assistance during their lifetime. Every month a family receives an MFIP grant that includes a cash portion counts toward the 60-month limit. Any month the grant amount includes the food portion ONLY does NOT count toward the lifetime limit.
PROSPECTIVE AND RETROSPECTIVE BUDGETING

➢ PROSPECTIVE BUDGETING

Generally, prospective budgeting is used only in the 1st 2 months of eligibility. Prospective budgeting means the assistance payment is based on the "best estimate" of the income a participant will receive during that month. For example, if the 1st 2 months of eligibility are April and May, a "best estimate" for April is used for the April payment and a "best estimate" for May is used for the May payment.

April = Budget Month
April = Payment Month

➢ RETROSPECTIVE BUDGETING

The MFIP payment for a month is generally based on income received in a past month. This method, called retrospective budgeting, is used because there is an administrative period needed to calculate and issue the payment after income is reported. Retrospective budgeting means that the month's payment is based on the reported income of a previous month. For example, the actual income received in April will be reported in May and used to calculate the payment for June.

April = Budget Month
May  = Report Month
June  = Payment Month

EMPLOYMENT BONUS

The use of retrospective budgeting also creates an "employment bonus" for families who begin working after they become MFIP participants in the program. After the 1st 2 months of eligibility, income is only counted retrospectively. A family in the retrospective cycle continues to receive a grant for the 1st 2 months after their earnings exceed the grant. The additional income can offset the initial expense when a caregiver begins working. This makes the transition off assistance an easier one.

EXAMPLE OF HOW BUDGETING POLICIES AFFECT A FAMILY’S GRANT

A participant starts working on April 1st. She/he reports to the worker on April 10 that anticipated earnings for April would exceed the level of income eligibility.
April Earnings: Full April Grant.

May Earnings: Full May Grant.

June Earnings: April earnings applied. Close MFIP.
Begin transitional child care and medical benefits.

In this example, the family would receive the full earnings in April and May, and receive MFIP payments based on income received in February and March. Transitional child care and medical benefits would begin in June.
MFIP EMPLOYMENT SERVICES MANUAL

SIGNIFICANT CHANGE POLICY

MFIP EMPLOYMENT SERVICES MANUAL

SIGNIFICANT CHANGE POLICY 10.21

MFIP has a "significant change" policy to address a decline of income. If a family experiences a decline in gross earned or unearned income of 39% or more in the payment month from income received in the budget month, a supplement can be issued in the payment month. For example, if the hours worked by the participant are reduced in June, and the participant's June payment was based on full-time work in April, a supplement can be issued in June based on the "best estimate" of income that will be received in June. The participant must request this recalculation to be done by the financial worker and can only receive this supplement twice in a 12-month period.

MAXIS issues a monthly "Notice of Action and Budget Calculation" for families with earnings. This notice includes a statement alerting the participant to a possible "significant change". The notice includes the dollar amount that qualifies for a "significant change" and informs the participant to call their worker if they experience this decline in income.

Significant change does not apply when the unit receives a lump sum; a unit member is on strike, in a month in which the unit gets an extra paycheck, or for self-employment income.
There are 3 MFIP budgeting rules to remember:

- The Transitional Standard or the Shared Household Standard is used if the family has no income or only unearned income.

- The Family Wage Level is always used when the family has earnings.

- The actual payment cannot exceed the Transitional Standard or Shared Household Standard.

The following examples illustrate the effects of earnings on the payment amount (standards EFFECTIVE 10-1-07):

**CASE EXAMPLE 1:**

The family consists of 1 adult and 1 child. There are no earnings. The grant equals the Transitional Standard of $698.

**Result:** Family receives $437 cash portion and $261 food portion.

**CASE EXAMPLE 2:**

The same family consists of 1 adult and 1 child. The participant is employed part-time and receives $400 in gross earnings per month. She/he receives 2 work incentives -- the Family Wage Level and the 39% disregard.

\[\begin{align*}
\$400 & \quad \text{Gross Earnings} \\
-156 & \quad 39\% \text{ disregard} \\
\$244 & \quad \text{Net earnings} \\
\$768 & \quad \text{Family Wage Level} \\
-244 & \quad \text{Net earnings} \\
\$524 & \quad \text{MFIP Grant}
\end{align*}\]

**Result:** Family receives $400 in gross earned income (less paycheck deductions such as, taxes and FICA) and $524 grant = $924 total family income (less paycheck deductions). In this case, the grant includes $263 cash and $261 in food portion. In addition, the family would be eligible for the federal Earned Income Credit (EIC) and the Minnesota Working Family Credit (MWFC).
CASE EXAMPLE 3:

The family consists of 1 adult and 1 child. The participant now earns $900/month.

- $900  Gross Earnings
- $351  39% disregard
- $549  Net earnings

- $768  Family Wage Level
- $549  Net earnings
- $219  MFIP Grant

Result: Family receives $900 in gross earning (less paycheck deductions such as, taxes and FICA) and $219 grant = $1,119 total family income. Because the entire grant amount ($219) is in food portion, this month DOES NOT count against the 60-month maximum lifetime limit. Again, the family would be eligible for EIC and MWFC.

As illustrated by these examples, a NON-WORKING family receives cash and food benefits of $698. With earnings of $400 per month, the cash and food benefit grant is $524 and the combined gross income is $924 (less paycheck deductions). With increased earnings of $900, the food benefit is $219, the combined gross income is $1,119 (less paycheck deductions), and the month does not count against the 60-month maximum lifetime limit.

CHILD CARE CO-PAYMENTS

Child care co-payments are based on household size and income. Co-payments are assessed on family income beginning at 75% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG) and are increased to provide movement to full payment of child care costs as parents’ income increases.

Families with income less than 75% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG) do not have a co-payment. Families with income between 75% - 100% of the FPG pay a biweekly co-payment fee of $2.00 or a monthly co-payment fee of $5.00.

For co-payment charts for all income levels and household sizes, refer to DHS Bulletin #07-68-07 (DHS Announces State Fiscal Year 2008 Copayment Schedules for the Child Care Assistance Program).

TAX CREDITS
A family can increase their family income even more with the federal Earned Income Credit (EIC) and the Minnesota Working Family Credit (MWFC). These tax credits are not counted against the MFIP grant, whether received monthly or annually.

Units which have received less than 60 months of MFIP may choose to "opt out" of the cash portion of the MFIP grant. The unit will continue to be eligible for the food portion of MFIP, as well as other program benefits, including employment support services and child care.

The months a unit chooses to opt out of the cash portion of MFIP count toward the required months of participation needed for Transition Year Child Care.

Any month a unit chooses not to receive the MFIP cash portion does not count toward the 60-month lifetime limit. Units otherwise exempt from the 60-month limit will receive no additional advantage in choosing only the food portion of MFIP. When a unit chooses to begin receiving the cash portion of the grant again, each month of the cash portion will count toward the 60-month limit. See §10.30 (60-Month Lifetime Limit).

Assistance units that are required to have all or part of the cash portion vendor paid cannot choose to opt out of the MFIP cash portion. This includes new applicant units for the 1st 6 months. It also includes units subject to mandatory vending due to 2nd occurrence Employment Services sanctions. See §9.3.3 (Pre 60-Month Type/Length of ES Sanctions).

When a mandatory vendor payment (shelter or utility) period ends, the unit can choose to opt out of the MFIP cash portion. A unit on voluntary vendor payments must choose whether it wants to continue voluntary vendor payments or to opt out of the MFIP cash portion but cannot choose to do both.

Units must choose to opt out of the cash portion by the 22nd of the month prior to the month the change is to take place. There are no EXCEPTIONS. A unit MAY NOT return a warrant or money in the amount of the benefit issued and choose at that time to opt out of the MFIP cash portion for the payment month.

Units which have opted out of the MFIP cash portion may, at a later date, choose to receive both the cash and food portions of the MFIP grant. The unit must notify the county agency that it wants to make the change by the 22nd of the month prior to the month the change is to take place. There are EXCEPTIONS to the deadline for choosing to opt back into the cash portion after the 22nd of the month:

- When a significant change occurs and the unit reports it timely, the unit may choose to begin to receive the cash portion in the month of a significant change and the months thereafter.
- When there is a change in assistance unit composition, the unit may choose to receive the cash portion the month a person is added or removed from the unit and the months thereafter.
There is no restriction on the number of times a unit can choose to opt out of the cash portion and start it again.
Federal rules limit public assistance eligibility for caregivers to 60 months in their lifetime. Minnesota began counting months toward the 60-month lifetime limit 7-1-97.

The 60-month limit is per caregiver receiving MFIP, and the months do not have to be consecutive. Months are counted as noted below. The counted and exempt months include months in which a caregiver received TANF benefits from another state, even if before 7-1-97 (states may have chosen earlier start dates and shorter limits for their TANF programs).

The following are EXCEPTIONS to counting a month toward the 60-month time limit. If a caregiver meets 1 of the exceptions, that month does NOT count toward the 60-month limit.

- Months in which the caregiver participated in the MFIP Field Trials.
- Months when the caregiver was living on reservations with a “not employed” rate of at least 50% when the grant is issued.
- Victims of family violence who request the Family Violence Waiver Option and are complying with an Employment Plan (EP). The exemption starts the month the EP is approved and ends the month after the participant no longer qualifies for a Family Violence Waiver. See §7.15 (Employment Plan (EP)), §7.15.12 (Employment Plans for Victims of Family Violence), §7.29 (Family Violence Waiver Option), §7.29.3 (Person Trained in Domestic Violence).
- Caregivers age 60 or older who have not already exceeded the 60-month time limit. Stop the clock the 1st of the month following the month the participant turns 60. Participants who are age 60 or older will not receive a 60-month warning notice referenced below, unless there is a 2nd MFIP caregiver in the household who is not exempt from the 60-month limit.
- Minor caregivers complying with an education plan. See §7.9.9 (Requirements for Teen Parents).
- Custodial parents age 18 or 19 who have chosen an Employment Plan with an education option and are cooperating with education requirements. See §7.9.9 (Requirements for Teen Parents).
- Any month the unit chooses to opt out of the cash portion of the MFIP grant. See §10.27 (Opting Out of MFIP Cash Portion).
Any month the unit receives ONLY the food portion of the grant. This includes if the unit is sanctioned and receives only the food portion. However, see below regarding months that include a vendor payment or a recoupment.

- Any month the unit receives a grant for minor children only. This includes any month caregivers are ineligible or disqualified.

- Any month the unit would have received only the FOOD portion of the grant (prior to recoupment).

Receipt of payments to cover emergency needs or assistance under the Diversionary Work Program do NOT count toward the 60-month limit.

Months listed below COUNT toward the 60-month limit, unless 1 of the above exceptions applies:

- Minnesota state-funded months for caregivers who received Family GA.

- Minnesota state-funded months for certain non-citizens who are ineligible for TANF-funded assistance.

- Minnesota state-funded months for 2-parent households.

- Months of assistance the client received from a Tribal TANF program, whether received in Minnesota or another state.

- A month in which there is a vendor payment or recoupment that reduces the CASH portion of the grant to $0.

- Months following the month the 19-year old caregiver turns 20.

- Months following the month the caregiver under 20 obtains a secondary school diploma or GED.

- Months when minor caregivers are sanctioned for non-cooperation with educational requirements.

- Months a person receives MFIP cash assistance and later is determined to be ineligible for assistance. That period of time is considered to have been a month of assistance, even if the benefits are subsequently repaid. Repayment for any reason does not change the number of counted months.
Financial workers use the STAT/TIME panel in MAXIS to record the history of a caregiver’s receipt of assistance toward the 60-month limit. This tracking triggers MAXIS to mail person-specific notices regarding the limits. See §10.30.3 (Transition Period - 48 to 60 Months). The 1st notice is sent to participants in the 48th month of cash assistance. Subsequent notices are sent between the 10th and the 15th of each month after that, telling participants the number of cash assistance months they have left.

When clients move to or from Minnesota:

- When a client moves to another state, the other state will call to confirm the number of months of assistance received toward the 60-month limit. Financial workers provide only the number of TANF-funded months a client has used, unless the other state inquires about state-funded assistance.

- When a client moves to Minnesota from another state, only the TANF-funded months on assistance count toward the 60-month limit. Financial workers do NOT count months when the unit received benefits only from a state-funded assistance program in another state.

Certain people who have reached their 60-month lifetime limit may be eligible for an extension of MFIP under a hardship extension category. See §10.33 (Hardship Extensions).

During the last 12 months of MFIP, there are specific requirements for determining whether a participant is eligible for an extension. See §10.30.3 (Transition Period - 48 to 60 Months), §10.30.6 (180 to 60 Days Before MFIP Closes).

Financial workers must determine if the family is eligible for other types of assistance, including health care or MinnesotaCare and Food Support when MFIP is closed at the end of 60 months. Families should also receive information on basic sliding fee child care.

Also see §10.42 (Post 60-Month ES Sanctions - General Provisions).
TRANSITION PERIOD - 48 TO 60 MONTHS 10.30.3

The transition period is the time during which to review progress and plans with participants who are approaching the 60-month time limit. The transition period begins in the 48th month of receipt of MFIP and continues through the 60th month of MFIP.

The objectives for the transition period are to:

- Continue to help families find employment.
- Ensure months on assistance were counted correctly.
- Identify and gather all information applicable to cases approaching 60 months.
- Communicate with families so they understand their options.
- Help participants obtain documentation necessary for an extension.
- Help prepare families who may not be extended by explaining non-cash benefits that may be continued and making referrals to other community resources.

From 180 to 60 days (approximately 6 to 2 months) before the 60th month:

- MAXIS identifies cases and sends notices to the family.
- Counties must complete an administrative review of each MFIP case prior to a face-to-face meeting.
- Counties must attempt to meet face-to-face meeting with the participant(s).

The order and specific months these activities are undertaken will vary by county.

For additional information on steps to follow for the period 180 to 60 days prior to the end of the participant’s 60th month, see §10.30.6 (180 to 60 Days Before MFIP Closes).

NOTICES

MAXIS identifies cases at the 48th month and notifies the county. MAXIS also sends notices to the family about the 60-month time limit and how many months of MFIP they have used. Notices to the family are sent monthly between the 48th and 59th month.
ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

Counties are required to complete an administrative review of each case within 180 days, but not less than 60 days, before the participant reaches 60 months on assistance. The purpose of the review is to determine whether the employment plan is still appropriate.

DHS recommends a team approach (financial worker, job counselor, other staff, and professionals involved with the case) for reviews and subsequent meetings with participants. However, each county has flexibility to determine who will be involved and how this process will be completed.

Issues to be considered include:

- Existing conditions that affect the participant’s progress toward self-sufficiency.
- Whether the participant is currently in compliance and his/her sanction history.
- Services the family currently receives and identification of other necessary services.
- Whether the employment plan is still appropriate.
- Whether the participant is aware of options to stop the 60-month clock.
- Whether months on assistance been counted correctly.
- Whether there appears to be eligibility for an extension category or categories.
- What resources are available if MFIP ends.

A participant who is in sanction for any reason during the 60th month is permanently ineligible for a hardship extension. In addition, to be eligible for a hardship extension under the employed hardship extension category, participants must be in compliance 10 out of the last 12 months. It is critical that participants understand the connection between sanctions and eligibility for an extension.

When sanctions that affect eligibility for an extension have been imposed, counties and Employment Services Providers should determine whether they were imposed properly, whether good cause existed, and work with participants to cure the sanction. County and ES staff should offer to assist participants who need help obtaining documentation necessary to cure the sanction.
FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS

Counties are required to attempt to meet face-to-face with participants between 180 and 60 days before the end of the 60th month. In general, after the administrative review is completed, the county will notify the participant that a face-to-face meeting has been scheduled, or that the participant should contact the county to schedule the meeting. If the participant does not respond, the county should make at least 2 more attempts to make contact and document these attempts in case notes. For information on attempting to meet, see §3.3 (Glossary: A...). The requirement to attempt a face-to-face meeting is a responsibility for counties and their ES Providers. Participants are NOT required to attend.

The purpose of the face-to-face meeting is the review the family’s current situation, review the 60-month time clock record, explain accrued months and eligibility requirements for an extension, and provide information about other resources. County and ES staff should offer to assist participants who need help obtaining documentation necessary for an extension.

If a face-to-face meeting cannot be completed, counties must mail information that would have been covered, including when MFIP will close and an extension request form.

EXTENSION DECISIONS

No later than the 10-day cut-off of the 60th month, the county makes a decision about whether to extend the family’s eligibility beyond the 60th month, or to close the case. If information needed to determine whether the participant is eligible for a hardship extension is not available before the 10-day cut-off date in the 60th month, a decision is made based on the best information available at the time. Depending on the degree of confidence the county has in the documentation it has received, 1 of the following 2 approaches should be used for cases where some further documentation is pending. The rationale for choosing a specific approach in should be documented in MAXIS CASE NOTES.

- The county may EXTEND MFIP benefits for the participant if they have received reasonable documentation that the participant would qualify for an extension, but either the county or another professional has identified that additional follow-up is needed. Set a review of the extension to coincide with the date the county expects to receive the additional documentation. Inform the participant that if the additional documentation does not confirm that the participant is eligible for an extension, he/she may be responsible for an overpayment.

- The county must CLOSE the case if a participant requests an extension but there is no current documentation on file that would indicate that the family is eligible for an extension. Notify the participant that the case may be reinstated if the...
needed documentation is received within 30 days of the date MFIP closes. The county also must offer to help the participant get the needed documentation.

Before a case can be closed (not extended at the end of 60-months), it must be reviewed by a job counselor supervisor or the team designated by the county. The review is used to determine whether an extension criteria was applied correctly and that there was an attempt to meet face-to-face with the participant.
DHS recommends that counties take the following steps when setting up and conducting the case review and face-to-face meetings required 180 to 60 days prior to the end of the participant’s 60th month on MFIP.

1. COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

Prior to the face-to-face meeting, staff involved with the participant(s) should meet to review the family’s situation. DHS recommends using a team for the county administrative review and subsequent face-to-face meeting. The team may include the financial worker, job counselor, supervisory staff, social worker, child care worker, psychologist, vocational specialist, family violence advocate, or anyone else involved with the participant, provided that the participant has signed the necessary consent forms.

Consider the following:

- What conditions exist that affect the participant’s progress toward self-sufficiency?
- Is the participant currently in compliance? What is the sanction history for this case?
- What services is the family currently receiving? Are there any other service options that should be considered, such as subsidized employment?
- Is the participant’s Employment Plan still appropriate?
- Is the participant aware of options for stopping the clock?
- Is there an extension for which the participant might qualify?
- What resources might be available to the family if MFIP ends?
- Has the number of TANF months been correctly counted?

NOTE: This list is not meant to be all-inclusive.

2. APPOINTMENT LETTER
The county sends a letter to ask the participant to call for an appointment for the face-to-face meeting or to notify the participant that a meeting has been scheduled.

If county agency does not hear from the participant, it must make AT LEAST 2 more attempts to reach the participant, using other approaches, such as phone calls or home visits. The county documents these attempts in case notes and person notes.

3. FACE-TO-FACE MEETING

Meet and discuss the items on your county’s checklist. The county is required to attempt to hold a face-to-face meeting for the benefit of the participant. Although “attempting to meet face-to-face” is a requirement for the county, it is not an eligibility requirement for MFIP participants. Counties are also required to develop guidelines for attempting to meet face-to-face.

The face-to-face meetings provide:

- A means to reach participants who may have missed important messages.
- An opportunity for participants to receive information on their sanction status or to provide information needed to cure the sanction.
- An opportunity for participants to request an extension or develop an exit plan.

Stress the importance to the participant of attending the face-to-face meeting, but do not sanction the participant for not attending the meeting.

4. IF NO FACE-TO-FACE MEETING

If a face-to-face meeting does not occur, the county must send a letter advising the participant that MFIP will soon close. Provide a list of the hardship extension categories and a copy of the extension request form. Enclose a list of community resources that are available to the participant if MFIP ends, and any other information that would have been covered at the face-to-face meeting. If the participant responds to this letter, attendance at a face-to-face meeting should be strongly encouraged even if it is after the 58th month.

5. SUPERVISORY OR TEAM REVIEW
Before MFIP closes due to the time limit, the job counselor’s supervisor or the review team must review the case to determine if the criteria for a hardship extension, if requested, were applied appropriately and an attempt was made to meet with the participant face-to-face. If the review indicates that the criteria to close the case were met, a 10-day notice of adverse action to terminate MFIP at the end of 60th month is sent by the county.

If a case was closed after the 60th month without the required case review, the county agency must contact the participant and offer to do a case review to determine if the assistance unit was eligible for a hardship extension. If the participant is determined to be eligible for a hardship extension and meets all other MFIP eligibility criteria, the county agency must issue retroactive benefits for all months of MFIP eligibility up to and including the current month.
Participants who have reached their 60-month lifetime limit as outlined in §10.30 (60-Month Lifetime Limit) may be eligible for an extension of MFIP if they meet criteria under 1 of the hardship categories listed below:

- **Ill or Incapacitated.** See §10.33.3 (Ill/Incapacitated Extensions). Extensions in this category include ill/incapacitated, needed in the home, and special medical criteria.

- **Hard to Employ.** See §10.36 (Hard to Employ Extensions). Extensions in this category include mental retardation, mental illness, IQ below 80, learning disability, and victims of family violence.

- **Employed.** See §10.39 (Employed Extensions). Extensions in this category include employed, and employed/limited hours.

Extended participants may continue to receive MFIP as long as:

- State law provides for extensions.
- The criteria for an extension are met.
- All other MFIP requirements (including ES) continues to be met.

