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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 2.30 (Glossary: M-N...).

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

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 2 predecessor agencies, ACTION and the Commission on National and Community Service and administers national service programs that include 3 AmeriCorps programs among others:

- AmeriCorps State and AmeriCorps National (together these 2 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 number 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 TRANSITIONAL STANDARD in 2.42 (Glossary: T-Z...). Also see Combined Manual 0020.09 (MFIP Assistance Standards).

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.

AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE
A person authorized in writing by the unit or participant to act on their behalf. See Combined Manual 0005.06 (Authorized Representatives).

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 18.18.15 (Special Medical Criteria).

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 RETROSPECTIVE BUDGETING in 2.36 (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 MFIP, excluding the food portion of the MFIP grant.

CHILD
See MINOR CHILD in 2.30 (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 an 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 Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG), and to non-custodial parents of a child receiving MFIP. See 23.51 (Performance Measures).

COUNTED ACTIVITIES
Activities that count toward the work participation rate. These activities are divided into core, non-core, and other allowable activities. For more information, see 7.36 (Core & Non-Core Activities), 23.51 (Performance Measures).

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.

DEEM
To allow a participant to meet the TANF core hour requirement when the participant meets 1 of the following conditions:

- If participating in uncompensated work experience or a community service program the maximum number of hours allowed under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). See 11.12 (Fair Labor Standards).

If a teen parent is attending high school or GED classes an average of 1 or more hours per week and is meeting the school's attendance requirements.

DCYF
The Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families

DHS
The Minnesota Department of Human Services.

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.

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.

DIVERSIONARY WORK PROGRAM
A short-term, work focused program for families applying for cash benefits. It provides a maximum of 4 consecutive months in a 12-month period, of necessary services and supports to families which will lead to unsubsidized employment, increase economic stability, and reduce the risk of needing longer term assistance under MFIP.

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.

ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE
A signature that is transmitted electronically. Electronic signatures must meet the criteria outlined in Combined Manual 0005.12.07 (Electronic Signatures).

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. See 7 (Employment Plans), 8.24 (Employment Plans & Family Violence Waiver).

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
See MFIP EMPLOYMENT SERVICES (MFIP-ES) in 2.30 (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.

EMPLOYABILITY MEASURE
A screening tool used to measure a participant's status in 11 areas of life functioning that has been shown to be related to getting and keeping a job. See 6.15 (The Employability Measure).

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)
English language program designed for non-English speaking people.

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 18.18 (Extension Categories).

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 uncompensated work experience more hours than the monthly MFIP cash assistance amount plus the monthly food benefit amount divided by the state minimum wage. See 11.12 (Fair Labor Standards) for more information on the FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT (FSLA).

FAMILY STABILIZATION SERVICES
Serves families who are not making significant progress within the regular employment and training services track, giving employment services providers more flexibility to develop appropriate plans. See Chapter 17 (Family Stabilization Services).

FAMILY VIOLENCE
An act or a combination of acts such as: physical harm, bodily injury or assault, the infliction of fear of physical harm, bodily injury or assault, terroristic threats, criminal sexual conduct committed against or committed by a family or household member. See 7 (Employment Plans), 8.3 (Family Violence Overview), 8.24 (Employment Plans & Family Violence Waiver).

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
A provision under which participants, who are victims of FAMILY VIOLENCE, may be exempt from the 60-month lifetime limit. See 7 (Employment Plans), 8.3 (Family Violence Overview), 8.24 (Employment Plans & Family Violence Waiver).

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 22 (Fraud and EBT Misuse).

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)
An Intensive ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE program that is work focused and offers at least 20 hours of class time per week. See 13.6 (English Language Learning).

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 2.3 (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.

HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (HIPAA)
The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, established the HIPAA Privacy Rule in December of 2000. The HIPAA Privacy Rule is a federal rule designed to protect individuals' medical records and other Personal Health Information.

HOMELESS
A household is homeless if they lack a fixed, adequate nighttime residence. This includes but is not limited to:

- Temporarily sharing the housing of other persons due to the loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.
- Residing in an emergency shelter, including a domestic violence shelter.
- Residing in a hotel or motel for lack of another permanent residence.
- Sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation, including but not limited to a tent, campground, vehicle, fish house, abandoned building, public place, structure, or section of a structure not meant as living accommodations, or similar setting.
- Residing in a place without utilities including heat, electricity, and/or water.

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

IN COMPLIANCE
A participant is meeting the requirements in his/her EMPLOYMENT PLAN.

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.

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.

KNOWN TO THE AGENCY
Information about a unit's circumstances that an agency receives directly from the unit or discovers from sources such as MAXIS, PRISM, MMIS, and MEC2. This does not include information discovered directly from the METS system. For this definition, "agency" includes:

- State of Minnesota, County or Tribal Nation human service agencies that administer child care, cash, food, health care programs, or employment services; and
- Agencies contracted with or who have an interagency agreement with any of the above to administer financial, health care, child care programs, or employment services.

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.
- Developmental Disability, mental illness.
- 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 2.9 (Glossary: C...). For the definition of MINOR CHILD, see 2.30 (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 4.27 (Limited English Skills).

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.

MANDATORY PARTICIPANT
All MFIP participants are mandatory in employment services except if the parent meets 1 of the following:
- A parent with a child under the age of 12 months, who chooses to take the child under 12-month exemption and have not used their 12-month lifetime limit.
- A parent receiving Minnesota (MN) Paid Leave benefits, who chooses to take the MN Paid Leave exemption.

Caregivers with a fraud disqualification on or after October 1, 2007, are also required to participate in employment services.

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.

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

MINIMUM WAGE
The lowest wage established by law that an employer may pay an employee. See SUITABLE EMPLOYMENT in 2.39 (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 2.15 (Glossary: E...). The Minnesota Working Family Credit can be applied for by filing a Minnesota income tax return.

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/herself and his/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.

OCCURRENCE OF NON-COMPLIANCE
A month a participant is not in compliance with MFIP requirements.

ON-LINE DIPLOMA
For an 18- or 19-year old with an on-line diploma other than from a program approved by the Department of Education, explain the MFIP policy and place the teen in the "work option". See 9.3 (Policies Specific to 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/she is engaged in productive work and that provides knowledge and skills essential to the full and adequate performance of the job.

PARTICIPANT
A recipient of cash assistance who participates or is required to participate in MFIP Employment Services.

PERMANENT DISQUALIFICATION
When 1 or both caregivers are no longer eligible to receive MFIP due to failure to comply with Employment Services.

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 (Employment Plans), 8.3 (Family Violence Overview), 8.24 (Employment Plans & Family Violence Waiver).

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

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

RECERTIFICATION
The process used by the COUNTY AGENCY to determine a participant's continued eligibility for benefits.

RECOUPMENT
Withholding 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.

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.

SAFE AT HOME (SAH) PROGRAM
The Safe At Home (SAH) Program is a Minnesota address confidentiality program that assists survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking by providing a substitute address for people who move or are about to move to a new location unknown to their aggressors. The Minnesota Secretary of State's office administers this program. See 8.36 (Resources for Addressing Family Violence) for more information.

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 if a participant fails to comply with the MFIP Employment Services requirements, a parental caregiver fails without good cause to cooperate with the Child Support Services requirements or a participant fails to comply with other program requirements.

SATISFACTORY PROGRESS
Determined by the training or education program, used to determine compliance with secondary, GED and training or educational programs.

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 outcome measure that tracks whether adults are either working 30 or more hours per week, or no longer receiving MFIP cash payments 3 years after a baseline quarter.

SIGNATURE
A signature is a handwritten depiction of someone's name that a person writes on documents as a proof of identity and intent. If the participant is unable to sign their name, accept an "X" or a gesture as a valid signature. A gestured signature includes, but is not limited to, the use of signs and expressions to communicate "Yes" or "I agree" in American Sign Language (ASL), Manually Coded English (MCE) or another similar language or method during an interview, in person, or over a video link. When accepting an "X" or a gesture as a valid signature, document this clearly in case notes.

SNAP
See SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

SOCIAL SERVICES
The services included in a county's community social services plan.

SPOKEN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY (SPL)
A test that measures the English language speaking skills of people whose native language is not English.

SSA
Social Security Administration.

SSI
See SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI) below.

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 or when the wages paid to a participant are made by a hired party, such as the county, the MFIP ES provider or a temporary staffing agency that has a contract to provide subsidized employment for MFIP

participants.

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 or when the wages paid to a participant are made by a hired party, such as the county, the MFIP ES provider or a temporary staffing agency that has a contract to provide subsidized employment for MFIP participants.

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 NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP)
The federal Food and Nutrition Service Program of the United States Department of Agriculture. Also known as: food assistance, food benefits, Food Support, nutrition assistance or nutrition assistance benefits. Formally known as Food Stamps.

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.

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.

TANF PARTICIPATION RATE
The federally mandated work performance requirement for states that have a TANF program. See 23.51 (Performance Measures).

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF) GRANT
In Minnesota it is called the MINNESOTA FAMILY INVESTMENT PROGRAM (MFIP), see 2.30 (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 Combined Manual 0020.09 (MFIP Assistance Standards).

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

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
Starting February 1, 2008, all caregivers must work with employment services and develop an Employment Plan or a Family Stabilization Services Employment Plan.

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.

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.

This chapter provides brief and summary information about key parts of MFIP eligibility policy:

- To understand the specifics of any policy, click on the links provided to the Combined Manual. It is the policy resource eligibility workers use and will provide more detailed information than the high-level policy descriptions in this chapter.
- Talk to the participant's eligibility worker if there is a question about that participant's case.

The Combined Manual is the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families official guidance on eligibility policy. Any discrepancies between the summary descriptions in this manual and the Combined Manual should be resolved by using the guidance in the Combined Manual.

In this chapter you can find information about:

- Applying for MFIP.
- Household size and how it is determined for MFIP.
- Income and asset limits for MFIP.
- Benefit amounts.
  - The MFIP Housing Assistance Grant.
  - How income affects benefits.
- Budgeting methods for calculating MFIP benefits.
- One-time changes in income.
- Closing an MFIP case.

How do people apply for cash assistance?

There are 2 options:

Option 1: Submit a completed Combined Application Form to their local county or tribal eligibility office.

The Combined Application Form is available in multiple languages.
Combined Application Form in English (DHS-5223-ENG) (PDF).
Combined Application Form in Hmong (DHS-5223-HMN) (PDF).
Combined Application Form in Russian (DHS-5223-RUS) (PDF).
Combined Application Form in Somali (DHS-5223-SOM) (PDF).
Combined Application Form in Spanish (DHS-5223-SPA) (PDF).

The English version can be completed in 1 of 2 ways:

- By hand.
- Electronically and printed out.

The non-English versions are only available to print out and complete by hand.

Option 2: Apply online at the MNbenefits website.

Which members of a household does MFIP count for determining the household size?

Not everyone in a household may be eligible to receive MFIP assistance. Members who are eligible are called the “assistance unit”.

To be eligible a household must either include minor children or, if no children are present, be a pregnant woman.

The number of people in the assistance unit determine the amount of the MFIP grant. See Combined Manual 0014.03.03 (Determining the Cash Assistance Unit).

“Child only cases” are situations in which no adult counts as a member of the assistance unit.

Most of these families are not subject to work requirements and time limits. The exceptions are adults who have been disqualified because of fraud. In those situations, the adult is still subject to work requirements and time limits. See Combined Manual 0014.06 (Who Must Be Excluded From Assistance Unit).

How much income can a family have and still be eligible for MFIP?

Eligibility limits and incomes related to exit levels are different for different family sizes.

Family Income must be below a threshold called the “Family Wage Level” to determine who is financially eligible for MFIP. See the Family Wage Level for each family size in ESM 24.9 (Links MFIP Benefit Levels).

How many assets can a family have and still remain eligible for MFIP?

There is a $10,000 asset limit which includes:

- Cash.
- Bank accounts.
- Liquid stocks and bonds.
- Vehicles.

See Combined Manual 0015.01 (Counted Assets), Combined Manual 0015.03 (Asset Limits).

The asset limit has special rules for vehicles:
The asset limits exclude 1 vehicle for each eligible person 16 years and older in the household. See Combined Manual 0015.39 (Excluded Assets - Vehicles).

How much assistance can families get through MFIP?

MFIP benefits are a combination of cash and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) food benefits.

- The SNAP benefits for MFIP are called the “food portion”.
- Because the benefits are combined, participants are subject to only 1 set of reporting rules and income changes affect the combined benefits.
- Minnesota has a waiver that applies some MFIP policies, instead of SNAP policies, to the MFIP food portion.

The most cash and food a family can receive is if the family has no other income. This is called the “transitional assistance standard” (also sometimes called the “full standard”) and is based on the family size. See Combined Manual 0020.09 (MFIP Assistance Standards).

What is the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant?

The MFIP Housing Assistance Grant is an additional cash benefit to the rest of the MFIP grant. Not all families qualify for the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant.

Having earned or unearned income does not change the amount of the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant. See Combined Manual 0013.03.09 (MFIP Housing Assistance Grant).

Any month a family receives an MFIP Housing Grant counts toward the 60 month lifetime limit. In order to stop the 60 month clock, see 18.3 (The 60-Month Time Limit Policy) about opting out.

The Housing Assistance grant is not subject to the 5% or 25% sanction, but it does end if there is a 100% sanction.

How does income affect the MFIP benefit amount?

The combination of earned income plus some remaining assistance is always more than the full MFIP benefit by itself.

Not counting all earned income is 1 important element to that formula.

MFIP disregards the first $65 for each eligible wage earner in a household in a month and then disregards 50% of the remaining earnings of all eligible household members in a month. See Combined Manual 0018.18 (Earned Income Disregards), 24.9 (Links MFIP Benefit Levels).

For every dollar of unearned income, the MFIP assistance is reduced by a dollar.

The exceptions are:
Child support payments:

- Up to $100 of child support will not count for an MFIP household with only 1 child.
- Up to $200 will not count for an MFIP household with 2 or more children.

Retirement, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (RSDI) payments:

- Up to the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) standard for a household of 1, will not count for each MFIP household member receiving RSDI.

When participants have income, the cash portion of the MFIP benefit is reduced.

See Combined Manual 0022.12 (How to Calc. Benefit Level - MFIP/GA), 24.9 (Links MFIP Benefit Levels).

What is the timing of when participants receive income and when their benefits reflect that income?

Prospective budgeting anticipates what someone's income will reasonably be for the next 6 months.

For MFIP budgeting methods see Combined Manual 0022.03.01 (Prospective Budgeting – Program Provisions).

What if an MFIP household's income decreases significantly?

If families have a drop in income and is expected to continue, they can report and verify the change to determine if their benefits can be recalculated by the eligibility worker.

See Combined Manual 0008.06.15 (Removing or Recalculating Income).

What happens when an MFIP assistance unit member gets a one-time payment in a month?

Calculations for the MFIP grant depend on whether the one-time payment is counted. One-time payments, also known as non-recurring income, can be earned or unearned.

Non-recurring income is only counted, if listed in Combined Manual 0017.12.03 (Unearned Income).

What does it mean to close MFIP?

"Closing MFIP" is when all MFIP benefits end for a family. This can occur when:

- A family chooses to no longer receive MFIP benefits.
- A family is no longer eligible.
- A 100% sanction is imposed, see 19.30 (Closing Cases for 100% Sanction).

When participants close MFIP, they:

- Do not receive any MFIP benefits – cash, MFIP food portion or MFIP Housing Assistance Grant.
- No longer work with MFIP employment services.
- May be eligible for:
  - The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.
  - One of the public health care coverage programs, Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare.
- Move to Transition Year or Basic Sliding Fee Child Care assistance, if they are using child care assistance and continue to be eligible.

Have participants reach out to the eligibility worker for details about continuing benefits.

In some cases, the state may pay the cost of employer-provided health care plans for employed participants.

Counties and tribes will review if the premium costs for the employer provided health care coverage is less expensive than paying for the Medical Assistance services without the employer-provided health insurance.

See Minnesota Health Care Programs Eligibility Policy Manual 2.1.1.2.1.3.1 (Cost-Effective Health Insurance).

Everyone served through the Minnesota Family Investment Program has rights under different federal and state laws.

- Many of those rights are rights that apply to all of us in the United States.
- Others are rights specific to these programs under federal or state laws.

In this chapter you will find information about:

- Rights to appeal.
- Data Privacy.
- Sharing Information within the Welfare System.
- Special types of private information including.
- Mental health and chemical dependency and treatment information.
  - Family Violence.
  - Health and medical information.
- Participants' rights to review information.
- Participants' program rights in MFIP.
- Civil Rights.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Limited English Skills.

Participants and applicants have a right to request a fair hearing if they disagree with an action a county or tribal agency has taken.

For information about Fair Hearings (appeals) and conciliation conferences, see 19.48.3 (Conciliation Conference), 19.48.6 (Fair Hearing (Appeal)).

Most of the data that county, tribal and employment services agencies collect about people are private data.

The person the data is about or that person's authorized representative must be allowed access to the private data.

State law classifies some data as confidential.
This is a higher standard than private: the person the data is about CANNOT have access to that data.

When participants are asked to provide private or confidential data about themselves, they must be informed about:
- The purpose and intended use of the requested data.
- Whether they may refuse to share the data or whether 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.

Every employment services worker must complete annual data privacy training.
The state provides this training. It explains:
- The difference between private and confidential information.
- What practices meet data privacy standards.

The training can be accessed at https://data-securitytraining.dhs.mn.gov/Account/Login.

Official state forms contain the appropriate language for notifying participants and applicants about how their information will be used:
- The financial assistance Combined Application Form (CAF) (DHS-5223) (PDF). For links to non-English versions of this form, see 3.3 (Applying for MFIP).
- Employment Services Responsibilities, Rights and Consent (DHS-3172) (PDF).
- Notice of Privacy Practices form:
  - Notice of Privacy Practices English (DHS-3979) (PDF).
  - Notice of Privacy Practices Hmong (DHS-3979-HMN) (PDF).
  - Notice of Privacy Practices Russian (DHS-3979-RUS) (PDF).
  - Notice of Privacy Practices Somali (DHS-3979-SOM) (PDF).
  - Notice of Privacy Practices Spanish (DHS-3979-SPA) (PDF).
  - Notice of Privacy Practices Vietnamese (DHS-3979-VIE) (PDF).

Review the Responsibilities, Rights and Consent (DHS-3172) (PDF) every 12 months with the participant.
- Have the participant sign this form at enrollment with employment services.
- Have the participant sign a new statement every 12 months.
- Keep the signed copy in the employment services file.

Release of information forms:
Have participants sign these forms if you are ever requesting or sharing private information.
General Authorization for Release of Information (DHS-2243A) (PDF).

Staff working within the welfare system may share private data with each other about applicants and participants without signed written consent.

Employment services agencies are considered part of the welfare system if BOTH of the following are true.

- The agency has a contract to serve people receiving assistance through the Minnesota Family Investment Program.
- That contract specifies that the employment services agency is part of the local welfare system.

Staff working for different employment services agencies and/or in different counties or for tribes can share information about shared participants if both employment services agencies have active contracts with a county or tribe for MFIP services.

Information can be shared without a release of information between staff working within the welfare system in order to do the following:

- Verify an individual's identity.
- Determine eligibility or amount of assistance for the individual.
- Determine a need to provide services across programs.
- Coordinate services for a participant or the participant's family.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the program.
- Assess parental contribution amounts.
- Investigate suspected fraud.

Links to release of information forms in multiple languages are available in the section on 4.6 (Data Privacy).

Information about mental health, chemical dependency, family violence and health has additional protections.

Mental health or chemical dependency

There must be a signed release of information in order to share information about a participant's mental health or chemical dependency condition.

- The release must identify the specific type of chemical dependency or mental health information being requested.

A welfare system agency may not require a person to consent to the release of mental health data as a condition of receiving services.

A signed release for information about a participant's chemical dependency diagnosis or treatment must include:

- The specific name or general designation of the program or person permitted to make the disclosure.
- The name or title of the person or the name of the organization to which disclosure is to be made.
- The name of the patient.
- The purpose of the disclosure.
- How much and what kind of information is to be disclosed.
- The signature of the patient and, when required for a patient who is a minor, the signature of a person authorized to give consent; or, when required for a patient who is incompetent or deceased, the signature of a person authorized to sign in lieu of the patient.
- The date on which the consent is signed.
- A statement that the consent is subject to revocation at any time except to the extent that the program or person which is to make the disclosure has already acted in reliance on it.
- The date, event, or condition upon which the consent will expire if not revoked earlier. This date, event, or condition must insure that the consent will last no longer than reasonably necessary to serve the purpose for which it is given.

A sample form may be found at: http s://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2010-title42-vol1/pdf/CFR-2010-title42-vol1-sec2-31.pdf.

Family Violence

Counties, tribes, and employment services agencies must ensure confidentiality to participants experiencing family violence. To ensure that confidentiality employment services agencies must:

- Obtain a release of information from the participant prior to talking to a family violence advocate about the participant's issues relating to family violence. See 4.6 (Data Privacy).
- Consult with the participant to determine where to send mail or what numbers to use to make phone calls.
  - This is especially critical when the victim of family violence lives with the abuser.
  - Do not assume that mail can be sent or phone calls can be made to the participant's home, because the abuser may be in the home or have access to the home.
  - See what to do if the participant is enrolled with Safe At Home, see 8.36 (Resources for Addressing Family Violence).
- Consult with the local county or tribal attorney regarding the county's or tribe's data practices policy if you are uncertain how to apply this policy.