When the criteria or requirements are no longer met, the participant may be sanctioned, have their case closed, or in the case of a 2-parent household be removed from the grant depending on the extension category. See §10.39.6 (Employed Extension Criteria - 2-Parent Units). See the sections referenced above for more information. Also see §10.42 (Post-60 Month ES Sanctions - General Provisions).

**REQUIREMENTS COMMON TO ALL EXTENSIONS**

Although there are separate eligibility criteria for each extension under the categories listed above, there are 3 requirements that are common to all extensions:

- **Requesting an Extension**
  In most cases, participants must request a hardship extension, either verbally or in writing. Counties MUST document whether the participant requests an extension or indicates that he/she is not interested in applying for an extension. If you receive the request, notify the county immediately. An extension request form should be completed at the face-to-face meeting, if possible. If the participant does not attend the face-to-face meeting, an extension request form must be sent
to the participant telling him or her to notify the county, orally or in writing, if he/she wants to be considered for a hardship extension.

There are 2 instances when participants do not need to request an extension:

- When an extension had been approved but eligibility under the original extension category ends. These participants may have to provide documentation that they are eligible under another category.

- When re-applying for MFIP. As part of the application process, these applicants will be required to provide documentation that they are eligible for a hardship extension.

➢ Providing Verification

Participants must provide verifications necessary for the county to approve an extension. Participants who need help obtaining verifications may sign a release of information that will allow the county or ES Provider to assist on their behalf.

➢ Compliance in the 60th Month

Participants may request a hardship extension in any month before or after month 60. However, they must be (or must have been) in compliance with all program requirements in the 60th month. “In compliance with all program requirements” means that the participant was not in sanction for any reason. See “Provisions for 2-Parent Households” below for information on how this requirement applies in a 2-parent family.

If a participant who applies for an extension after the 60th month is able to document that a sanction was incorrectly applied, or that the participant had good cause for the non-compliance, the county must consider the participant compliant for the purpose of establishing eligibility for any hardship extension.

ASSISTING PARTICIPANTS WITH THE EXTENSION PROCESS

Counties and ES Providers should work with each family to determine eligibility for an extension. Potential eligibility for an extension such as “ill/incapacitated” or “hard to employ” may involve identifying barriers, referring for assessments, and obtaining documentation. Potential eligibility for the “employed” extension may mean helping participants increase work hours or making subsidized work opportunities available. Counties and ES Providers must tell families who do not qualify for an extension that they
would continue to receive benefits such as Food Support and Health Care when they are eligible, and receive information about other community resources.

In all cases, it is important to reach out, follow through, and work with each family as intensively as needed. Families must also follow through on appointments, provide the necessary documentation, complete assessments, and attend scheduled meetings. Expectations need to be clearly communicated.

IDENTIFYING THE APPROPRIATE EXTENSION CATEGORY

Some participants may meet criteria for an extension in more than 1 category, and others may switch categories over time as their situation and family circumstances change. Counties and Employment Services Providers should make initial extension decisions based on the best available information at that time. As more information becomes available, the category of extension may need to be reviewed and changed.

Listed below are examples of the potential extension categories for participants with mental health issues. To determine which category to use, consider the following:

- If the doctor's statement says the participant cannot work or participate in work activities at all, extend under the ill or incapacitated category. See §10.33.3 (Ill/Incapacitated Extensions).

- If the participant can work but not in an unsubsidized job, extend under the hard-to-employ category based on the MI diagnosis. See §10.36 (Hard to Employ Extensions).

- If the participant can work in an unsubsidized job but only a limited number of hours, extend under the employed/limited work category. See §10.39.9 (Limited Work Due to Illness/Disability Extension Criteria).

- If the participant has been able to obtain and retain unsubsidized employment at the required number of hours, extend under the regular employed category. See §10.39 (Employed Extensions).

PARTICIPANTS WHO SPEAK LIMITED ENGLISH

Counties, and Employment Services Providers under contract with the county, MUST follow the county’s limited English proficiency (LEP) plan to communicate information about hardship extensions to participants who speak limited English. Employment Services Providers should review the LEP plan to make sure they understand what language
assistance resources are available to help participants understand necessary information about hardship extensions and what they need to do to request an extension. The most common language assistance resources will be in-person or telephone interpreters and translated documents. Prior to face-to-face meetings, counties should review MAXIS information about the participant’s primary language and the need for an interpreter. If an interpreter is necessary, the county should arrange for one before the interview. Counties must provide meaningful access to the information for clients who speak limited English.

CASES THAT ARE NOT EXTENDED

If the case is closed because the parent(s) do not meet extension criteria, a review must be conducted by the job counselor’s supervisor or the review team designated in the county’s approved Service Agreements to determine if the extension criteria were applied appropriately.

PROVISIONS FOR 2-PARENT HOUSEHOLDS

Hardship extension policy for 2-parent units when both parents reach the 60-month lifetime limit at the same time differs from the policy for 2-parent units when 1 parent reaches the 60-month lifetime limit before the other. The differences are outlined below.

WHEN BOTH PARENTS REACH THE 60-MONTH LIFETIME LIMIT AT THE SAME TIME

BOTH parents must:

- Be in compliance in month 60.
- Meet criteria for an extension or have banked months in order for MFIP to be continued.

IF one parent is not in compliance, does not meet criteria for an extension, or have banked months, the unit may choose to remove the non-compliant or ineligible parent. See §10.39.6 (Employed Extension Criteria - 2-Parent Units).

Parents being evaluated for the employed extension must be in compliance with all program requirements in at least 10 out of the previous 12 months. If the parent being evaluated for the employed extension does not meet the 10 of 12 criteria, the unit may choose to remove that parent from the MFIP unit.

WHEN 1 PARENT REACHES THE 60-MONTH LIFETIME LIMIT BEFORE THE OTHER
The parent who reaches the 60-month limit must:

- Be in compliance in month 60.
- Meet criteria for an extension or have accrued banked months in order for MFIP to be continued.

IF the parent who has reached month 60 is not in compliance, does not meet criteria for an extension, or have banked months, the unit may choose to remove that parent. See §10.39.6 (Employed Extension Criteria - 2-Parent Units).

The parent who has less than 60 months does NOT:

- Need to be in compliance in month 60.
- Need to meet an extension criteria.

NOTE: The family may choose to remove the sanctioned parent, who HAS NOT used 60 months, in month 61 and extend the case if the parent who HAS reached month 60 meets any extension criteria.

If the family chooses NOT to remove the sanctioned parent, post 60-month sanction provisions apply and could result in a permanent case closure.
The following 3 groups of participants may be extended in the ill/incapacitated extension category:

- Participants who are ill, injured, or incapacitated. See §10.33.3.3 (Ill, Injured, or Incapacitated Extension Criteria).

- Participants with an adult or child in the unit who meet special medical criteria. See §10.33.3.6 (Special Medical Criteria Extension). The extension related to special medical criteria applies only when the caregiver has a child or an adult in the household who meets the criteria. When the caregiver receives similar services or has a serious and persistent mental illness, he or she may be extended in another category, such as the ill/incapacitated (lasting 30 days or more) category or the hard to employ/MI category.

- Participants who are needed in the home. See §10.33.3.9 (Needed in the Home Extension Criteria).

If the participant’s health care provider does not provide the information needed to determine whether the participant is eligible for a hardship extension, obtain a release of information from the participant authorizing you to contact the health care provider. Explain to the health care provider that this information is necessary to determine whether the participant is eligible for a hardship extension. If the health care provider still does not respond, contact the consumer representative at the health plan. If the health plan does not respond, contact DHS Health Care Purchasing Division at 651-296-3386 or 1-800-657-3756. Indicate which health plan you have contacted.

Participants extended in any of the above categories ARE NOT REQUIRED to participate in Employment Services, but they may volunteer. Counties are required to serve all caregivers who volunteer.

Volunteers may request approval for any work activity and do not have to meet hourly participation requirements. See §6.6 (Minimum Hourly Activity Requirements).

Although volunteers cannot be sanctioned for failure to follow through with the activities in their plan, they are expected to make satisfactory progress in each plan activity. Job counselors may close the case and discontinue support services for volunteer participants who fail, without good cause, to comply with their plan.
NON-COMPLIANCE WITH TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The extension may end for caregivers who do not follow treatment recommendations without good cause. Good cause may be granted when the nature of a caregiver’s disability interferes with follow through on treatment recommendations. The county may also want to consider changing the extension reason to “unemployable” if this is a better alternative.

If the treatment recommendations of the health care provider are not followed, the participant is no longer eligible to continue receiving MFIP. However, counties should allow a 30-day grace period for the participant to come back into compliance with the treatment recommendations before ending the extension. If the participant goes in and out of compliance frequently, it may not be necessary to allow a 30-day grace period each time. However, compliance expectations should be reasonable and applied equitably.

Since participants extended in this category are not expected to work and are not required to participate in ES, responsibility for monitoring follow through with treatment recommendations may vary from county to county.

See §10.30 (60-Month Lifetime Limit) for an explanation of the 60-month lifetime limit and exceptions. See §10.33 (Hardship Extensions) for an explanation of the requirements for hardship extensions.

PROVISIONS FOR 2-PARENT FAMILIES

Parents in a 2-parent family may be extended in different categories, and 1 may reach the 60-month time limit before the other.

WHEN BOTH PARENTS REACH THE 60-MONTH LIMIT AT THE SAME TIME

If both parents reach the 60-month limit at the same time, and they are both extended as ill/incapacitated, NEITHER is required to participate in Employment Services.

If the parents are extended in different categories, the Employment Services requirements for that category apply. For example, if 1 parent is extended as ill/incapacitated, that parent is not required to participate in Employment Services. However, if the other parent is extended as employed or hard to employ, he/she IS REQUIRED to participate in Employment Services.

WHEN 1-PARENT REACHES THE 60-MONTH LIMIT BEFORE THE OTHER
When the parent who reaches the 60-month limit is extended as ill/incapacitated, that parent IS NOT required to participate in Employment Services. The parent who has not reached the 60-month limit MUST continue to meet Employment Services requirements.
PROVISIONS FOR ALL FAMILIES

The extension criteria apply to the health status of the participant, not to other family or household members. Participants who request this extension must:

- Provide professional certification of an illness, injury, or incapacity that is expected to last more than 30 days which prevents them from obtaining or retaining employment.

**NOTE:** The certification of an illness, injury, or incapacity should be from a qualified professional who is a licensed physician, a physician’s assistant, a nurse practitioner, a certified nurse midwife, or a licensed chiropractor.

AND

- Follow the treatment recommendations of the health care provider certifying the illness, injury, or incapacity. The extension may end for caregivers who do not follow treatment recommendations without good cause. Good cause may be granted when the nature of a caregiver’s disability interferes with follow through on treatment recommendations. The county may also want to consider changing the extension reason to “unemployable” if this is a better alternative.

Participants under this category DO NOT have to follow an Employment Plan (EP).

Participants who are pregnant may be extended under the ill or incapacitated category if there is a medical professional’s statement verifying that they are unable to work and the condition is expected to last for more than 30 days. The extension under ill or incapacitated lasts only as long as the illness or incapacity lasts.

A participant with mental illness or mental retardation are eligible under this category if the doctor’s statement says the participants cannot work or participate in any work activities.

Continuation of care activities for participants with chemical health issues are considered part of the treatment plan for purposes of this extension when the activities are led by a chemical health professional, based on an assessed need, and provided according to a treatment plan as part of a licensed program.

A participant who is certified as ill, injured, or incapacitated is NOT eligible for this extension if the medical statement indicates that he or she can perform limited employment. For these cases, evaluate the participant for other extension categories, including the employed/limited hours category.
EXTENDING THE CASE WHEN DOCUMENTATION IS PENDING

Counties may extend MFIP benefits beyond the 60 months for participants requesting extension under the ill/incapacitated category if documentation is not available by the 60th month. Participants must cooperate with efforts to obtain the documentation, and they may be responsible for an overpayment if they are later determined to not qualify for an extension. Also see §10.30.3 (Transition Period - 48 to 60 Months).

See §10.30 (60-Month Lifetime Limit) for an explanation of the 60-month lifetime limit and exceptions. See §10.33 (Hardship Extensions) for an explanation of the requirements for hardship extensions. Also see §10.33.3 (Ill/Incapacitated Extensions), §10.33.3.6 (Special Medical Criteria Extension), §10.33.3.9 (Needed in the Home Extension Criteria).

PROVISIONS FOR 2-PARENT FAMILIES

When Both Parents Reach Month 60 at the Same Time

Evaluate both adults for an extension, when both parents reach month 60 at the same time. If both qualify for an extension as ill, injured, or incapacitated category, neither one is required to participate in Employment Services. However, both parents are required to follow treatment recommendations to maintain the extension.

If parents are extended in different categories, determine Employment Services requirements separately. A parent extended as ill, injured, or incapacitated IS NOT required to participate in Employment Services, a parent extended as employed or hard to employ MUST meet Employment Services requirements.

When 1 Parent Reaches Month 60 Before the Other

When 1 parent reaches month 60 before the other, evaluate the parent who has reached 60 months for an extension. A parent extended as ill, injured, or incapacitated category must follow treatment recommendations of their health care provider, but IS NOT required to participate in Employment Services.

The parent who has not reached the 60-month limit must continue to meet Employment Services requirements. Review the Employment Services status and Employment Plan of this parent to determine if the activities identified in the Employment Plan are still appropriate.
MFIP EMPLOYMENT SERVICES MANUAL    ISSUE DATE  08/2007

SPECIAL MEDICAL CRITERIA EXTENSION  10.33.3.6

MFIP participants who have household members with serious disabilities qualify for an extension to the 60-month time limit when certain “special medical criteria” are met. These provisions apply to:

- **Participants with a child in the household who meets disability or medical criteria for:**
  - Home care services.
  - Community-based waiver services.
  - Severe emotional disturbance.

OR

- **Participants with an adult in the household who meets disability or medical criteria for:**
  - Home care services.
  - Community-based waiver services.
  - Serious and persistent mental illness

**NOTE:** Although the adult or child must meet eligibility criteria, he/she does not need to be receiving services.

“Special medical criteria” means that 1 of the following applies:

- **HOME CARE SERVICES** - Child or adult in the household who meets the disability or medical criteria for home care services. For the purpose of this determination, home care services means a medically necessary health service that is ordered by a physician and documented in a service plan that is reviewed by the physician at least once every 60 days for the provision of home health services or private duty nursing, or at least once every 365 days for personal care. Home care services are provided to the client at the client’s residence that is a place other than a hospital or long term care facility.

- **HOME AND COMMUNITY-BASED WAIVERED SERVICES** - Child or adult in the household who meets the disability or medical criteria for a home and community-based waiver services program. The provisions of these criteria apply to the following home and community-based waiver services programs:

  - **Alternative Care Grant Program (ACG):** A state-funded program that targets people age 65 or older who are at risk of nursing facility level of care and whose personal financial resources would allow no more than a 6-month stay in a nursing facility. The service menu is the same as that available for people receiving services under the Elderly Waiver.
- **Community Alternatives for Disabled Individuals (CADI):** Targets people under the age of 65 at risk of nursing facility level of care.

- **Community Alternative Care (CAC):** Targets people under the age of 65 at risk of long term or frequently recurring hospitalization (initially designed to serve medically fragile children).

- **Traumatic Brain Injury Waiver (TBIW):** TBIW targets people at risk of the level of care provided in a neurobehavioral hospital or those at risk of the level of care provided in a specialized nursing facility (designed for people who have cognitive and/or behavioral issues).

- **Waiver for Persons with Mental Retardation or Related Conditions (MR/RC Waiver):** Targets people who are determined to have MR/RC and are at risk of the level of care provided in an Intermediate Care Facility for people with mental retardation (ICF/MR).

- **Elderly Waiver (EW):** Targets people over the age of 65 who are in a nursing facility or at risk of placement in a nursing facility.

Each of the waivers serves both people moving from an institutional setting to the community and people who are determined to be "at risk of" the level of care provided in the respective institutional setting.

CADI, TBIW, and CAC clients may remain on the waiver after age 65 if warranted by their needs and service plan.

- **SEVERE EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE (SED)** - There is a child in the household who meets the following definition of “severe emotional disturbance” as determined by a qualified professional, such that he/she:

  - Has been admitted within the last 3 years or is at risk of being admitted to inpatient or residential treatment.

  OR

  - Is a Minnesota resident receiving inpatient treatment or residential treatment for the emotional disturbance through the Interstate Compact.

  OR

  - Has been determined by a mental health professional to have psychosis or clinical depression, to be at risk of harming self or others, or to have psychopathological symptoms that resulted from physical or sexual abuse or psychic trauma within the past year.
OR
- Has significantly impaired home, school, or community functioning for at least 1 year or for a period that a mental health professional documents as presenting substantial risk of lasting at least a year.

➤ SERIOUS AND PERSISTENT MENTAL ILLNESS (SPMI) - There is an adult who meets the definition of “serious and persistent mental illness” as determined by a qualified professional, such that he/she:

- Has undergone 2 or more episodes of inpatient care for a mental illness within the past 24 months.
OR
- Has been continuously hospitalized or in residential treatment for more than 6 of the past 12 months.
OR
- Has a diagnosis of schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression, or borderline personality disorder which significantly impairs his or her functioning, and a mental health professional documents that he/she is reasonably likely to have future episodes requiring inpatient or residential treatment unless ongoing case management or community support services are provided.
OR
- Has been court-committed as a mentally ill person in the past 3 years or has had his or her commitment stayed or continued.
OR
- Meets any of the criteria above, but the specified time period has expired.
OR
- Was diagnosed with severe emotional disturbance as a child and who a mental health professional has documented in the past 3 years is reasonably likely to have future episodes requiring inpatient or residential treatment unless ongoing case management or community support services are provided.

Participants in this category are presumed to be unable to work, and must be evaluated for extension on or before the 60th month.

BANKING MONTHS

Participants with an adult or child in the household who meets special medical criteria may have banked months beginning 1-1-98. These months are used to extend eligibility after the 60-month time limit is reached and ONLY when a participant no longer meets the condition for extension under the special medical criteria. Participants who have banked months must
use them before they can be assessed for another category of extension.

Participants using banked months are subject to regular Employment Services requirements and pre-60 month sanction policies.

After banked months are exhausted, the participant should be **re-evaluated** to determine whether another extension category applies.

**NOTE:** A caregiver can accrue banked months based on the special medical criteria of a child or other adult in the household, but cannot bank months based on his or her own special medical criteria. If the participant meets these criteria, the participant may be extended under the ill or incapacitated category, for example, but would not bank months.

As long as the participant has a household member who meets the special medical criteria, he/she will bank months to be used after reaching the time limit when there is no longer eligibility for a special medical criteria extension. Participants who volunteer for Employment Services or choose to work do not lose eligibility for the extension.

In a 2-parent household with a child or an adult who meets the special medical criteria, only 1 parent is presumed to be prevented from obtaining or retaining employment. If the family provides documentation from their health care provider that a 2nd parent is also needed in the home to care for the child or adult who meets the special medical criteria or disability, extend 1 parent in the special medical category, and extend the other in the category for participants whose presence is needed in the home. See §10.33.3 (Ill/Incapacitated Extensions), §10.33.3.9 (Needed in the Home Extension Criteria).
Participants may be extended as “needed in the home” when they provide verification that their presence is required to provide care for another member of the assistance unit, a relative in the household, or a foster child in the household who has an illness or incapacity certified by a qualified professional that is expected to continue for more than 30 days.

NOTE: Receipt of SSI does not result in an automatic extension.

The verification of an illness/injury/incapacity must state that the participant is needed in the home to provide care, but it does not have to include the extent to which the participant is needed in the home.

These caregivers are NOT required to participate in Employment Services and are NOT expected to work. However, participants who are extended as needed in home may volunteer for Employment Services and may work without losing the extension.

NOTE: When both parents in a 2-parent family are needed in the home to care for an adult or child in the household who meets special medical criteria, extend 1 parent under the special medical criteria category, and extend the other as needed in the home. See §10.33.3.6 (Special Medical Extension Criteria).

See §10.30 (60-Month Lifetime Limit) for an explanation of the 60-month lifetime limit and exceptions. See §10.33 (Hardship Extensions) for an explanation of the requirements for hardship extensions. Also see §10.33.3 (Ill/Incapacitated Extensions), §10.33.3.3 (Ill, Injured, or Incapacitated Extension Criteria).
MFIP participants who have reached their 60-month life time limit may be extended if they meet eligibility criteria for 1 of the following categories:

- Mental Retardation or Mental Illness. See §10.36.3 (Mental Retardation/Mental Illness Extension Criteria).
- Learning Disabled. See §10.36.6 (Learning Disabled Extension Criteria).
- IQ below 80. See §10.36.9 (IQ Below 80 Extension Criteria).
- Unemployable. See §10.36.12 (Unemployable Extension Criteria).
- Family Violence. See §10.36.15 (Family Violence Extension Criteria).

Participants who are extended in any of the Hard to Employ categories are required to participate in Employment Services and must have an Employment Plan. The Employment Plan should be developed in consultation with other professionals who work with the individual, and incorporate activities and hours appropriate to each person’s abilities and overall family circumstances. Hourly requirements must be written into the Employment Plan and non-compliance may result in sanction. Disqualification is part of the post 60-month sanction process. See §10.42 (Post 60-Month ES Sanctions - General Provisions). For information on Employment Plans, see §7.15 (Employment Plan (EP)).