Medical and Health Information

Case notes about medical information should contain only the minimum necessary information.

- Rarely include an actual diagnosis.
- Use general language when writing case notes in Workforce One or comments in the Employability Measure.

Examples include: "medical condition present. See case file" or "medical condition restricts activities. See case file." Or "mental health condition restricts activities. See case file."

When a participant discloses a medical, mental or chemical health condition but they do not have documentation to support the claim:
Write more specific information on the Employability Measure or in a case note. For example: "participant stated she is feeling depressed, assisted participant in making an appointment for an assessment."

Protected health Information is:
Individually identifiable health information that meets both of the following conditions:

- Is created by or received from a health care provider, a health plan, a public health authority, an employer, life insurer, school or university or a health care clearinghouse.
- Concerns a health condition, health care services or payment for health care services related to that individual.

Protected Health Information includes the following types of information:

- Oral.
- Written.
- Electronic.

Counties should establish measures to ensure that health information is not accessible to anyone other than authorized personnel.
Workforce One security provisions are sufficient to meet criteria for guarding accessibility for electronic case records.

Related forms
Request for Medical Opinion (DHS-2114) (PDF).

Participants may review private and public records which contain information about them.

- Show participants the actual private or public data about them – not summaries.
- 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, tribe or employment services agency may take up to an additional 10 days with agreement of the participant.
- The county or tribal agency or employment services provider may set the place and time of review.
- Provide copies of original documents when the participant or the authorized representative requests copies.
  - Provide one free copy of a document and additional copies at the cost of reproduction.

There is some confidential medical data that participants may NOT see about themselves.
The authorized licensed medical or mental health professional:

- May designate that a participant should not be shown certain information in a medical record because the information is:
  - 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.
- Must specifically request that the information be withheld from the data subject.
  - Do not assume that just because a medical record is stamped "confidential" that the health care provider has determined that it cannot be shared with the participant.

Inform health care providers that the subject of the data will be allowed access to all of the information unless the health care provider specifically identifies information to be withheld as described above.
Communicate this by including this on the medical opinion form or in a cover letter that accompanies that form.

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.

Parents may view records of their minor children, unless 1 of the following is true:

- 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.

For more information, see Guide for Requesting Data About You (DHS-6553) (PDF) issued by DHS.

Participants have the following rights:

The right to receive specific information from their eligibility workers. These rights are outlined in Combined Manual 0003.09 (Client Rights).

The right to NOT have to take a job offer that is not suitable.
Suitable employment includes a job that:

- Is within the participant's physical and mental capacity.
- Pays hourly gross wages which are not less than the state or local minimum wage.
- Meets federal, state, county and tribal health and safety standards.
- Complies with federal, state and local anti-discrimination laws.

The right not to be required to participate in work activities or be sanctioned if appropriate child care is not available.
Child care is not appropriate if:

- The child care provider is not licensed or is a legal non-licensed provider not registered with the county.
- The child care provider cannot speak the same language as the parent or meet other demonstrated needs for a specific language.
- The child care is not appropriate to the child's age and any disabilities.
- The total commute time to the child care provider and work exceeds two hours round trip.
- The provider does not meet basic health and safety standards.
- The provider charges in the excess of the maximum amount the child care assistance program will pay.

For more information about other good cause reasons that sanctions cannot be imposed see 19.9 (Good Cause).

Everyone applying for or receiving assistance is entitled to information about:

- Their civil rights.
- The process for filing a complaint if they believe someone working in the MFIP system has discriminated against them.

Three separate laws forbid different types of discrimination.

The discrimination that is outlawed.	Minnesota Human Rights Law	Federal Civil Rights Law	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Civil Rights*
Race	Yes	Yes	Yes
Color	Yes	Yes	Yes
Creed	Yes	No	No
Religion	Yes	Yes	Yes
National origin	Yes	Yes	Yes
Disability	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sex	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sexual orientation	Yes	No	No
Public assistance status	Yes	No	No
Age	No	Yes	Yes
Political beliefs	No	No	Yes

* The Minnesota Family Investment Program is subject to SNAP civil rights laws, because MFIP combines cash and SNAP food benefits as 1 benefit.

Participants may contact different agencies to file a complaint if they believe a human services worker (including an employment counselor working within MFIP) has discriminated against them.

- In some circumstances, a person may file the same complaint with more than 1 agency.
- Some agencies do not have authority to accept certain types of civil rights complaints.

Always give participants enough information about filing complaints so they can decide for themselves which agency (or agencies) to contact.

- Use the Employment Services Responsibilities, Rights and Consent (DHS-3172) (PDF) form.
- When a participant contacts any of these agencies, that agency will inform the person if it is the appropriate agency to receive the complaint.

Agency	Which laws it enforces	The contact information for that agency	Information about the process:	How soon to file a complaint
The Minnesota Department of Human Rights	Minnesota state human rights laws.	Army Corps of Engineers Centre 190 East 5th Street, Suite 700 St. Paul, Minnesota 55101 651-539-1100 1-800-657-3704 TTY 651-296-1283 The Minnesota Department of Human Rights web site is available in Somali, Spanish or Hmong.	This agency will help in the process of filing a complaint.	Within 1 year.
Minnesota Department of Human Services	Minnesota State Human Rights code.	Office for Equal Opportunity	This agency will provide:	Within 1 year.

		P.O. Box 64997 St. Paul, MN 55164-0997 651-431-3040 The Civil Rights in Human Services page on the DHS website has more information	• Interpreters. • Reasonable modifications for people with disabilities.	
United States Department of Health and Human Services	Federal Civil Rights laws applied to human services programs.	Office of Civil Rights - Region V United States Department of Health and Human Services 233 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 240 Chicago, IL 60601 312-886-2359 (voice) 312-353-5693 (TDD)	* See below.	Within 180 days.
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)	Civil Rights Laws for (SNAP)	Director - Office of Civil Rights Whitten Building, Room 326W 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 202-720-5964 (voice/TDD)	* See below.	N/A

* **The written complaint to federal agencies must 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.

People with disabilities should receive individualized services and meaningful opportunities.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services requires that people with disabilities should experience:
- Individual treatment: Treat people with disabilities on a case-by-case basis consistent with facts and objective evidence.
- Effective and meaningful opportunity: Offer people with disabilities opportunities to benefit that are as effective as the opportunity offered to people without disabilities.

The Americans with Disabilities Act applies to anyone who meets at least 1 of the following conditions:
- Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits 1 or more major life activities.
- Has a record of such an impairment.
- Is regarded as having such an impairment.

The ADA definition of disability is different than the criteria in programs that provide cash assistance based on disability, such as Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Income.

Eligibility and employment services workers must:
Inform all participants that the Americans with Disabilities Act provides them rights to equal access to all services and benefits regardless of a physical or mental disability.

Give the DHS brochure Do you have a disability? (DHS-4133) (PDF) to participants:
- During the Employment Services overview.
- When an Employment Plan is developed or revised.
- Before an assessment, including the MFIP Self Screen.

This brochure is also available in:
Do you have a disability? (DHS-4133-HMN) (PDF) Hmong
Do you have a disability? (DHS-4133-RUS) (PDF) Russian
Do you have a disability? (DHS-4133-SOM) (PDF) Somali
Do you have a disability? (DHS-4133-SPA) (PDF) Spanish
Do you have a disability? (DHS-4133-VIE) (PDF) Vietnamese

Employment Plans for anyone with a disability must consider any and all limitations due to the disability.

Many participants with disabilities will be eligible for Family Stabilization Services (FSS). Develop an employment plan for FSS participants based on the participant's individual circumstances.

For information:
- How an employment plan must accommodate disabilities, see 7.33 (Accommodating Disabilities).
- How the Family Stabilization Services track creates more flexibility and the policies associated with specific conditions that may be disabling, see 17 (Family Stabilization Services).
- Guidance issued by the Office of Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Also see, 24.27 (Disability Criteria for SSI Benefits).

Anyone with limited English language skills has a right to free and timely language assistance services in MFIP.

Federal and state civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of national origin cover people with limited English language skills.

Do not require the participant to have a child, a friend or a relative interpret for them.
Providing language assistance is the responsibility of the county agency or the services provider – not the person with limited English language skills.

Follow the provisions of the local county's or tribe's Limited English Proficiency (LEP) plan for serving people who have limited English language skills.

Counties and tribes must provide a level of assistance that ensures that all participants with limited English language skills:

- Receive adequate information.
- Are able to understand the services and available benefits.
- Receive benefits for which they are eligible.
- Are able to communicate their circumstances to the county.

Each county must develop and implement a Limited English Proficiency plan. The 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).
- Procedures that arrange for providing notice to people of the rights to language assistance FREE of charge and in a timely manner during all hours of operation.

In this chapter you can find information about:

- Referrals to employment services.
- Time frames for starting employment services.
- Participant choice of employment services providers.
- Participants moving into or out of a county.
- Employment services overview.
- Participation requirements.
- Parents with a child under 12 months old exemption.

Accept or deny a Workforce One referral for employment services within 7 calendar days.

This includes referrals of:
- New participants.
- Returning participants who had previously been open on MFIP with another agency or with your agency.
- Participants transferring from another county or agency.

Only deny a referral if the person already has a Workforce One record open for your agency.

Note: Accepted referrals should be enrolled in Workforce One within 30 days.

How referrals will arrive to employment services agencies:

MAXIS will generate referrals to Workforce One automatically when:
- A participant becomes eligible for MFIP and the eligibility worker approves the new case on MAXIS.
- A participant transfers to a new county or tribe and the new county or tribe approves the case on MAXIS.
- These referrals will only contain the information available on MAXIS at the time of the referral.

Paper referrals by an eligibility worker do not replace electronic referrals. An electronic referral has to follow a paper referral.

Instructions for accepting referrals and closing cases on Workforce One:

Never start a new program sequence for a participant already open on Workforce One with your agency.

Be careful not to close cases too soon on Workforce One.
- Before closing a case in Workforce One, verify that the case has been closed in MAXIS for more than 30 days.
- Be aware that an auto-close on MAXIS or a case closed due to over income may not actually mean the case is closed long-term.
  - If the case is closed for less than 30 days, MAXIS will not send a new Workforce One referral when the case is reactivated.
- If the case is closed incorrectly on Workforce One, re-open the most recent sequence.

Provide an overview, develop an employment plan and have a participant begin activities within the following timelines:

Time frame	For these circumstances
10 days	For a participant starting MFIP who had been on the Diversionary Work Program in the last 12 months.
30 days	For all other MFIP participants.

Counties and tribal MFIP programs must offer participants a choice of at least 2 providers unless the county or tribe meets 1 of the following conditions:

- Uses a Workforce Center for MFIP Employment Services.
- Has received an exemption because of financial hardship.

Both parents in a 2-parent family must choose the same employment services provider, unless a special need exists that 1 provider cannot meet. For instance:

- Language specific-services.
- Family violence situations.

Participants must also be allowed to change employment services providers.

Each county or tribe has specific policies and procedures regarding transferring between employment services agencies. Ask a supervisor or manager to get clarification about local policies.

Counties and tribes must develop procedures that ensure a smooth transition when participants move to a new county or tribal location.

Eligibility workers in the sites that the participant is leaving should:

- Transfer the case to the new county or tribe.
- Do not impose any impending employment services sanctions.
- Keep child care assistance open until the date the employment services agency in the new county accepts responsibility for the employment plan.

Eligibility workers in the county to which the participant is moving should:

- Submit a referral to employment services through MAXIS within 7 calendar days of opening the participant in the new county.

Employment services agencies in the county to which the participant is moving should:

- Accept the MAXIS referral in Workforce One within 7 calendar days.
- Take full responsibility for the case, once the agency accepts the referral.
- Enroll the participant in Workforce One within 30 days.
- See 19.45 (Ending & Correcting Sanctions) about what to do if the transferring participant is in sanction.

To ensure a smooth transition for the participant, do the following:

- Ensure that child care assistance is not interrupted because of delays in the transfer process.
- Communicate with the employment services staff from the other county or tribe. The more information shared by employment services staff from the two sites, the more continuity is possible in the services and employment plans.

  For information on what procedures employment services agencies must follow to share information with each other, see 4.9 (Sharing Information in the Welfare System).
- Follow all the same processes and deadlines for opening new cases when opening a transferring case.
- Update Workforce One when closing a case that is transferring and when receiving a transferred case.

The participant starts counting in the new county's or tribe's work participation rate on the date the new county or tribe issues benefits.

The employment services overview should clearly explain the opportunities MFIP offers and the expectations it has for participants.

MFIP participants must attend an employment services overview.

Overviews can be done with groups or one-on-one.

- Participants who have a family violence waiver or are in the process of being considered for a family violence waiver must be offered the opportunity to receive the overview information one-on-one.

Counties and Tribal Nation eligibility offices must cover the costs of any child care needed to make it possible for participants to attend the overview.

The Overview must include the following:

Topic	Key message	Resources for more information
Expectations	Participants are expected to work, look for work, or participate in other activities to prepare for work.	N/A.
Work.	MFIP services focus on: • The most direct path to competitive employment. • Any subsequent steps that support long-term economic stability.	N/A.
Time Limits.	Most participants will have a 60-month lifetime limit to receive MFIP benefits. Participants can opt out of their cash benefits to stop the time clock. See 18.3 (The 60-Month Time Limit Policy).	Combined Manual 0011.30 (60-Month Lifetime Limit).
Participation.	Participants will need to develop and follow through on an employment plan.	N/A.
Sanctions.	Participants perceived to not be complying will receive a Notice of Intent to Sanction (often called a NOITS). • Responding to a NOITS can help avoid a sanction. • The sanctions are 5% of the cash portion of the MFIP grant. After seven consecutive sanctions, the case will close. • Child support can also initiate a 25% sanction of the cash portion of the MFIP grant.	Chapter 19 (Sanctions and Non-Compliance).
Supports	MFIP intends to make work, looking for work and preparing for work possible.	N/A.
Resources to help with job search.	The specific services your agency offers.	N/A.
Child care.	• MFIP Child Care Assistance: covers care by a licensed or unlicensed provider.	Chapter 16 (Child Care). parentaware.org for information about

	• To get MFIP Child Care Assistance, a participant must:
	  • Complete an application.
	  • Pay a small co-pay in some instances.
	  • Cooperate with child support services.
	  • Engage in employment services.
	• Transition Year Child Care Assistance is available.
	• Child care resources and referrals.
		child care resources and referrals.
		
		Department of Human Services Licensing Information Lookup.

Employment counselor.	Participants will receive help developing the employment plan and connecting to support resources.	N/A.
A variety of activities.	The employment plan can include a range of activities.	7.36 (Core & Non-Core Activities).
Opportunities to pursue education and training.	• GED, high school or adult high school diploma. • English Language Learning. • Post-secondary education.	Education and Training in the Minnesota Family Investment Program (DHS-3366) (PDF).
Help during probationary periods on the job.	N/A.	Explain any retention services your agency offers someone who is hired into a job with a probationary period.
Incentives	A job will always increase family income compared to MFIP benefits alone.	N/A.
Earned Income Disregard.	The first $65 earned in a month and 50% of the remaining earnings do not count when figuring out the MFIP grant amount.	Combined Manual 0018.18 (Earned Income Disregards). ESM 24.9 (Links MFIP Benefit Levels)
Tax credits.	Working parents even with low earnings can apply for both the federal Earned Income Tax Credit and the state's Working Family Credit by filing taxes.	The Minnesota Department of Revenue: for information about the Working Family Credit. The IRS: for information about the Earned Income Tax Credit.
Special service tracks in MFIP.	All options focus on work but different circumstances require different services.	N/A.
Family Stabilization Services.	• More flexibility in the activities that can be part of the employment plan. • Who qualifies for Family Stabilization Services. • What they should do if they think they belong in that track.	Chapter 17 (Family Stabilization Services).
Family Violence Waiver	• A safety plan created with the help of someone trained in family violence.	Domestic Violence Information (DHS-3477) (PDF).

	• Information about local shelters and other local services for people experiencing family violence. • Stops the 60 month time clock. • Information on Child Support good cause exemption from cooperating with Child Support Services.	Chapter 08 (Family Violence Waiver). ESM 19.51 (Child Support Sanctions).
Rights.	Participants receiving MFIP retain the basic rights afforded all residents of the state and nation and have particular rights within MFIP.	Employment Services Responsibilities, Rights and Consent (DHS-3172) (PDF).
Right to file a complaint and to request conciliation.	Participants have the right to file complaints about their services in MFIP.	Employment Services Responsibilities, Rights and Consent (DHS-3172) (PDF). 19.48.3 (Conciliation Conference).

MFIP requires participants to take part in employment services.

Participating in employment services means: Developing an employment plan
- Signing the employment plan.
- Doing the activities in the employment plan.

Failing to do any of these things without good cause can result in a sanction for the participant.

These requirements apply to all participants including:
- Those disqualified from receiving MFIP assistance for themselves because of fraud.
- New spouses whose income is excluded.

Only the following circumstances allows for an exemption from these requirements:
- A parent with a child under 12 months, who chooses to take the child under 12-month exemption and has not used their 12-month lifetime limit. See 5.21 (Child Under 12 Months Old Exemption).
- A parent receiving Minnesota (MN) Paid Leave benefits, who chooses to take the MN Paid Leave exemption. See 5.23 (Minnesota Paid Leave Exemption).

Parents with a birth child 12 months or younger are the only participants eligible for an exemption from participating in employment services.

This exemption is available to parents for up to 12 months total in their lifetime use of MFIP.

N/A	Exemption for families with an infant
Who qualifies.	Parents who have not already used all 12 months and who meet one of the following conditions: • 20 years or older. • 18- and 19-year-old parents with a high school diploma. • 18-and 19-year old parents without a high school diploma who choose the work option.
For what period.	From birth until an infant turns 1. The exemption begins: • The 1st month after the month the participant claims the exemption. The exemption ends at whichever of the following happens 1st: • The 1st full month after the infant's 1st birthday. The parent must meet with an employment counselor in this month. • An earlier month that the participant chooses. • When the participant has used the 12 months of the lifetime limit.
The time limit for this exemption.	A parent can claim this exemption for no more than 12 months total. See information below on how to calculate the 12 months.
How the policy affects minor parents.	Minor parents (parents younger than 18) cannot have this exemption. Minor parents are not required to resume school attendance until 6 weeks after the birth of a new baby.
The child's status on MFIP does not matter.	The parent can claim the exemption even if the child is not included in the MFIP grant. This would include children who receive Supplemental Security Income benefits.
How this policy intersects with Presumptive Medical Disability as good cause.	Presumptive Medical Disability (PMD) is good cause, not an exemption. Only the participant who gives birth is eligible for PMD. However, participants can request the child under one exemption at the same time, and it can be taken by either parent. See 19.9 (Good Cause).

Use the "holding" activity code for a participant who takes the child under 12-months exemption.

- When the exemption ends, meet with the participant to develop a new employment plan.
- If the participant is in the Family Stabilization Services track, determine if the previous medical opinion form is still valid or has expired in order to determine if the participant still qualifies for Family Stabilization Services. Request a new medical opinion form if necessary.

Calculating the 12-month lifetime limit for the child under 12 months exemption.

The financial worker should be the only person to communicate the official count of months to the participant.

Who the calculation applies to	How the financial workers calculate the 12-month lifetime limit
For all parents.	Parents may choose to claim the exemption for more than 1 child and in different spans of time, as long as the total months of exemption are not more than 12 months.

	To determine how many months of exemption have already been used, check the STAT/EMPS panel in MAXIS or ask the eligibility worker.
For 2-parent families	Both parents in a 2-parent family are allowed a combined total of one 12-month lifetime limit for this exemption. Only 1 parent in a month may claim the exemption. The exemption can switch between the parents from month to month.
For individual parents when two-parent families separate and form new families.	If 1 of the parents moves out and moves in with another single parent receiving assistance from MFIP, the parent who moved keeps any of his/her unused exemption months and takes the number of months already used by that parent. Add together the exemption months each of the new couple has used. • Subtract that combined total from 12 to find out how many months of exemption are still available to them. • If the total combined months of the couple is more than 12 months, they are not eligible for any more exempt months as long as they live together.

For information about how the child under 12 months exemption works for participants claiming the Family Violence Waiver, see Chapter 08 (Family Violence Waiver).

Parents receiving Minnesota (MN) Paid Leave benefits can take an exemption from participating in employment services.

MN Paid Leave is a state-run insurance program that provides payments and job protections. The program offers 12 weeks of medical leave or 12 weeks of family leave, but no more than 20 weeks combined between the two types of leave each year.

Basic eligibility for MN Paid Leave:

- Earned at least 5.3% of the state annual wage over the last year. The person does not have to be currently employed.
- Work at least 50% of the time in MN.
- Covered through the MN Paid Leave program. Self-employed and independent contractors are not automatically covered, but can choose to opt-in by paying the premiums.
- Has a qualifying event and includes:
    - Own serious health condition
    - Welcoming a child
    - Caring for a loved one
    - Supporting a family member's active duty
    - Responding to safety concerns like domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

If approved for MN Paid Leave, the program will pay a portion of their wages during the leave.