NOTE: Victims of family violence are required to participate in Employment Services and also must have an Employment Plan. See §7.15.12 (Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence), §10.36.15 (Family Violence Extension Criteria).

Counties may extend MFIP benefits for participants in the above categories after 60 months when documentation is not available by the 60th month. Participants must cooperate with efforts to obtain the documentation, and they may be responsible for an overpayment if they are later determined to not qualify for an extension. Also see §10.30.3 (Transition Period - 48 to 60 Months).

Participants are required by law to apply for benefits from other programs for which they are potentially eligible. If it appears that their condition would make them eligible for Social Security benefits or benefits from other programs, they are required to apply.

WHEN BOTH PARENTS REACH MONTH 60 AT THE SAME TIME

When both parents reach month 60 at the same time, evaluate both adults for an extension. If both parents qualify for 1 or more of the hard-to-employ categories, both must participate in
and comply with an Employment Plan. Review to determine whether revisions are necessary if 1 or both parents have an existing plan. Encourage both parents to attend meetings to develop or revise Employment Plan. Maximum participation should be expected from both parents unless there are compelling reasons to do otherwise.

WHEN 1 PARENT REACHES MONTH 60 BEFORE THE OTHER

If 1 parent reaches month 60 before the other, evaluate the parent who has reached 60 months for an extension. Participation in Employment Services is required if the parent meets criteria for a hard-to-employ extension. If this parent has an existing plan, it should be reviewed to determine whether revisions are necessary. The Employment Services status and Employment Plan of the parent who has not reached month 60 should also be reviewed at this time.

See §10.30 (60-Month Lifetime Limit) for an explanation of the 60-month lifetime limit and exceptions. See §10.33 (Hardship Extensions) for general information and requirements for hardship extensions. Also see §10.33.3 (Ill/Incapacitated Extensions), §10.39 (Employed Extensions).
MFIP participants with mental illness or mental retardation are eligible for an extension of their benefits when the condition prevents them from obtaining or retaining unsubsidized employment. These participants are required to participate in Employment Services and may be sanctioned for non-cooperation.

Employment Plans developed for participants who are extended due to mental illness or mental retardation should be developed in consultation with other professionals working with the participant. The plan should include only activities and hourly requirements appropriate to that person’s abilities and current situation. Participation may be below minimum hourly requirements when appropriate.

DETERMINATION OF MENTAL ILLNESS

The determination of mental illness must be made by a licensed physician or a qualified mental health professional. Qualified mental health professional means:

- **In psychiatric nursing, for children:** A registered nurse who is licensed under Minnesota Statutes, sections 148.171 to 148.285, and who is certified as a clinical specialist in child and adolescent psychiatric or mental health nursing by a national nurse certification organization, or who has a master's degree in nursing or 1 of the behavioral sciences or related fields from an accredited college or university or its equivalent, with at least 4,000 hours of post-master's supervised experience in the delivery of clinical services in the treatment of mental illness.

- **In psychiatric nursing, for adults:** A registered nurse who is licensed under Minnesota Statutes, sections 148.171 to 148.285, and who is certified as a clinical specialist in adult psychiatric and mental health nursing by a national nurse certification organization or who has a master's degree in nursing or 1 of the behavioral sciences or related fields from an accredited college or university or its equivalent, with at least 4,000 hours of post-master's supervised experience in the delivery of clinical services in the treatment of mental illness.

- **In clinical social work:** A person licensed as an Independent Clinical Social Worker (LICSW) under Minnesota Statutes, section 148B.21, subdivision 6, or a person with a master's degree in social work from an accredited college or university, with at least 4,000 hours of post-master's supervised experience in the delivery of clinical services in the treatment of mental illness.

- **In psychology:** An individual licensed by the board of psychology under Minnesota Statutes, sections 148.88 to 148.98, who has stated to the Board of Psychology competencies in the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness.
In psychiatry: A physician licensed under Minnesota Statutes, chapter 147, and certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology or eligible for board certification in psychiatry.

In marriage and family therapy: A marriage and family therapist licensed under Minnesota Statutes, sections 148B.29 to 148B.39, with at least 2 years of post-master's supervised experience in the delivery of clinical services in the treatment of mental illness.

DETERMINATION OF MENTAL RETARDATION

The determination of mental retardation must be made by a professional qualified by training and experience to administer the tests necessary to make such a determination (tests of intellectual functioning, assessment of adaptive behavior, adaptive skills, and developmental function). These professionals include licensed psychologists, certified school psychologists, or a certified psychometrist working under supervision of a licensed psychologist.

Person with mental retardation means a person who has been diagnosed as having substantial limitations in present functioning, manifested as significantly sub-average intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with demonstrated deficits in adaptive behavior and who manifests these conditions before the person’s 22nd birthday.

Deficits in adaptive behavior means a significant limitation in an individual’s effectiveness meeting the standards of maturation, learning, personal independence, and social responsibility expected for the individual’s age level and culture group, as determined by clinical assessment and generally standardized scales.

Significantly subaverage intellectual functioning means a full scale IQ score of 70 or less based on assessment that includes 1 or more individually administered standardized intelligence tests developed for the purpose of assessing intellectual functioning. Errors of measurement must be considered.

Substantial functional limitations means the long-term inability to significantly perform an activity or task.

WHEN THE PARTICIPANT SPEAKS LIMITED ENGLISH

Listed below is guidance to counties and Employment Services Providers to use when the participant speak limited English:
MENTAL RETARDATION/MENTAL ILLNESS EXTENSION CRITERIA

- Consider other categories of extension 1st before requesting a mental health diagnostic for purposes of determining mental retardation or IQ below 80.

- For purposes of an extensions, counties may accept a statement from a qualified professional regarding IQ that identifies a range instead of a specific score. Professionals qualified to administer tests of intellectual functioning, assessment of adaptive behavior, adaptive skills, and developmental function include licensed psychologists, certified school psychologists, or certified psychometrists working under supervision of a licensed psychologist. Counties and Employment Services Providers should make every effort to ensure that professionals making these determinations have experience conducting cross-cultural evaluations.

- Request that the assessment report include a discussion of the limitations of testing.

- Request that the assessment report include a statement of the clinician’s confidence in the results.

- Request that the assessment report related to mental retardation or low IQ include a description of the participant’s functional level and functional restrictions.

- Request that the assessment report identify the interpreter, his or her qualifications and relationship to the assessor, the participant, and anyone else involved in the process.

Verification of mental retardation or mental illness should include a statement that the person is unable to obtain or retain unsubsidized employment. Participants in this category must participate in ES. The Employment Plan should be developed with input from other professionals working with the participant and should include activities and hours approved to their ability. See §7.15 (Employment Plan), §10.42 (Post 60-Month ES Sanctions - General Provisions).

See §10.30 (60-Month Lifetime Limit) for an explanation of the 60-month lifetime limit and exceptions. See §10.33 (Hardship Extensions) for an explanation of the requirements for hardship extensions. Also see §10.36.6 (Learning Disabled Extension Criteria), §10.36.9 (IQ Below 80 Extension Criteria), §10.36.12 (Unemployable Extension Criteria), §10.36.15 (Family Violence Extension Criteria).
MFIP EMPLOYMENT SERVICES MANUAL

LEARNING DISABLED EXTENSION CRITERIA 10.36.6

MFIP participants with learning disabilities may be eligible for an extension if the disability severely limits their ability to obtain, perform, or retain employment. “Learning disabled” means the person has a disorder in 1 or more of the psychological processes involved in perceiving, understanding, or using concepts through verbal language or non-verbal means. It does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor handicaps, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or due to environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

Participants who are extended in the learning disabled category are required to participate in Employment Services and may be sanctioned for non-compliance. Whenever possible, the Employment Plan should be developed with input from other professionals working with the participant, or with input from the psychologist who made the determination.

DETERMINATION OF A LEARNING DISABILITY

The determination of a learning disability must be made by a qualified professional. A qualified professional for this purpose is a licensed psychologist or school psychologist with experience determining learning disabilities. The determination should have been made within the previous 12 months. Counties and Employment Services Providers should request that the determination also include a statement about the extent to which the learning disability impacts work.

WHEN THE PARTICIPANT SPEAKS LIMITED ENGLISH

Determining if a person has a learning disability may be difficult due to limited English proficiency or lack of cultural assessment tools. Listed below is guidance for counties and Employment Services Providers to use when participants who speak limited English are referred for assessments and evaluated for extensions:

- Consider other categories of extension before requesting a mental health diagnosis for purposes of determining a learning disability.

- For purposes of an extension, counties may accept a report from a qualified professional stating that a participant who speaks limited English may have a learning disability, as long as other issues have been ruled out and the participant’s ability to work is severely impaired. This determination should have been made within the previous 12 months. Counties and Employment Services Providers should make every effort to ensure that the qualified professional making the determination has experience conducting cross-cultural evaluations.
LEARNING DISABLED EXTENSION CRITERIA

10.36.6

- Request that the assessment report include a discussion of the limitations of testing.

- Request that the assessment report include a statement of the clinician’s confidence in the results.

- Request that the assessment report identify the interpreter, his/her qualifications and relationship to the assessor, the participant, and anyone else involved in the process.

See §10.30 (60-Month Lifetime Limit) for an explanation of the 60-month lifetime limit and exceptions. See §10.33 (Hardship Extensions) for general information and requirements for hardship extensions. Also see §10.33.3 (Ill/Incapacitated Extensions), §10.36.3 (Mental Retardation/Mental Illness Extension Criteria), §10.36.9 (IQ Below 80 Extension Criteria), §10.36.12 (Unemployable Extension Criteria), §10.36.15 (Family Violence Extension Criteria).
MFIP participants with an IQ below 80 may be eligible for an extension of benefits if they have been assessed by a vocational specialist or the county agency to be employable but not at a level that qualifies for a hardship extension in the employed participant category. Determinations of IQ must be made by a qualified professional.

Participants extended in this category are required to participate in Employment Services and may be sanctioned for non-compliance. Employment Plans developed for participants who are extended due to mental retardation should be developed in consultation with other professionals working with the participant. The plan should include only activities and hourly requirements appropriate to that person’s abilities and current situation. Participation may be below minimum hourly requirements when appropriate.

**DETERMINATION OF IQ**

The determination of IQ must be made by a professional qualified by training and experience to administer the tests necessary to make such a determination (tests of intellectual functioning, assessment of adaptive behavior, adaptive skills, and developmental function). These professionals include a licensed psychologist, certified school psychologists, or certified psychometrists working under supervision of licensed psychologists.

**WHEN THE PARTICIPANT SPEAKS LIMITED ENGLISH**

Determining if a person has an IQ below 80 may be difficult due to limited English proficiency or lack of cultural assessment tools. Listed below is guidance for counties and Employment Services Providers to use when participants who speak limited English are referred for assessments and evaluated for extensions:

- Consider other categories of extension before requesting a mental health diagnostic for purposes of determining mental retardation or IQ below 80.

- For purposes of extensions, counties may accept statements from qualified professionals regarding IQ that identifies a range instead of a specific score. Professionals qualified to administer tests of intellectual functioning, assessment of adaptive behavior, adaptive skills, and developmental function include licensed psychologists, certified school psychologists, or certified psychometrists working under supervision of licensed psychologists. Counties and Employment Services Providers should make every effort to ensure that the professional making the determination has experience conducting cross-cultural evaluations.

- Request that the assessment report include a discussion of the limitations of testing.
IQ BELOW 80 EXTENSION CRITERIA

- Request that the assessment report include a statement of the clinician’s confidence in the results.

- Request that the assessment report related to mental retardation or low IQ include a description of the participant’s functional level and functional restrictions.

- Request that the assessment report identify the interpreter, his or her qualifications and relationship to the assessor, the participant, and anyone else involved in the process.

See §10.30 (60-Month Lifetime Limit) for an explanation of the 60-month lifetime limit and exceptions. See §10.33 (Hardship Extensions) for general information and requirements for hardship extensions. Also see §10.36 (Hard to Employ Extensions).
MFIP EMPLOYMENT SERVICES MANUAL

UNEMPLOYABLE EXTENSION CRITERIA

MFIP participants who are considered “unemployable” may be eligible for an extension of MFIP benefits. It is helpful to think about this category as an extension for individuals who are temporarily unemployable because they are experiencing multiple and severe issues that significantly impact their ability to work. Participants who demonstrate they are able to work in unsubsidized employment should not be extended in this category.

Participants extended in the unemployable category are required to participate in Employment Services and may be sanctioned for non-compliance. Hourly requirements and activities should be appropriate to the participant’s abilities and included in the Employment Plan.

NOTE: Mental and chemical health treatment may be included in the plan on a voluntary basis.

DETERMINATION OF WHETHER THE PARTICIPANT IS UNEMPLOYABLE

Before determining whether an MFIP participant is unemployable for purposes of this extension, counties and Employment Services Providers should assess whether he or she is eligible for an extension under a different category. If he or she does not meet the criteria for another extension category, but appears to have significant barriers to employment, a determination of unemployability should be done by a vocational specialist or another qualified professional designated by the county.

There is no single factor or cluster of factors which would indicate unemployability, but take the following into consideration:

- The participant’s work history over the past 5 years. If the person has worked, review his or her work history and the reason or reasons the participant left employment to determine whether any barriers exist which prevent the participant from maintaining a job. If the participant has not worked, review the reason he or she has not been employed to identify any barriers to employment.

- Age 55 or older.

- Extremely limited ability to speak or understand English, despite efforts to learn it.

- Felony record that inhibits employment in existing positions.

- Other barriers or functional limitations that have not been professionally certified. These barriers could include mental health issues or chronic chemical
dependency issues that interfere with the participant’s ability to seek assessment or treatment.

**NOTE:** Factors such as lack of child care, transportation, or housing, while they may be significant barriers to employment, do not in themselves constitute a basis for unemployability.

After reviewing the above, determine whether there are any factors that would result in the participant being unable to work. If there are no factors that would result in the participant being unable to work, he or she is considered employable and is NOT eligible for an extension. If the participant cannot work, determine whether he or she could work with a reasonable investment of available supports to address his or her limitations.

- If yes, these supports must be provided. The participant is not eligible for a hardship extension under the category of “unemployable”, but may qualify for an “employed participant” extension.

- If no, the county must document the lack of available supports, and the participant may be extended as “unemployable”. When appropriate, the county should assist a participant who is assessed as “unemployable” to apply for SSI.

See §10.30 (60-Month Lifetime Limit) for an explanation of the 60-month lifetime limit and exceptions. See §10.33 (Hardship Extensions) for general information and requirements for hardship extensions. Also see §10.36 (Hard to Employ Extensions).
MFIP EMPLOYMENT SERVICES MANUAL  ISSUE DATE  08/2007

FAMILY VIOLENCE EXTENSION CRITERIA  10.36.15

MFIP participants who are victims of family abuse may be eligible for an extension of benefits. Participants who request this extension must verify the abuse AND develop an Employment Plan (EP).

These participants will be referred to a job counselor and a person trained in domestic violence (if they are not already working with a domestic violence advocate) to develop the EP. The primary goal of an Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence is to ensure the safety of the caregiver and the children. You have final approval of an EP, see §7.15.12 (Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence). The EP must be approved prior to approval of the extension, and participants must comply with activities in their plan to continue receiving the extension.

For information on post 60-month sanctions for failure to comply with an EP, see §10.42 (Post 60-Month ES Sanctions - General Provisions).

See §3.18 (Glossary: F...) for the definition of family violence. Also §7.29 (Family Violence Waiver Option), §7.29.3 (Person Trained in Domestic Violence), §10.30 (60-Month Lifetime Limit), §10.33 (Hardship Extensions).
MFIP EMPLOYMENT SERVICES MANUAL

EMLOYED EXTENSIONS 10.39

MFIP participants may be eligible for an extension of benefits in the employed category if they:

- Were in compliance 10 of the last 12 months immediately preceding month 61, including month 60.
- AND
- Meet the hourly requirements. Counties must provide the opportunity for subsidized employment to participants needing that type of employment in order to be extended.

Compliance means the participant was not in sanction for any reason (for example, ES, child support, financial orientation, convicted drug felon). Participants extended in this category MUST participate in Employment Services.

Hourly requirements vary for 1-parent and 2-parent families, and for participants who are able to work only a limited number of hours. For hourly requirements, see §10.39.3 (Employed Extension Criteria - 1-Parent Units), §10.39.6 (Employed Extension Criteria - 2-Parent Units), §10.39.9 (Limited Work Due to Illness/Disability Extension Criteria).

When the participant has accepted a job that begins during the 60th or 61st month, there must be a reasonable expectation that the participant will work an average of at least the number of hours required for the extension in the coming month. DHS recommends that the decision be based on the participant’s current employment situation and/or employment offer.

For purposes of the employed extension category, employment means:

- Subsidized private sector or public sector employment, including Grant Diversion.
- Unsubsidized employment.
- On-the-job training.
- Apprenticeship.
- Supported work. See SUPPORTED WORK in §3.39 (Glossary: S...).
- Work study.
- OR
- A combination of any of the bulleted items above.
- OR
- Providing child care services to another participant who is working in a community service program, if it is in combination with paid employment.
NOTE: Participants who are complying with a child protection plan may count hours required in their plan toward the requirement for the employed extension.

See §10.30 (60-Month Lifetime Limit) for an explanation of the 60-month lifetime limit and exceptions. See §10.33 (Hardship Extensions) for general information and requirements for hardship extensions.

LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT/REDUCTION IN HOURS

Whenever there is a loss of employment or a reduction in hours, you should assist the participant to return to work or increase their hours as soon as possible. Counties/job counselors should consider referring participants to employers they know are hiring, temporary agencies, or placing the participants in a work experience when appropriate.

If the loss of employment or reduction in hours is involuntary (laid off or lose a job through no fault of their own), the participant is not subject to the hourly employment requirement for 1 month but must meet all remaining requirements in the Employment Plan. The 1-month period begins the day after the employment ended or hours were reduced. In cases where involuntary loss of employment or involuntary reduction in hours is claimed but not documented, have participants sign a statement that this occurred through no fault of their own. Counties and ES Providers have flexibility to do as much verification as they deem necessary.

The 1-month exemption from meeting work requirements is available to each client extended as employed twice (non-consecutive) in a 12-month period. The 1-month grace periods are person-based, and apply separately to each parent in a 2-parent household (each employed parent is allowed 2 grace periods).

Participants who fail to meet the hourly requirements for this extension, without good cause, should be sanctioned or permanently disqualified. See §10.42 (Post 60-Month ES Sanctions - General Provisions).

GOOD CAUSE FOR NOT MEETING HOURLY REQUIREMENTS - INVOLUNTARY LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT

Good cause for not meeting hourly employment requirements may only be granted for the portion of the month in which good cause applies. Participants must meet all remaining requirements in the Employment Plan. This provision may also be applied if good cause for not meeting hourly requirements continues beyond a 1-month exemption from hourly meeting employment requirements (involuntary loss of employment/reduction in hours).
Good cause provisions in statute may be applied to extended cases. Good cause is used in cases when a drop below hourly requirements is temporary and intermittent. An example would be a participant who misses a few hours or days of work due to illness, child care or transportation problems, or some other emergency.

The same grace period also applies to cases where participants are willing to accept suitable employment but none is available. The participant is exempt from the hourly employment requirement for 1 month. Participants must meet all remaining requirements in the approved Employment Plan or be subject to sanction or permanent disqualification. This exemption is available to each participant 2 times in a 12-month period.
To be eligible for an employed extension, a single parent must:

- Be in compliance with all program requirements in the 60th month. Being in compliance means the participant is not in sanction for non-cooperation with ANY MFIP program requirement, including non-cooperation with child support.
- Be in compliance 10 out of 12 months preceding month 61.
- Participate in work activities at least 30 hours per week per month, 25 of which on average must be employment.

Hourly requirements for an employed extension in this section are minimums. Require the maximum number of hours appropriate for the participant even if it exceeds the minimum hourly requirement for the extension. Participants who are working hours above the minimum hourly requirement prior to being extended may only decrease those hours with approval from a job counselor, and in conjunction with a revised Employment Plan. This should not be done unless there is a compelling reason to do so.

Parents extended in this category are required to participate in Employment Services and may be sanctioned for non-compliance, including a reduction in hours or loss of employment.

See §10.30 (60-Month Lifetime Limit) for an explanation of the 60-month lifetime limit and exceptions. See §10.33 (Hardship Extensions) for general information and requirements for hardship extensions.
One or both parents in a 2-parent family may be eligible for an “employed” extension when they work at a certain level. Requirements for parents in a 2-parent family differ depending on whether they reach the 60-month time limit at the same or different times, and whether both request an extension in the same category.

Hourly requirements for an employed extension in this section are minimums. Require the maximum number of hours appropriate for the participant(s) even if it exceeds the minimum hourly requirement for the extension. Participants who are working hours above the minimum hourly requirement prior to being extended may only decrease those hours with approval from a job counselor, and in conjunction with a revised Employment Plan. This should not be done unless there is a compelling reason to do so.

In 2-parent families where only 1 parent is extended under this category (for example the 2nd parent is in pre 60-month status, removed from the household being extended, or extended under another category) follow the single parent minimum hourly requirements.

Parents extended in this category are required to participate in Employment Services and may be sanctioned for non-compliance, including a reduction in hours or loss of employment.

**WHEN BOTH PARENTS REACH THE 60-MONTH LIFETIME LIMIT AT THE SAME TIME**

- Both parents must be in compliance with all program requirements in the 60th month. Being in compliance means the participant(s) is not in sanction for non-cooperation with ANY MFIP program requirement, including non-cooperation with child support. If 1 parent is not in compliance in month 60, that parent may be removed.