Encourage participants to apply for MN Paid Leave if it appears they may be eligible.

More information about the program is available at Minnesota Paid Leave.

The MN Paid Leave exemption is available to parents who are receiving MN Paid Leave benefits. Parents may choose to take the exemption or not. In two-parent households, if a parent not receiving MN Paid Leave benefits that parent is required to work with employment services.

N/A	Exemption for families receiving MN Paid Leave benefits
Who qualifies.	The parent that is receiving MN Paid Leave benefit payments. The parent must request for the exemption and provide verification. See 15.3.3 (Holding & Local Flag: Documenting/Tracking).
For what period.	The exemption begins: • If the participant receives a MN Paid Leave payment, the participant is exempt for the entire month. The exemption ends at whichever of the following happens 1st: • At the end of the month in which the last MN Paid Leave payment is received. For example: If the last payment is received in August, the exemption ends and the participant will return to employment services in September. • An earlier month that the participant chooses.
The time limit for this exemption.	The parent may use the exemption as often as needed, provided they meet the requirements.
How the policy affects minor parents.	Minor parents (parents younger than 18) are eligible for this exemption.
How this policy intersects with the Child under 12 months old exemption.	If the parent is eligible for both the MN Paid Leave exemption and the Child under 12 months exemption, it is recommended that the parent take the MN Paid Leave exemption before the Child Under 12 months exemption.
How this policy intersects with Family Stabilization Services (FSS) and Extensions.	Receiving MN Paid Leave benefits alone, is not enough to determine FSS or extension eligibility. Review documentation in the case file to determine if there is sufficient information and verification to meet eligibility requirements. Request and assist with obtaining additional documentation, if appropriate.

Use the “Holding – MN Paid Leave” activity type for a participant who takes the MN Paid Leave exemption.

- When the exemption ends, meet with the participant to review or develop a new employment plan.

- If the participant is in the Family Stabilization Services track, determine if the previous medical opinion form is still valid or has expired in order to determine if the participant still qualifies for Family Stabilization Services. Request a new medical opinion form if necessary.

For information about how the MN Paid Leave exemption works for participants claiming the Family Violence Waiver, see Chapter 08 (Family Violence Waiver).

This chapter offers information about:

- Definition and purpose of assessments.
- Using the findings from assessments.
- When assessments and screenings should happen.
- Initial assessment.
- The employability measure.
- Vocational assessments.
- Observation checklist for concerns about behavioral health.
- Mental health and chemical health screening and assessments.
- Special learning needs screening.
- Comprehensive review.

An assessment is the process of gathering information related to employability.

The assessment process begins at the first meeting between the participant and a job counselor and continues throughout participation in Employment Services. The information should:

- Identify both the participant's strengths and challenges.
- Inform strategies for addressing issues that interfere with employment.
- Make connections to needed resources.
- Determine whether the participant qualifies for Family Stabilization Services. See Chapter 8 (Family Violence Waiver).

The information gathered serves as the basis for:

- The initial Employment Plan.
- Updates and revisions to that plan.

Assessment is an on-going process that happens formally and informally.
At each meeting with participants, assess their current situation and revise the employment plan if necessary.

These on-going assessments should help determine whether core supports are in place, such as:

- Transportation.
- Child care.
- Training, or job seeking skills.

Assessment policies and tools created by the Minnesota Department of Human Services:

Mandatory tools	Non-mandatory tools	Mandates for a particular scope of assessment, but no state created tools
• Chemical and Mental Health Self Screening. • Special Learning Needs Screen. • Employability Measure.	• Observation Checklist.	• Initial Assessment. • Comprehensive Review.

Assessments should inform employment plans.

If the assessment indicates progress has been made or the participant has acquired new skills or capacity:

- Adjust the plan to continue the goal of getting to unsubsidized employment and long-term economic stability.
- Recognize and celebrate the success with the participant.

If an assessment indicates	See this section of this manual
Family Violence.	Chapter 8 (Family Violence Waiver).
Eligibility for Family Stabilization Services.	Chapter 17 (Family Stabilization Services).
Need for chemical health or mental health services.	Chapter 14 (Social Services and Other Activities).
A disability.	7.33 (Accommodating Disabilities).

In the on-going process of assessing and gathering information, some assessments and screenings must occur at specific times.

These instructions are about what needs to happen at a minimum. In order to gauge progress and explore barriers to explain lack of progress, assessment should be a continuous process.

Points in time that require a specific assessment or screening:	Screening or assessment required at that point:
At the Employment Services overview or as soon as possible afterwards.	Initial assessment.
Within 3 months of enrolling someone on Workforce One.	Employability Measure.
When a documented need raises concerns about the possibility of behavioral health or learning disabilities: • 3 months after development of the initial employment plan if progress is not being made. • Earlier if there is a documented need.	• Mental Health Self-Screen. • Chemical Dependency Self Screen. • Special Learning Needs Self-Screens.
At the end of any 12-month period in which a participant has not worked in unsubsidized employment while receiving MFIP assistance.	Comprehensive Review.

Each local site will develop their own tools and protocols for an initial assessment.

- Do an initial assessment at the Employment Services Overview or as soon as possible afterwards.
- The Employability Measure can be used for an initial assessment.

An initial assessment should uncover fundamental information about employability and include, at least, the following areas.

Basic information about a participant's ability to get and keep a job, including a review of the participant's:

- Education level.
- Interests, skills and abilities.
- Prior employment or work experience.
- Transferable work skills.
- Child care needs.
- Transportation needs.

Identification of personal and family circumstances that can affect the participant's ability to get and keep a job, including:

- Any special needs of the children.
- The level of English proficiency.
- Presence or history of any family violence issues.
- Homelessness or housing instability.
- Physical or behavioral health concerns.
- Any involvement with social services or the legal system.

The Employability Measure structures an interview or conversation between an employment counselor and a participant.

- Administer the Employability Measure within 3 months of enrolling a new or returning participant who does not have a recent employability measure on record.
- It can be used for an initial assessment.
- Additional Employability Measure assessments done periodically can help determine whether progress is being made and whether an employment plan should be revised.

The Employability Measure focuses on strengths and challenges.

Its purpose is to develop a relevant Employment Plan which assists the participant in moving towards self-sufficiency.

The Employability Measure addresses a participant's status in 11 areas of life functioning that have been shown to be related to getting and keeping a job:

- Transportation.
- Dependent care.
- Education.
- Housing.
- Social support.
- Child behavior.
- Financial.
- Legal.
- Safe living environment.
- Health.
- Workplace skills.

Each area in the Employability Measure has descriptions of 5 Levels: from Level 1, an area of challenge, to Level 5, an area of strength.

Do not sanction participants for refusing to participate in the Employability Measure assessment.

Only staff trained in the Employability Measure may administer it. Register for training through TrainLink.

For Employability Measure protocols and related information, see Employability Measure & User Guide.

Vocational assessments help job seekers identify the work that best fits their skills, their interests and their circumstances.

Minnesota State, the system of public colleges and universities, provides 2 online options for vocational assessments:

- Assess Yourself: A collection of tools provided by the University of Minnesota Career and Internship Services office that allows someone to explore their particular employment interests.
- Explore Careers that lays out options for careers in Minnesota and creating career plans at the Minnesota State CareerWise Education resource page.

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development offers Job Outlook, an online resource for learning about occupations in demand and how to match previous work experience to other jobs.

Employment Services agencies are likely to use additional vocational assessments.

The observation checklist helps to note and record behaviors that may require screening or further assessment.

The MFIP Observation Checklist (DHS-3483) (PDF) can be useful as:

- A supplement to the Chemical and Mental Health Self-Screen or the Special Learning Needs Screening.
- A part of the comprehensive assessment.

Document the following items:

- Behaviors that triggered an intervention.
- A summary of conversations with the participant, including results of screening.
- Substantial impacts on employment that were identified.
- A record of whether the participant agreed voluntarily to a professional chemical use assessment or you required that assessment.

Use the Observation Checklist any time you see behaviors or signs that may indicate the need for screening or assessment.

- The checklist has examples of the behaviors that might be applicable.
- The Observation Checklist is not mandatory.
- If not using the Observation Checklist, ensure case notes cover the same information the checklist covers in order to have an objective and useful record about why assessments or other actions have been recommended or put in the employment plan.

Follow the steps below when there are any indications that mental illness or chemical dependency could be impeding a participant in reaching employment goals.

Step 1: Screening

DCYF has developed tools to screen for possible chemical or mental health problems:

- MFIP Self Screen (See links below.)
- MFIP Self-Screen Scoring Form (DHS-3482A) (PDF).

The MFIP Self Screen indicates whether a participant needs a formal chemical or mental health assessment.
Use the screening tool with participants who:

- Have not made progress 3 months after the initial development of their employment plan.
- Have clear barriers to employment no matter when those barriers are evident.
  - When having a participant complete the self-screening tools sooner than 3 months, use the Observation Checklist or information in case notes to document why. See 6.21 (Observation Checklist).

When initiating an MFIP Self Screen, always let participants know that the purpose of the screening is to determine:

- Whether they need referrals for more in-depth assessments.
- How those assessments can identify and help to overcome barriers to employment.

If participants refuse to complete the screens, they are subject to sanction.

- Investigate whether good cause should apply to the circumstances before beginning the sanction process.

The MFIP Self-Screen is available in English and 10 other languages.
Because these are self-screening tools, the participant must be able to read, not just speak, the language used in the form.
MFIP Self-Screen English (DHS-3482) (PDF).
MFIP Self-Screen Arabic (DHS-3482-ARA) (PDF).
MFIP Self-Screen Hmong (DHS-3482-HMN) (PDF).
MFIP Self-Screen Khmer (DHS-3482-KHM) (PDF).
MFIP Self-Screen Lao (DHS-3482-LAO) (PDF).
MFIP Self-Screen Oromo (DHS-3482–ORM) (PDF).
MFIP Self-Screen Russian (DHS 3482–RUS) (PDF).
MFIP Self-Screen Serbo-Croatian/Bosnian (DHS 3482-SCR) (PDF).
MFIP Self-Screen Somali (DHS 3482-SOM) (PDF).
MFIP Self-Screen Spanish (DHS 3482-SPA) (PDF).
MFIP Self-Screen Vietnamese (DHS 3482-VIE) (PDF).

Use the Scoring Sheet to determine whether to make a referral for assessment.

- Only staff trained in the use of these screening tools may administer them.
- Training is available through the New Employment Services Workers training provided by the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families through TrainLink.

Step 2: Diagnosis and Assessment

A diagnosis is a statement by a qualified professional about a physical or behavioral health condition a participant has. See 17.45 (Qualified Professionals).

The qualified professional may communicate that diagnosis through a Request for Medical Opinion (DHS-2114) (PDF) or through their own form or letter.

An assessment can be broader in scope than a diagnosis. It can include:

- A determination of whether someone has a mental health or chemical dependency problem.
- Information about how a health condition can affect someone's ability to function or to get and keep a job.

An assessment must also be done by a qualified medical or behavioral health professional. See 17.45 (Qualified Professionals).

Special rules for chemical dependency assessments in MFIP.
A chemical dependency assessment is the only assessment that:
- Employment services counselors may require of a participant.
- A participant can be sanctioned for refusing to do.

Only require a chemical dependency assessment if:
- Objective evidence exists that a chemical addiction is impairing the participant's ability to get or keep a job. This evidence may come through 1 or more of the following:
  - The self-screen.
  - Other sources, such as social services, the family or medical professionals.
  - Observations by the employment counselor.
- Document this evidence in the case notes or the Observation Checklist.

Provide the necessary support services.
When referring or recommending someone for a mental and/or chemical health assessment, ensure that the necessary support services, such as child care and transportation, are available.

MFIP child care can be authorized for assessments that are included in the employment plan, such as:
- Chemical or mental health assessments.
- Treatment.
- Therapy.
- Mental health case management.
- Other assessments included in the employment plan.

Get written consent from the participant to receive the assessment and related information from the behavioral health provider.
Use one of the following forms:
- The MFIP Employment Services Authorization for Release of Information (DHS-4093) (PDF).
- A comparable form developed and approved by the county or tribe and that contains the components included in the state Release of Information form.

Ensure participants understand the release of information forms before signing. This may mean:
- Using an interpreter when the participant has limited English language skills.
- Reading and explaining the form to a participant with reading ability below the 7th grade level.

Assessment information is private information and must be protected.
A signed release of information from the participant is necessary in order to share mental health or information with anyone else.
No one whose name is not on that release can see that information.

For information about participants' rights in handling this information, see Participant Rights Chapter.
4.6 (Data Privacy).
4.9 (Sharing Information in the Welfare System).
4.12 (Special Types of Private Data).

The Brief Screening Tool for Special Learning Needs indicates whether a participant needs a formal assessment to explore whether a learning disability is present.

Provide this screening to any participants:

- Not making progress on their goals 3 months after the development of their initial employment plan.
- Demonstrating behaviors that indicate screening and assessment is needed at any time.

A learning disability is:

- Not the same as a low IQ or a developmental disability.
- A neurologically based disorder in learning that can include difficulty in:
  - Processing information either by visual or auditory means – which can impact reading, spelling, writing, understanding or using language.
  - Prioritizing or organizing information.
  - Doing mathematics.
  - Following instructions.
  - Storing or retrieving information from short or long-term memory.
  - Using spoken language.
  - Clumsiness or difficulty with handwriting (from the Learning Disabilities Association of America).

The tools:

- Brief Screening Tool for Special Learning Needs (DHS-3504) (PDF).
- MFIP Special Learning Needs Scoring Form (DHS-3504A-ENG) (PDF).

The Brief Screening Tool for Special Learning Needs is available in English only and should NOT be used with participants who speak limited English.

- For participant who speak only limited English and who show signs of perhaps having a learning disability, confer with mental health or education professionals to determine if culturally appropriate assessments are available.

A comprehensive review determines if the participant needs additional services and supports.

Each employment services agency, county or tribe will develop their own tools, forms, and protocols for a comprehensive review.

Complete an in-person comprehensive review for participants who have not worked in subsidized employment in any 12-month period of receiving MFIP assistance.

The Comprehensive Review should look at:
- Participation in employment plan activities.
- Progress in those activities.
- At least the same topics of inquiry from the initial assessment at 6.12 (Initial Assessment).

Consider whether the Employability Measure or follow up from the chemical and mental health and special learning needs screenings would be valuable.

A comprehensive review might result in offering the following services or activities:
- Placement in subsidized employment (if available).
- Placement in unpaid work experience.
- Referral to Family Stabilization Services.
- Referral or enrollment in other support services identified as necessary.

Record in case notes:
- That a comprehensive review has been conducted.
- When it was conducted.
- What was learned.

In this chapter you will find information about:

- The purpose of the employment plan.
- Electronic and paper plans.
- Plan types.
- Time frames for initiating or reviewing employment plans.
- Hourly requirements in employment plans.
  - Rounding hours of activities.
- Holidays and excused absences.
- Reduced Hours Plans.
- Contents in employment plans.
- Goals.
- Order of preferences for Activities.
- Accommodating disabilities.
- Core and non-core activities.

The employment plan should build on participants' strengths and address their challenges.

The purpose of the employment plan is to identify:

- The most direct path to unsubsidized employment
  And
- Any steps that support long-term economic stability.

For some participants with significant challenges the most direct path to employment and economic stability may involve many steps, including assessments.

There are specific chapters about the Family Violence Waiver, Family Stabilization Services and Teen Parents. Specific details about the plans for those service tracks are in those chapters. See Chapter 08 (Family Violence Waiver), Chapter 09 (Teen Parents), Chapter 17 (Family Stabilization Services).

Both the participant and the employment counselor must sign the plan and any revisions.

The employment counselor and the participant each have core responsibilities related to the employment plan:

Who	Responsibility	What Can Occur if the Responsibility is Not Met.
Employment Counselor.	• Support the participant's progress. • Ensure that the participant achieves acceptable progress on their plan.	A conciliation conference or appeal.
Participant.	• Develop an employment plan. • Follow through with the activities in the plan.	Loss of support services and/or sanctions.

Follow progress of the Employment Plan in order to:

- Support participants in reaching their employment goals.
- Support compliance with MFIP Employment Services policy.

Participants must help develop and comply with the employment plan.

- Those who do not are subject to sanction. See Chapter 19 (Sanctions and Non-Compliance).

Use the electronic plans on Workforce One whenever possible.

- On Workforce One click on “Add Plan” on the plan page.
- Only one plan type can be open at a time for a participant.
- Activating a new plan type automatically invalidates the previous plan.

Paper plans are available as an option if needed. Use MFIP Employment Plan (DHS-4209) (PDF) for all plans. It contains the signature page.

Choose from the following employment plan sections:

- Employment MFIP Employment Plan (DHS-4209A) (PDF).
- Job Search Requirements MFIP Employment Plan (DHS-4209B) (PDF).
- Unpaid Work Activities MFIP Employment Plan (DHS-4209C) (PDF).
- Education MFIP Employment Plan (DHS-4209D) (PDF).
- Family Safety MFIP Employment Plan (DHS-4209E) (PDF).
- Child Care or Transportation MFIP Employment Plan (DHS-4209H) (PDF).
- Health MFIP Employment Plan (DHS-4209I) (PDF).
- Housing MFIP Employment Plan (DHS-4209J) (PDF).
- Personal/Family Activity MFIP Employment Plan (DHS-4209K) (PDF).
- Legal Issues MFIP Employment Plan (DHS-4209L) (PDF).
- County/State Social Services MFIP Employment Plan (DHS-4209M) (PDF).

Keep a copy of the paper plan by uploading the paper plan into Workforce One using Electronic Document Storage (EDS).

The participant must receive a copy of the employment plan.

Both the electronic plans on Workforce One and the paper plans on edocs require picking an employment plan type.

The plan type should match the participant’s circumstances and service track in MFIP.

There are different types of employment plans. These include:

Employment Plan Type:	When to Use This Plan:
Employment Plan.	Both of the following apply: • The participants are in a "regular" employment plan. • They do not qualify for FSS.
Employment Plan – 18-19 year old, no HS Diploma/GED.	The participant is 18-19 years old without a HS Diploma/GED. See 9.9 (Options for 18- & 19- Year Old Parents).
Employment Plan – Parent under 18.	The participant is under 18. See 9.21 (Employment Plans Focused on Education).
Employment Plan – Reduced Hours/Good Cause.	There are circumstances where participants meet good cause and therefore, need the hours of their plan to be reduced. See 7.21 (Reduced Hours Plans).
Employment Plan – Family Stabilization Services: FSS – Age 60 or Older. FSS – Applying for SSI/RSDI. FSS – Developmental Disability. FSS – Family Violence Waiver: FSS – Ill, Injured, or Incapacitated. FSS – In the Country 12 Months or Less. FSS – Learning Disabled. FSS – Mentally Ill. FSS – Needed in the Home. FSS – Participants with an IQ below 80. FSS – Special Medical Criteria. FSS -- Unemployable. POST 60 MONTHS EMPLOYMENT PLAN TYPES: FSS – Hard to Employ – Developmental Disability. FSS – Hard to Employ – Family Violence Waiver. FSS – Hard to Employ – Learning Disabled FSS – Hard to Employ – Mentally Ill FSS – Hard to Employ – Participants with an IQ below 80. FSS – Hard to Employ – Unemployable. FSS – Ill, Injured, or Incapacitated. FSS – Needed in the Home. FSS – Special Medical Criteria.	Identify services, supports, training and accommodations needed to address barriers. The Work Participation Rate does not play a role in setting activities. See 17.55 (The Employment Plan).
Working.	For participants who are extended for working at least 30 hours a week for a single parent and at least 55 hours combined for a 2-parent family.
Working limited hours.	For participants who are working limited hours due to a disability and are extended in this category.

Follow these timeframes for acting on employment plans.

Track these events with case notes in Workforce One.

Action That Must Occur:	Within This Time Frame
For participants moving to MFIP who had been on the Diversionary Work Program in the last 12 months: • Provide an overview. • Develop an employment plan. Have participant sign employment plan. Have participant begin activities. The employment plan might be a reduced hours plan if documentation and verification are needed to finalize the type of plan or activities in the plan.	Within 10 days of enrolling someone on Workforce One.
Review the employment plan.	At least every 3 months. (Plans in the Family Stabilization Services track or under a Family Violence Waiver should be reviewed every 6 months.)
Revise the employment plan.	At least every 12 months – or sooner if circumstances change or new information indicates a need.

To determine if a newly referred participant has been on the Diversionary Work Program in the last 12 months, do 1 of the following:

- Check the referral.
- Check Person at A Glance for the sequence on Workforce One.

For Family Stabilization Services plans, see 17.55 (The Employment Plan).

MFIP sets minimum hourly requirements for participants.

The program policies also recognize that in some situations the minimum required hours may not be possible.

Basic hourly requirements: Family Situation	Required Hours
Single parent or single caregiver family with a child younger than 6.	87 hours a month.
Single-parent or single caregiver family with no children younger than 6.	130 hours a month.
Two-parent families: both parents eligible for MFIP, including families in which 1 or both parents is disqualified for fraud.	At least 55 hours a week as a combined total. When 1 parent in a 2-parent family is participating 55 hours per week: • The 2nd parent must still participate. • Use professional discretion to decide the appropriate number of hours required of this parent to help achieve the goal of leaving MFIP.
Two-parent families: Only 1 parent eligible for MFIP. (For instance, if 1 of the 2 parents receives SSI.) OR Both parents eligible for MFIP and the other parent is FSS or is taking the child under 12-month exemption, or is taking the Minnesota Paid Leave exemption.	130 hours a month.

The Fair Labor Standards Act may result in these hours being modified for individuals doing unpaid work. See 11.12 (Fair Labor Standards).

Guidelines for the range of hours to use in different situations

- Use the criteria below to determine the number of hours that fit a participant's circumstances.
- Document in case notes the rationale for the number of hours in the plan.

Number of Hours	Situations That Are Appropriate to Those Hours
Maximum hours: 30-40 hours a week.	For participants for whom it is realistic and achievable, DCYF recommends writing plans that mirror full-time work, 30-40 hours a week.
Between the minimum and maximum hours.	Set the appropriate number of hours between the minimum hours required based on the age of the youngest child and maximum based on the participant's personal and family circumstances. This information could come from: • Assessment results. • The participant's rate of progress. • Observations of the participant. • Special needs of the participant or children.

	• Family violence issues. • The level of English proficiency. • Involvement with social services. • Legal issues.
Below Minimum Hours.	Write a plan for less than the minimum if the participant: • Qualifies for a modified plan through Family Stabilization Services. • Has good cause and qualifies for a temporary Reduced Hours Plan. See 7.21 (Reduced Hours Plans).
Beyond 40 Hours a Week.	Only write an employment plan for more than 40 hours a week if all the following conditions are met: • The participant is involved in activities totaling more than 40 hours a week and needs the activities documented in the plan because child care is needed to support those activities. • The participant requested the additional hours. • The employment counselor approves the additional hours. • The Employment Plan clearly states that the additional hours and activity are voluntary and not subject to sanction.

Hourly requirements for specific circumstances

The Specific Circumstances	The Hourly Requirements
Participants just opening on MFIP meeting both these conditions: • With a skill level likely to succeed in obtaining suitable employment. • Not choosing education activities.	A minimum of 30 hours per week in job search for up to 3 months. To meet requirements for any remaining hours, include other allowable work activities in the plan. • This applies to single-parent participants and to both parents in 2-parent families.
Teen Parents.	See 9.24 (Documenting/Tracking Education Activities).
Participants with a family violence waiver.	See 8.24 (Employment Plans & Family Violence Waiver).
Participants in Family Stabilization Services.	See 17.55 (The Employment Plan).

Do NOT sanction a participant if the participant is meeting whichever is the smaller number of hours:
- The number of hours required in the participant's employment plan.
- The minimum number of hours required in the circumstances.

If the plan requires more hours than the participant is achieving, the job counselor should learn the reason for the difference and consider revising the plan.

How to count transportation time:
Count transportation that is a part of the work activity.

For example, transportation from the Employment Services office to an interview or between interviews can be counted as part of job search activities.

Do NOT count hours used for transportation in either of the following circumstances:

- From home to a child care provider.
- To and from work or other work activities.

Round weekly activity hours to the nearest whole number

Number of Hours	Rounding Instructions
Less than 30 minutes.	Round down to the nearest hour.
30 minutes or more.	Round up to the nearest hour.

This applies to all activities.

If a participant is engaged in more than 1 activity, round the hours of participation separately for each activity each week.

Participants can be credited for hours during holidays and excused absences

Holiday hours can be allowed for unpaid activities.

Count hours of an activity during a holiday if the participant was scheduled to participate in 1 or more unpaid activities, but could not do so because the site where the activity was to occur was closed because of a holiday.

- Use the number of hours scheduled in the employment plan to determine the number of hours to count for the holiday.
- If a participant was scheduled for multiple activities on the holiday, split the credited holiday hours between the multiple activities.

Recognized holidays are:

- 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)
- Juneteenth (June 19th)
- Independence Day (4th of July)
- Labor Day (1st Monday in September)
- Veterans Day (November 11th)
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day (December 25th)

When New Year's Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Veterans Day, or Christmas Day falls on Sunday, the following Monday shall be a holiday. If these holidays fall on a Saturday, the preceding Friday shall be a holiday.

Excused absences can be used in unpaid activities:

- Participants in unpaid activities can receive up to 80 hours of excused absences in a 12-month period, but no more than 16 hours in any 1 calendar month.
  - The 12-month period begins when a participant starts in an unpaid activity.
- Participants are considered to be meeting attendance requirements and credited with excused hours when the educational institution is not in regular session, such as during holiday breaks.
  - During summer breaks, however, participants need to be in other activities to meet their hourly requirements.
- To credit a participant with other excused absence hours, do the following:
  1. Check that the participant has not already used 80 hours of excused absences in the previous 11 months.
  2. Use the participant's employment plan activity schedule to determine how many hours to credit the participant. For instance, if the participant is supposed to participate in that activity for 25 hours a week and cannot do so one day because of an excused absence, that would be 5 hours credited to the participant. Credit only as many excused hours as the participant was scheduled to do that day.
  3. If a participant was scheduled for multiple activities on the holiday, split the credited holiday hours between the multiple activities.
  4. Besides school holidays, a participant can earn an excused absence for any good cause reason. See 19.9 (Good Cause).
  5. Record the credited hours in the "excused' row under the activity category where the hours were missed.
  6. Case note the reason for granting an excused absence that day.

Use a Reduced Hours plan when the participant meets good cause but does not qualify for Family Stabilization Services. See 19.9 (Good Cause).

Good cause is a list of specific types of situations that MFIP recognizes as acceptable reasons for not following through on Employment Plan activities. See 19.9 (Good Cause).

Some of the situations in which a Reduced Hours plan might make sense:

- An initial plan which needs more verification or documentation, such as for a medical statement.
- Homelessness.
- Family violence until a Family Violence Waiver is approved.
- Legal issues that demand significant time of the participant.
- Indications of chemical or mental health problems that have not yet been verified.
- In process of applying for child care assistance.
- Child care is not available.

Do NOT use a Reduced Hours plan if the participant:

- Does NOT meet good cause and is still able to do the minimum required hours in the plan.
- Cannot meet minimum hourly requirements because of an on-going health condition. This is likely to be a situation for enrolling someone in Family Stabilization Services.

Reduced Hours for Good Cause plans should be for 90 days or less.

Employment plans must include:

- The participant's overall employment goal.
- 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.
- Monthly meetings or contact with the employment counselor.
- Documentation/verification requirements.
- The support services that will be provided.

Most but not all activities in the employment plan will be mandatory.

- Clearly indicate which activities are mandatory and which are not.
  - The following activities may be in the employment plan but cannot be mandatory:
    - Pursuing mental health treatment if they have used less than 60 months of MFIP.
- Engaging in more hours than they are required to meet, see 7.15 (Hourly Requirements for Plans).
    - Doing unpaid work.

If the participant is not pursuing unrequired activities in the plan, revise the plan.

The employment plan should include enough hours to meet minimum hourly requirements unless a good cause to do less is case-noted in the participant's file. See 7.15 (Hourly Requirements for Plans), 19.9 (Good Cause).

The employment counselor and the participant must sign and date the employment plan and any revisions to the employment plan.

Employment counselors cannot hold participants accountable to unsigned pending plans, which means sanctions cannot be applied to unsigned pending plans.

If using an electronic plan:

1. Print off the completed plan.
2. Sign it.
3. Have the participant sign it.
4. Upload the signature page into Workforce One using electronic document storage.

If using a paper plan:

1. Sign the plan.
2. Upload that paper plan into Workforce One using Electronic Document Storage.
3. Case note that the participant created and signed a paper plan and that the plan has been loaded in Workforce One.
4. Choose paper plan in Workforce One to deactivate the electronic plan.

The primary goal for the participant is employment.

Other goals may be included in the plan to fit the participant's circumstances or to incorporate the participant's personal goals.

A well written employment plan:

- Identifies the participant's self-support and employment goals.
- Breaks those sub-goals into smaller objectives.
- Lists the steps the participant must take to achieve the goals in the shortest time reasonably possible.
- Specifies what the participant will do and what the employment counselor will do, using clear deadlines or target dates.

Goals written in the employment plan should be:

- Specific: Explain what the participant wants to achieve, how and why.
- Measurable: Describe the goal in such a way that it will be clear when the goal has been reached.
- Realistic: The goal must be within the participant's ability and must not need more resources than the participant has or than the Employment services agency can provide.

The main goal of the employment plan may or may not change when the plan is updated.

Including short-term goals in different versions of the employment can help gauge progress.

For goals for victims of family violence, see 8.24 (Employment Plans & Family Violence Waiver).

For goals in Family Stabilization Services plans, see 17 (Family Stabilization Services).

Select activities in the following order of preference as needed for the family's circumstances:

1. A job in the competitive labor market.
2. Job search.
3. Subsidized employment or unpaid work experience.
4. A job combined with job readiness education or job skills training.
5. A job or unpaid work experience combined with activities related to pre-employment needs.

This hierarchy is a guide:

- 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.

Interim steps may be necessary to achieve a major activity or to transition from one level of activity to another. The Employment Plan must also include those specific steps.

When considering the order of preference for activities and the participant's circumstances, use the following criteria:

- All activities must put the participant on the most direct path to employment and any steps that support long-term economic stability.
- All activities in the plan should build upon prior steps.
- All activities must contribute to the participant's overall goal.
- Participants have the right to participate in education activities in their employment plans if they meet the admission criteria, even if those activities do not qualify as core activities.

Pre-employment activities are activities that help participants unable to work or search for work address barriers to employment. They include:

- Chemical dependency and mental health assessments.
- Chemical dependency and mental health treatment and services.
- Learning disability services.
- Child protection services.
- Other programs designed to enhance employability.

Activities related to safety are the priority in Family Violence Waiver Plans. See Chapter 08 (Family Violence Waiver).

- Those plans must ensure the safety of the caregiver and children. See 8.24 (Employment Plans & Family Violence Waiver).
- Use a modified order of preference that prioritizes safety.

For participants in Family Stabilization Services:
The order of preference is much more flexible. See 17 (Family Stabilization Services).

For teen parents without high school diplomas:
Education is the goal and the order of preference for activities does not apply. See 9.6 (Education Requirements).

Participants with a disability must receive employment plans that accommodate the disability.

People are considered to have a disability if the condition (including mental illness or, under some circumstances, chemical dependency) affects 1 or more basic life functions, including the ability to work.

- People with disabilities have the right to participate in, and benefit from, the MFIP program.
- The disability must be documented. This could be in a medical opinion form or in other documents or communications from a medical or behavioral health professional.

Inform participants of their rights to reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act. See 4.24 (Americans With Disabilities Act).

How to make accommodations:

- Seek consultation and advice from the professional who assessed the participant about activities within the participant's capacity.
- Tailor activities to meet the needs of the participant with a disability.
  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.
- Do not require a participant with disabilities 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.
- Include fewer hours of work or work activities in the plan if needed to accommodate the disability.

Federal law recognizes chemical dependency as a disability under certain conditions.

The requirement to make accommodations applies for:

- Participants who do NOT currently use illegal drugs or abuse legal drugs (including alcohol and/or prescription drugs) and who meet 1 of the following situations:
  - Have successfully completed a drug rehabilitation program.
  - Are participating in a supervised drug rehabilitation program.
- Participants using illegal drugs or abusing legal drugs but who have another documented disability.

There is no requirement to make accommodations if participants without any other disabilities:

- Use, possess or distribute illegal drugs.
- Abuse legal drugs.

The ADA also forbids discriminating against someone because he/she is assumed to be illegally using drugs and that assumption is wrong.

Do whatever is reasonable to facilitate assessment, treatment, and ongoing recovery.

Additional Resources:

- The American Disabilities Act, see 4.24 (Americans With Disabilities Act).
- Guidance issued by the Office of Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Also, see 24.27 (Disability Criteria for SSI Benefits).

There are 3 categories of activities for Employment Plans

Core Activities
These count in the Work Participation Rate without needing to be combined with other activities.

Non-Core Activities
These count in the Work Participation Rate ONLY IF the participant is already recording at least 87 hours a month in a core activity.

Other allowable activities
These do NOT count in the Work Participation Rate but are activities that are appropriate to the participant's circumstances.

For how many hours must be in core and non-core activities in order for activities to count in the Work Participation Rate, see 7.15 (Hourly Requirements for Plans).

MFIP activities and plan sections in Workforce One (WF1)

Core Activities	WF1 Plan Sections
Job search (for 240/360 hours a year).	Job Search.
Employed/Self-employed 30+ hrs per week.	Employment.
Employed/Self-employed less than 30 hrs per week.	Employment.
Paid Work Experience.	Employment.
Grant Diversion.	Employment.
Child Care for Employment in Community Service Prog.	Employment.
On-the-Job Training (OJT), public sector.	Uncompensated Work.
On-the-Job Training (OJT), private sector.	Uncompensated Work.
Community Service Program.	Uncompensated Work.
Uncompensated Work Experience.	Uncompensated Work.
Training/Education up to 12 months (12 months in a lifetime).	Education.
Training/Education, 13+ months (12 months in a lifetime).	Education.

Non-Core Activities	WF1 Plan Sections
Job Skills Training Directly Relating To Employment.	Education.
Functional Work Literacy (FWL).	Education.
Adult Basic Education (ABE)/Remedial Training.	Education.
English As a Second Language (ESL).	Education.
High School Completion.	Education.

GED Classes.	Education.
*Training/Education up to 12 months.	Education.
*Training/Education, 13+ months.	Education.

Other Allowable Activities	WF1 Plan Sections
Job search (after maximum time has been met).	Job Search.
Social Services.	Health (Chemical, Mental, Physical); Safety; Rehab services.
Other.	Child Care; Child protection; Child behavior; Transportation; Housing; Legal; Child support; Financial; Other.
Assessment.	N/A.
Holding.	N/A.
Holding – Child under 12 months.	N/A.
Holding – MN Paid Leave.	N/A.
Holding – Sanction.	N/A.
Local Flag.	N/A.

In this chapter you can find information about:

- What MFIP workers must do regarding family violence.
  - What the definition of family violence is.
- The family violence referral form.
- Rights for non-citizens.
- Requests for a family violence waiver.
- Verifying family violence.
- Time limits and the family violence waiver.
- Family violence specialists.
- Employment plans and the family violence waiver.
- Non-compliance and the family violence waiver.
- Ending a family violence waiver.
- A child under 12 months exemption and the family violence waiver.
- A Minnesota Paid Leave exemption and the family violence waiver.
- Resources for addressing family violence.
  - Safe At Home.

MFIP policies include special provisions for participants experiencing family violence.

The Family Violence Waiver ensures that participants experiencing family violence receive employment plans and services that make their safety a priority.

- To ensure that happens eligibility workers and employment counselors must inform all participants about the options available to people experiencing family violence.

What eligibility workers do:

- Provide everyone applying for or receiving public assistance a brochure about Domestic Violence Information (DHS-3477) (PDF), which describes what family violence is.
- Tell participants a family violence referral form is available for them to indicate that they want help for or information about family violence. See 8.6 (The Family Violence Referral Form).
- Not count months for the MFIP 60-month time limit when a family violence waiver is in effect. See 18.3 (The 60-Month Time Limit Policy).

What employment services agencies must do:

- Explain the family violence wavier.
- Give participants a family violence referral form. See 8.6 (The Family Violence Referral Form).
- Ensure someone trained in and specializing in family violence is available to participants. See 8.21 (Family Violence Specialists).
- Offer participants experiencing family violence an employment plan that prioritizes safety and that offers safety activities and services.
- Discuss family violence each time the employment plan is revised or reviewed. Be aware that people experiencing family violence may be reluctant to raise the issue.

Family violence is an act or a combination of acts such as:

- Physical harm.
- Bodily injury or assault.
- The infliction of fear of physical harm, bodily injury, or assault.
- Terroristic threats.
- Criminal sexual conduct committed against or committed by a family or household member.
- Interference with an emergency call.

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 whether or not 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, whether or not they have been married or have lived together at any time.
- People involved in a current or past significant romantic or sexual relationship.

Participants with a family violence waiver:

- Should be in the Family Stabilization Services track for MFIP.

Child Support also grants good cause to participants unable to cooperate with Child Support Services because of family violence. See 19.51 (Child Support Sanctions).

Give all participants a family violence referral form.

Family Violence Referral (DHS-3323) (PDF) is for all participants, whether or not they have disclosed family violence experiences, to know the local resources if and when they are needed.

Complete the information on the form about which local agencies respond to family violence before giving the form to participants.

Share the form during the:

- Employment services overview with the Domestic Violence Information (DHS-3477) (PDF).
- First meeting with employment counselor.

Make sure participants are aware this form is in their packet and that they have a choice about whether they take it home.
The form is available in six languages:
Family Violence Referral English (DHS-3323-ENG) (PDF),
Family Violence Referral Hmong (DHS-3323-HMN) (PDF).
Family Violence Referral Russian (DHS-3323-RUS) (PDF).
Family Violence Referral Somali (DHS-3323-SOM) (PDF).
Family Violence Referral Spanish (DHS-3323-SPA) (PDF).
Family Violence Referral Vietnamese (DHS-3323-VIE) (PDF).

Eligibility workers also share the family violence referral form at:

- Application.
- Referral to Child Support Services.
- Recertification for MFIP.

Noncitizens experiencing family violence have rights to apply for permanent residency.

Ensure that non-citizen participants experiencing family violence of any type know that those rights exist.

The federal Violence Against Women Act offers these rights.

Permanent resident status allows non-citizens to live and work in the United States.

Make referrals to appropriate legal services. These include:

- Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid 1-800-292-4150.
- Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services 1-888-575-2954.
- Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota 1-651-641-1011.

Both employment counselors and eligibility workers must act if a participant requests a family violence waiver.

When participants share that they are experiencing family violence:
- Let them know about the family violence waiver.

If they choose to pursue the family violence waiver:
- Ensure a family violence specialist is involved by doing 1 of the following:
  - Refer or arrange a meeting for the participant with a person trained as a family violence specialist, see 8.21 (Family Violence Specialists).
  - Refer to the agency family violence specialist.
  - Engage the family violence specialist the participant is already working with.
- Get verification of the family violence, see 8.15 (Verifying Family Violence).
- Work with the family violence specialist and participant to develop an employment plan with safety activities. See 8.24 (Employment Plans & Family Violence Waiver).
- Send a status update to the eligibility worker to approve the Family Violence Waiver once the employment plan has been signed.
- Consult with the participant to determine where mail should be sent and phone calls should be made.

When an eligibility worker communicates that a participant has shared that they are experiencing family violence:
- Expect that the eligibility worker may already have connected the participant to a family violence specialist.
- Work with the family violence specialist and the participant to develop an employment plan.
- Offer the participant the option to attend a group employment services overview or to do a private overview as part of developing the employment plan or as a separate event, whatever best meets the participant's needs.
  - If the participant fails to attend the overview, reach out to the participant.
  - If that fails, follow the FSS checklist before imposing a sanction. See 17.61 (Sanctions).

NOTE: Participants can still be eligible for a Family Violence Waiver even when they reside with or are still in a relationship/interacting with the abuser.

Ensure participants know all the ways to document family violence.

Documentation can be 1 of the following, past or current, however, do not demand a specific document or form of verification if another is more readily available. All of the documents listed are equally as valid as documentation for the Family Violence Waiver.

- Police, government agency or court records.
- Statements from staff at a family violence shelter, a sexual violence advocate or a family violence specialist with knowledge of the circumstances. This could include the same family violence advocate who is helping with the employment plan.
- Statement from a professional to whom the participant has turned for assistance about the violence.
- A sworn statement from the participant along with a sworn statement from any other person with knowledge of the violence or credible evidence that supports the participant's statement.

Keep the documentation in the case file.

Allow the participant a minimum of 10 days to gather the documentation verifying the family violence.

- Do not require a participant to engage in employment services activities or impose a sanction during this time.
- Help participants if they have difficult in securing the documentation.
- The family violence specialist may help obtain the documentation.

If child support has already received and accepted documentation about family violence from a participant, that same documentation can support the request for a family violence waiver in MFIP.

Do not require the participant to resubmit that same information to the MFIP eligibility worker or employment counselor.

Any month a participant has a family violence waiver in place does not count in the MFIP 60-month lifetime limit.

The 1st month that does not count is the 1st month that the eligibility worker has approved the family violence waiver.

- Eligibility workers can manually approve the waiver retroactively for previous months.

The 1st month after the waiver ends is the 1st month that starts counting again.

Participants may stay on the family violence waiver as long as it is needed.

Participants experiencing family violence are eligible for post-60 month extensions. See 18 (Time Limits and Extensions).

A family violence specialist is someone who meets 1 of the following criteria:

- A staff person at an organization designated by the Office of Justice Programs at the Minnesota Department of Public Safety as providing services to people experiencing family violence.
- A county, tribal or employment services agency staff person who has received similar training.
- A Legal Aid staff person with knowledge of family violence.
- Any other person or organization designated by the Office of Justice Programs at the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

The family violence specialist and the participant's employment counselor cannot be the same person.