- Both must be in compliance 10 out of the last 12 months. If both parents fail to be in compliance 10 of the 12 months preceding month 61, the MFIP case must NOT be extended under this category. When only 1 parent does not meet the 10 of 12 months compliance requirement, the family has the option to remove that parent and extend the case if the remaining parent meets the remaining criteria. If the parent who failed the 10 out of the last 12 months compliance requirement is removed, the 1-parent work requirement under the employed category (30/25 hrs) applies to the remaining parent, and the MFIP grant must be calculated using the Shared Household Standard. If the parent who was removed has income, it is deemed to the MFIP unit. The parent who was removed may apply for and receive Food Support, if otherwise eligible. The financial worker will review health care eligibility for the disqualified member.
EMPLOYED EXTENSION CRITERIA - 2-PARENT UNITS 10.39.6

NOTE: If you are evaluating 1 parent for the employed extension and the other for a different extension type, the parent who is being evaluated for an extension other than employed is NOT subject to the 10 of 12 months compliance test.

- Both parents must meet criteria for an extension or have banked months in order for MFIP to be continued. If the case is closed because neither parent qualifies nor has banked months, a review must be conducted by your supervisor or a review team designated by the county.

- Both parents must follow an Employment Plan.

- When both parents are extended as employed, they must participate in work activities at least 55 hours per week each month, 45 of which on average must be employment. Hours may be divided between the 2 parents in any way that works for their particular situation and should be documented in the Employment Plan. When 1 parent is completing all the minimum hours required for this extension, the other parent’s plan should require the maximum hours of work activities you determine he/she is able to complete.

WHEN 1 PARENT REACHES THE 60-MONTH LIFETIME LIMIT BEFORE THE OTHER

To be eligible for the employed extension, the participant who has reached month 60 must:

- Be in compliance with all program requirements in the 60th month.

- Be in compliance with all program requirements in 10 out of the last 12 months preceding month 61.

- Participate in work activities at least 30 hours per week per month, 25 of which on average must be employment. Participants must meet minimum work requirements, and they are NOT exempt from ES requirements.

NOTE: If the participant who has not reached 60 months is also employed, the combined minimum hours of participation for the 2-parent family is 55 hours a week, 45 of which must be employment.

- If the parent who reaches month 60 does not meet criteria for an extension or is in sanction in month 60 he/she may be removed. The case then follows pre-60 month policies.
See §10.30 (60-Month Lifetime Limit) for an explanation of the 60-month lifetime limit and exceptions. See §10.33 (Hardship Extensions) for general information and requirements for hardship extensions.
MFIP EMPLOYMENT SERVICES MANUAL

ISSUE DATE  08/2007

LIMITED WORK DUE TO ILLNESS/DISABILITY EXTENSION CRITERIA  10.39.9

MFIP participants who are able to work but not enough hours to qualify for the employed extension may be extended when they:

- Have verification from their qualified professional that work hours are limited due to illness or disability.
- Work at least the number of hours specified by the qualified professional.

Verification from the qualified professional must include the participant’s diagnosis, any functional limitations that limit work hours, and treatment recommendations. Counties and Employment Services Providers may use Request For Medical Opinion (DHS-2114) to obtain this information. Participants extended in this category must follow treatment recommendation of the health care provider who submitted the documentation.

In cases where both parents in a 2-parent family are extended as employed but 1 is only able to work a limited number of hours, apply the single parent requirement to the parent who is not ill or disabled (at least 30 hours per week of work activities, of which an average of at least 25 are employment).

All other requirements for an employed extension apply. See §10.39 (Employed Extensions) for additional information, including loss of employment and good cause for not meeting hourly requirements.

See §10.30 (60-Month Lifetime Limit) for an explanation of the 60-month lifetime limit and exceptions. See §10.33 (Hardship Extensions) for general information and requirements for hardship extensions. Also see §10.33.3 (Ill/Incapacitated Extensions).
Participants extended as employed, hard to employ, or as victims of family violence are required to participate in Employment Services. Non-compliance with Employment Services requirements may result in a sanction under post 60-month policies. Note that these policies apply only to non-compliance with Employment Services requirements.

Post 60-month sanctions differ from action taken during the 1st 60 months in several important ways:

- Non-compliance may result in permanent closure of MFIP.
- Pre-60 month occurrences do not carry into extended MFIP.
- Two-parent provisions are more complex.

Prior to imposing a sanction, the county must review the Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence with the participant and a person trained in domestic violence to determine if the activities in the Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence are appropriate (for example: the activities do not endanger the victim of the child). If it is agreed that the activities are not appropriate, then the Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence must be revised.

For information on what the Family Violence Waiver Option is and who a person trained in domestic violence is, see §7.29 (Family Violence Waiver Option), §7.29.3 (Person Trained in Domestic Violence).

**SANCTION SEQUENCE**

When an extended participant is out of compliance, send an MFIP Notice of Intent to Sanction (DHS-3175) (NOITS). Notify the financial worker if the participant does not respond within 10 days or does not follow through with steps necessary to comply as listed on the NOITS. See §9.9.3 (Notifying the Participant). The financial worker will issue a notice of adverse action.

Participants may claim good cause for not complying as outlined in §9.6 (Good Cause for Non-Compliance).

Participants who do not respond or take steps necessary to comply will be sanctioned as follows:

- **1st Occurrence of Non-Compliance:**
- MFIP Notice of Intent to Sanction (DHS-3175) (NOITS).
- Notice of Adverse Action (NOAA), MAXIS generated.
- 10% of the Transitional Standard (grant reduction).

➢ 2nd Occurrence of Non-Compliance:

- Case review.
- NOAA, MAXIS generated.
- Vendor pay rent, and utilities (at county option).
- 30% of the Transitional Standard (grant reduction) after vending.

➢ 3rd Occurrence of Non-Compliance:

- Vendor pay rent, and utilities (at county option).
- 30% of the Transitional Standard (grant reduction) after vending.

➢ 4th Occurrence of Non-Compliance:

- Case closed (1st disqualification from MFIP for the case). If the family reapplies, participant(s) must comply with ES for up to 1 month BEFORE the case is reopened.

NOTE: Forms are available on the Internet at: [http://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/](http://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/).

DISQUALIFICATIONS

Participants who have been removed from the MFIP assistance unit or whose MFIP case has been closed under the 4th occurrence of post 60-month sanction policy above may reapply for assistance one time. In order to be reopened, the participant(s) must demonstrate compliance with Employment Services for up to 1 month, OR meet criteria for another extension category before the participant may be added back to the unit or the MFIP case may be reopened. If the participant(s) demonstrates compliance with Employment Services, the effective date must not be prior to the date of cooperation.

When the participant is added back into the MFIP assistance unit or the MFIP case is reopened, the participants must remain in compliance. When an extended participant is out of compliance, send an MFIP Notice of Intent to Sanction (DHS-3175). Notify the financial worker if the participant does not respond within 10 days, or does not follow through with steps necessary to comply as listed on the NOITS. See §9.9.3 (Notifying the Participant). Participants who do not respond or take steps necessary to comply will be sanctioned as follows:
5th Occurrence of Non-Compliance:
- NOITS.
- NOAA.
- 10% of the Transitional Standard (grant reduction).

6th Occurrence of Non-Compliance:
- Case closed. Permanent disqualification of the case/MFIP unit, or the individual participant.

NOTE: Before disqualifying a participant under the above policy, the county must review the participant’s case to determine if the Employment Plan is still appropriate and must make a good faith effort to meet with the participant face-to-face. If the participant does not comply, the county agency must send a notice of adverse action informing the participant that the MFIP case will be permanently closed or the MFIP participant will be permanently disqualified.

During the face-to-face meeting, the county agency must:

- Determine whether continued non-compliance can be explained and mitigated by providing a pre-employment activity or services.
- Inform the participant that non-cooperation with Child Support does not result in permanent case closure.
- Determine whether the participant qualifies for a good cause exception.
- Inform the participant of the sanction status and explain the consequences of continuing non-compliance.
- Identify other resources that may be available to meet the needs of the family.
- Inform the participant of the right to appeal.
- Inform the participant of the family violence waiver criteria and make appropriate referral if the participant requested for a waiver.

For information on Employment Services sanctions for pre 60-month time limit participants, see §9.3.3 (Pre 60-Month Type/Length of ES Sanctions).
For information on post 60-month for 2-parent units and removing a caregiver in a 2-parent unit, see §10.42.3 (Post 60-Month ES Sanctions - 2-Parent Units), §10.42.3.3 (Post 60-Month ES Sanctions - Removing Caregivers).
For information on the general sequence of sanctions, see §10.42 (Post 60-Month ES Sanctions - General Provisions).

In addition to those sanction policies, there are provisions which apply when 1 or both parents in an extended 2-parent family are out of compliance. Some of these provisions apply to all 2-parent families, and some will differ depending on whether both parents reach month 60 at the same time or 1 reached month 60 before the other. Information in this section is divided into 3 parts:

- Policies for all 2-parent cases.
- Policies when both parents reach month 60 at the same time.
- Policies when 1 parent reaches month 60 before the other.

**POLICIES FOR ALL 2-PARENT CASES**

- Pre 60-month occurrences do not carry into extended MFIP for purposes of counting occurrences toward permanent disqualification.

- ES sanction occurrences are counted against the INDIVIDUAL for purposes of determining when that individual is permanently disqualified.

- ES sanction occurrences are counted against the CASE for purposes of determining when the family is permanently disqualified.

- If both participants are in sanction at the same time, it counts as 1 occurrence of non-compliance for the case.

- Two-parent families have the option to remove a non-compliant parent from the grant. A parent who is removed from the grant may reapply once. A subsequent removal of this parent from the grant for non-compliance will result in permanent disqualification from MFIP for that parent. See §10.42.3.3 (Post 60-Month ES Sanctions - Removing Caregivers) for information about removing a non-compliant parent from MFIP.

- Only 1 parent may be removed at a time. Removals are counted per CAREGIVER for purposes of determining permanent disqualification of the individual caregiver from the MFIP unit. See §10.42.3.3 (Post 60-Month ES Sanctions - Removing Caregivers) for information about removing a non-compliant parent from MFIP.
POLICIES WHEN BOTH PARENTS REACH MONTH 60 AT THE SAME TIME

- If both caregivers reach month 60 and are extended under a category that requires an Employment Plan, post 60-month sanction provisions apply.

**EXAMPLE:** Both parents reach month 60 and are extended under the employed category. Parent 2 is out of compliance with his or her Employment Plan. Apply post 60-month sanction or removal/disqualification provisions.

- If the household is mixed and 1 is extended under a category that requires an Employment Plan and 1 is extended under a category that does not require a plan, post 60-month sanction provisions apply.

**EXAMPLE:** Both parents reach month 60. Parent 1 is determined “unemployable”. Parent 2 meets criteria for “ill or incapacitated”. Parent 1 must develop and follow an Employment Plan. Parent 2 is not required to follow an Employment Plan. Post 60-month /disqualification policies apply if parent 1 is out of compliance.

**NOTE:** If both caregivers are extended under a category that does not require an Employment Plan, post 60-month policies do NOT apply.

**EXAMPLE:** Both parents reach month 60. Parent 1 meets criteria for “ill or incapacitated”. Parent 2 meets criteria for “needed in the home”. Neither parent is required to develop and follow an Employment Plan. Post 60-month sanctions do NOT apply. However, the ill/incapacitated parent must follow treatment recommendations to continue receiving MFIP.

POLICIES WHEN 1 PARENT REACHES MONTH 60 BEFORE THE OTHER

- If the caregiver who has reached month 60 is extended under a category that requires an Employment Plan, post 60-month sanction provisions apply.

**EXAMPLE:** Parent 1 has reached month 60 and is extended under the employed category. Parent 2 has not reached month 60, and is not exempt from Employment Services requirements. Parent 2 is out of compliance with his or her EP. Apply post 60-month sanction or removal/disqualification provisions.
If Parent 1 has reached month 60 and is being extended under a category that doesn’t require an Employment Plan, and Parent 2 has not reached month 60 but is required to participate in Employment Services, pre 60-month sanction provisions apply. See §9.3.3 (Pre 60-Month Type/Length of ES Sanctions).

**EXAMPLE:** Parent 1 has reached month 60 and is extended under the ill/incapacitated category. Parent 2 has not reached month 60, and is not exempt from Employment Services requirements. Parent 2 is out of compliance with his or her Employment Plan. Apply pre 60-month sanction provisions.
Two-parent families have the option to remove a non-compliant parent from the grant. The option to remove the non-compliant parent must occur as part of a discussion and decision-making process between the county/Employment Services Provider and the participants. The county MUST NOT automatically remove a non-compliant parent.

A parent who is removed from the grant may reapply once. A subsequent removal of this parent from the grant for non-compliance will result in permanent disqualification from MFIP. Only 1 parent may be removed at a time. Removals are counted per CAREGIVER for purposes of determining permanent disqualification of that caregiver from the MFIP unit.

Before removing a participant under this policy, the county agency must review the participant’s case to determine if the Employment Plan is still appropriate and must make a good faith effort to meet with the participant face-to-face. If the participant does not comply, the county agency must send the participant a notice of adverse action.

**WHEN BOTH PARENTS REACH MONTH 60 AT THE SAME TIME:**

When BOTH parents reach month 60 at the same time, there are 2 situations when 1 of the parents may be removed from the grant and the remainder of the family continued on MFIP:

- **Effective month 61:** If 1 of the parents does not meet an extension category, or is in sanction in month 60, that parent may be removed from the grant upon request, effective month 61. Either parent may make the request. If the remaining parent is extended as employed, the single parent hourly requirement applies (30/25 hours). The Shared Household Standard and deeming provisions apply. Only 1 parent may be removed from the MFIP unit under this provision.

- **After month 61:** After an extension has been approved, either parent may request removal of a non-compliant parent from the MFIP grant. Pre 60-month notice requirements apply.

**EXAMPLE:** Both parents reach month 60. Parent 1 is extended as employed. Parent 2 is extended as hard to employ. Parent 2 is out of compliance with Employment Services. You must send an MFIP Notice of Intent to Sanction (DHS-3175) (NOITS) and allow 10 days for a response. If either caregiver responds with a request to remove parent 2, the financial worker removes the non-compliant parent the 1st of the month after 10-day legal notice is sent from MAXIS. If no response to the NOITS is received, a status update is sent to the financial worker to impose a sanction.
WHEN 1 PARENT REACHES MONTH 60 BEFORE THE OTHER:

There are situations when 1 parent in a 2-parent family can be removed from the grant when 1 parent reaches month 60 before the other:

- **Effective month 61:** The parent who has reached month 60 is requesting an extension and is in compliance with MFIP requirements, but the parent who has not reached month 60 is NOT in compliance. The non-compliant parent, at either caregiver’s request, can be removed (disqualified) effective month 61. This parent may reapply and be removed 1 additional time before he/she is permanently disqualified from MFIP. If the non-compliant parent (who has not reached month 60) is not removed, post 60-month ES sanctions apply.

  **EXAMPLE:** Parent 1 reaches month 60 and is employed the minimum hourly requirement to be extended (30/25). Parent 2 reaches month 40 and is in sanction with Employment Services. Parent 1 requests removal of parent 2 effective month 61 and the case is extended under the employed category. If parent 1 is out of compliance with ES requirements, the post 60-month sanction sequence is applied.

- **Effective month 61:** The parent who has reached month 60 and requesting an extension is NOT in compliance with MFIP requirements, but the parent who has not reached month 60 IS in compliance. The non-compliant parent, at either caregiver’s request, can be removed (disqualified) effective month 61 and the shared household standard applied. This family is considered a pre-60 month case, which means the 60 months clock is ticking according to the number of months used by the parent who remains on the grant, pre-60 month sanctions apply. Since the parent who reach 60 months was disqualified because of non-compliance in the 60th month, this parent may not reapply or be added back onto the grant at any point in the future.

- **After month 61:** After an extension is approved, either caregiver may request removal of a non-compliant caregiver, regardless of who reached month 60 first. Pre 60-month notice requirements apply.

  **EXAMPLE:** Parent 1 reaches month 60 and is employed 30 hours per week. Parent 2 reaches month 30 and is in compliance. The case is extended effective month 61 as employed. In month 70, Parent 2 is out of compliance with Employment Services. You must mail a NOITS. Parent 1 calls within 10 days of receiving the NOITS to request removal of Parent 2 from the grant. The financial worker
removes parent 2 from the MFIP grant after allowing for 10-day notice and applies the Shared Household Standard and deeming provisions.

**NOTE:** By removing the non-compliant parent before a sanction takes place the MFIP unit still has 4 occurrences of sanction until case closure (1st disqualification) and 2 more occurrences of ES sanction until permanent case closure (permanent disqualification). The removed caregiver may be added back to the grant 1 additional time before being permanently disqualified from MFIP. The option to remove the non-compliant parent must occur as part of a discussion and decision making process between the county and the participants. The county MUST NOT automatically remove the non-compliant parent.

See §10.42 (Post 60-Month ES Sanctions - General Provisions), §10.42.3 (Post 60-Month Sanctions - 2-Parent Provisions) for additional information on post 60-month sanctions.
The Issuance Operation Center will mail the 1st notice to the participants in the 48th month of cash assistance. MAXIS will generate person-specific notices, each month after that, to participants who have less than 12 months of the 60-month time limit informing them of the number of cash assistance months that are left.

The notices are sent out by DHS on an on-going basis between the 10th and 15th of each month. The final monthly notice will be sent in the 59th month, when 1 month of the original 60-month limit is remaining.

**EXCEPTION:** Caregivers age 60 or older who have not already exceeded the 60-month time limit will not receive a 60-month warning notice, unless there is a 2nd MFIP caregiver in the household who is not exempt from the 60-month time limit.

It is critical that the information recorded on the MAXIS TIME panel reflects the participant’s situation. Workers should review the TIME panel with the participant at least yearly to make sure that the information on the panel is correct.

MAXIS will mail 1 notice for each MFIP caregiver who has reached his or her 48th month of MFIP. MAXIS will mail 2 separate notices, if 2 adult members of the MFIP unit have reached the 48th month of counted MFIP. The notice(s) will be addressed to the head of household.

The notices MUST contain:

- Information on the 60-month time limit.
- The number of months the participant has remaining.
- The hardship extension policy.
- Other information the commissioner deems pertinent.

The financial worker reviews the accuracy of the information with the participants at recertification and at other times when he/she meets with participants.
MFIP Transition Standards and Shared Household Standards effective October 1, 2007.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># Eligible People</th>
<th>FAMILY WAGE LEVEL</th>
<th>TRANSITIONAL STANDARD</th>
<th>Cash Portion</th>
<th>Food Portion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Full Standard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$ 430</td>
<td>$ 391</td>
<td>$ 250</td>
<td>$141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$ 768</td>
<td>$ 698</td>
<td>$ 437</td>
<td>$261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$1,001</td>
<td>$ 910</td>
<td>$ 532</td>
<td>$378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
<td>$1,091</td>
<td>$ 621</td>
<td>$470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>$1,370</td>
<td>$1,245</td>
<td>$ 697</td>
<td>$548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>$1,568</td>
<td>$1,425</td>
<td>$ 773</td>
<td>$652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>$1,708</td>
<td>$1,553</td>
<td>$ 850</td>
<td>$703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>$1,884</td>
<td>$1,713</td>
<td>$ 916</td>
<td>$797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>$2,058</td>
<td>$1,871</td>
<td>$ 980</td>
<td>$891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>$2,226</td>
<td>$2,024</td>
<td>$1,035</td>
<td>$989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each add’l person</td>
<td>$ 166</td>
<td>$ 151</td>
<td>$ 53</td>
<td>$ 98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use the Family Wage Level (FWL) standard only for units with earned income.

For families with a child subject to the family cap, apply the FWL for the household size including that child. To determine the Transitional Standard to apply, add the cash portion for the household size not including the child to the food portion for the household size including the child.

Some state and federal programs do not count the food portion as income. Examples of these programs include housing subsidy programs, low income energy assistance program, and Supplemental Security Income when determining interim assistance amount.

**SHARED HOUSEHOLD STANDARD :**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># Eligible People</th>
<th>Full Standard</th>
<th>Cash Portion</th>
<th>Food Portion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$ 366</td>
<td>$ 225</td>
<td>$141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$ 654</td>
<td>$ 393</td>
<td>$261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$ 857</td>
<td>$ 479</td>
<td>$378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>$1,029</td>
<td>$ 559</td>
<td>$470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>$1,175</td>
<td>$ 627</td>
<td>$548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>$1,348</td>
<td>$ 696</td>
<td>$652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>$1,468</td>
<td>$ 765</td>
<td>$703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>$1,621</td>
<td>$ 824</td>
<td>$797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>$1,773</td>
<td>$ 882</td>
<td>$891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>$1,921</td>
<td>$ 932</td>
<td>$989</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each add’l person

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$ 146</td>
<td>$ 48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Assistance standards for a household of more than 10 are calculated by MAXIS.

The Shared Household Standard does NOT apply if:

- The MFIP member is a victim of family violence.
- The non-MFIP member meets the eligible caregiver requirement.
- The MFIP family includes a child subject to the family cap.

Use the Shared Household Standard unless unrelated household members meet at least 1 of the following EXCEPTIONS:

- Receiving Public Assistance:
  - Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP).
  - General Assistance (GA).
  - Emergency General Assistance (EGA).
  - Minnesota Supplemental Aid (MSA).
  - Minnesota Food Assistance Program (MFAP).
  - Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA).
  - Food Support (FS).
  - Medical Assistance (MA).
  - General Assistance Medical Care (GAMC).
  - MinnesotaCare.
  - Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
  - Adoption Assistance.
  - Relative Custody Assistance.
  - Foster Care.