Information about officially recognized family violence agencies is available through the Minnesota Center for Crime Victim Services:

- Phone Number: 1-888-622-8799
- Crime Victim Support Line: 1-866-385-2699

Get a signed General Consent/Authorization for Release of Information (DHS -3549) (PDF) from the participant in order to communicate about case details with the family violence specialist if the specialist is not an employee of either of the following:

- The county or tribe.
- The employment services agency.

The safety of participants and their children is the primary goal.

Activities that would not be in the participant or children's best interest or that interfere with their safety cannot be in the employment plan.

Participants with a family violence waiver are part of the Family Stabilizations Services track. See Chapter 17 (Family Stabilization Services).

Develop the employment plan in collaboration with the participant and with a family violence specialist.

- Only approve or revise an employment plan, including setting hourly requirements, after consultation with the family violence specialist and the participant.
- Rely on the expertise of the family violence specialist and the participant to decide if an activity is appropriate and safe.
- Only include the following activities if the family violence specialist and the participant agree that the activity is appropriate:
  - Pursuing employment.
  - Getting an order of protection.
  - Attending counseling.
  - Moving away from the abuser.

Revise the employment plan if issues related to family violence prevent the participant from complying.

- Encourage participants to contact their employment counselor and/or family violence specialist immediately if they are having trouble complying with activities in their employment plan.
- Let family violence specialists know to contact the employment counselor if changes are needed in the employment plan.

Review the employment plan at least every 6 months.

The purpose of the review is to determine if:

- The activities are still appropriate.
- The participant is able to safely comply with the plan.
- The family violence waiver should continue or end.

Revise the plan if necessary.

Notify the eligibility worker about whether to continue or close the family violence waiver.

Rewrite the plan at least annually.

The plan may address safety, legal, or emotional issues, and other demands on the family as a result of the family violence. The sort of employment plan activities that might be identified in a meeting with a family violence specialist and the participant might include the following:

To create safety	To access support services	To further the participant's economic stability
• Check-in with a family violence advocate. • Carry a cell phone. • Change phone numbers. • Change locks and improve security at home. • Investigate the possibility of court action, such as an Order for Protection or criminal prosecution Domestic Assault No Contact Order. • Assure that the children's school or child care provider is aware of the current situation and that the abuser	• Have children work with a children's advocate from the community or family violence program. • Attend counseling. • Participate in support groups.	Do independent or group job search activities. Volunteer in the community or at the children's school. Continue work, if the employer follows safety precautions. Change job sites or duties. Change jobs to a place unknown by the abuser.

is not authorized to pick up the children. • Set up code words or arrangements at work to call police if necessary. • Make a police report. • Register with Safe at Home, see 8.36 (Resources for Addressing Family Violence).		

Participants with the Family Violence Waiver still qualify for child care assistance to support activities in their employment plans.

- Employment counselors should communicate to child care assistance workers about activities in employment plans, as is done with information about activities in any MFIP employment plan.
- Child care assistance workers do not need to know that a family violence waiver is in place.

Sanction policies for participants with a Family Violence Waiver.

When a participant already in sanction requests or receives a family violence waiver:

- Determine if the participant qualifies for good cause, including the information the participant has shared about family violence. If the participant qualifies for good cause:
  - Lift the sanction.
  - Notify the eligibility worker and communicate the effective date.
  - Revise the employment plan.

1. When a participant with a family violence waiver fails to comply with the employment plan:
   - Review the plan with the family violence specialist and, if possible, the participant, to determine if the plan is still appropriate.
   - Revise the plan with the family violence specialist and the participant, if the family violence interferes with pursuing activities in the employment plan.
   - Grant good cause when incidents beyond the participants' control interfere with their ability to comply with the activities in the employment plan.

2. If the family violence advocate determines the participant is able to comply but is not doing so:
   - End the Family Violence Waiver.
   - Notify the eligibility worker.
   - The 60 month time clock will start counting again.
   - Invite the participant to develop a new employment plan.
     - If the participant does not participate in developing a new employment plan or does not follow through on the activities of that employment plan, follow the Family Stabilization Services sanction process. See 17.61 (Sanctions).
     - Consider whether a home visit, as required in sanctions for Family Stabilization Services, would be safe.
     - If a participant is in Safe At Home, a home visit will not be possible. See 8.36 (Resources for Addressing Family Violence).
     - Because home visits are required if Family Stabilization Services participants do not follow through on in-office visits, a sanction cannot proceed in situations in which home visits are not possible.

The participant must always have the assistance of a family violence advocate to help resolve disagreements or noncompliance concerns with employment counselors or with the county.

The decision to continue or end a family violence waiver should always be on a case-by-case basis.

- The participant's and the children's safety should be the deciding factor.
- The family violence specialist should always be part of the decision-making process about whether to continue or end a family violence waiver.

Only end the Family Violence Waiver if BOTH these criteria are met:

- The participant either:
  - Reports there is no longer a safety issue.
  - Continues to be out of compliance.
- The family violence specialist agrees.

End or renew the family violence waiver by sending a status update to the eligibility worker.

How to handle the overlap between the child under 12 months exemption and the family violence waiver depends on timing.

If the participant already has a Family Violence Waiver and choses to start the child under 12 months exemption:
• Leave family violence plan in place. • Notify the eligibility worker that the participant has chosen the child under 12 months exemption and to leave the family violence waiver in place. • The months will not count towards the participant's lifetime limit. • Set the review date as the date the exemption is expected to end. • Explain to the participant that MFIP support service dollars and MFIP child care are not available while they have the child under 12 months exemption. • Use the child under 12-month identifier under Holding on WF1 to indicate the participant is choosing the exemption.

If the participant requests the Family Violence Waiver and the child under 12 months exemption at the same time:
To ensure that the months do not count towards the participant's lifetime limit: • The participant must meet with the Employment Counselor to develop a Family Stabilization Services employment plan under the Family Violence Waiver Option. • Note that the plan is on hold. • The participant can claim the exemption after the plan is written and approved and the Family Violence Waiver is in place. • Leave the Family Violence Plan in place. • Notify the eligibility worker that the participant has chosen the child under 12 months exemption and is approved for Family Violence Waiver, so that the 60-month clock stops from that point forward.

The participant must come in to revise the plan the month after the child under 12 months exemption ends.

- For instance, if the exemption ends in June, the participant should meet with the employment counselor in July.

How to handle the overlap between the Minnesota (MN) Paid Leave exemption and the family violence waiver depends on timing.

If the participant already has a Family Violence Waiver and chooses to start the MN Paid Leave exemption:
• Leave family violence plan in place. • Notify the eligibility worker that the participant has chosen the MN Paid Leave exemption and to leave the family violence waiver in place. • Set the review date as the date the exemption is expected to end. • Explain to the participant that MFIP support service dollars and MFIP child care are not available while they have the MN Paid Leave exemption. • Use the Holding – MN Paid Leave activity in Workforce One to indicate the participant is choosing the exemption.

If the participant requests the Family Violence Waiver and the MN Paid Leave exemption at the same time:
To ensure that the months do not count towards the participant's lifetime limit: • The participant must meet with the Employment Counselor to develop a Family Stabilization Services employment plan under the Family Violence Waiver Option. • Note that the plan is on hold. • The participant can claim the exemption after the plan is written and approved and the Family Violence Waiver is in place. • Leave the Family Violence Plan in place. • Notify the eligibility worker that the participant has chosen the MN Paid Leave exemption and is approved for the Family Violence Waiver, so that the 60-month clock stops from that point forward. • Use the Holding – MN Paid Leave activity in Workforce One to indicate the participant is choosing the exemption.

The participant must come in to revise the plan the month after the MN Paid Leave exemption ends.

- For instance, if the exemption ends in June, the participant should meet with the employment counselor in July.

The Safe At Home Program

People experiencing family violence, sexual violence or stalking can get a substitute address.

The Safe at Home Program is run by the Secretary of State and offers (among other services):

- A free, confidential mail-forwarding service:
  - Participants in the Safe at Home Program all share the same P.O. Box but get assigned a unique Lot number.
  - The Minnesota Secretary of State's office forwards the mail to the participant's actual residence.
- Optional absentee voter registration.

Participants can enroll in Safe at Home through local county organizations.

- More information about how to enroll is at Safe at Home.
- Participants who are moving out of state can learn if the other state also has a program like Safe At Home.

Never require a Safe At Home participant to provide their actual address.

Safe At Home participants are privileged cases on MAXIS, meaning very few people have access to these cases.

- Employment counselors have no access to privileged cases through MAXIS Inquiry.
- In Workforce One, it is a private case and only the employment services agency staff assigned to that participant can see the case information.

Participants receiving assistance let counties or tribes know they are Safe at Home Participants in 1 of 2 ways:

- Declaring that they are enrolled in Safe at Home.
- Providing the county or tribe with their unique Lot number for PO Box 17370 in order to get their mail.

Participants do not have to share their Safe At Home identification card with the county or tribe.

When applying for or receiving assistance Safe At Home participants should:

- Use the Safe At Home PO Box address and unique lot number on the Combined Application Form (DHS-5223) (PDF) and the Authorization for Release of Information About Residence and Shelter Expenses (DHS-2952) (PDF).
- Tell the county or tribal agency in which county or reservation they actually live.

Safe At Home participants may experience delays in getting their mail.

- Be aware that it may affect their ability to reply in a timely way.
- Make exceptions for these situations.

Brochures about Safe At Home are available by calling:

- Metro Area 651-201-1399.
- Greater MN 1-866-723-3035
- MN Relay Service 711 or 1-800-627-3529

Services For Crime Victims

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety provides information for victims of crime, including people experiencing family violence.

General information for victims of crime is available at the Department's Office of Justice Programs website.

Minnesota Day One Crisis Line

A statewide 24-hour hotline that assists callers to get help, get safe and get support. The telephone number is 1-866-223-1111.

The hotline has access to interpreters for non-English speakers.

For more information, see the Minnesota Day One Crisis Line web site.

In this chapter you can find information about:

- The specific policies that apply to teen parents.
- Education requirements.
- Options for 18- and 19-year old parents.
- Roles of employment services and social services.
- Social Services Assessment requirements.
- Online and distance education.
- Employment plans focused on education.
- Documenting and tracking education activities for teen parents.
- Child under 12 months exemptions for teen parents.
- Minnesota Paid Leave exemption for teen parents.

MFIP policies specific to teen parents include:

- Having education the primary goal and activity.
- Being able to earn money without reducing the MFIP benefits when meeting education requirements.
- Not having months of MFIP assistance count while attending middle or high school or GED preparation.
- Maybe counting their parents income, if they live with their parents.
- Having required assessments done through social services.

Some policies differ based on the age of the teen parents:

MFIP policies	For minor parents (younger than 18)	For 18- and 19-year-old parents
Living arrangements.	Have to live with 1 of the following: • Their parents. • A legal guardian. • Another adult relative. • Adults who manage a supervised living arrangement approved by the county or tribe. (For more detail, see Combined Manual 0012.06 (Requirements for Caregivers Under 20)).	No special policies.
Issuance of benefits.	Have to have their MFIP cash benefits issued by warrant to the supervising adult on their behalf, when possible. This is called a protective payment. The food benefits, however, are available directly to the minor parent.	Receive benefits directed to them on their own EBT card like other adult-headed households.
Assessments. See 9.15 (Social Services Assessments).	Must include the minor parent's child.	Do not have to include the teen parent's child.
Referrals by county or tribal eligibility staff.	Must be referred to county or tribal social services, see 5.3 (Referrals to Employment Services).	May be referred to an employment services agency or the county or tribal social services department, see 5.3 (Referrals to Employment Services).
Education requirements.	Must attend high school or GED preparation courses, if the minor parent does not yet have a high school diploma or GED. See 9.6 (Education Requirements).	• Have the option to pursue either education or work as a primary activity. See 9.9 (Options for 18- & 19-Year Old Parents). • Must pursue the work option if they have a GED or high school diploma or no appropriate educational opportunity is available. See 9.6 (Education Requirements).
Child under 12 months exemption, see 5.21 (Child Under 12 Months Old Exemption).	Have only a 6-week exemption from attending school to care for a newborn. See 9.27 (Child Under 12 Months & Teen Parents).	Have only a 6-week exemption to care for a newborn if taking the education option. See 9.27 (Child Under 12 Months & Teen Parents).

Minnesota (MN) Paid Leave exemption, see 5.23 (Minnesota Paid Leave Exemption)	Can take the MN Paid Leave exemption. See 9.29 (Minnesota Paid Leave & Teen Parents).	Can take the MN Paid Leave exemption. See 9.29 (Minnesota Paid Leave & Teen Parents).

The focus in MFIP for teen parents is on education.
The specific education requirements differ according to the participant's age and education status.

Scenarios	Requirements
Minor parents without a high school diploma	Must attend 1 of the following: High School to get a diploma or GED. Educational programs to help them get a GED. (They may combine education with other activities, if those activities do not interfere with their school completion.)
18- and 19-year old parents without a high school diploma or GED	Can choose between the education option or the work option. The focus of the education option: 9.9 (Options for 18- & 19-Year Old Parents), getting a high school diploma or GED. The focus of the work option: 9.9 (Options for 18- & 19-Year Old Parents), immediate employment.
18- and 19-year old parents who get their high school diploma or GED	Must participate in employment services and are subject to all the requirements for other adult participants. Post-secondary education may still be a part of their employment plan. See 13.15 (Post-Secondary Training and Education).
Parents who turn 20 without a high school diploma	Must participate in employment services and are subject to all the requirements for other adult participants. Adult Basic Education may still be a part of their employment plan. See 13.9 (Adult Education).
Minor parents and 18- and 19-year-old parents	May pursue their education through an online school under certain conditions. See 9.18 (Online & Distance Education).

To meet education requirements the participant must:
- Be enrolled in a high school or other secondary educational program.
- Meet the school or program's attendance requirements.
  - Teen parents need to attend school for as many hours as possible and as available through the school.
  - They are in compliance when the school is not in regular session, such as during holiday and summer breaks, but they may not count in the work participation rate during those breaks.
- See instructions on how to handle these breaks in Workforce One at 9.24 (Documenting/Tracking Education Activities).
  - Meeting attendance requirements is meeting participation requirements.
  - Child care assistance will be authorized based on actual expected hours of attendance and travel time.

The only reasons a minor parent does not have to attend school:
- No appropriate educational program is available.
- Transportation to attend school is not available.
- Appropriate child care services are not available.
- The participant is ill or incapacitated seriously enough to prevent school attendance.
- The participant is needed in the home to care for someone who is ill and incapacitated.
  - This automatically includes a participant's baby younger than 6 weeks old.

If no appropriate education option is available:

For Minor Parents.	The county or tribe must refer the participant to minor parent social services.
For 18 and 19 year old parents.	The employment counselor should develop an employment plan under the work option. See 9.9 (Options for 18- & 19-Year Old Parents).

Child care assistance continues for teen parents who leave MFIP.

- Teen parents of any age will qualify for Transition Year child care if the employment plan already includes education. See 16 (Child Care).

18- and 19-year old parents can choose either a work or an education option.

Questions	Education Option	Work Option
What are the employment plan activities?	• High school education or equivalent activities. • Other activities including employment – if the education activities are at least half-time.	• No high school education or equivalent activities. • Any of the other activities permitted in an employment plan.
Do months count for 60 month time limit? See 18.3 (The 60-Month Time Limit Policy).	No – if the participant is attending school at least half-time.	Yes.
Does earned income count?	No – if the participant is attending school at least half-time.	Yes.
What does the participant do to comply?	Attend School.	Do any activities that are part of the employment plan.
What plan type should be used in Workforce One?	18-19-year old, No HS diploma/GED. (Select School only or School and Work option in the plan).	18-19-year old, No HS diploma/GED. (Select Work only option in the plan).

The school determines satisfactory progress and adequate attendance.

18- and 19-year-old parents can switch between the 2 options.
- They can notify either the eligibility worker or employment counselor.
- They can change options at any time.
- The option is not in effect until a new employment plan is developed and signed.
- Notify the eligibility worker when the new plan is signed.

If participants who want to change options are in sanction or have received notices about sanctions, they must do the following in order to change options:

Changing Options	Required Steps
From education to work option.	Attend the employment services overview.
From work to education option.	Either: • Start attending school if school is in session. • Register for school if it is summer and school is not in session.

MFIP services to teen parents include social services in some circumstances.

Counties and tribes must refer minor parents to county or tribal social services.

The social services staff must:
- Assess the minor parents and their children.
- Develop a social services plan.

Each county or tribe administering MFIP will determine which agency is responsible for managing the MFIP plan. That may or may not be the employment services agency.

In some counties MAXIS will also send a referral through Workforce One to employment services.
- If that happens and, even if the minor parent is working only with social services, the hours must be recorded on Workforce One to count those hours in the Work Participation Rate.
- Local counties will determine the procedures for who enters those hours.

If the referral is sent to Workforce One, employment services agencies must:
1. Accept the referral.
2. Enroll the minor parent.
3. Open Workforce One activities.
4. Record activity hours, including school, in Workforce One.

MFIP employment services and MFIP social services to a teen parent are part of the same welfare system and may share information about the participant.

If there is other information about the family or questions about what specific information can be shared, get direction from the local county or tribe.

Local sites refer some 18- and 19-year-old parents to social services and some to employment services.

Scenario	Who is designated to serve the participant
A minor parent already on MFIP turns 18 and still does not have a high school diploma.	Either: • The county or tribal social services agency. • An employment services agency. The decision is the participant's choice.
A minor parent already receiving MFIP earns a high school diploma or GED certificate before turning 18.	An employment services agency.
An 18- or 19-year-old parent starts MFIP without a high school diploma and chooses the education option.	Either: • The county or tribal social services agency. • An employment services agency. The county or tribe administering MFIP decides.
An 18- or 19-year old chooses the work option, see 9.9 (Options for 18- & 19-Year Old Parents).	An employment services agency.

Assessments must occur for teen parents without high school diplomas as soon as possible.

They must be done no later than 30 days after the participant is found eligible for MFIP.

N/A	Minor Parents	18- and 19-Year Old Parents Without a High School Diploma
What must assessments of the parent include?	Educational progress and educational needs: • Literacy level. • Child care and supportive service needs. • Family circumstances. • Work Experience. Optional: • The results from a Child and Teen Parent Check-up.	• Educational progress and educational needs. • Literacy level. • Child care and supportive service needs. • Family circumstances. • Work Experience.
What must assessments of the child include?	• The results from a Child and Teen Parent Check-up. • Effect of the child's development and educational needs on the participant's ability to participate in MFIP activities.	No assessment of the child is required.
Who does the assessment?	The county social services agency.	The county may designate either: • The county social services agency. • An employment counselor.

Allow online and distance high school or GED education programs for all teen parents when the program meets all of the following criteria:

- It is approved by the Minnesota Department of Education. To know whether this is the case, see Minnesota Approved Online Learning Providers.
- The program provides verification through 1 of the following methods:
  - Has mechanisms for providing reports which document the actual time the participant is accessing the online training.
  - Conducts the online or distance training in a supervised setting.

If teen parents enroll in or have a diploma from an online or distance program not approved by the Minnesota Department of Education:

Minor parents	Refer them to their local school district.

18- or 19-year old parents	• Use the Work Option. See 9.9 (Options for 18- & 19-Year Old Parents).
	• Allow them to continue the program on their own if they choose.
	• Do not include time in that program in the employment plan.
	• Let them know that:
	  • The time and activity do not count toward meeting Work Participation Requirements.
	  • Earnings from a job will count against their MFIP benefits.
	  • Child care assistance is not available for the education hours.

When teen parents not enrolled in a formal online program are preparing for GED tests online or with practice books: Put the activity in the employment plan.

- Enter the hours in “other” activity type.

The plan should reflect the participant's preferences as much as possible.

- Review with the participant the various options available for completing school.
- Consult with education agencies and the participant's school in developing the education plan.
- Help the participant select the most appropriate option available.
- Develop an employment plan that reflects that option.
- Specify that attending school is required.
- Identify:
  - The school or education program selected.
  - The services that will be provided.
  - Other activities the participant will participate in, including child care and supportive services.
  - The consequences for not complying.
  - The right to appeal any adverse action.

The MFIP plan may include activities other than school as long as work does not interfere with completing school.

Summer Break

- The employment plan can require other activities for teen parents not attending school over the summer break.
- Paid work during summer break would not count against their benefits or count in their months.
- If the employment plan includes summer school, other activities should not interfere with school activities.

Employment plans focused on education

For 18- and 19-year olds taking the work option, follow regular employment plan instructions.

A. Workforce One - Teen Parents

Activity Type in Workforce One	High School Completion. ABE/Remedial Training. GED Training.
Workforce One Employment Plan Section	Education. Minor parents working with social services or public health may not have a plan in Workforce One.

B. TANF Work Participation Rate - Teen Parents

Core or Non-Core Activity	Teen parents who are attending high school or GED preparation are deemed to be meeting the work participation requirements.
How to Calculate Hours for This Activity	For school attendance: • Use the actual hours of classroom or program time. For study or homework time: • Allow up to 1 hour of unsupervised study time per class time hour. • To count any additional study time hours recommended by the instructor or school, the study sessions must be supervised. In order to count any hours of study time: • Obtain from the school or training provider or course instructor a statement which specifies the amount of study time that is required or advised in order to make satisfactory progress or complete the education and training program. • Have the class schedule in the case file, as a reference for the required study time. • Have the person supervising the study time sign the DHS activity log. • Confirm that the total unsupervised and supervised study time does not exceed the amount of study time required or advised by the education program or instructor.

C. Documentation and Verification - Teen Parents

Who Collects the Documentation?	Employment Counselor. Social worker, who may submit the documentation to the employment counselor to enter in Workforce One.
What Information Needs to Be Included in the Verification?	Attendance verification should include: • The participant's name. • The dates covered. • The actual number of hours of class time each day. • The actual number of hours of study time. • The participant's signature.

	• The name, signature and phone number of responsible individual providing the daily supervision. Electronic attendance records produced by the school do not need a signature of the person providing daily supervision.
Which Documents Meet the Requirements?	One of the following: • Attendance printouts from the school (no signatures needed). • Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) Education Activity Log (DHS- 4209N) (PDF). • A phone call to the school. If the student's attendance information is received by phone, the employment services provider must document the hours, the name, and the contact information of the person providing the attendance information.
When is the Documentation Due?	Verify the participant's attendance monthly.
Where Should Documents Be Kept for This Activity?	In the participant's case file. Follow the County or Tribal Nation's human services general records retention schedule.
Who Provides Daily Supervision?	Someone employed at the school, including: • Course instructors. • Student advisors. • Attendance office personnel. For 18- or 19-year olds pursuing education, MFIP employment counselors may supervise attendance IF the counselors: • Keep in contact monthly by phone, in person, or electronically in order to discuss attendance along with progress. (Do not create additional expense or unnecessary travel for the participant to provide updates). • Confirm the participant's satisfactory progress by receiving and reviewing the quarterly or semester grades. • If the participant fails to demonstrate satisfactory progress at the end of an instructional period, only an official at the school or training agency can verify the reported hours of attendance reported and sign the attendance sheets for the upcoming period. • For high school students 17 and younger, a school official must supervise attendance or activities. An employment services staff person cannot supervise high school attendance or activity.
Who or what standard determines acceptable performance?	The school or instructional program. Review progress on acceptable performance when grades or other information comes from school.

D. Specific Instructions:

Leave education open on Workforce One during holidays and summer breaks.

- Enter holiday hours only for the hours of the actual holiday.
- Track zero hours.

E. Related Links

Verification and documentation requirements for On-Line Programs, see 9.18 (Online & Distance Education).

Not all teen parents are eligible for the child under 12 months exemption.

Background: Parents with children under 12 months are the only participants eligible for an exemption from participating in employment services. Details about this exemption are available in 5.21 (Child Under 12 Months Old Exemption).

Minor parents and 18- or 19-year old parents taking the education option may claim a 6-week exemption from school attendance to care for a child younger than 6 weeks old.

- This is a different time frame than is permitted to adult parents for a presumptive medical disability under Good Cause. See 19.9 (Good Cause).
- The 6 weeks is not once in a lifetime.

18 or 19-year-old parents who take the work option can request the child under 12 months exemption.

All teen parents are eligible for the Minnesota (MN) Paid Leave exemption.

Parents receiving MN Paid Leave are eligible for an exemption from participating in employment services. Details about this exemption are available in 5.23 (Minnesota Paid Leave Exemption).

Minor parents and 18- or 19-year-old parents taking the education option or work option can take the exemption for MN Paid Leave.

In this chapter you can find information about:

- Paid Employment Overview.
- Loss of Employment.
- Full-Time & Part-Time Employment: Described.
- Full-Time & Part-Time Employment: Documenting/Tracking.
- Self-Employment: Described.
- Self-Employment: Documenting/Tracking.
- Work for Rent Reductions.
- On-The-Job-Training: Described.
- On-The-Job Training: Documenting/Tracking.
- Paid Work Experience: Described.
- Paid Work Experience: Documenting/Tracking.
- Grant Diversion.

Paid employment can include:

- Employed Full-Time, 10.9 (Full-Time & Part-Time Employment: Described).
- Employed Part-Time, 10.9 (Full-Time & Part-Time Employment: Described).
- Self-Employment, 10.12 (Self-Employment: Described).
- Work for Rent Reduction, 10.15 (Work for Rent Reductions).
- On-the-Job Training – public and private, 10.18 (On-the-Job-Training: Described).
- Paid Work Experience, 10.21 (Paid Work Experience: Described).
- Grant Diversion, 10.24 (Grant Diversion).

Paid or unpaid work done for political purposes cannot be part of the employment plan.

- This includes any work done to directly or indirectly influence voting in public elections.
- Child care assistance cannot be authorized to cover hours in that type of work.

Participants can only be required to participate in employment that is suitable. See 4.18 (Participants' Program Rights in MFIP).

Participants must be in contact with their employment counselors after losing work.

An in-person or phone conversation should occur within 10 business days of learning about the job loss.

If participants quit suitable employment without good cause:

Send out a Notice of Intent to Sanction (DHS-3175) (PDF) if good cause was not confirmed. See 19.9 (Good Cause).

Follow the instructions in the Sanctions chapter on what the participant can do to cure the sanction. See 19.21.3 (How Participants Can Prevent Sanctions).

If participants lose work for reasons other than quitting:

- Do not sanction them.
- Engage with the participants and discuss whether further assessments or other revisions to the employment plan are necessary to address those conditions.

For the policies about job loss in Post-60 month (Extended) MFIP, see 18.18.3 (Employed).

Full-Time and Part-Time Employment includes the following activities:

- A job in the competitive labor market (also called unsubsidized employment).
- Paid internships.
- Americorps.
- Work study.
- Self-Employment, see 10.12 (Self-Employment: Described).
- Work for Rent Reduction only if the participant receives a cash payment or paystub.

Full-time or part-time employment cannot include work done for political purposes.

Full-time employment: work that totals 30 hours or more a week and can include 1 or more jobs.

Part-time employment: work that totals less than 30 hours a week and can include 1 or more part-time jobs.

Include other allowable activities in the employment plan to meet hourly requirements if the paid employment alone does not do so.

- Those activities should support getting full-time employment as soon as possible.
- At each 3-month review of the employment plan, gauge the progress toward full-time employment.

Self-Employment means participants working for themselves rather than an employer.

Self-employment cannot include work done for political purposes. See 10 (Paid Employment).

To determine if someone is self-employed, use these guidelines:

N/A	Self-Employed	An Employee
Work Rules.	Set by self-employed individual.	Set by employer.
Work schedule.	Set by self-employed individual.	Set by employer.
Payment.	By the job or by units, such as number of sales or visits or deliveries, etc.	By the hour or time worked, even if job is not completed
Federal/State Taxes, FICA.	Not withheld from pay – self-employed individual pays.	Employer withholds from pay.
Number of clients/employers.	Multiple.	One Employer.
Location.	Multiple or owned by self-employed individual	Set by employer.
Risk.	Assumed by self-employed individual.	Assumed by employer.

Participants must have a business plan in order to include self-employment in their employment plans.

Include self-employment activities in the employment plan as long as there is a business plan in place or being developed.

The options for creating a business plan are:

Option 1: Using the MFIP Self Employment Business Plan (DHS-6200) (PDF).

The Standard Self Employment Business Plan (SEBP) was developed based on research on self- employment business plans and in consult with professionals, who have expertise in small business, therefore meets the requirement to seek assistance from an expert in small businesses. Examples can include:

- In-home product sales.
- Personal Services (massage, hair dresser, nail care, etc.).
- In-home child care.
- Handyman services.
- Accounting.
- Paper route.
- Housecleaning.
- Taxi or ride-sharing driver.
- Miscellaneous services.

Option 2: Connecting the participant to an individual or organization trained in helping people to develop business plans.

Organization	Contact Information
Small Business Development Centers of Minnesota.	Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development Small Business Development Centers.
SCORE.	South Metro SCORE.

Small Business Development Center at the University of St. Thomas	University of St. Thomas Opus College of Business Small Business Development Center.
Small Business Resource Guide provided by the U.S. Small Business Administration	U.S. Small Business Administration.
Small Business Administration's Office of Native American Affairs: Resources to Help Native-Owned Small Businesses.	Office of Native American Affairs U.S. Small Business Administration.
The University of Minnesota Extension Service Extension offers business planning, loan consultation and other services for farm businesses.	University of Minnesota Extension.

Do not include self-employment as an employment plan activity, if a participant does not do 1 of the following:
- Develop a business plan.
- Use any available services to help develop a business plan.

Work with the participant to identify other ways to move toward greater self-sufficiency.

The reasons to accept a business plan for self-employment could include at least 1 of the following:
- A specialist from an agency listed above helped to develop the business plan.
- A designated staff person in the county or tribe responsible for administering MFIP approved the business plan. (Some counties appoint a staff person to review self-employment plans.)
- A business plan has a realistic forecast of earnings within 3-6 months and ultimately to provide enough income to be ineligible for MFIP.

Reject business plans that:
- Are incomplete and do not include a timeline, earning goals or specific steps to meeting those goals.
- Do not follow either the Self-Employment business form or were not done with the help of a small business specialist.
- Do not have an objective of profitability and enough income to move a family beyond the MFIP income limits.

Work for rent reduction is any work participants do for their landlord to reduce their rent.

A business plan is NOT required for someone getting rent reductions in return for work.

Workforce One - Work for Rent Reductions

Activity Type in Workforce One	Employed part time or Fulltime: Use 1 of these activity types if there is a cash payment or pay stub showing that the participant worked for rent reduction. Uncompensated Work Experience: Use this activity type if both of the following conditions are met: • Participants have made good faith efforts to either get evidence that they are working in exchange for a rent reduction or to get cash instead of a reduced rent, but are unable to do so. • The work is a meaningful activity that will provide marketable job skills and help the participant get paid employment in the future.
Workforce One Employment Plan Section.	Employment, see 10.9 (Full-Time & Part-Time Employment: Described). Uncompensated Work, see 11 (Unpaid Work).

TANF Work Participation Rate - Work for Rent Reductions

Core or non-core activity for Work Participation Rate.	Core.
How to calculate hours for this activity.	Use the actual hours worked.

TANF Work Participation Rate - Work for Rent Reductions

Who collects the documentation?	The eligibility worker
Which documents meet the requirements?	The participant should submit check stubs or statements from the landlord with their Combined Six-Month Report Form.
What information needs to be included in the verification?	Can be a log, a statement or check stub. The landlord must sign whatever form is used. There is no time limit on this activity.
When the documentation is due.	By the 8th of the last month of the family's current 6-month report period, attached to the Combined Six-Month Report (CSR) form that the participant submits to the eligibility worker. • For instance, the CSR form is due March 8th, if the last month of the 6-month period is March.
Where should documents be kept for this activity?	In the paper case file. Follow the County's or Tribal Nation's human services general records retention schedule.
Who provides daily supervision?	The landlord.

Who or what standard determines acceptable performance?	The landlord.
Instructions specific to this activity.	As soon as the eligibility worker processes the Combined Six-Month Report Form, this information comes across on the Workforce One/MAXIS interface.

Specific information - Work for Rent Reductions

How the income is treated for the MFIP grant.	If the participant submits a pay stub, the eligibility worker will treat the earnings as earned income, see Combined Manual 0017.12.06 (Earned Income). If the participant does not receive pay stubs, the eligibility worker will treat it as in-kind income and it will not count.

On-the-job training is training a paid employee receives while engaged in productive work and that will likely result in the employer continuing the participant in that job beyond the training phase.

- The training provides knowledge and skills essential to the full and adequate performance of the job.
- It can in the public sector or the private sector.
- It cannot include work done for political purposes. See 10 (Paid Employment).

On- the- Job Training Programs must meet all of the following conditions:

- A public sector agency covers part of the wages an employee earns while in a training program at work. The payments cover the costs associated with the training and for the lost productivity of the employee while in training.
- The public sector subsidy payments cannot exceed 50% of the wages the employer pays to the participant.
- The employer must pay the participant in accordance with any applicable law, at the same rate (including any raises) as similarly situated employees or trainees and at least at the federal or state minimum wage (whichever is higher).
- Length of the training should be based on the complexity of the job and the participant's previous work experience and training.
- An employer who accepts a placement of someone in an On-the-Job-Training-Program has agreed to retain the person upon satisfactory completion of training.

Paid Work Experience is temporary employment designed to help the participant develop skills for permanent employment in the competitive labor market.

- It cannot include work done for political purposes. See 10 (Paid Employment).
- Placing someone in a paid work experience assignment cannot displace another worker at that employment site. See 23.27 (Non-Displacement).
- It can be in the public, non-profit or private sector.

Supported work is a specialized type of paid work that includes:

- Subsidized or unsubsidized wages.
- Placement at a public sector or private sector employer.
- Individualized supervision and job coaching to support the participant on the job.

Sector name	Definition
Public Sector.	A unit of government, including school district or city, county, tribe, regional, state, or federal government agency.
Non-profit Sector.	A tax-exempt organization formed for the purpose of fulfilling a mission to improve the common good of society rather than to acquire and distribute profits. (These employers should be coded on MAXIS as private sector for subsidized employment.)
Private Sector.	A for-profit business or corporation that exists to make money for its investors, partners, principals and/or shareholders.

Tax Credits

Some employers receive tax credits for hiring public assistance participants. Those tax credits are not considered subsidies for this activity.

Grant diversion translates the MFIP monthly benefit into an hourly wage for work performed.

Grant diversion is a very rarely used program.

- Grant Diversion is a core activity.
- The eligibility worker records actual paid hours, including holidays, vacation, sick days, and prospectively determines the monthly average hours for the next 6 months.
- Find the hours reported on MAXIS.
- Documents that meet the verification requirements:
    - Pay stubs that include hours worked.
    - Employer reports that list hours worked.
    - Employer time and attendance records.
- Information that needs to be included in the verification:
    - The participant’s name.
    - Earned income amount.
    - Number of work hours.
    - Employer name (with signature and phone number, if available).

For more information see Chapter 23 (Manager's Chapter).

Paid employment

Workforce One – Full-Time & Part-Time Employment

Activity Type in Workforce One	Employed Full-time Employed Part-time
Workforce One Employment Plan Section	Employment.

TANF Work Participation Rate – Full-Time & Part-Time Employment

Core or Non-Core Activity	Core.
How to calculate hours for this activity	The eligibility worker records actual paid hours, including holidays, vacation, sick days, and prospectively determines the monthly average hours for the next 6 months. Find the hours reported on MAXIS at either: • DHS IX under employment status update in Workforce One. • MAXIS Inquiry. Hours of paid work may also be available on Workforce One at the Participation Hours tab. If Workforce One shows zero hours, use MAXIS Inquiry.

Documentation and Verification – Full-Time & Part-Time Employment

Who collects the documentation?	The eligibility worker.
Which documents meet the requirements?	Any of the following 1. Pay stubs that include hours worked. 2. Employer reports that list hours worked. 3. Employer time and attendance records. 4. Employer statement of hours worked.
What information needs to be included in the verification?	• The participant's name. • Earned income amount. • Number of work hours. • Pay period. • Pay date. • Employer name (with signature and phone number, if available).
When is the documentation due?	By the 8th of the last month of the family's current 6-month report period, attached to the Combined Six-Month Report (CSR) form that the participant submits to the eligibility worker. • For instance, the CSR form is due March 8th, if the last month of the 6-month period is March.

Where should documents be kept for this activity?	In the paper case file. Follow the County's or Tribal Nation's human services general records retention schedule.
Who provides daily supervision?	The employer.
Who or what standard determines acceptable performance?	The employer.

Specific Instructions – Full-Time & Part-Time Employment

Do not ask participants for wage and hours information they have shared with the eligibility worker.	Do not: • Require more documents beyond what an eligibility worker accepted for documentation. • Require participants to submit documentation for this activity directly to the employment counselor in addition to the eligibility worker. • Send a participant a Notice of Intent to Sanction for not providing the employment counselor with paycheck stubs. As soon as the eligibility worker processes the Combined Six-Month Report form, this information comes across on the Workforce One/MAXIS interface on the work participation hours detail page under the Participation Hours tab. • Case note that work hours have been documented on MAXIS. Look at STAT/JOBS or STAT/BUSI in MAXIS Inquiry to confirm that work hours are on MAXIS.

Get verification when someone starts a new job.	Check with the employment services agency manager to find out if the eligibility worker or the employment counselor has the responsibility to get verification for a new job.
	
	Options for getting verification:
	• Give the participant an employment verification form to take to their new employer for completion.
	• If that does not work, contact the employer directly after getting a release of information signed by the participant.
	• Send an employment verification form to the employer as soon as possible when a participant starts a new job.
	• If that form is not returned or that process not possible use one of the following options:
	  • A telephone conversation with an employer.
	  • Email communications from an employer.
	  • A pay stub (if available shortly after employment begins).
	  • Online verification source, such as the Work Number.
	  • A local employment verification form approved by DHS or Authorization for Release of Employment Information (DHS-2146) (PDF).
	
	As soon as possible, when receiving information about a participant's change in employment status, share that information with eligibility workers (and child care worker if necessary) using 1 of the following:
	• MFIP Status Update Form (DHS-3165) (PDF).
	• Status update form on Workforce One.

Related Links - Paid Employment

- Loss of Employment, see 10.6 (Loss of Employment).
- Self-Employment, see 10.12 (Self-Employment: Described).

Self-Employment

Workforce One - Self-Employment

Activity Type in Workforce One.	Job search: When the participant is preparing for self-employment or when participants are approved for self-employment but have not yet begun earning money. This might include developing a business plan and/or meeting with a business plan professional or small business consultant. Employed Full-time: When calculations show that the participant's earnings are equivalent to full-time work at the federal minimum wage. Employed Part-Time: When calculations show that the participant's earnings are equivalent to less than full-time work at the federal minimum wage.
Workforce One Employment Plan Section.	Employment.

TANF Work Participation Rate - Self-Employment

Core or non-core activity for Work Participation Rate.	Core. The hours the participant reports working may not always reflect the hours the eligibility worker calculates using the federal minimum wage.
How to calculate hours for this activity.	Hours are based on net earnings, which are total earnings minus expenses. The net earnings are divided by the federal minimum wage to identify the countable hours and will remain the same for each month until the 6-month review. See Combined Manual 0017.15.33.03 (Self Employment, Convert Inc. to Monthly Amt). Eligibility workers may use 1 of 2 methods to calculate net self-employment income: 1. Income from tax returns: • Using the net profit reported on the most recent tax year filed with the IRS. • Dividing the net profit by the number of months the business was open in the year to identify a monthly income. 2. A standardized formula allowed in MFIP: • Using 50% of the most recent month's total gross earnings (Gross earnings are total earnings before allowable business expenses are subtracted). The number is found in 2 places on Workforce One: 1. The DHS-IX Incoming Status Update tab in the Employment Status Updates section. 2. Participation Hours Tab. This information will be after the fact. For self-employed participants, the hourly requirement for the employed extension is based on actual hours worked. Do not use net income divided by the federal minimum wage to calculate the number of hours to determine eligibility for the employed extension.
How to calculate hours for child care authorizations.	Child care assistance will authorize care for all the hours specified in the employment plan. Child care assistance does NOT need to limit the authorized hours based on a calculation with the minimum wage when self-employment is part of the employment plan.

Documentation and Verification - Self-Employment

Who collects the documentation?	Eligibility worker if there are earnings. Employment Counselor if there are not earnings (For instance in preparation stages).
Which documents meet the requirements?	When there is income the options include 1 of the following: • Tax returns filed with the IRS in the most recent tax year. • Documentation of all self-employment income attached to the Combined Six-Month Report form as business records. • Self-Employment Report Form (DHS-3336) (PDF). Participants still preparing for self-employment should use: • Job search logs to track their hours and activities completed.
What information needs to be included in the verification?	• The participant's name. • Dates covered. • Amount of gross income. • Business related income (for current income method). • Participant's signature.
When is the documentation due?	Weekly if developing initial efforts -- job searching. By the 8th of the last month of the family's current 6-month report period, attached to the Combined Six-Month Report (CSR) form that the participant submits to the eligibility worker. • For instance, the CSR form is due March 8th, if the last month of the 6-month review period is March.
Where should documents be kept for this activity?	In the paper case file. Follow the County's or Tribal Nation's human services general records retention schedule.
Who provides daily supervision?	Employment Counselor. • Have contact with the participant at least monthly. • Review participant's progress.
Who or what standard determines acceptable performance?	The business plan or employment plan should identify key milestones with specific time frames. • If the participant does not make satisfactory progress on that plan and does not have good cause, revise the employment plan to replace self-employment with other approved work activities. • If the participant does not meet the minimum hourly requirements, find out if there is good cause, see 19.9 (Good Cause). • If there is not good cause: Revise the employment plan to include additional activities that could improve earnings in that job or another job. • If there is good cause: Use a temporary Reduced Hours Employment Plan.

Specific Instructions - Self-Employment

Guidelines for how to assess progress in self-employment.	Making satisfactory progress could include: • Pursuing and completing steps in Self-Employment business plan. • Meeting hourly requirements. • Increased income.