- Roomer, Boarder, or a Person to whom Room or Board Is Paid:
For this to apply, the unit must meet the definition of ROOMER/BOARDER, not simply share living expenses. If the MFIP unit is receiving roomer/boarder income, consider the income as self-employment.

- Minor Child

- Minor Caregiver:
  This includes minor caregivers living with parents or in an approved supervised living arrangement, if applicable.

- Caregiver of a Child not in the MFIP Assistance Unit:
  This refers to the relationship of an unrelated person in the household to a child that is not considered part of the MFIP assistance unit.

- Providing Child Care to a Child in the MFIP Assistance Unit:
  This refers to the unrelated person providing care for a child who is part of the MFIP assistance unit.
The maximum earnings on this initial eligibility threshold chart are calculated assuming that the unit is employed at application, has only earned income, has not been on MFIP in the previous 4 months, receives the regular Transitional Standard and has no children subject to the Family Cap. The earnings amounts listed assume that the unit has no child care expenses, makes no child or spousal support payments and allocates no income to others in the household. Unless otherwise noted, the table assumes working 40 hours per week and 4.3 weeks per month.

**This chart should be used only as a guide and not to determine eligibility.**

To be eligible for MFIP, the assistance unit's gross earnings minus an 18% disregard must be below the Transitional Standard for that size unit in the month of application. These earnings thresholds apply to a DWP family who applies for MFIP after having received 4 months of DWP benefits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Size</th>
<th>Transitional Standard</th>
<th>Maximum Gross Earnings of Applicant to be Eligible for MFIP</th>
<th>Hourly Wage of Applicant to be Eligible for MFIP</th>
<th>*2007 Monthly Federal Poverty Guidelines</th>
<th>Percent of Federal Poverty Guideline at Threshold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$ 391</td>
<td>$ 475</td>
<td>17 hrs/wk @$6.15</td>
<td>$ 851</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$ 698</td>
<td>$ 850</td>
<td>32 hrs/wk @$6.15</td>
<td>$1,141</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$ 910</td>
<td>$1,108</td>
<td>$ 6.44</td>
<td>$1,431</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>$1,091</td>
<td>$1,329</td>
<td>$ 7.73</td>
<td>$1,721</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>$1,245</td>
<td>$1,517</td>
<td>$ 8.82</td>
<td>$2,011</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>$1,425</td>
<td>$1,736</td>
<td>$10.09</td>
<td>$2,301</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>$1,553</td>
<td>$1,892</td>
<td>$11.00</td>
<td>$2,591</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>$1,713</td>
<td>$2,087</td>
<td>$12.13</td>
<td>$2,881</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>$1,871</td>
<td>$2,280</td>
<td>$13.26</td>
<td>$3,171</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>$2,024</td>
<td>$2,467</td>
<td>$14.34</td>
<td>$3,461</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The 2007 FPG amounts are effective for Calendar Year 2007*
This table is used to calculate the amount of earnings needed to exit the MFIP cash portion and eligible only for the food portion.

**NOTE:** MFIP does not count against 60-month clock if only the food portion is received. A participant can choose to “opt out” of cash portion to stop the 60-month clock.

Unless otherwise noted, this table assumes working 40 hours per week and 4.3 weeks per monthly. It also assumes no allocation, deeming or sanctions. Calculations are based on MFIP standards effective October, 2007. The current minimum wage is $6.15 per hour for large employers. The earned income disregard is 39% of gross earnings.

### Amount of Earnings Needed to Reach the Food Portion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HH Size</th>
<th>Full MFIP Food Portion</th>
<th>Monthly Income</th>
<th>Annual Income</th>
<th>Weekly Hours Must Work at Minimum Wage</th>
<th>Hourly Wage</th>
<th>Child Care Co-Pay when Lose Cash Portion</th>
<th>*2007 Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG)</th>
<th>Percent of FPG when Lose Cash Portion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$141</td>
<td>$ 473</td>
<td>$ 5,676</td>
<td>17 hrs</td>
<td>$6.15</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>$10,210</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$261</td>
<td>$ 830</td>
<td>$ 9,960</td>
<td>31 hrs</td>
<td>$6.15</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>$13,690</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$378</td>
<td>$1,020</td>
<td>$12,240</td>
<td>38 hrs</td>
<td>$6.15</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>$17,170</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>$470</td>
<td>$1,196</td>
<td>$14,352</td>
<td>45 hrs</td>
<td>$6.95</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>$20,650</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>$548</td>
<td>$1,346</td>
<td>$16,152</td>
<td>51 hrs</td>
<td>$7.83</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>$24,130</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>$652</td>
<td>$1,501</td>
<td>$18,012</td>
<td>57 hrs</td>
<td>$8.73</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>$27,610</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>$703</td>
<td>$1,646</td>
<td>$19,752</td>
<td>62 hrs</td>
<td>$9.57</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>$31,090</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>$797</td>
<td>$1,781</td>
<td>$21,372</td>
<td>67 hrs</td>
<td>$10.35</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>$34,570</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>$891</td>
<td>$1,912</td>
<td>$22,944</td>
<td>72hrs</td>
<td>$11.12</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>$38,050</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>$989</td>
<td>$2,027</td>
<td>$24,324</td>
<td>77hrs</td>
<td>$11.78</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>$41,530</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The 2007 FPG amounts are effective for Calendar Year 2007*
This table is used to calculate the amount of earnings needed to exit the MFIP program (both the cash and food portion). The figures on this table are EFFECTIVE 10-1-07.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HH Size</th>
<th>Family Wage Level</th>
<th>Monthly Income</th>
<th>Annual Income</th>
<th>Hourly Wage</th>
<th>*Child Care Co-Pay when Exit MFIP</th>
<th>**Annual 2007 Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG)</th>
<th>Percent of FPG when Exit MFIP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$430</td>
<td>$704</td>
<td>$8,448</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>$6,15 at 26 hrs/wk</td>
<td>$10,210</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$768</td>
<td>$1,258</td>
<td>$15,096</td>
<td>$7.31</td>
<td>$34</td>
<td>$13,690</td>
<td>110%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$1,001</td>
<td>$1,640</td>
<td>$19,680</td>
<td>$9.53</td>
<td>$43</td>
<td>$17,170</td>
<td>115%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
<td>$1,966</td>
<td>$23,592</td>
<td>$11.43</td>
<td>$52</td>
<td>$20,650</td>
<td>114%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>$1,370</td>
<td>$2,245</td>
<td>$26,940</td>
<td>$13.05</td>
<td>$60</td>
<td>$24,130</td>
<td>112%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>$1,568</td>
<td>$2,569</td>
<td>$30,828</td>
<td>$14.94</td>
<td>$69</td>
<td>$27,610</td>
<td>112%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>$1,708</td>
<td>$2,799</td>
<td>$33,588</td>
<td>$16.27</td>
<td>$74</td>
<td>$31,090</td>
<td>108%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>$1,884</td>
<td>$3,087</td>
<td>$37,044</td>
<td>$17.95</td>
<td>$83</td>
<td>$34,570</td>
<td>107%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>$2,058</td>
<td>$3,373</td>
<td>$40,476</td>
<td>$19.61</td>
<td>$91</td>
<td>$38,050</td>
<td>106%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>$2,226</td>
<td>$3,648</td>
<td>$43,776</td>
<td>$21.21</td>
<td>$99</td>
<td>$41,530</td>
<td>105%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The child care co-pay amounts are effective 7/1/07.

** The 2007 FPG amounts are effective for calendar year 2007.
DHS Required Forms:
Do NOT use any alternative form developed by the county, tribe, or ES provider in place of a DHS required form. This is not a list of what is required to be kept in a case file.

- Assessor/Treatment Provider Report (DHS-4316).
- *Notice of Requirement to Attend MFIP Overview (DHS-2929).
- *MFIP Notice of Intent to Sanction (DHS-3175).
- *MFIP Self-Screen (DHS-3482).
- Brief Screening Tool for Special Learning Needs (DHS-3504).
- Injury Protection Program (IPP) - Participant Medical Referral and Medical Care Provider Information Letter (DHS-3996).
- Injury Protection Program (IPP) - Participant Injury Status Report (DHS-3997).
- MFIP/DWP Employment Plan – (DHS-4209A,B,C,D,E,F,G). Either the paper version or the electronic employment plan of WF1 is required.

DHS Required OR the County/ES Provider Must Develop an Alternative:

- Diversionary Work Program/Minnesota Family Investment Program Status Update Form (DHS-3165). A paper version is not necessary, if the electronic status update is on WF1.
- Diversionary Work Program/Minnesota Family Investment Program Employment Services Referral (DHS-3166). A paper version is not necessary, if the electronic status update is on WF1.
- *Family Violence Referral (DHS-3323).
- Request for Verification of School Attendance/Progress (DHS-2883).
- DWP/MFIP Observation Checklist (DHS-3483).
- MFIP Self-Screen Scoring Form (DHS-3482A).

*Available in many languages.

See DHS forms on the Internet at [http://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/](http://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/).
Include the following items in the MFIP/DWP Employment Services (ES) paper files:

- Notice of Requirement to attend MFIP Overview (DHS-2929-ENG).
  NOTE: If the MFIP ES overview is being scheduled by income maintenance staff, this form does not necessarily need to be in the ES file. When scheduling the overview, income maintenance staff have the option of using this form or the ES referral SPEC/LTR can be used.

- Employment Services Rights and Responsibilities (DHS-3172-ENG) and Release of Information forms.

- Case notes (may be on-line).

- Signed copies of the MFIP/DWP Employment Plan(s) (DHS-4209A-ENG) and Employment Plan (EP) Modifications.

- Assessment materials, test scores, Chemical Dependency (CD), Mental Health (MH) and Learning Disabilities (LD) screening tools and observation check lists.

- Medical, psychological, and other pertinent data collected.

- Verification of activity hours contained in the EP and entered on WorkForce1 (WF1) including:
  - Activity logs/attendance records
  - School attendance records
  - Non-paid employment activities attendance records.

- Copies of Status Updates generated manually by job counselor.


- Copies of On The Job Training (OJT) contracts or worksite agreements with employers.

- MFIP Notice of Intent to Sanction (NOITS) (DHS-3175-ENG) and other communications.

- Any documents needed for an external or internal fiscal review or audit.

*Refer to Activity Table (Appendix E1) and Activity Cheatsheet (Appendix E3) in the ES Manual, for more details on documentation and verification.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>PROGRAM POLICY</th>
<th>DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED</th>
<th>SOURCE OF DATA AND HOURLY TRACKING</th>
<th>USED IN MFIP PARTICIPATION RATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job Skills Training Directly Related to Employment</strong></td>
<td>Possible classes might include, but are not limited to, computer basics, keyboarding, communication skills, getting along with coworkers or supervisors, development of back-up plans for day care and transportation. Also includes the last two years of a bachelor degree and advanced degree programs. Section: §7.3.12 (Education &amp; Training Activities)</td>
<td>For <strong>on-site</strong> (for example, the Employment Services (ES) provider office, workforce center or educational institution) classroom instruction, attendance record with dates and hours of attendance. For <strong>off-site</strong> classroom instruction, a bi-weekly activity log from participant, must be verified by another responsible individual. For <strong>on-site</strong> study time, bi-weekly documentation from school or other responsible individual/organization which includes the number of hours of on-site supervised study time, including the date and time the on-site study occurred. For <strong>off-site</strong> study time, include in participant’s employment plan and obtain a bi-weekly signed statement from participant indicating the date and time the off-site study occurred and verify hours. Progress - Must have education/training institution verify that participant is making good progress and remains in good standing, plus bi-weekly report in meetings between employment services staff and participant, along with case note. Document this activity in the employment plan. Put copies of time sheets, activity logs and other relevant documents in the participant’s case file Enter a case note to document any follow-up discussions with the participant.</td>
<td>Source of data: Workforce 1 Record actual hours for each week of the month. Classroom hours. Actual hours for preparation or study must be supervised and verified.</td>
<td>This is a <strong>non-core</strong> activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocational Training/Education - 12 months or less</strong></td>
<td>Includes vocational programs that can be completed in 12 months or less if attended on a</td>
<td>For <strong>off-site</strong> classroom instruction, documentation at least once per quarter or semester from school or instructor for training, including the number of classroom hours.</td>
<td>Source of data: Workforce 1 Record actual hours for each</td>
<td>This is a <strong>core</strong> activity for 12 months (one time lifetime limit). After the 12 month lifetime limit is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITY</td>
<td>PROGRAM POLICY</td>
<td>DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED</td>
<td>SOURCE OF DATA AND HOURLY TRACKING</td>
<td>USED IN MFIP PARTICIPATION RATE</td>
</tr>
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<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| done by a private or state college or post secondary educational institution or program that results in a degree, credential or industry recognized certificate such as Microsoft certificate. | full-time basis, unless the participant needs to extend beyond 12 calendar months for reasons such as combining training with part-time employment. This activity does not include baccalaureate or advanced degrees. Section: §7.3.12 (Education & Training Activities) | weekly activity log from participant, must be verified by another responsible individual. For on-site study time, bi-weekly documentation from school or other responsible individual/organization which includes the number of hours of on-site supervised study time, including the date and time the on-site study occurred. For off-site study time, include in participant’s employment plan and obtain a signed a bi-weekly activity log from participant indicating the date and time the off-site study occurred and verify hours. Progress - Must have education/training institution verify that participant is making good progress and remains in good standing, plus bi-weekly report in meetings between employment services staff and participant, along with case note. Document this activity in the employment plan. Put copies of time sheets, activity logs and other relevant documents in the participant’s case file. Enter a case note to document any follow-up discussions with the participant. | week of the month.  
- Classroom hours.  
- Actual hours for preparation or study must be supervised and verified. | reached, this is a non-core activity.  
NOTE: The 12 month vocational educational training lifetime limit is a combination of Vocational Educational Training – 12 months or less AND Vocational Educational Training -13-24 months. |