	Not making satisfactory progress could include: • Not taking steps outlined in the business plan. • Pursuing multiple steps in the business plan but repeatedly hitting dead ends. • Not obtaining needed financing or certification. • Not securing space necessary to run the business, etc. If possible, include in the review meeting anyone working with the participant from an organization specializing in business plans and/or small business development.
A self-employed parent in a 2-parent household may hire the other parent.	The marital status does not matter. This may result in reducing the family's MFIP benefits because: • The wages paid to the 2nd parent will count against the benefits. Contact the eligibility worker for help in determining the financial impact on any specific family.

Related Links - Self-Employment:
For more detailed information about Self-Employment, see the Self-Employment Guide: A resource for SNAP and Cash Programs. It is primarily for eligibility workers and includes detailed information about:

- The types of business structures that are considered self-employment.
- The calculations eligibility workers use to determine countable income.
- The documentation self-employed workers must submit depending on their source of self-employment.

On the Job Training

Workforce One - On-the-Job Training

Activity Type in Workforce One.	OJT Private: If the employer is a private sector, non-governmental employer. OJT Public: If the employer is a unit of government, including school district or city, county, Tribal Nation, regional, state, or federal government agency.
Workforce One Employment Plan Section.	Employment.

TANF Work Participation Rate - On-the-Job Training

Core or non-core activity for Work Participation Rate.	Core.
How to calculate hours for this activity.	The eligibility worker records actual paid hours, including holidays, vacation, sick days and prospectively determines the monthly average hours for the next 6 months. Find the hours reported on MAXIS at either: • DHS IX in Workforce One. • Workforce One participation hours detail page on the Participation Hours tab. • MAXIS Inquiry.
How activity is coded in MAXIS.	MAXIS STAT/JOBS screen's 'Subsidized Income Type' code '03'.

Documentation and Verification - On-the-Job Training

Who collects the documentation?	The eligibility worker.
Which documents meet the requirements?	• Pay stubs that include hours worked. • Employer reports that list hours worked. • Employer time and attendance records. • Employer statement of hours worked.
What information needs to be included in the verification?	• The participant's name. • Earned income amount. • Number of work hours. • Pay period dates or pay date • Employer name (with signature and phone number, if available).
When is the documentation due?	By the 8th of the last month of the family's current 6-month report period, attached to the Combined Six-Month Report (CSR) that the participant submits to the eligibility worker. • For instance, the CSR form is due March 8th, if the last month of the 6-month period is March.
Where should documents be kept for this activity?	In the paper case file. Follow the County's or Tribal Nation's human services general records retention schedule.

Who provides daily supervision?	The employer.
Who or what standard determines acceptable performance?	The employer.

Specific Instructions - On the Job Training

Do not ask participants for wage and hours information they have shared with the eligibility worker. Eligibility workers and employment counselors are responsible to share documentation verifying hours worked.	Do not: • Require more documents beyond what an eligibility worker accepted for documentation. • Require participants to submit documentation for this activity directly to the employment counselor in addition to the eligibility worker. • Send a participant a Notice of Intent to Sanction for not providing the employment counselor with paycheck stubs. As soon as the eligibility worker processes the Combined Six-Month Report form, this information comes across on the Workforce One/MAXIS interface.

Related Links - On the Job Training
None.

Paid Work Experience

Workforce One - Paid Work Experience

Activity Type in Workforce One.	Paid Work Experience.
Workforce One Employment Plan Section.	Employment.
Special Instructions.	Employment counselors should let eligibility workers know whether to code the paid work experience as subsidized employment in MAXIS. Subsidized employment: • Any situation in which a participant is paid out of public funds designated for paid work experience. • Subsidized private sector covers jobs with for-profit or non-profit employers, including an employment services agency. • Subsidized public sector covers jobs with a unit of government.

TANF Work Participation Rate - Paid Work Experience

Core or non-core activity.	Core.
How to calculate hours for this activity.	The eligibility worker records actual paid hours, including holidays, vacation, sick days, and prospectively determines the monthly average hours for the next 6 months. Find the hours reported on MAXIS at either: • DHS IX in Workforce One. • Workforce One participation hours detail page on the Participation Hours tab. • MAXIS Inquiry.
How activity is coded in MAXIS.	One of the following on the MAXIS STAT/JOBS screen: • 'Subsidized Income Type' code '01' (subsidized public sector employer). • Code '02' (subsidized private sector employer).

Documentation and Verification - Paid Work Experience

Who collects the documentation?	The eligibility worker.
Which documents meet the requirements?	• Pay stubs that include hours worked. • Employer reports that list hours worked. • Employer time and attendance records. • Employer statement of hours worked.
What information needs to be included in the verification?	• The participant's name. • Earned income amount. • Number of work hours. • Pay dates. • Employer name (with signature and phone number, if available).
When is the documentation due?	By the 8th of the last month of the family's current 6-month report period, attached to the Combined Six-Month Report (CSR) for that the participant submits to the eligibility worker.

	• For instance, the CSR form is due March 8th, if the last month of the 6-month period is March.
Where should documents be kept for this activity?	In the paper case file. Follow the County's or Tribal Nation's human services general records retention schedule.
Who provides daily supervision?	The employer.
Who or what standard determines acceptable performance?	The employer.
Do not ask participants for wage and hours information they have shared with the eligibility worker. Eligibility workers and employment counselors are responsible to share documentation verifying hours worked.	Do not: • Require more documents beyond what an eligibility worker accepted for documentation. • Require participants to submit documentation for this activity directly to the employment counselor in addition to the eligibility worker. • Send a participant a Notice of Intent to Sanction for not providing the employment counselor with paycheck stubs. As soon as the eligibility worker processes the Combined Six-Month Report form, this information comes across on the Workforce One/MAXIS interface.

Related Links - Paid Work Experience
None.

In this chapter you can find information about:

- Unpaid work: definition and limits.
- Requirements for unpaid work placements.
- Unpaid work: documenting and tracking.
- Community Service: documenting and tracking.
- Providing child care for other participants doing community service.
- Providing child care documenting and tracking.
- Fair Labor Standards.
- Injury Protection Program.

Unpaid work must meet participant or community needs.

Activity	Definition
Unpaid Work Experience.	Done to provide participants an opportunity to develop skills and experience increase the possibility of getting a job in the competitive labor market.
Community Service (also called Community Work Experience).	Fulfills a useful public purpose and provides meaningful, productive work. Examples of the sort of needs community service projects may address: • Health. • Social services. • Environmental protection. • Education. • Urban or rural development. • Public assistance. • Recreation. • Public facilities. • Public safety. • Community service. • Aged citizens. • Citizens with disabilities. • Child care. This can include: • Placements the employment services agencies arrange. • Volunteer opportunities that the participant identifies. • Court-ordered community service.
Providing child care for another parent working in a community service program.	Provides child care when another parent receiving MFIP is doing community service work. Do not count child care work in this category if the participant is paid for the child care. Instead treat it as self-employment. See 10.12 (Self-Employment: Described).

An unpaid work experience can occur in all types of work sites:
- Public.
- Non-Profit.
- Private Sector.

Definitions of these sectors are available at 10.21 (Paid Work Experience: Described).

Limitations on unpaid work or community service include the following:

Unpaid work done for political purposes cannot be part of the employment plan.	• This means any work done to directly or indirectly influence voting in public elections. • Child care assistance cannot be authorized to cover hours in political work.
Unpaid work can be part of an employment plan only if:	• The participant agrees to do unpaid work. • The participant has been unable to get or keep a job in the competitive labor market. • There are no paid work experience programs available. • The unpaid work experience offers specific skills and experience that the participant could not get in other activities that are available in the local area. • The skills or experience will result in higher wages than the participant would earn without the unpaid work experience.
Do not place a participant in community services unless these 2 conditions are met.	• The participant has exhausted all other employment opportunities. • The participant has been given an opportunity to choose to participate in other work activities.
Unpaid work or community service can be done for religious organizations – but it cannot include religious activities.	Examples of non-religious activities that might occur in a religious setting: • Food shelf work. • Preparing or serving meals for community members. • Clothes closets. • Staffing overnight shelters for the homeless. • Office work. Examples of religious activities: • Worship or prayer services. • Religious instruction. • Attempting to convert people.
Periodic assessments are necessary.	Re-assess the participant's needs and revise the employment plan as necessary: • At the end of a community service assignment. • Every 6 months.
Unpaid work cannot displace other workers.	See information on: • Non- displacement, see 23.27 (Non-Displacement). • Criteria for unpaid work, see 23.30 (Criteria for Unpaid Work).

Workforce One - Community Service

Activity Type in Workforce One.	Community Service.
Workforce One Employment Plan Section.	Uncompensated work.

TANF Work Participation Rate - Community Service

Core or non-core activity.	Core.

How to determine maximum hours for this activity.	• To determine the hours for any unpaid work activity other than court-mandated community service:
	• Do the calculation to determine how many hours the Fair Labor Standards Act will allow the participant. For instructions, see 11.12 (Fair Labor Standards).
	  • Ensure that the participant is not exceeding the number of hours identified by the Fair Labor Standards Act calculation.
	  • After 9 months in a community service activity, a participant's hours are limited to the MFIP benefit amount divided by the rate of pay for people in the same or similar jobs with the same employer. (Determine the hours in the same way as is done for the Fair Labor Standards Act). See 11.12 (Fair Labor Standards).
	• Count the actual hours for court-mandated community service. Court-mandated community service is not subject to the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act.

Documentation and Verification - Community Service

Who collects the documentation?	The employment counselor.
Which documents meet the requirements?	• Time sheet. • Similar document. Case notes that confirm the activity meets MFIP requirements for unpaid work.
What information needs to be included in the verification?	• The participant's name. • Days worked. • Number of hours worked. • Name of worksite supervisor. • Worksite supervisor's signature and phone number. If the worksite supervisor has not signed the form and the participant is unable to get that signature: • Have the participant sign a release of information form. • Contact the worksite to verify that the hours are correct. • Sign the form. • Case note the conversation with the worksite supervisor. To confirm that the activity meets MFIP requirements, case notes should include how the activity meets a public purpose and how it enhances the person's employability.
When is the documentation due?	• Monthly. • More often if the community service is less than a month long.

Where should documents be kept for this activity?	In the participant's case file. Follow the County's or tribe's human services general records retention schedule.
Who provides daily supervision?	The supervisor at the work site. This should be a person the participant reports to at least daily. Supervision includes: • Developing the participant's work schedule. • Overseeing that work schedule and assignments. To avoid any confusion, the Minnesota Department of Human Services recommends that worksites and employment services agencies develop a written agreement about who is providing daily supervision.
Who or what standard determines acceptable performance?	The worksite.

Related Links - Community Service:

- Fair labor Standards: 11.12 (Fair Labor Standards)
- No displacement of other paid employees, see 23.27 (Non-Displacement).

Participants may provide child care for other participants who are doing community service as an official MFIP activity.

This activity does NOT cover participants who are providing child care for their own children while their spouse or the other parent of those children is in a community service activity.

Get a signed release of information both from the participant providing the child care and the participant doing the community service.

- This is necessary, because getting the necessary information from each of them requires sharing information about the fact they are receiving public assistance, which is protected information.
- Keep the signed release in the case file.

Federal law limits how many hours of unpaid work can be part of a participant's employment plan.

Minimum wage laws affect how many hours someone can do unpaid work under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act.

- The MFIP benefit is treated as though it were earned income.
- The MFIP benefit is divided by the minimum wage to determine the maximum hours of unpaid work that can be required in a month.

Instructions on how to figure out the maximum number of hours of unpaid work someone can do:

1. Every month check through MAXIS Inquiry the total amount of MFIP benefits a household is receiving in a month. Include the:
   - MFIP cash portion.
   - The food portion.
   - The housing assistance grant.
2. Divide that by the federal or state minimum wage, whichever is higher.
3. Always round down the result to the nearest whole number. That number is the maximum number of hours in that month that the participant can do unpaid work as part of the MFIP employment plan.
4. If the participant's MFIP benefits change, re-do the calculation for the number of hours allowed in unpaid work.

If the participant is a part of a 2-parent family:

- Do the same calculation with the MFIP benefits and the minimum wage.
- If both parents are doing unpaid work, their combined hours cannot exceed the maximum number of hours identified in the minimum wage calculation.

If the participant does NOT work the maximum hours allowed under Fair Labor Standards:

- The participant will only receive credit for actual hours.
- The participant may include other activities to meet their minimum hourly requirements. Those other activities are not subject to the Fair Labor Standard Act.

How Maximum Hours Apply to Work Participation Rate Hourly Requirements

Participants working the maximum number of hours allowed under Fair Labor Standards will be credited as completing 87 hours of a counted core activity in the Work Participation Rate – even though the actual numbers fall short of 87. This is called "deeming" the hours.

For participants with children younger than 6.	This will meet all their hourly requirements.
For participants with no children younger than 6.	• The employment plan must contain other activities to meet their 130 hours a month requirement. • The additional hours between the 87 deemed hours and the 130 required hours can be in core or non-core activities. • Those other activities are not subject to the Fair Labor Standards Act.

How the Work Participation Rate Treats the Maximum Allowed Hours

Participant's Required Monthly Hours	Maximum Number of Monthly Hours Allowed Per FLSA Calculation	Will the Participant Meet the Work Participation Rate Requirements?	What Else Needs to Occur?
87 hours	Less than 87	Yes	Nothing The Work Participation Rate will treat the participant as though he/she met the 87 hours a month requirement.

			This is called “deeming” the hours.
130 hours	Less than 87	Only partially	• Track the actual hours of unpaid work that the participant did as opposed to the maximum number of hours allowed under the FLSA calculation. • The participant will be deemed the 87 hours.

Here is an example, if the participant is working the maximum of 82 hours of unpaid work allowed under this formula, the following scenarios apply:

If MFIP Household is:	How many Unpaid work hours meet the FLSA requirement?	How does the Work Participation rate treat those hours?	How many hours are required in other activities for the Work Participation Rate?
1 parent with a child under 6 years old.	82 hours per month.	As though the participant has met the 87 hour requirement.	No other activities required.
1 parent with the child 6 years or older.	82 hours per month.	As though the participant has done 87 hours of work activity.	43 additional hours in core or non-core activities, to meet the 130 hours per month requirement.
2 parent households with a pregnant woman.	The combined hours of both parents cannot be more than 82 hours per month.	N/A.	Additional activities will need to be added to meet their 55 hours a week participation requirements.

If the participant wants to work more hours than the Fair Labor Standards allow, those additional hours:

- Cannot be part of the employment plan.
- Do not count towards the participant’s minimum hourly requirements.
- Cannot be supported by child care assistance.
- Should not be in the participant’s activity log or time sheet.
  - If the participant’s time sheet includes the hours, identify the hours that are voluntary additional time and record a case note to explain that they are voluntary and are not being counted.

The Injury Protection Program pays claims when someone has been injured or killed while doing unpaid work for public programs.

Be sure that the participant knows that there is an injury protection program and explain how it works.

- It covers reasonable medical expenses, compensation for partial disability, and burial costs.
- It covers those costs up to $200,000.
- The Department approves coverage on a case by case basis.

Do not place a participant in an unpaid work experience program unless 1 of the following is true:

Option 1:
The site has liability insurance covering unpaid workers or volunteers for injuries or death while doing work at the site.

Option 2:
The county or tribe has an Unpaid Work Experience Program approved by the Minnesota Department of Human Services and has filed the Injury Protection Program with the Department.

Have the participant and worksite supervisor complete the following forms after an incident in which a participant has been injured while doing unpaid work:

Form	Purpose	Who Should Complete This Form
Notice of Privacy Practices (DHS-3979) (PDF) -- even if the participant received this earlier as part of enrollment.	• Notifies clients about how their private information may be used. • Available in 7 languages. See 4.6 (Data Privacy).	No one.
Injury Protection Program Participant Information and Authorization to Release Medical Information (DHS-3994) (PDF).	Permission to release data and medical information.	The participant.
Injury Protection Program First Report of Injury (DHS-3995) (PDF).	Provides information about the participant, the injury or accident and the worksite.	Worksite supervisor or authorized staff.

Steps others will do:

DHS.	• Will refer the participant to a medical care provider. • Submit the Injury Protection Program claim.
The medical care provider.	• Will provide a report and diagnosis.
Counties or tribal agencies.	• Will investigate the claim. • Will submit claims to an insurance agency or to DHS after the treatment is complete and all treatment bills are available.

Unpaid work or community experience placements must not exploit or endanger participants.

Before offering or placing a participant in unpaid work, including for community service, do all of the following.

- Confirm with the employment services manager that the county or tribe has an Unpaid Work Experience Program approved by the Minnesota Department of Human Services.
- Monitor that the hours of work fall within the range of the monthly MFIP cash and food benefits and the housing assistance grant divided by the minimum wage according to the Fair Labor Standards Act requirements. See 11.12 (Fair Labor Standards).
- Ensure that the County or tribe has confirmed with sites hosting unpaid work that the placement of an MFIP participant at that site will not result in displacing a paid worker. See 23.27 (Non-Displacement).
  - Clarify who must monitor that.
- Confirm that the site is compliant with federal Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) requirements.
  - Ask the employment site if it has been inspected by OSHA Compliance
  - If yes: Ask to see the results.
  - If no, ask if the employer is working with OSHA Consultation.
  - If yes, ask to see recommendations.
  - If no, ask to see the employer has an Aware Program plan. This is an accident and injury reduction plan. All Minnesota employers must have one.

For questions or more information about safety: Call Workplace Safety Consultation at the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry at 651-284-5060.

Workforce One - Unpaid Work Experience

Activity Type in Workforce One.	Uncompensated work experience.
Workforce One Employment Plan Section	Uncompensated work.

TANF Work Participation Rate - Unpaid Work Experience

Core or non-core activity.	Core.
How to determine maximum hours for this activity.	To determine the hours for any unpaid work activity other than court-mandated community service: 1. Do the calculation to determine the maximum hours the Fair Labor Standards Act will allow the participant. For instructions, see 11.12 (Fair Labor Standards). 2. Ensure that the participant is not exceeding the number of hours identified by the Fair Labor Standards Act calculation. 3. Do not require the participant to do more hours than required for the Work Participation Rate. 4. Case the note the calculations. May need to recalculate hours if the monthly grant changes.
How to track hours.	Enter the actual number of hours in Workforce One.

Documentation and Verification - Unpaid Work Experience

Who collects the documentation?	The employment counselor.
Which documents meet the requirements?	• Time sheet. • Work Activity Verification Log (DHS-4897) (PDF). • Similar document. • Case notes that confirm the activity meets MFIP requirements for unpaid work.
What information needs to be included in the verification?	• The participant's name. • Days worked. • Actual number of hours worked each day. • Name of worksite supervisor. • Worksite supervisor's signature and phone number. If the worksite supervisor has not signed the form and the participant is unable to get that signature: • Have the participant sign a release of information form. • Contact the worksite to verify that the hours are correct. • Sign the form. • Case note the conversation with the worksite supervisor. • If the worksite supervisor is unavailable to sign the timesheet, another responsible individual who is employed by or stationed at the worksite may do so. Name and phone number of the other responsible individual are required.

	Case notes should include how the unpaid work enhances the person's employability.
When is the documentation due?	Monthly.
Where should documents be kept for this activity?	In the participant's case file. Follow the County's or tribe's human services general records retention schedule.
Who provides daily supervision?	The supervisor at the work site. This should be a person the participant reports to at least daily. Supervision includes: • Developing the participant's work schedule. • Overseeing the work schedule and assignments. To avoid any confusion, the Minnesota Department of Human Services recommends that worksites and employment services agencies develop a written agreement about who is providing daily supervision.
Who or what standard determines acceptable performance?	The worksite.

Related Links - Unpaid Work Experience

- Fair labor Standards: 11.12 (Fair Labor Standards).
- No displacement of other paid employees, see 23.27 (Non-Displacement).

Providing child care for another participant doing community service.

Workforce One - Providing Child Care to Support Community Service

Activity Type in Workforce One.	Providing Child Care (Community Service).
Workforce One Employment Plan Section.	Uncompensated Work.

TANF Work Participation Rate - Providing Child Care to Support Community Service

Core or non-core activity.	Core.
How to calculate hours for this activity.	Record the actual hours of participation.

Documentation and Verification - Providing Child Care to Support Community Service

Who collects the documentation?	The employment counselor.
Which documents meet the requirements?	One of the following: • A signed statement from the participant doing the community service about the hours child care was needed and provided. • A signed statement from someone who has knowledge of the time spent providing child care. This cannot be from the participant who is providing the child care. This could include the parent of the child, someone supervising the community experience activity and familiar with the schedule. If the statement is not signed and the participant is unable to get that signature: • Have the participant sign a release of information form. • Contact the person who submitted the statement to verify that the hours are correct. • Sign the form. • Case note the conversation with the worksite.
What information needs to be included in the verification?	• The participant's name. • Days worked/dates covered. • The actual number of hours worked each day.
When is the documentation due?	Monthly.
Where should documents be kept for this activity?	In the participant's case file. Follow the County's or tribe's human services general records retention schedule.
Who provides daily supervision?	Someone who has knowledge of the participant's schedule. It can be an employment services agency staff person if that person has at least weekly contact with the participant and receives a log at least monthly.
Who or what standard determines acceptable	The employment plan must list the days and times the participant will be providing the child care.

performance?	