| Vocational Training/ Education – 13-24 months | Includes vocational programs that can be completed in 13-24 months if attended on a full time basis, unless the participant needs to extend beyond 24 calendar months for reasons such as combining | For off-site classroom instruction, documentation at least once per quarter or semester from school or instructor for training which includes the number of classroom hours. For off-site classroom instruction, a bi-weekly activity log from participant, must be verified by another responsible individual. For on-site study time, bi-weekly documentation from school or other responsible individual/organization which includes the number of hours of | Source of data:  
Workforce 1  
Record actual hours for each week of the month.  
- Classroom hours.  
- Actual hours for | This is a core activity for 12 months (one time lifetime limit).  
After the 12 month lifetime limit is reached, this is a non-core activity.  
NOTE: The 12 month vocational educational training lifetime limit is a combination of |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>PROGRAM POLICY</th>
<th>DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED</th>
<th>SOURCE OF DATA AND HOURLY TRACKING</th>
<th>USED IN MFIP PARTICIPATION RATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>industry recognized certificate such as Microsoft certificate.</td>
<td>training with part-time employment. This activity does not include baccalaureate or advanced degrees. Section: §7.3.12 (Education &amp; Training Activities)</td>
<td>on-site supervised study time, including the date and time the on-site study occurred. For off-site study time, include in participant’s employment plan and obtain a signed bi-weekly activity log from participant indicating the date and time the off-site study occurred and verify hours. Progress - Must have education/training institution verify that participant is making good progress and remains in good standing, plus bi-weekly report in meetings between employment services staff and participant, along with case note. Document this activity in the employment plan. Put copies of time sheets, activity logs and other relevant documents in the participant’s case file. Enter a case note to document any follow-up discussions with the participant.</td>
<td>preparation or study must be supervised and verified.</td>
<td>Vocational Educational Training – 12 months or less AND Vocational Educational Training -13-24 months.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| English as a Second Language (ESL) | To be an approved activity the participant must be below the spoken language proficiency of SPL6 on a nationally known test. No more than 24 months of ESL and/or Functional Work Literacy (FWL) may be approved. No more than one half of the participation requirements in the employment plan may be met | For on-site (for example, the ES provider office or workforce center) classroom instruction, attendance record with dates and hours of attendance. For off-site classroom instruction, bi-weekly attendance records or other documentation from school or instructor which includes the number of classroom hours. For on-site study time, bi-weekly documentation from school or other responsible individual/organization which includes the number of hours of on-site supervised study time, including the date and time the on-site study occurred. For off-site study time, include in participant’s employment plan and obtain a bi-weekly signed activity log from participant indicating the date and time the off-site study occurred and verify hours. | Source of data: Workforce 1 Record actual hours for each week of the month. Classroom hours. Actual hours for preparation or study must be supervised and verified. | This is a non-core activity. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>PROGRAM POLICY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>through ESL, FWL and Adult Basic Education (ABE) (combined).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sections: §7.3.12 (Education &amp; Training Activities), §7.21 (Participants with Limited English Proficiency (LEP))</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED</th>
<th>SOURCE OF DATA AND HOURLY TRACKING</th>
<th>USED IN MFIP PARTICIPATION RATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>time the off-site study occurred and verify hours.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress - Must have education/training institution verify that participant is making good progress and remains in good standing, plus bi-weekly report in meetings between employment services staff and participant, along with case note.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document this activity in the employment plan. Put copies of time sheets, activity logs and other relevant documents in the participant’s case file. Enter a case note to document any follow-up discussions with the participant.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adult Basic Education (ABE)</th>
<th>To be an activity, the participant must have a reading or math proficiency level below the 9th grade.</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No more than one half of the participation requirements in the employment plan may be met through ABE, ESL and FWL (combined).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sections: §7.3.12 (Education &amp; Training Activities), §7.21 (Job Development for Participants With Limited English)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of data:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workforce 1</td>
<td>Record actual hours for each week of the month.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom hours.</td>
<td>Actual hours for preparation or study must be supervised and verified.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is a non-core activity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>PROGRAM POLICY</th>
<th>DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED</th>
<th>SOURCE OF DATA AND HOURLY TRACKING</th>
<th>USED IN MFIP PARTICIPATION RATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>staff and participant, along with case note. Document this activity in the employment plan. Put copies of time sheets, activity logs and other relevant documents in the participant’s case file. Enter a case note to document any follow-up discussions with the participant.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional Work Literacy (FWL)</td>
<td>No more than 24 months of Functional Work Literacy and/or ESL training may be approved. No more than two thirds of the participation requirements in the employment plan may be met through FWL.</td>
<td>For on-site (for example, the ES provider office or workforce center) classroom instruction, attendance record with dates and hours of attendance. For off-site classroom instruction, bi-weekly attendance records or other documentation from school or instructor which includes the number of classroom hours. For on-site study time, bi-weekly documentation from school or other responsible individual/organization which includes the number of hours of on-site supervised study time, including the date and time the on-site study occurred. For off-site study time, include in participant’s employment plan and obtain a signed bi-weekly activity log from participant indicating the date and time the off-site study occurred and verify hours. Progress - Must have education/training institution verify that participant is making good progress and remains in good standing, plus bi-weekly report in meetings between employment services staff and participant, along with case note. Document this activity in the employment plan. Put copies of time sheets, activity logs and other relevant documents in the participant’s case file. Enter a case note to document any</td>
<td>Source of data: Workforce 1 Record actual hours for each week of the month. Classroom hours. Actual hours for preparation or study must be supervised and verified.</td>
<td>This is a non-core activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITY</td>
<td>PROGRAM POLICY</td>
<td>DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED</td>
<td>SOURCE OF DATA AND HOURLY TRACKING</td>
<td>USED IN MFIP PARTICIPATION RATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Completion</td>
<td>Sections: §7.3.12 (Education &amp; Training Activities), §7.23.3 (Basic Education or GED)</td>
<td>follow-up discussions with the participant. Bi-weekly documentation from school or instructor which includes the number of classroom hours. For on-site study time, bi-weekly documentation from school or other responsible individual/organization which includes the number of hours of on-site supervised study time, including the date and time the on-site study occurred. For off-site study time, include in participant’s employment plan and obtain a signed bi-weekly activity log from participant indicating the date and time the off-site study occurred and verify hours. Document this activity in the employment plan. Put copies of time sheets, activity logs and other relevant documents in the participant’s case file. Enter a case note to document any follow-up discussions with the participant.</td>
<td>Source of data: MAXIS for participants under the age of 20. Workforce 1 for participants 20 years and older. Record actual hours for each week of the month. Classroom hours. Actual hours for preparation or study must be supervised and verified. Additional Tip: Start recording hours on Workforce 1 in the month of their 20th birthday so no months will be missed. (Those under the age of 20 are pulled from MAXIS). This is a non-core activity for participants who are 20 years of age or older and who have last grade completed as less than 12 as it is coded on MAXIS. Teen parents less than 20 who do not have a high school diploma or GED meet the participation requirement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Educational</td>
<td>No more than one half of the For on-site (for example, the ES provider office or workforce center)</td>
<td>Source of data:</td>
<td>This is a non-core activity for</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>PROGRAM POLICY</th>
<th>DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED</th>
<th>SOURCE OF DATA AND HOURLY TRACKING</th>
<th>USED IN MFIP PARTICIPATION RATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development Training (GED)</td>
<td>participation requirements in the employment plan may be met through GED training. Sections: §7.3.12 (Education &amp; Training Activities), §7.23.3 (Basic Education or GED)</td>
<td>classroom instruction, attendance record with dates and hours of attendance. For off-site classroom instruction, bi-weekly attendance records or other documentation from school or instructor which includes the number of classroom hours. For on-site study time, bi-weekly documentation from school or other responsible individual/organization which includes the number of hours of on-site supervised study time, including the date and time the on-site study occurred. For off-site study time, include in participant’s employment plan and obtain a signed bi-weekly activity log from participant indicating the date and time the off-site study occurred and verify hours. Progress - Must have education/training institution verify that participant is making good progress and remains in good standing, plus bi-weekly report in meetings between employment services staff and participant, along with case note. Document this activity in the employment plan. Put copies of time sheets, activity logs and other relevant documents in the participant’s case file. Enter a case note to document any follow-up discussions with the participant.</td>
<td>MAXIS for participants under the age of 20. Workforce 1 for participants 20 years and older. Record actual hours for each week of the month. Classroom hours. Actual hours for preparation or study must be supervised and verified. Additional Tip: Start recording hours on Workforce 1 in the month of their 20th birthday so no months will be missed. (Those under the age of 20 are pulled from MAXIS).</td>
<td>participants who are 20 years of age or older and who have last grade completed as less than 12 as it is coded on MAXIS. Teen parents less than 20 years of age who do not have a high school diploma or GED meet the participation requirement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-the-Job Training – Public Sector</td>
<td>The employer is reimbursed for the time and expense of providing this training. Section:</td>
<td>Check stubs or employer statement and monthly Household Report Form collected by Financial Worker. Document this activity in the employment plan. Put copies of time sheets, activity logs and other relevant documents in the participant’s case file.</td>
<td>This is a core activity. All paid work hours are counted in the month paid.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## MFIP Activity Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Program Policy</th>
<th>Documentation Required</th>
<th>Source of Data and Hourly Tracking</th>
<th>Used in MFIP Participation Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>by a public employer and, while engaged in productive work, receives training that provides knowledge or skills essential to the full and adequate performance of that job.</td>
<td>§7.3.3 (Paid Employment Activities)</td>
<td>documents in the participant’s case file. Document this activity in the employment plan. Enter a case note to document any follow-up discussions with the participant.</td>
<td>entered into and pulled from MAXIS. Hourly tracking in Workforce 1 (WF1) is optional (hours recorded in WF1 are not used in Work Participation Rate calculations and reports).</td>
<td>This is a core activity. All paid work hours are counted in the month paid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-the-Job Training – Private Sector</td>
<td>The employer is reimbursed for the time and expense of providing this training. Section: §7.3.3 (Paid Employment Activities)</td>
<td>Check stubs or employer statement and monthly Household Report Form collected by Financial Worker. Document this activity in the employment plan. Put copies of time sheets, activity logs and other relevant documents in participant’s case record file. Enter a case note to document any follow-up discussions with the participant.</td>
<td>Source of data: All paid work hours are reported to the county, entered into and pulled from MAXIS. Hourly tracking in Workforce 1 is optional (hours recorded in WF1 are not used in Work Participation Rate calculations and reports).</td>
<td>This is a core activity. All paid work hours are counted in the month paid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Service</td>
<td>To determine the number of hours for this activity follow the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) guidelines. Divide the participant’s</td>
<td>Bi-weekly time sheet, signed by work site supervisor or other responsible individual. Client signed time sheet/activity log with hours worked must be verified bi-weekly by other responsible individual. Document this activity in the employment plan. Put copies of time</td>
<td>Source of data: Workforce 1 Record actual hours for each week of the month.</td>
<td>This is a core activity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>PROGRAM POLICY</th>
<th>DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED</th>
<th>SOURCE OF DATA AND HOURLY TRACKING</th>
<th>USED IN MFIP PARTICIPATION RATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>organizations or projects. The position must fulfill a useful public purpose.</td>
<td>MFIP grant (both cash and food) by the state minimum wage. Section: §7.3.6 (Unpaid Employment Activities)</td>
<td>sheets, activity logs and other relevant documents in the participant’s case file. Enter a case note to document any follow-up discussions with the participant.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Diversion</td>
<td>Section: §7.3.3 (Paid Employment Activities)</td>
<td>Check stubs or employer statement and monthly Household Report Form collected by Financial Workers. Document this activity in the employment plan. Put copies of time sheets, activity logs and other relevant documents in the participant’s case file. Enter a case note to document any follow-up discussions with the participant.</td>
<td>Source of data: All paid work hours are reported to the county, entered into and pulled from MAXIS. Hourly tracking in Workforce 1 is optional (hours recorded in WF1 are not used in Work Participation Rate calculations and reports).</td>
<td>This is a core activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Work Experience Program (CWEP)</td>
<td>The participant must have completed job search prior to entering CWEP. Placements must serve a useful public purpose. To determine the number of hours for this activity follow the FLSA</td>
<td>Bi-weekly time sheet, signed by work site supervisor or other responsible individual. Client signed time sheet/activity log with hours worked must be verified bi-weekly by other responsible individual. Document this activity in the employment plan. Put copies of time sheets, activity logs and other relevant documents in the participant’s case file. Enter a case note to document any follow-up discussions with the participant.</td>
<td>Source of data: Workforce 1 Record actual hours for each week of the month.</td>
<td>This is a core activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>PROGRAM POLICY</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>employment</td>
<td>guidelines. Divide the participant’s MFIP grant (both cash and food) by the state minimum wage. Section: §7.3.6 (Unpaid Employment Activities)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid Work Experience</td>
<td>Section: §7.3.3 (Paid Employment Activities)</td>
<td>Check stubs and monthly Household Report Form collected by Financial Worker. Document this activity in the employment plan. Put copies of time sheets, activity logs and other relevant documents in the participant’s case file. Enter a case note to document any follow-up discussions with the participant.</td>
<td></td>
<td>This is a core activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid Work Experience</td>
<td>This activity can also include unpaid supported work and unpaid internships. To determine the number of hours for this activity follow the FLSA guidelines.</td>
<td>Bi-weekly time sheet, signed by work site supervisor or other responsible individual. Client signed time sheet/activity log with hours worked, must be verified bi-weekly by other responsible individual. Document this activity in the employment plan. Put copies of time sheets, activity logs and other relevant documents in the participant’s case file. Enter a case note to document any</td>
<td>Source of data: All paid work hours are reported to the county, entered into and pulled from MAXIS. Hourly tracking in Workforce 1 is optional (hours recorded in WF1 are not used in Work Participation Rate calculations and reports).</td>
<td>This is a core activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITY</td>
<td>PROGRAM POLICY</td>
<td>DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED</td>
<td>SOURCE OF DATA AND HOURLY TRACKING</td>
<td>USED IN MFIP PARTICIPATION RATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divide the participant’s MFIP grant (both cash and food) by the state minimum wage. Section: §7.3.6 (Unpaid Employment Activities)</td>
<td>follow-up discussions with the participant.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job Search</strong></td>
<td>This activity is used for both the initial job search and all subsequent periods of job search.</td>
<td>Job search includes looking for suitable job openings, making contact with potential employers, applying for vacancies and interviewing for jobs. Job readiness assistance includes:</td>
<td>Weekly time sheet, activity log or attendance record signed by responsible individual. Employ...</td>
<td>This is a core activity that only counts for 6 weeks out of the federal fiscal year. No more than 4 weeks can be consecutive. Each October a new 6-week period begins. There must be 4 hours or more in this activity in a week for the week to count. This is in combination with assessment hours. The 6 weeks is either job search or assessment or a combination of both activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This activity is also used to record hours of job readiness assistance, including chemical health and mental health treatment and rehabilitation services. Otherwise, record treatment and rehabilitation services under social services (non-countable).</td>
<td>Weekly time sheet, activity log or attendance record signed by responsible individual. Employ...</td>
<td>Weekly signed client activity log with actual hours must be verified by other responsible individual. For chemical health treatment, mental health treatment and rehabilitation services, a signed statement from the provider listing the days and hours of participation. Document this activity in the employment plan. Put copies of time sheets, activity logs and other relevant documents in the participant’s case file. Enter a case note to document any follow-up discussions with the participant.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITY</td>
<td>PROGRAM POLICY</td>
<td>DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED</td>
<td>SOURCE OF DATA AND HOURLY TRACKING</td>
<td>USED IN MFIP PARTICIPATION RATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employed Less Than 30 Hours Per Week</strong></td>
<td>§7.3.9 (Job Search &amp; Job Readiness Activities)</td>
<td>Check stubs and monthly Household Report Form collected by Financial Workers.</td>
<td>Source of data:</td>
<td>This is a core activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This activity is used for participants who are employed less than 30 hours per week and continue to receive MFIP assistance.</td>
<td>Include paid internships of less than 30 hours in this activity.</td>
<td>For self-employed participants, a monthly Household Report Form, with additional documentation showing the monthly gross income and allowable business expenses.</td>
<td>All paid work hours are reported to the county, entered into and pulled from MAXIS.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It includes self-employed participants who work 30 or more hours per week.</td>
<td>Hours can be a result of 2 or more part-time jobs.</td>
<td>Document this activity in the employment plan. Put copies of time sheets, activity logs and other relevant documents in the participant’s case file. Enter a case note to document any follow-up discussions with the participant.</td>
<td>Hourly tracking in Workforce 1 is optional (hours recorded in WF1 are not used in Work Participation Rate calculations and reports).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employed 30 Hours or More Per Week</strong></td>
<td>§7.3.3 (Paid Employment Activities), §7.3.9 (Job Search &amp; Job Readiness Activities)</td>
<td>Check stubs and monthly Household Report Form collected by Financial Workers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This activity is used for participants who are employed more than 30 hours per week and continue to receive MFIP assistance.</td>
<td>The 30 hours per week could be a result of 2 or more part-time jobs.</td>
<td>For self-employed participants, a monthly Household Report Form, with additional documentation showing the monthly gross income and allowable business expenses.</td>
<td>All paid work hours are reported to the county, entered into and pulled from MAXIS.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It includes self-employed participants who work more than 30 hours per week</td>
<td>Include paid internships in this activity.</td>
<td>Document this activity in the employment plan. Put copies of time sheets, activity logs and other relevant documents in the participant’s case file. Enter a case note to document any follow-up discussions with the participant.</td>
<td>Hourly tracking in Workforce 1 is optional (hours recorded in WF1 are not used in Work Participation Rate calculations and reports).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is a core activity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>PROGRAM POLICY</th>
<th>DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED</th>
<th>SOURCE OF DATA AND HOURLY TRACKING USED IN MFIP PARTICIPATION RATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participating in Social Services</strong>&lt;br&gt; This activity is used for participants who are involved in all forms of social service interventions.</td>
<td>Possible interventions include:&lt;br&gt; - Chemical health and mental health assessment.&lt;br&gt; - Non-countable chemical health or mental health treatment.&lt;br&gt; - Non-countable rehabilitation services.&lt;br&gt; - Assessment for learning disabilities and subsequent services.&lt;br&gt; - Other forms of social service interventions.&lt;br&gt; Sections: §7.3.15 (Social Services Activities), §7.9.12 (Chemical/Mental Health/Learning Needs Screening)</td>
<td>Document this activity in the employment plan. Put copies of time sheets, activity logs and other relevant documents in the participant’s case file. Enter a case note to document any follow-up discussions with the participant.</td>
<td>Source of data: Workforce 1&lt;br&gt; Record actual hours for each week of the month.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Providing Child Care For Parent Working in a Community Services Program</strong>&lt;br&gt; Sections: §7.3.3 (Paid Employment Activities), §7.3.6 (Unpaid Employment Activities) Chapter 8</td>
<td>If unpaid, signed statement from other responsible individual including days and hours worked. NOTE: If paid, then report as self-employed. Submit monthly Household Report Form, additional documentation showing monthly gross income and allowable business expenses.</td>
<td>Source of data: Workforce 1&lt;br&gt; Record actual hours for each week of the month.</td>
<td>This is a core activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITY</td>
<td>PROGRAM POLICY</td>
<td>DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED</td>
<td>SOURCE OF DATA AND HOURLY TRACKING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Supporting Participant Progress)</td>
<td>Document this activity in the employment plan. Put copies of time sheets, activity logs and other relevant documents in the participant’s case file. Enter a case note to document any follow-up discussions with the participant.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Efforts to increase family stabilization and secure suitable housing, and other activities that do not fit in any other category. Section: §7.3.18 (Holding and Other Activities)</td>
<td>Signed client activity log with hours not tracked under any other activity and case notes. Document this activity in the employment plan. Put copies of time sheets, activity logs and other relevant documents in the participant’s case file. Enter a case note to document any follow-up discussions with the participant.</td>
<td>Source of data: Workforce 1 Record actual hours for each week of the month.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Assessment must cover at least the following: Basic information about participant’s ability to obtain and retain employment: Educational level. Interests, skills, and abilities. Work history and experiences, transferable skills. Child care and transportation needs.</td>
<td>Copies of assessments. Notation in case notes. Document this activity in the employment plan. Put copies of time sheets, activity logs and other relevant documents in the participant’s case file. Enter a case note to document any follow-up discussions with the participant.</td>
<td>Source of data: Workforce 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITY</td>
<td>PROGRAM POLICY</td>
<td>DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED</td>
<td>SOURCE OF DATA AND HOURLY TRACKING</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Idealize personal and family circumstances that impact participant’s ability to obtain and retain employment:  
  - Special needs of children  
  - Level of English proficiency  
  - Family violence issues  
  - Involvement in social services or legal system |
|          |                | Copies of screening tool.  
Notation in case notes. | Source of data:  
Workforce 1  
No tracking required.  
Activity should be opened/closed. | This activity is NOT used in Calculating the MFIP or TANF Work Participation Rates. |
| Holding  | This non-activity temporarily places a participant in | Notation in case notes. | Source of data:  
Workforce 1 | This indicator is NOT used in calculating the MFIP or TANF Work Participation Rates. |

Screening  
This activity includes using the MFIP Self-Screen (DHS-3482) and the Brief Screening Tool For Special Learning Needs (DHS-3504)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>PROGRAM POLICY</th>
<th>DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED</th>
<th>SOURCE OF DATA AND HOURLY TRACKING</th>
<th>USED IN MFIP PARTICIPATION RATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“suspension”.</td>
<td>anticipated entry into another activity. Section: §7.3.18 (Holding &amp; Other Activities)</td>
<td>No hours recorded.</td>
<td>No hours recorded.</td>
<td>Rates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holding – Sanction</td>
<td>This non-activity is used when a participant is in sanction status for non-cooperation with MFIP Employment Services. Sections: §7.3.18 (Holding &amp; Other Activities), Chapter 9 (Non-Compliance and Sanctions)</td>
<td>Notation in case notes.</td>
<td>Source of data: Workforce 1 No hours recorded.</td>
<td>This indicator is NOT used in calculating the MFIP or TANF Work Participation Rates, although the participant may count in the denominator after the 3rd month of sanction out of the previous 12 months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Violence Waiver</td>
<td>This is used when a modified employment plan is developed for a participant who is a victim of family violence. The activities in the modified plan are to ensure the safety of participant and/or the participant’s children. The plan should also include activities designed to lead to self-sufficiency, provided these activities do not endanger the participant or the children. Activities should be tracked using the applicable categories (Job Search, Part Time Employed, etc). Sections: §7.3.15 (Social Services Activities) §7.29 (Family</td>
<td>Signed client activity log with hours not tracked under any other activity and case notes.</td>
<td>Source of data: Workforce 1 Use “Alternate Employment Plan”.</td>
<td>This indicator is NOT used in calculating the MFIP or TANF Work Participation Rates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITY</td>
<td>PROGRAM POLICY</td>
<td>DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED</td>
<td>SOURCE OF DATA AND HOURLY TRACKING</td>
<td>USED IN MFIP PARTICIPATION RATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence Waiver Option) §7.15.12 (Employment Plan for Victims of Family Violence)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

updated 08/7/2007
Exit reasons for MFIP and DWP:

- **Entered Unsubsidized Employment**
  Participant is working and the case is closed due to earnings, or a combination of unearned income (such as child support) and earnings.

- **Moved from the Area**
  Moved to another county within the state in which case the income maintenance case remains opens. This code is also used when participants move out of state.

- **Voluntarily Separation**
  Participant requests closure of their MFIP (cash/food) case.

- **Sanction/Closed**
  Participant closes due to the 100% sanction.

- **60 months/Not Extended**
  Participant closes because they reach the 60 month limit and either do not request or do not qualify for an extension.

- **Extended ill/incapacitated**
  Participant qualifies for an ill/incapacitated extension and is no longer working with employment services.

- **No eligible child**
  Case closes because there are no eligible children in the household.

- **Fraud**
  Case is disqualified due to fraud.

- **Other**
  Reasons not specified above, for example closing because the participant is now eligible for SSI and no longer eligible for MFIP/DWP.

**DWP only:**

**Transition from DWP to MFIP**
The Activity Cheatsheet provides a quick reference tool on how various Employment Services (ES) activities are verified and counted. See also Appendix E, MFIP Activity Table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Documentation</th>
<th>Hourly Tracking</th>
<th>Core/Non Core—Used in Work Participation Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Copies of assessments, notation in case notes.</td>
<td>Record hours for each week of month.</td>
<td>Not used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 14 – MFIP Activity table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening</td>
<td>Copy of screening tool, notation in case notes.</td>
<td>Hours not tracked but activity opened and closed.</td>
<td>Not used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 15 - MFIP Activity table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job skills training directly related to employment</td>
<td>School or instructor statement with hours.</td>
<td>Record hours for each week of month.</td>
<td>Non core, see page 1 of activity table for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 1 - MFIP Activity table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Training/ Education - 12 months or less</td>
<td>School statement with hours or instructor statement.</td>
<td>Record hours for each week of month.</td>
<td>Core, for 1st 12 months in a lifetime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 1 - MFIP Activity table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Training/ Education - 13 to 24 months</td>
<td>School statement with hours or instructor statement.</td>
<td>Record hours for each week of month.</td>
<td>Core, for 1st 12 months in a lifetime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 2 - MFIP Activity table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English as a Second Language (ESL) Training</td>
<td>Monthly school attendance sheet with hours or instructor statement.</td>
<td>Record hours for each week of month.</td>
<td>Non core, see page 3 of activity table for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 3 - MFIP Activity table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Basic Education (ABE)/</td>
<td>Monthly school attendance</td>
<td>Record hours for each week of month.</td>
<td>Non core, see page 4 of activity table for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Schedule</td>
<td>Core/Non-core</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remedial Training</td>
<td>sheet or instructor statement.</td>
<td>week of month.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional Work Literacy (FWL)</td>
<td>Monthly school attendance sheet with hours or instructor statement.</td>
<td>Record hours for each week of month.</td>
<td>Non core, see page 5 of activity table for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Completion</td>
<td>Monthly school attendance sheet with hours or instructor statement.</td>
<td>Record hours for each week of month.</td>
<td>Non core, see page 6 of activity table for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Educational Development (GED) Training</td>
<td>Monthly school attendance sheet with hours or instructor statement.</td>
<td>Record hours for each week of month.</td>
<td>Non core, see page 7 of activity table for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-the-Job Training (OJT), Public Sector</td>
<td>FW will collect check stubs and HRF.</td>
<td>Optional, on MAXIS.</td>
<td>Core.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-the-Job Training (OJT), Private Sector</td>
<td>FW will collect check stubs and HRF.</td>
<td>Optional, on MAXIS.</td>
<td>Core.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Service</td>
<td>Client statement verified by on-site supervisor.</td>
<td>Record hours for each week of the month.</td>
<td>Core.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td>Hourly Tracking</td>
<td>Core/Non Core--- Used in Work Participation Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grant Diversion</strong></td>
<td>FW will collect check stubs and HRF.</td>
<td>Optional, on MAXIS.</td>
<td>Core.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Page 9 - MFIP Activity table)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Work Experience Program (CWEP)</strong></td>
<td>Client statement verified by on-site supervisor.</td>
<td>Record hours for each week of month.</td>
<td>Core.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Page 9 - MFIP Activity table)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paid Work Experience</strong></td>
<td>FW will collect check stubs and HRF.</td>
<td>Optional, on MAXIS.</td>
<td>Core.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Page 10 - MFIP Activity table)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unpaid Work Experience</strong></td>
<td>Client statement verified by on-site supervisor.</td>
<td>Record hours for each week of month.</td>
<td>Core.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Page 10 - MFIP Activity table)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Holding</strong></td>
<td>Case notes.</td>
<td>No hours tracked.</td>
<td>Not used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Page 15 - MFIP Activity table)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Holding – Sanction</strong></td>
<td>Case notes.</td>
<td>No hours tracked.</td>
<td>Not used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Page 15 - MFIP Activity table)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job Search</strong></td>
<td>Weekly signed client statement with actual hours.</td>
<td>Record hours for each week of month.</td>
<td>Core, see page 11 of activity table for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Page 11 - MFIP Activity table)</td>
<td>Daily supervision required.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employed Less Than 30 Hours Per Week</strong></td>
<td>FW will collect check stubs and HRF.</td>
<td>Optional, on MAXIS.</td>
<td>Core.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Page 11 - MFIP Activity table)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Tracking Notes</td>
<td>Core Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed 30 Hours or More Per Week</td>
<td>FW will collect check stubs and HRF.</td>
<td>Optional, on MAXIS.</td>
<td>Core.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in Social Services</td>
<td>Case notes, phone contacts.</td>
<td>Record hours for each week of month.</td>
<td>Not used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing Child Care for Parent Working in a Community Service Program</td>
<td>Client statement with actual hrs.</td>
<td>Record hours for each week of month.</td>
<td>Core, see page 13 of activity table for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Violence Waiver</td>
<td>Signed client statement with actual hours.</td>
<td>Hours tracked weekly under other activities.</td>
<td>Not used, see page 16 of activity table for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Case notes.</td>
<td>Record hours for each week of month.</td>
<td>Not used, see page 14 of activity table for details.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Activity Cheatsheet provides a quick reference tool on how various Employment Services (ES) activities are verified and counted. See also Appendix E, MFIP Activity Table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Documentation</th>
<th>Hourly Tracking</th>
<th>Core/Non Core---Used in Work Participation Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment</strong></td>
<td>Copies of assessments, notation in case notes.</td>
<td>Record hours for each week of month.</td>
<td>Not used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 14 – MFIP Activity table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Screening</strong></td>
<td>Copy of screening tool, notation in case notes.</td>
<td>Hours not tracked but activity opened and closed.</td>
<td>Not used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 15 - MFIP Activity table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job skills training directly related to employment</strong></td>
<td>School or instructor statement with hours.</td>
<td>Record hours for each week of month.</td>
<td>Non core, see page 1 of activity table for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 1 - MFIP Activity table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocational Training/ Education - 12 months or less</strong></td>
<td>School statement with hours or instructor statement.</td>
<td>Record hours for each week of month.</td>
<td>Core, for 1st 12 months in a lifetime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 1 - MFIP Activity table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocational Training/ Education - 13 to 24 months</strong></td>
<td>School statement with hours or instructor statement.</td>
<td>Record hours for each week of month.</td>
<td>Core, for 1st 12 months in a lifetime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 2 - MFIP Activity table</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>English as a Second Language (ESL)Training</strong></td>
<td>Monthly school attendance sheet with hours or instructor statement.</td>
<td>Record hours for each week of month.</td>
<td>Non core, see page 3 of activity table for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 3 - MFIP Activity table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adult Basic Education (ABE)/</strong></td>
<td>Monthly school attendance</td>
<td>Record hours for each week of month.</td>
<td>Non core, see page 4 of activity table for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Record Hours Method</td>
<td>Core/Non-core</td>
<td>Activity Table Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Remedial Training</strong></td>
<td>sheet or instructor statement.</td>
<td></td>
<td>activity table for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Functional Work Literacy (FWL)</strong></td>
<td>Monthly school attendance sheet with hours sheet or instructor statement.</td>
<td>Non core, see page 5 of activity table for details.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High School Completion</strong></td>
<td>Monthly school attendance sheet with hours or instructor statement.</td>
<td>Non core, see page 6 of activity table for details.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Educational Development (GED) Training</strong></td>
<td>Monthly school attendance sheet with hours or instructor statement.</td>
<td>Non core, see page 7 of activity table for details.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>On-the-Job Training (OJT), Public Sector</strong></td>
<td>FW will collect check stubs and HRF.</td>
<td>Optional, on MAXIS.</td>
<td>Core.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>On-the-Job Training (OJT), Private Sector</strong></td>
<td>FW will collect check stubs and HRF.</td>
<td>Optional, on MAXIS.</td>
<td>Core.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Service</strong></td>
<td>Client statement verified by on-site supervisor.</td>
<td>Core.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td>Hourly Tracking</td>
<td>Core/Non Core--- Used in Work Participation Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Diversion</td>
<td>FW will collect check stubs and HRF.</td>
<td>Optional, on MAXIS.</td>
<td>Core.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 9 - MFIP Activity table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Work Experience Program (CWEP)</td>
<td>Client statement verified by on-site supervisor.</td>
<td>Record hours for each week of month.</td>
<td>Core.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 9 - MFIP Activity table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid Work Experience</td>
<td>FW will collect check stubs and HRF.</td>
<td>Optional, on MAXIS.</td>
<td>Core.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 10 - MFIP Activity table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid Work Experience</td>
<td>Client statement verified by on-site supervisor.</td>
<td>Record hours for each week of month.</td>
<td>Core.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 10 - MFIP Activity table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holding</td>
<td>Case notes.</td>
<td>No hours tracked.</td>
<td>Not used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 15 - MFIP Activity table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holding – Sanction</td>
<td>Case notes.</td>
<td>No hours tracked.</td>
<td>Not used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 15 - MFIP Activity table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Search</td>
<td>Weekly signed client statement with actual hours. Daily supervision required.</td>
<td>Record hours for each week of month.</td>
<td>Core, see page 11 of activity table for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 11 - MFIP Activity table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Less Than 30 Hours Per Week</td>
<td>FW will collect check stubs and HRF.</td>
<td>Optional, on MAXIS.</td>
<td>Core.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 11 - MFIP Activity table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employed 30 Hours or More Per Week</strong></td>
<td>FW will collect check stubs and HRF.</td>
<td>Optional, on MAXIS. Core.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 12 - MFIP Activity table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participating in Social Services</strong></td>
<td>Case notes, phone contacts.</td>
<td>Record hours for each week of month.</td>
<td>Not used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 12 - MFIP Activity table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Providing Child Care for Parent Working in a Community Service Program</strong></td>
<td>Client statement with actual hrs.</td>
<td>Record hours for each week of month.</td>
<td>Core, see page 13 of activity table for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 13 - MFIP Activity table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Violence Waiver</strong></td>
<td>Signed client statement with actual hours.</td>
<td>Hours tracked weekly under other activities.</td>
<td>Not used, see page 16 of activity table for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 16 - MFIP Activity table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td>Case notes.</td>
<td>Record hours for each week of month.</td>
<td>Not used, see page 14 of activity table for details.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following list identifies the regional consultants for each of the 9 regions of the state. The regions have been reconfigured to better align with the regions for PAID and to increase staffing for the counties with the largest caseloads. A star (*) denotes the 7 largest counties (caseload) that have consultants separate from the regional consultants.

Unless otherwise noted or communicated, counties within each region should contact one of the consultants listed to support that region for any questions, issues, concerns, requests for consultation, etc., related to MFIP or DWP.

**Northwest:** Kittson, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, and Roseau

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Consultants</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>E-mail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linda Foster</td>
<td>651-431-4039</td>
<td><a href="mailto:linda.foster@state.mn.us">linda.foster@state.mn.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danielle Kressin (DEED)</td>
<td>651-297-1372</td>
<td><a href="mailto:danielle.kressin@state.mn.us">danielle.kressin@state.mn.us</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**West Central:** Becker, *Beltrami, Cass, Clay, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Douglas, Grant, Hubbard, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomen, Morrisson, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens, Todd, Traverse, Wadena, and Wilkin County

<table>
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<td><a href="mailto:bruce.borgh@state.mn.us">bruce.borgh@state.mn.us</a></td>
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*Beltrami County:

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Northeast:** Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, *St. Louis

<table>
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<tr>
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*St. Louis County:

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</tbody>
</table>
Central: Benton, Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, Mille Lacs, Pine, Renville, Sherburne, Stearns, Wright

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Consultants</th>
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<tr>
<td>Joan Truhler</td>
<td>651-431-4023</td>
<td><a href="mailto:joan.truhler@state.mn.us">joan.truhler@state.mn.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leila Farah</td>
<td>651-431-4043</td>
<td><a href="mailto:leila.farah@state.mn.us">leila.farah@state.mn.us</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Southwest: Big Stone, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Jackson, Lac Qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Rock, Swift, Yellow Medicine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Consultants</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>E-mail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marilyn Leonard</td>
<td>651-431-4041</td>
<td><a href="mailto:marilyn.leonard@state.mn.us">marilyn.leonard@state.mn.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Blanchard</td>
<td>651-431-4032</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jennifer.blanchard@state.mn.us">jennifer.blanchard@state.mn.us</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

South Central: Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, Le Sueur, Martin, Nicollet, Sibley, Waseca, Watonwan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Consultants</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>E-mail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Randy Rennich</td>
<td>651-431-4022</td>
<td><a href="mailto:randy.rennich@state.mn.us">randy.rennich@state.mn.us</a></td>
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<td><a href="mailto:danielle.kressin@state.mn.us">danielle.kressin@state.mn.us</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Southeast: Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, *Olmsted, Rice, Steel, Wabash, Winona

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Consultants</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>E-mail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sheryl Lockwood</td>
<td>651-431-4031</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sheryl.lockwood@state.mn.us">sheryl.lockwood@state.mn.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayjoua Ly</td>
<td>651-431-4030</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mayjoua.ly@state.mn.us">mayjoua.ly@state.mn.us</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Olmsted County:*

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Suburban Metro: *Anoka, Carver, *Dakota, Scott, Washington

<table>
<thead>
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*Anoka County:*

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Phone Number</td>
<td>Email Address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core Metro:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tribal Consultants</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Olson</td>
<td>651-431-4038</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jimolson@state.mn.us">jimolson@state.mn.us</a></td>
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<td><a href="mailto:bruce.borgh@state.mn.us">bruce.borgh@state.mn.us</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### ACTIVITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Core Y/N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paid work pulled from MAXIS*</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Work Experience Program CWEP</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid Work Experience</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Search**</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer &amp; Community Service</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training/Educ - 12 mos or less</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing Child Care for parents participating in Community Service.</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Categories below are countable only if last grade completed is < 12 on MAXIS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Core Y/N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESL ***</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Basic Ed/remedial training</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional work literacy</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Completion****</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GED training</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes subsidized, unsubsidized employment and OJT

** There is a 6-week limit per Federal Fiscal Year (a week is 4 hours or more of activities.)

*** All education related activities can count hours spent doing supervised study time as well as class time.

**** If client is < 20 years old and in school use MAXIS data from the SCHL panel.

Fulltime = 152 hrs/mo, 1/2 and less 1/2 = 87 hrs/mo

If client is > 20 use DEED hours only.
Core hours must be > 87 hrs/mo so that the non-core hours can be counted. Total of 130 hrs/mo needed to meet the federal participation rate.

Core hours are not needed for teen caregivers in school if the teen caregiver is married or the only eligible adult in the household.

Cases with child < 6 yrs old and one eligible adult can meet 87 hrs/mo requirement with core hours.
DHS began reporting the MFIP Participation Rate in July 2003. The calculations were completed for July 2003 - June 2004. For counties or Tribal providers performing at 30% or above bonuses were awarded in 2005. This rate goes to 40% or a 5% increase for 2006 and increases to 50% for 2007. We apply the federal TANF Work Participation Rate calculation to MFIP cases with at least 1 eligible adult. TANF reauthorization has not passed, when it does the MFIP Participation Rate will change to reflect the changes.

TANF federal participation reporting changed effective 10/1/02 because Minnesota’s TANF waiver expired. The countable (allowable) activities are listed below. There are time limits on assessment and/or job search activities, see below.

There are cases that will be excluded from the MFIP Participation Rate if the case does not have enough hours of participation:

- Cases with an eligible caregiver who has a child less than 1 year old who has not used the 12 month life time federal limit.
- Cases in first 3 months of sanction out of previous 12 months.

In addition, some activities are further restricted due to “CORE HOURS” reporting requirements. The federal Department of Health and Human Services has established which activities constitute “core hours”. For any “non-core” activity hours to count, participants must maintain at least 87 core hours each month from the following activities:

**Core hours** contain all MAXIS JOBS/BUSI/RBIC (paid work) hours plus any hours in:

- Job Search
- Unpaid Work Experience
- Training/Education 12 months or less
- Volunteer & Community Service
- CWEP
- Providing child care for parents participating in CWEP
- Training/Education 13-24 months

**Non-Core hours** include all MAXIS SCHL hours plus any hours in Job Skills Training Directly Related to Employment.

Include hours from the following activities if the individual’s last grade completed is less than 12 in MAXIS:

- ESL Training
ABE/Remedial Training
Intensive Work Literacy

Include hours from the following activities as non-core if the individual’s last grade completed is less than 12 in MAXIS and is age 20 or older:

High School Completion
GED Training

Exclude from the calculation any hours from the following DEED activities:

Participating in Social Services
Assessment
Other

If the person’s last grade completed is listed in MAXIS as 12 or higher, exclude the following DEED activities:

ESL Training
ABE/Remedial Training
Intensive Work Literacy

TIME LIMITED

Exclude hours from assessment and/or job search activities if they have been reported for more than 6 weeks during the federal fiscal year (10/1 – 9/30):

To meet the MFIP Participation Rate requirement, a case must have:

87 core activity hours with a total of core and non-core of at least 130 hours a month (30 weekly hours times 4.33 weeks = 1 month). This includes all 2 parent cases, which means 1 of the 2 parents must have the 87 core activity hours and total of 130 hours;

OR

At least 87 hours monthly of work or activities (20 weekly hours times 4.33 weeks = 1 month) in core areas if they have a child under the age of 6.

Eligible teens, age less than 20, who have less than a 12th grade education and their MAXIS SCHL panel shows them to be in school full-time (F), half-time (H), or less than half-time (L) are considered to be meeting the participation requirements.

Eligible teen students are assigned monthly hours based on their MAXIS SCHL panel code:
‘F’ = 152 hours; ‘H’ = 87 hours; ‘L’ = 87 hours.
Below is an example of how to track weekly activity hours:

If the participant is in an activity for 4 hours per day, 5 days per work week, the weekly count should look like this:

Week 1 (Sat. 7/1)          0 hours.
Week 2 (Sun. 7/2 thru Sat. 7/8)  20 hours.
Week 3 (Sun. 7/9 thru Sat. 7/15)  20 hours.
Week 4 (Sun. 7/16 thru Sat. 7/22)  20 hours.
Week 5 (Sun. 7/23 thru Sat. 7/29)  20 hours.
Week 6 (Sun. 7/30 thru Mon. 7/31)    4 hours.

Activities occur only on the shaded days. For this example, the monthly total is 84 hours.
Appendix I explains how to track Employment Services (ES) activities in WorkForce1 (WF1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Activities:</th>
<th>Track in WF1 as:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed 30 Hours or More Per Week §7.3.3 (Paid Employment Activities)</td>
<td>Employed Full-Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Less Than 30 Hours Per Week §7.3.3 (Paid Employment Activities)</td>
<td>Employed Part-Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-the-Job Training (OJT), Public Sector §7.3.3 (Paid Employment Activities)</td>
<td>OJT Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-the-Job Training (OJT), Private Sector §7.3.3 (Paid Employment Activities)</td>
<td>OJT Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid Work Experience §7.3.3 (Paid Employment Activities)</td>
<td>Work Experience Paid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Diversion §7.3.3 (Paid Employment Activities)</td>
<td>Grant Diversion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Service Program §7.3.3 (Paid Employment Activities) &amp; §7.3.6 (Unpaid Employment Activities)</td>
<td>Volunteer and Community Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Work Experience Program (CWEP) §7.3.6 (Unpaid Employment Activities)</td>
<td>CWEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing Child Care for Parent Working in a Community Service Program §7.3.3 (Paid Employment Activities)</td>
<td>Providing Child Care (CWEPS)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid Work Experience §7.3.6 (Unpaid Employment Activities)</td>
<td>Unpaid Work Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-secondary Vocational Education and Training Lasting 12 Months or Less</td>
<td>Training/Education 12 Months or Less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§7.3.12 (Education &amp; Training Activities)</td>
<td>Training/Education 13-24 Months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Training/Education, 13–24 Months (12 months in a lifetime) §7.3.12 (Education &amp; Training Activities)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Search (For 6 Weeks in a Fiscal Year) §7.3.9 (Job Search &amp; Job Readiness Activities)</td>
<td>Job Search</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Core Activities:</th>
<th>Track in WF1 as:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Skills Training Directly Relating to Employment §7.3.12 (Education &amp; Training Activities)</td>
<td>Job Skills Training Directly Related to Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English as a Second Language (ESL) Training §7.3.12 (Education &amp; Training Activities)</td>
<td>ESL Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Basic Education (ABE) §7.3.12 (Education &amp; Training Activities)</td>
<td>ABE/Remedial Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional Work Literacy (FWL) §7.3.12 (Education &amp; Training Activities)</td>
<td>Functional Work Literacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>High School Completion §7.3.12 (Education &amp; Training Activities)</td>
<td>High School Completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GED Classes §7.3.12 (Education &amp; Training Activities)</td>
<td>GED Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-secondary Vocational Education and Training Lasting 12 Months or Less §7.3.12 (Education &amp; Training Activities).</td>
<td>Training/Education 12 Months or Less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Training/Education, 13–24 Months (12 Months Lifetime Limit Used</td>
<td>Training/Education 13-24 Months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Up) §7.3.12 (Education & Training Activities).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not Counted Activities:</th>
<th>Track in WF1 as:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Search (After 6 Weeks is Used) §7.3.9 (Job Search &amp; Job Readiness Activities)</td>
<td>Job Search</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment §7.3.15 (Social Services Activities)</td>
<td>Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Screening §7.3.15 (Social Services Activities)</td>
<td>Screening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Plan for Family Violence Waiver (§7.3.15 (Social Services Activities)</td>
<td>Alternative Employment Plan*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in Social Services §7.3.15 (Social Services Activities)</td>
<td>Social Service Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holding §7.3.18 (Holding &amp; Other Activities)</td>
<td>Holding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holding – Sanction §7.3.15 (Social Services Activities)</td>
<td>Holding Sanctioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other §7.3.18 (Holding &amp; Other Activities)</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated Services Project §7.3.18 (Holding &amp; Other Activities)</td>
<td>Integrated Services Project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The activities “post 60 month service not Ext.” and “SEID” are available in WF1. They should not be used as they are outdated activities and need to be deleted.

*These activities are outdated in WF1 and need to be updated.*
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990
The ADA protects the civil rights of people with disabilities. A wide range of people are covered, some examples are: people with physical conditions, people with mental illness, and people with learning disorders. The ADA addresses the following areas:

- Title I – Employment
- Title II – Public Services
- Title III – Public Accommodations
- Title IV – Telecommunications
- Title V – Miscellaneous

Equal access to the MFIP program is addressed under Title II of the ADA.

FEDERAL RESOURCES
There are a number of federal resources available to county agencies and providers that will assist them in becoming more knowledgeable about what is required under the ADA.

- **Office for Civil Rights (OCR)**
  The Office for Civil Rights within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is the federal agency responsible for enforcing Title II with state and local health and human services agencies. OCR posted guidance on its web site clarifying the obligations Title II of the ADA imposes on local government agencies. The guidance also sets out promising practices in modifying policy and programs to ensure access for people with disabilities. The title of the document is “Prohibition Against Discrimination on the Basis of Disability”. This [http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/prohibition.html](http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/prohibition.html).

- **Jobs Accommodation Network (JAN)**
  This is a service of the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy. This web site contains a fact sheet on possible accommodations for persons with certain disabilities. [http://www.jan.wvu.edu](http://www.jan.wvu.edu).

- **Great Lakes ADA and Accessible IT Center**
  This is a Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center located at the University of Illinois at Chicago. It is one of ten regional centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The Chicago center operates a toll free information line for answering questions about all aspects of the ADA. Anyone seeking information is encouraged to use this service by calling 1-800-949-4232. Counties and providers can also access their web site for additional information on ADA issues at [http://www.adagreatlakes.org](http://www.adagreatlakes.org).
STATE RESOURCES
The following is a list of resources available at the state level:

- **Disability Linkage Line**
  This is an information and referral service for people with disabilities. Disability Linkage Line can be reached statewide by calling toll-free 1-866-333-2466. A resource specialist is available during regular business hours (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) to provide one-to-one assistance to help people learn about their options and connect them with the supports and services they choose. [http://www.semcil.org/dll.html](http://www.semcil.org/dll.html).

- **MinnesotaHelp.info**
  This is an online human services database of resources to help people find services to meet their needs. [http://www.minnesotahelp.info/en/mn/cgi-bin/location.asp](http://www.minnesotahelp.info/en/mn/cgi-bin/location.asp).

- **Social Security Income (SSI) Advocates**
  A list of individuals/agencies that have contracted with DHS to provide advocacy services is in Appendix J-3 (SSI Advocates List). The services provided by these advocates are paid for by DHS and are free of charge to MFIP applicant/recipient. Appendix J-3 (SSI Advocates List) identifies which SSI advocates provide full service and which advocates handle SSI appeals.

- **Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)**
  DEED provides a listing of accredited Community Rehabilitation Programs throughout the State that deliver employment services to people with disabilities and may be able to provide information about services available in the community. [http://www.deed.state.mn.us/rehab/crp/crp.htm](http://www.deed.state.mn.us/rehab/crp/crp.htm).

- **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)**
  This is a state agency that provides services to people with disabilities so they can prepare for work, or to find and keep a job. Vocational Rehabilitation can be found on the DEED website at [http://www.deed.state.mn.us/rehab/vr/main_vr.htm](http://www.deed.state.mn.us/rehab/vr/main_vr.htm).

- **Focus on Ability:**
  This is an on-line educational tool designed for employers that discusses the ADA. While the main focus of this tool is what is required of employers under the ADA, it can also be helpful in providing information to county agencies and employment service providers about various disabilities, possible accommodations, and providers offering employment related services for persons
with disabilities. This training and information can be found at
http://www.focusonability.net.

- **Disability Criteria for SSI Benefits**
  This is a desk guide that is currently being used by a state funded SSI advocacy
group to assist workers in identifying possible applicants for SSI benefits (see
Appendix J-4). The advocacy group is allowing the state to share this document
so that it can be used by all county financial workers and job counselors.

- **DWP/MFIP Observation Checklist**
  The “DWP/MFIP Observation Checklist”, DHS-3483, is a tool job counselors
have historically used as one way to determine if a participant needs to be
screened for chemical dependency abuse or mental health issues as well as a way
to document other issues or behaviors that need to be addressed. This form could
also be used by job counselors or financial workers as a “resource” to identify
behavior that would warrant a discussion about a possible disability and whether
the participant needs an accommodation in order to access the program or
services.

  The DWP/MFIP Observation Checklist, DHS-3483, and MFIP Self Screen, DHS-
3482, may be used to indicate when a modification to an employment plan needs
to be made. If these forms are used as a “checklist” where information is
recorded, they would be protected under Minnesota Data Privacy Law.

**LOCAL/COUNTY RESOURCES**
County agencies are encouraged to seek out resources within the county administration,
including the county ADA Coordinator, local disability specialists, Rehabilitation Services,
employment service providers who specialize in vocational rehabilitation services and
managers or staff that have expertise in the areas of mental health, developmental
disabilities, and chemical dependency.

- **PRIVATE NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS**
  There are several organizations that provide advocacy and education on issues
relating to specific disabilities. A comprehensive list of organizations can be

  Some organizations that provide services as well as education include:

  - **Arc Minnesota**, 770 Transfer Rd. #26, St. Paul, MN 55114-1422,
201-523-0823, 1-800-582-5256, 651-523-0829 fax, mail@arcars.org, Web site:
http://www.thearcofminnesota.org/. This organization provides support and
advocacy for persons with developmental disabilities and their families.

- **Brain Injury Association of Minnesota**, 43 Main St. SE #135, Minneapolis, MN 55414, 612-378-2742, 612-378-2789 fax, 1-800-669-6442 Toll-free, info@braininjurymn.org, Web site: [www.braininjurymn.org](http://www.braininjurymn.org).


- **Mental Health Association of Minnesota**, 2021 E Hennepin Ave. #412, Minneapolis, MN 55413-2726, 612-331-6840 voice/TTY, 1-800-862-1799, 612-331-1630 fax, info@mentalhealthmn.org, Web site: [www.mentalhealthmn.org](http://www.mentalhealthmn.org).

- **Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health**, 165 Western Ave. #2, St. Paul, MN 55102, 651-644-7333, 1-800-528-4511, 651-644-7391 fax, dsaxhaug@macmh.org, Web site: [www.macmh.org](http://www.macmh.org).

- **Minnesota Disability Law Center**, 430 First Ave. N #300, Minneapolis, MN 55401, 612-332-1441, 1-800-292-4150, 612-334-5755 fax, 612-332-4668 TTY, phoopes@midmnlegal.org, Web site: [www.lawhelp.org/MN/](http://www.lawhelp.org/MN/). This organization provides legal services for persons with disabilities.

- **National Alliance for the Mentally Ill-MN (NAMI-MN)**, 970 Raymond Ave. #105, St. Paul, MN 55114-1146, 651-645-2948, 1-888-473-0237, 651-645-7379 fax, nami-mn@nami.org, Web site: [http://mn.nami.org](http://mn.nami.org). This organization provides education (including a “speaker’s bureau”), advocacy and support on mental illness.

- **PACER Center, Inc.** (Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights), 8161 Normandale Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55437-1098, 952-838-9000, 1-800-537-2237, 952-838-0199 fax, 952-838-0190 TTY, pacer@pacer.org, Web site: [www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org). This organization is the federal government's designated parent training and information center in Minnesota for families of children with disabilities.
Special Needs
This information is available in other forms to persons with disabilities by calling Aaron Coonce at 651-431-4049, or contact DHS through the Minnesota Relay Service at 1-800-627-3529 (TTY) or 1-877-627-3848 (speech-to-speech relay service).
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Action / Decision Points for Employment Counselors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situations</th>
<th>Action Steps / Decision Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| A new or existing participant discloses that they have a disability. | - **Action** – Give and review “Do you have a Disability?” ([DHS-4133](#)) brochure.  
- **Decision Point** – Do you need to ask for existing or gather new information on the disability such as medical documentation from the medical or mental health professional? Are modifications necessary? Are there modifications that can be made based on this information?  
- **Action** – Communicate any findings with financial worker.  
- **Decision Point** – Should they be referred to a SSI advocate? |
| Exhibiting unusual behavior, no disability has been disclosed. Examples of the behavior: angry, crying, difficulty filling out forms, (see observational checklist for more examples). | - **Decision point** – Have you used the MFIP Self Screen ([DHS-3482](#)) yet? The Brief Screening Tool for Special Learning Needs ([DHS-3504](#))?  
- **Action** - Start logging information on the DWP/MFIP Observation Checklist ([DHS-3483](#)).  
- **Action** – Review “Do you have a Disability?” ([DHS-4133](#)) brochure with participant. |
<p>| Making very little progress on the employment plan, not progressing. | - <strong>Decision point</strong> – Has the client completed the MFIP Self Screen (<a href="#">DHS-3482</a>)? Have you completed a more thorough assessment? Have you started the DWP/MFIP Observation Checklist (<a href="#">DHS-3483</a>)? Have you considered encouraging or requiring a chemical or mental health assessment? |
| Gets jobs but can’t keep them. (A disability has not been established) | - <strong>Decision point</strong> – Has the MFIP Self Screen (<a href="#">DHS-3482</a>) been completed? Complete a more thorough assessment? Start DWP/MFIP Observation checklist (<a href="#">DHS-3483</a>)? |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision point</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Decision point</th>
<th>Decision point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gets jobs but can’t keep them. (A disability has been established)</td>
<td>Reasonable modification needed for employment plan?</td>
<td>Educate participant on ADA: when and if to disclose a disability, what are reasonable accommodations, essential functions of the job.</td>
<td>Have you considered a referral to Rehab Services or a referral to someone who can do one-on-one placement and/or job coaching? Have you considered talking to employers on the participant’s behalf (must have participant’s consent)?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Action / Decision Points for Financial Workers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situations</th>
<th>Action Steps / Decision Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| A new applicant or existing participant discloses that they have a disability. | - **Action** – Give and review “Do you have a disability” ([DHS-4133](#)) brochure.  
- **Decision Point** – Do you need to ask for existing or gather new information on the disability such as medical documentation from the medical or mental health professional for the application process? Are there modifications necessary? Are there modifications that can be made based on this information?  
- **Action** - Communicate any findings with job counselor.  
- **Decision Point** – Should they be referred to a SSI advocate? |

| Participant is exhibiting unusual behavior, no disability has been disclosed. Examples of the behavior: angry, crying, difficulty filling out forms, (see observational checklist for more examples) | - **Action** – Review “Do you have a Disability?” ([DHS-4133](#)) brochure with the participant.  
- **Action** – If you observe unusual behavior (see DWP/MFIP Observation Checklist ([DHS-3483](#)) for examples), consider if a modification is needed. Discuss with supervisor and/or job counselor.  
- **Decision Point** – Should you consult with job counselor to see if they have done any screening or assessments? |

| Participant fails to report timely on an ongoing basis, often reschedules, doesn’t respond to requests for information, in and out of sanction. | - **Action** - Send the “Do you have a Disability?” ([DHS-4133](#)) brochure. Make follow-up call. Consider using the DWP/MFIP Observation Checklist ([DHS-3483](#)) to start logging observations.  
- **Action** - Consult with job counselor to see if he/she has any additional information. |

| Participant states or implies that they can’t comply with the rules because of a disability. | - **Action** – Request documentation of disability; assist client with obtaining information.  
- **Decision Point** – Are program modifications needed?  
- **Action** – Discuss possible modifications with participant, supervisor, & job counselor. |
| **Action** – Implement modifications.  
| **Decision Point** – Should they be referred to an SSI advocate? |
## SSI ADVOCATES LIST

**Effective through December 31, 2007**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Service Area</th>
<th>Specialty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anishinabe Legal Services</strong></td>
<td>Leech Lake, Red Lake, White Earth Reservations</td>
<td>Applications, Appeals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>411 First Street</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO Box 157</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cass Lake, MN 56633</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristine Cannon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>218-335-2223 or 1-800-422-1335 (clients only)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Central Minnesota Legal Services</strong></td>
<td>Hennepin County &amp; West Central Counties</td>
<td>Appeals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>430 First Avenue North, Suite 359</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minneapolis, MN 55401-1780</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean Lastine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>612-332-8151</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chamberlin Edmonds</strong></td>
<td>Hennepin County, St. Louis County, Regions Hospital</td>
<td>Outreach, Applications, Appeals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hennepin County Mental Health Center</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800 Chicago Avenue, Ste N211</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minneapolis, MN 55404</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elliot Schoon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>612-870-0225</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:ESchoon@chamberlinedmonds.com">ESchoon@chamberlinedmonds.com</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disability Advocates of Duluth</strong></td>
<td>Carlton County, Cook County, Lake County &amp; St. Louis County</td>
<td>Outreach, Applications, Appeals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301 West First Street, #508</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duluth, MN 55802</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Atwood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>218-529-1601</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disability Specialist, Inc.</strong></td>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>Outreach, Applications, Appeals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907 Wood Road</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook, MN 55723</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Ehrbright</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>218-666-2676 or 1-800-642-6393</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Advocate</td>
<td>Services</td>
<td>Counties</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Judicare of Anoka County, Inc.</strong></td>
<td>Anoka County</td>
<td>Outreach, Applications, Appeals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1201 89th Avenue NE, Suite 310</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blaine, MN 55434</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floyd A. Pniewski</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>763-783-4970</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:floydp@anokajudicare.org">floydp@anokajudicare.org</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Korstad Law Office LLC</strong></td>
<td>South central counties</td>
<td>Applications, Appeals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO Box 400</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amboy, MN 56010-0400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ardys Korstad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>507-674-3434</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fax 507-674-3424</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:akorstad@lakes.com">akorstad@lakes.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Richard Kreutzfeldt</strong></td>
<td>Aitkin County, Cass County, Crow Wing County</td>
<td>Applications, Appeals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attorney at Law</td>
<td>County, Morrison County, and adjacent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14084 Baxter Drive, Suite 14</td>
<td>communities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Baxter, MN 56425</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>218-829-3477 or 1-800-935-7425</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lao Family Community</strong></td>
<td>Hennepin County and Ramsey County</td>
<td>Outreach, Asian immigrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>320 University Avenue West</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Paul, MN 55103</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sharon Nelson</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>651-221-0069</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Legal Aid Service of Northeastern MN</strong></td>
<td>Aitkin County, Crow Wing County, Itasca County, Koochiching County, Pine County, and Kanabec County</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>302 Ordean Building</td>
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<tr>
<td>424 West Superior Street</td>
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<td>Duluth, MN 55802</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael W. Connolly</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>218-726-4800</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Legal Services of Northwest MN</strong></td>
<td>Northwest &amp; north central counties</td>
<td>Applications, Appeals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1015 7th Avenue N.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PO Box 838</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moorhead, MN 56561-0838</td>
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<td><strong>218-726-4800</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Douglas Johnson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lifetrack Resources, Inc.</td>
<td>709 University Avenue West St. Paul, MN 55104-4804</td>
<td>218-233-8585 or 1-800-450-8585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diane Heldt</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merrick Community Services</td>
<td>1526 East Sixth Street St. Paul, MN 55106</td>
<td>651-227-8471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Smith</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Minnesota Legal Assistance</td>
<td>430 First Avenue North, Suite 300 Minneapolis, MN 55401-1780</td>
<td>651-771-8821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeremy Lane</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>New American Community Services</td>
<td>1821 University Avenue, Ste. S-286 St. Paul, MN 55104</td>
<td>612-332-1441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sirad Osman</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Olmsted Community Action Program</td>
<td>300 11th Ave. NW Rochester, MN 55901</td>
<td>651-287-5223</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linda Bradford</td>
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<tr>
<td>Olmsted Community Action Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Address 1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Orr</td>
<td>401 Second Avenue South, Suite 418</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach Services of Minnesota, Inc.</td>
<td>4294 Dahlberg Drive</td>
<td>Golden Valley, MN 55422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lionel H. Peabody</td>
<td>PO Box 10</td>
<td>Duluth, MN 55801-0010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramsey County Workforce Solutions</td>
<td>2098 11th Avenue East</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Salvation Army Northern Division</td>
<td>2445 Prior Avenue</td>
<td>Roseville, MN 55113-2714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethel Schaen</td>
<td>1821 University Ave., Ste 344</td>
<td>South St. Paul, MN 55104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services, Inc.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ramsey County, Southern Counties and Western Counties</strong></td>
<td><strong>Applications, Appeals</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>166 East 4th St., Suite 200</td>
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<td>St. Paul, MN 55101</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steven J. Wolfe</td>
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<tr>
<td>651-222-5863</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Southwest Private Industry Council</strong></th>
<th><strong>Southwest counties</strong></th>
<th><strong>Outreach, Applications</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lyon County Courthouse</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>607 West Main</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marshall, MN 56258</td>
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<tr>
<td>507-537-6236 or 1-800-818-9295</td>
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<tr>
<td>507-537-6237 TTY</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Volunteers of America of Minnesota</strong></th>
<th><strong>Minneapolis</strong></th>
<th><strong>Outreach, Applications, Minneapolis High-rise residents</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2021 E. Hennepin Ave.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minneapolis, MN 55413</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bill Melton</td>
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<tr>
<td>612-617-7808</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
County SSI Advocacy
Administrative contact persons at counties with DHS SSI advocacy contracts
Effective 02/01/07

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aitkin</td>
<td>Kathleen Ryan&lt;br&gt;Aitkin County Health &amp; Human Services&lt;br&gt;204 First Street NW&lt;br&gt;Aitkin, MN 56431&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:kryan@co.aitkin.mn.us">kryan@co.aitkin.mn.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anoka</td>
<td>Barb Case&lt;br&gt;Anoka County Human Services&lt;br&gt;2100 Third Avenue&lt;br&gt;Anoka, MN 55303&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:barbara.case@co.anoka.mn.us">barbara.case@co.anoka.mn.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becker</td>
<td>Nancy V. Nelson&lt;br&gt;Becker County Human Services&lt;br&gt;712 Minnesota Avenue&lt;br&gt;PO Box 1637&lt;br&gt;Detroit Lakes, MN 56502-1637&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:nvnelso@co.becker.mn.us">nvnelso@co.becker.mn.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlton</td>
<td>Pam Brumfield&lt;br&gt;Carlton County Public Health &amp; Human Services&lt;br&gt;30 North 10th Street&lt;br&gt;Cloquet, MN 55720&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:pam.brumfield@co.carlton.mn.us">pam.brumfield@co.carlton.mn.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chisago</td>
<td>Liz M. Dodge&lt;br&gt;Chisago County Human Services&lt;br&gt;313 N. Main St., Rm. 239&lt;br&gt;Center City, MN 55012&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:lmdodge@co.chisago.mn.us">lmdodge@co.chisago.mn.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dakota</td>
<td>Linda Merkel&lt;br&gt;Dakota County Veterans’ Service Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dodge</td>
<td>Brian Hartung</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faribault &amp; Martin</td>
<td>Kathy DeNeui</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hennepin</td>
<td>Laurie Tolle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lake</td>
<td>June Juenemann</td>
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<tr>
<td>Le Sueur</td>
<td>John Glischinski</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lake of the Woods</td>
<td>Nancy Wendler</td>
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<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>Advocate Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeker</td>
<td>Clark Gustafson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Olmsted</td>
<td>Linda Bradford</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Pine</td>
<td>Joan Bloemendaal-Gruett</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramsey</td>
<td>Tim Hammond</td>
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<td>Sue Illg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wadena</td>
<td>Pam Jenson</td>
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</table>
The final determination of disability qualification for SSI is made by the Social Security Administration. For further information see the Social Security Administration web site: http://www.ssa.gov/.

The following information is courtesy of Chamberlin Edmonds:

To qualify for SSI benefits, you must be **aged, blind or disabled.**

**Aged** = 65 years or older.

**Blind** = corrected vision of 20/200 or less in better eye.

**Disabled adult** = your medical condition is expected to keep you out of work for at least 12 months or result in death.

**Disabled child** = child’s medical condition causes marked and severe functional limitations that can be expected to cause death or last for at least 12 months.

Some Basic Disability Criteria

- **Muscles/Joints**
  - Rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, severe back disorders, amputations, severe burns, any joint disorder.
  - **Watch for** - the need to use a cane, walker or wheel chair.
  - **Issue** - must affect more than one appendage otherwise SSA will deem it only a partial disability (for example, both legs, or one arm and one leg).

- **Breathing/Respiratory**
  - Severe breathing disorders that limit walking or exercise or cause client to use oxygen (for example, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), cystic fibrosis, cor pulmonale, severe asthma).
  - **Watch for** - difficulty even talking without break, unable to walk stairs without rests, use of multiple pillows at night to breath.
  - **Issue** - asthma attacks need to require Emergency Room/Clinic visit 6 times in 12 months or 3 inpatient stays within 12 months.

- **Heart**
  - Congestive heart failure, heart disease, severe circulation problems (swelling in hands and/or feet), multiple or recent heart attacks.
  - **Watch for** - chest pain with only mild exertion, use of nitro pills
  - **Issue** - one heart blockage with stint placement rarely gets approved.
multiple ongoing heart problems.

- **Stomach/Digestive**
  Liver disease, cirrhosis, kidney failure, on dialysis
  
  Watch for - ascites (fluid build up causing severely swollen/protruding stomach, jaundice (yellowing skin and eyes)
  
  Issue - bleeding from stomach ulcers is not disabling but bleeding from esophagus is a disability listing.

- **Hemic/Lymphatic**
  Severe sickle cell anemia, acute leukemia, lymphoma
  
  Watch for - sickle cell pain crisis requiring Emergency Room/Clinic visits 6 times in 12 months or 3 inpatient hospital stays in 12 months.
  
  Issue - acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) is very treatable and rarely lasts 12 months if successful. Disability will probably delay to see if treatment is succeeding. Acute myeloid leukemia (AML) is very aggressive and is always a disability listing.

- **Endocrine**
  Diabetes with organ damage to kidneys, eyes, heart or diabetes that is causing severe swelling or tingling/numbness in legs and feet.
  
  Watch for - the longer someone is on insulin (shots) the more complications that develop. Eye sight gets blurry, fingers and toes tingle, feet swell.
  
  Issue - insulin taken in pill form usually means mild case and few complications.

- **Neurological**
  Stroke, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, brain tumors, severe head trauma
  
  Watch for - case by case depending on severity
  
  Issue - Disability will place on hold any neuro trauma (strokes, head trauma) for 3 months to see what the residual functioning level will be.

- **Mental Disorders**
  Severe and long term psychiatric problems requiring medication and/or counseling. The condition must be so severe that it affects the client’s ability to perform daily living or work activities (for example, mental retardation, organic mental disorders, schizophrenic personality disorders, severe depression, paranoia or anxiety).
  
  Watch for - need multiple treatment sources that can demonstrate long term illness. Must be compliant with treatments that are available to client (for example, medications).
Issue - just going to see doctor once a month to get medications rarely gets approved for disability.

- Learning Disorders
  History of special needs education. Demonstrated disruption in activities of daily living. Full scale Intelligence Quotient (IQ) score of less than 70.

- Cancers
  Cancers that have spread (metastatic) or are inoperable (for example, brain, liver, esophageal, pancreatic, lung, colon or uterine cancer)
  
  Watch for - aggressive treatment.
  Issues - breast cancer is more and more treatable so it is harder to get approved for disability.

- Immune System
  Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), severe lupus
  
  Watch for - with HIV a blood count (CD4) < 200, and opportunistic infections (thrush, pneumocystic carinii pneumonia (PCP)) or wasting syndrome (unintentional loss of 10% of body weight), with Lupus must have frequent flair ups requiring Emergency Room/inpatient hospital visits.
  Issue - Must be compliant with medications to control the illness.

- Learning Disabilities/Low Intelligence Quotient (IQ)
  Watch for - IQ below 70.
  Issue - Need tests from doctor to assess IQ.

NOTE: Alcoholism and Drug Abuse are no longer listings. These disorders were delisted in 1997. However, if it can be proven that a person’s medical problems are primary and chemical use is secondary to that illness, the person could still be approved for SSI.
The WorkForce One (WF1) is a web-based system used to track employment services and supports that are provided to persons who participate in the MFIP, DWP and FSET programs, as well as other employment services that are provided through Minnesota’s Workforce Development System and Workforce Centers.

MAXIS – WF1 Interface

The MAXIS computer system is an electronic referral interface with the WF1 system. The electronic referral interface provides notification to a specific employment services provider that the county is referring MFIP, DWP, or FSET participants to employment services.

The MAXIS-WFI electronic referral interface requires the state to maintain an accurate and up to date list of authorized employment services providers for the MFIP, DWP, and FSET programs. Only authorized employment services providers listed in the provider table will be able to receive electronic referral from the county.

Employment Services Provider Authorization and Notification Form (DHS-4193)

Counties must submit and “Employment Services Provider Authorization and Notification” form (DHS-4193) to add or remove a provider from the table of authorized providers or to make changes to the programs from which a provider can receive electronic interface referral from MAXIS. DHS-4193 can be found in eDocs on the DHS website.

This form will only be accepted from the county who responsible from administering the MFIP, DWP, or FST programs and is only used for these programs. The DHS-4193 must be submitted no less than one month prior to the effective date of a change. This will allow time for new provider staff to receive training and the WF1 and MAXIS systems to update the provider tables.

If a county has any questions about this form, please, contact the regional representative. See Appendix F (Regional Teams and Contact Lists for MFIP and DWP).

NOTE: FSET Services must be delivered by a statewide workforce development system unless such services are not available. Counties desiring to change FSET providers must obtain written approval from the state FSET coordinator prior to submitting the DHS-4193.