Related Links - Providing child care to support community service:
Fair labor Standards: 11.12 (Fair Labor Standards).
No displacement of other paid employees, see 23.27 (Non-Displacement).

In this chapter you can find information about:

- Job search description and appropriate activities.
- Job search requirements.
- Documenting and tracking requirements for job search.

Job search can be self-directed or structured.

In either case it includes the following types of activities:

- Preparing and submitting resumes.
- Attending interviews with employers.
- Participating in job clubs.
- Completing job applications.
- Researching employers.
- Preparing for self-employment when no income is yet being earned. See 10.12.3 (Self-Employment: Documenting/Tracking).
- Training in interviewing skills.
- Learning effective job search skills.
- Attending job fairs.
- Participating in other activities that support job search.
- Life skills training.
- Chemical health treatment, mental health treatment, or rehabilitation services activities when tracked and reported under Job Search. See 14.9.3 (Treatment & Rehab: Documenting/Tracking).

To set the stage for a successful job search:

- Tailor job search activities to the local economic conditions.
- Focus job search on currently available jobs that meet the participant's employment goal and that match their skills and abilities.
  - Expand the scope of the job search if that more narrowed approach does not lead to job offers.
- Do not routinely refer all participants to a single employer or a small set of employers.

Structured job search may be appropriate in some circumstances.

Structured job search is a continuum of organized, intensive, and supervised activities that help:

- Identify work skills.
- Develop soft skills.
- Build confidence.
- Coach the participant.
- Offer peer support.

Each employment services agency will design its own structured job search.

Some common components include:

- Requirements to participate in on-site activities.
- Modeling of workplace expectations, such as dress, timeliness, etc.
- Skill building workshops.
- Job club.
- Frequent evaluation of progress with constructive feedback for the participant.

The employment plan should include information about whether job search is on-site or self-directed.

Who must do job search and for how long:

Who MUST participate.	Newly enrolled and returning unemployed participants with the skills to get a job in the competitive labor market.
Others that may be good candidates for job search.	Participants who: • Were initially determined unable to secure a job but have since resolved barriers or challenges. • Have lost a job. • Have completed a training or education program and are not working. • Plan to take a course of education that is not currently available. • Are pursuing education part-time.
Who does not have to participate.	Participants who: • Are eligible to pursue education, who want to do so, and who can meet their minimum hourly requirements through education, see Chapter 13 (Education and Training). • Have barriers to getting or keeping work that will not be overcome during 3 months of job search. Develop an employment plan that addresses those barriers.
The time requirements.	At least 30 hours a week for up to 12 weeks.
Expectations of participants.	• Submit completed job search logs weekly. • Accept any suitable offer of employment. See 4.18 (Participants' Program Rights in MFIP).
What to do if a job search has not resulted in a successful job offer within 3 months.	1. Meet with the participant. 2. Have the participant complete the following screening tools: • The MFIP Self-Screen, see 6.24 (Mental/Chemical Health Screening/Assessments). • Brief Screening Tool for Special Learning Needs (DHS-3504) (PDF). 3. Use the results of the screening tool and any other information to determine next steps: • Work with the participant to determine if other activities should be incorporated into the employment plan. • Identify services to address concerns impairing the job search. • Those services can be counted as a job readiness activity, 7.30 (Order of Preferences for Activities), or a social service activity, Chapter 14 (Social Services and Other Activities). • Use a structured and supervised job search if the screening tools and/or resulting consultations with qualified professionals indicate job search is an appropriate activity to continue. See 12.3 (Job Search: Description & Activities).
When job search should be discontinued or the hours reduced.	• It becomes obvious that the job search is unsuccessful and is not or will not result in employment. • The participant is having difficulty following through with activities in the employment plan.

Job Search

Workforce One - Job Search

Activity Type in Workforce One.	Job Search.
Workforce One Employment Plan Section.	Job Search.

TANF Work Participation Rate - Job Search

Core or non-core activity.	Core up to: • 240 hours in a year for participants with children younger than 6. • 360 hours in a year for participants with no children younger than 6. The year is a 12-month period that starts with the participant's first hours in job search that are counted in the Work Participation Rate. No more than four consecutive weeks in a month are countable as core activity. After that time: • Job search is neither core nor non-core. • The hours are not counted in the Work Participation Rate. Participants should continue with job search activities, even when the activity no longer counts in the Work Participation Rate if it makes sense for their circumstances. The State is responsible for calculating which hours of job search count in the Work Participation Rate and which do not. Use the same documentation and verification standards for any job search hours entered.
How to track hours for this activity.	Hours are tracked by the week. The hours for any activity must be actual hours. Count hours of travel time between job search activities. • Do not count travel time to the 1st activity or travel time returning home after the last activity. Do not write employment plans trying to maximize the hours of job search for the work participation rate. • Job search can be in an employment plan even when the hours do not contribute to the work participation rate. • Include job search in employment plans whenever it appears to be an activity that will advance a participant to employment and self-sufficiency.
Where are hours tracked for this activity?	Workforce One.

Documentation and Verification - Job Search

Who collects the documentation?	Employment counselor.
What information needs to be included in the verification?	For job search logs: • Date and time of each contact. • Type of contact (phone call, in person, by email, other). • Position the participant was pursuing.

	• Status of the contact.
	• Name and contact information of the employer or business.
	• Participant's signature stating the activity log and the hours contained on it are accurate.
	• Weekly check-in date.
	  • A case note should be used to document the participant's activity log was reviewed and the hours have been verified.
	• Every other week job contact verified.
	  • Check the box on the back of the Job Search Log to indicate job contact was verified.
	  • Indicate the job and the method used to verify the contact.
	  • If no verification was provided, a case note indicating the specific job contact that has been verified is acceptable.
	• Employment counselor's signature.
	
	For attendance sheets:
	• The participant's name.
	• The date and actual hours of participation.
	• A signature of the person responsible for overseeing the activity.
	
	To verify a job contact:
	• Make sure to check the box on the MFIP Job Search Activity Log about a verified job contact.
	• Indicate on the log how the contact was verified or case note that a specific job contact was verified if no other documentation can be obtained.

Which documents meet the requirements?	• MFIP Employment Services Weekly Job Search Activity Log (DHS-5784) (PDF) and the every-other-week method for verification as checked on the log, such as:
	  • Conversation between the employment counselor and the participant about a specific job contact.
	  • Copies of applications, letters and business cards.
	  • A computerized "receipt" for online applications.
	  • Contacting the employer to verify the job contact.
	  • Other.
	• A sign-in attendance sheet for group meetings such as job club or job search at a Workforce Center.
	• A computerized print-out documenting online job searches – if the print out specifies the amount of time the participant was doing an online job search.

When is the documentation due?	As part of weekly check-ins with the participant.
Where should documents be kept for this activity?	Activity logs and computerized print-outs: In the participant's case file. Group attendance sheets: In the participant's case file or at a location easily accessible to program monitors. Follow the County's or tribe's human services general records retention schedule.
Who provides daily supervision?	• Employment counselor. • Other responsible individuals, such as another employment services provider or Workforce Center staff. Daily supervision means: • Developing a schedule with the participant of daily activities for the week.

	• At least 1 in-person or phone check each week.
	  • Review progress.
	  • Identify the need for any support services.
	  • Make any necessary changes in the schedule of activities.

Who or what standard determines acceptable performance?	Employment counselor should review the activity log at weekly check-ins with the participant. • Review that the log is complete. • Sign the activity log attesting that information and hours have been verified.

Specific Instructions - Job Search

What should be done with incomplete logs?	• Do not track hours of activities in Workforce One that cannot be verified. • Return job search logs missing the participant's signature to the participant to get the signatures if job search was independent and the activity was off-site. • Case note any actions taken.

In this chapter you can find information about:

- The requirement to let all participants know about education and training options in MFIP overview.
- English Language Learning or Functional Work English.
- English Language Learning: Documenting and Tracking.
- Adult Basic Education, GED preparation and Adult High School Diploma.
- Adult Education Documenting and Tracking.
- Job skills training directly related to employment.
- Job Skills training: Documenting and Tracking.
- Post-Secondary Training and Education.
- Post-Secondary Ed: Documenting and Tracking.
- Online Education and Training.
- Online Learning: Documenting and Tracking.

Information about education requirements for teen parents can be found in 9.6 (Education Requirements).

Employment counselors should encourage and share with all participants the opportunity to pursue training and education.

A brochure is available to share with participants about education and training opportunities in MFIP, see Education and Training in the Minnesota Family Investment Program (DHS-3366) (PDF).

Do not deny access to education for participants who qualify for the education program they want to pursue.

Include education activities in the employment plan:

- Even when they do not contribute to the Work Participation Rate.
- When participants meet the eligibility criteria of the educational program they want to enter.

Participants need to make satisfactory progress in their education or training in order to maintain education as part of the employment plan:

- The educational institution determines satisfactory progress.
- If it is clear the participant will not make satisfactory progress as defined by the educational institution, amend the plan to have alternative activities.
- This change in the employment plan will not necessarily occur the 1st time a participant falls below the school's standards. For instance, a school may put a student on academic probation and allow a student to continue attending. The employment plan should continue with the education activity until the school decides the student is dis-enrolled.

If the education and training activities do not meet minimum hourly requirements, work with the participant to include additional activities in the employment plan.

The education and training activities in MFIP include:

For adults

- English Language Learning or Functional Work Literacy, see 13.6 (English Language Learning).
- Adult Basic Education, GED preparation and Adult High School Diploma, see 13.9 (Adult Education).
- Job skills training directly related to employment, see 13.12 (Job Skills Training Related to Employment).
- Post-Secondary Training and Education, see 13.15 (Post-Secondary Training and Education).

For teen parents:

- High school attendance and GED preparation are allowed activities. See 9.6 (Education Requirements).

For information about how education and training can increase career opportunities:
See the Pathways to Prosperity (PDF) visual guide from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

This includes English Language Learning (ELL) and Functional Work Literacy (FWL).

Education Activity:	Instruction designed to:
English Language Learning.	Improve their ability to speak, write or read English because it is not their first language. (This is sometimes referred to as English as a Second Language or ESL).
Functional Work Literacy.	Provide a specialized form of English Language Learning that is intensive and work-focused instruction for at least 20 hours per week.

Participants with a student performance level (SPL) below 6 must be allowed to pursue English Language Learning as part of their MFIP employment plan.

- The language proficiency level must be determined by a nationally recognized test, such as the CASAS (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems).
- If the instructional agency does not use the SPL system, use the conversion chart which outlines the CASAS levels and spoken proficiency levels for English language learners, see CASAS SPL Scores.
- Participants are expected to make satisfactory progress in the courses in order to continue to include these activities in their employment plan. The school or training program defines satisfactory progress.

This includes Adult Basic Education, GED Preparation and Adult High School Diploma.

The information about these activities is for participants 20 years and older. See 9.9 (Options for 18- & 19-Year Old Parents).

Education activity:	Instruction designed to:	Link for more information:
Adult Basic Education.	• Improve the employability of students through instruction in reading, math, language, and workplace readiness. • Provide remedial work for students who want to pursue post-secondary education.	Minnesota Adult Basic Education.
GED Preparation.	Prepare for and pass GED tests that earn the students a certification that they have high-school level academic skills.	GED — General Educational Development Diploma.
Adult High School diploma.	Acquire the competencies to earn a diploma issued by the Minnesota Department of Education for adults.	Standard Adult Diploma.

Do not deny participants without a high school diploma the opportunity to pursue Adult Basic Education and GED preparation.

- Participants must make satisfactory progress in the courses in order to continue to include these activities in their employment plan.
- Some participants, already having earned a high school diploma, may need to pursue a GED, because they cannot access their high school diploma (for instance when they earned that diploma in another country).

Jobs Skills training is short-term training or education directly related to employment.

It should focus on skills required in specific jobs.

These skills should provide a participant the ability to get a job or to advance or adapt to changing demands in a workplace.

Examples include classes that teach:

- Interviewing skills.
- Resume writing skills.
- Tips for finding appropriate child care.
- Dress for success.
- Budgeting.
- Appropriate workplace behaviors.
- Keyboarding.
- Driver's education.
- Vehicle maintenance.
- Use of specific software.
- Office skills training.
- Safety/first aid monitoring.
- Microenterprise or small business owner’s training.
- Business machine operations.
- Food preparation.
- Landscape maintenance.
- Work specific courses provided by employers.

Post-secondary education is training or education provided by a private or state college or post-secondary institution that results in a degree or an industry-recognized certificate, including vocational or technical schools.

Participants interested in a post-secondary program are to be encouraged and must be allowed to pursue post-secondary education if they have been accepted to a program.

Participants must make satisfactory progress in the courses in order to continue to include these activities in their employment plan.

After participants complete or end their post-secondary education or training program, the participant has 3 months to find employment related to their field of training. If after 3 months the participant is not able to find employment in their field, the participant should seek alternative employment options and accept any offer of suitable employment. The participant should meet with the employment counselor to revise the employment plan to include other work activities.

Two categories of post-secondary education exist in MFIP

Programs lasting 12 months or less.	Programs in this category are programs designed to be completed in 12 months or less. • This category is not used for the 1st 12 months someone is in a post-secondary program designed to take longer than 12 months to complete. • If the participant takes longer than 12 months to complete the program, it is still recognized as post-secondary education and training lasting 12 months or less.

Programs lasting 13 months or more.	• Programs in this category are ones designed to be completed in 13 months or more.
	• These can include the following degrees:
	  • Associates of arts.
	  • Bachelors.
	  • Masters.
	  • Other degrees designed to be completed in no more than 4 years.

Online or distance learning programs can be included in an MFIP employment plan if 1 of the following conditions are met:

Option 1:
The training program can provide reports that document the actual log-in and log-out times the participant accesses the online program. A supervisor's signature is not necessary.

Option 2:
The online or distance training program is conducted in a supervised setting where the course instructor or another responsible person oversees the participant's course work and progress.

Option 3:
For adult students 18 years and older, the supervisor may be an employment counselor who maintains regular contact and confirms the participant's progress by receiving quarterly or semester grades.

Workforce One - English Language Learning

Activity Type in Workforce One.	ESL Training. Functional Work Literacy.
Workforce One Employment Plan Section.	Education.

TANF Work Participation Rate - English Language Learning

Core or non-core activity.	Non-Core. Include education activities in the employment plan even when they do not contribute to the Work Participation Rate.
How to calculate hours for this activity.	Use the actual hours of classroom time including labs and other required activities. For study time: • Allow up to 1 hour of unsupervised study time per class time hour. • To count any additional study time hours recommended by the instructor or school, the study sessions must be supervised. In order to count any hours of study time: • Obtain from the school or training provider or course instructor a statement which specifies the amount of study time that is required or advised in order to make satisfactory progress or complete the education and training program. • Have the class schedule in the case file, as a reference for the required study time. • Have the person responsible for supervising study time sign the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) Education Activity Log (DHS-4209N) (PDF). • Confirm that the total unsupervised and supervised study time does not exceed the amount of study time required or advised by the education program or instructor.

Documentation and Verification - English Language Learning

Who collects the documentation?	Employment Counselor.
What information needs to be included in the verification?	Attendance verification should include: • The participant's name. • The dates covered. • The actual number of hours of class time each day. • The actual number of hours of study time. • The participant's signature. • The name, signature and phone number of responsible individual providing the daily supervision. Electronic attendance records produced by the school do not need a signature of the person providing daily supervision.
Which documents meet the requirements?	One of the following: • Group attendance sheets. • Electronic attendance records. • Participant activity logs. • Ensure that activity log documents the amount of study time.

	• Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) Education Activity Log (DHS-4209N) (PDF).
When is the documentation due?	Participants should submit attendance records and study time logs at least monthly.
Where should documents be kept for this activity?	In the participant's case file. Follow the county or tribe's Human Services General Records Retention Schedule.
Who provides daily supervision?	There are 2 options: Option 1: Someone employed at the school, including: • Course instructors. • Student advisors. • Attendance office personnel. Option 2: The participant's employment counselor. In order for an employment counselor to provide the daily supervision, the employment counselor must do all of the following: • Keep in contact monthly by phone, in person, or electronically in order to discuss attendance along with progress. Do not create additional expense or unnecessary travel for the participant to provide updates. • Confirm the participant's satisfactory progress through communication with the English Language Learning program.
Who or what standard determines acceptable performance?	The school or instructional program. Review progress on acceptable performance when grades or other information comes from school. Ensure testing procedures are in place to determine if the participant's language proficiency exceeds SPL 6. • If a participant reaches or exceeds SPL 6 while in the middle of a course of instruction, allow the participant to continue until the end of that course.

Specific Instructions - English Language Learning

Participants must enroll in classes offered by a state-approved provider.	To find out if a provider is state-approved do 1 of the following: • Call the Minnesota Adult Literacy Hotline at 1-800-222-1990. • Text the Literacy Hotline at 612-424-1211. • Visit the Literacy Minnesota website. The hotline operator will need to know the zip code for the area the participant lives or is likely to pursue classes. The hotline staff will provide: • Information about the nearest program. • Operating hours. • Contact information.
For new immigrants on FSS.	The county will enroll newly arrived immigrants in the United States for less than 12 months in the Family Stabilization Services track. Notify the eligibility worker if the participant is still at or below SPL 6 and needs to continue in Family Stabilization Services. See 17.33 (In the

	Country for 12 Months or Less). For participants staying in Family Stabilization Services for more than 12 months because of English Language Learning needs, review language-learning progress every 6 months and determine if the participant should be continued in the Family Stabilization Services track for another 6 months. Notify the eligibility worker of the Family Stabilization Services status. Check Workforce One/DHSIX to confirm the Family Stabilization Services status.

Related Links - English Language Learning

- Verification and documentation requirements for online programs, see 13.18 (Online Education and Training).
- CASAS Skill Level Descriptors for ELL, see CASAS SPL Scores.

This applies to Adult Basic Education, GED preparation and Adult High School diploma for participants 20 years old and older. For participants 19 and younger, see Chapter 9.24 (Teen Parents).

Workforce One - Adult Education

Activity Type in Workforce One.	ABE/Remedial Training. GED Training. High School Completion.
Workforce One Employment Plan Section.	Education.

TANF Work Participation Rate - Adult Education

Core or non-core activity.	Non-core. Include education activities in the employment plan even when they do not contribute to the Work Participation Rate.
How to calculate hours for this activity.	Use the actual hours of classroom time. For study or homework time: • Allow up to 1 hour of unsupervised study time per class time hour. • To count any additional study time hours recommended by the instructor or school, the study sessions must be supervised. In order to count ANY hours of study time: • Obtain from the school or training provider or course instructor a statement which specifies the amount of study time that is required or advised in order to make satisfactory progress or complete the education and training program. • Have the class schedule in the case file, as a reference for the required study time. • Have the person supervising the study time sign the DHS activity log. • Confirm that the total unsupervised and supervised study time does not exceed the amount of study time required or advised by the education program or instructor.

Documentation and Verification - Adult Education

Who collects the documentation?	Employment Counselor.
What information needs to be included in the verification?	Attendance verification should include: • The participant's name. • The dates covered. • The actual number of hours of class time each day. • The actual number of hours of study time. • The participant's signature.

	• The name, signature and phone number of responsible individual providing the daily supervision. Electronic attendance records produced by the school do not need a signature of the person providing daily supervision.
Which documents meet the requirements?	One of the following: • Participant activity logs. • Ensure that activity log documents the amount of study time. • Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) Education Activity Log (DHS-4209N) (PDF). • Electronic attendance records. • Group Attendance Records. • For HC Completion: via phone call to the school. If the student's attendance information is received by phone, the employment services provider must document the hours, the name, and the contact information of the person providing the attendance information.
When is the documentation due?	At least monthly.
Where should documents be kept for this activity?	In the participant's case file. Follow the county's or tribe's Human Services General Records Retention Schedule.
Who provides daily supervision?	Option 1: Someone employed at the school, including: • Course instructors. • Student advisors. • Attendance office personnel. Option 2: The participant's employment counselor. In order for an employment counselor to provide the daily supervision, the employment counselor must do all of the following: • Keep in contact monthly by phone, in person, or electronically, in order to discuss attendance along with progress. Do not create additional expense or unnecessary travel for the participant to provide updates. • Confirm the participant's satisfactory progress by receiving and reviewing the quarterly or semester grades.
Who or what standard determines acceptable performance?	The school or instructional program. Review progress on acceptable performance when grades or other information comes from school.

Specific Instructions - Adult Education

When participants not enrolled in a formal online program are preparing for GED tests online or with practice books:

- Put the activity in the employment plan.
- Track it as "other" activity.

Related Links - Adult Education
Verification and documentation requirements for Online Programs, see 13.18 (Online Education and Training).

Workforce One - Job Skills Training

Activity Type in Workforce One.	Job skills training directly related to employment.
Workforce One Employment Plan Section.	Education.

Work Participation Rate - Job Skills Training

Core or non-core activity.	Non-core. Include education activities in the employment plan even when they do not contribute to the Work Participation Rate.
How to calculate hours for this activity.	Use the actual hours of classroom time. For study or homework time: • Allow up to 1 hour of unsupervised study time per class time hour. • To count any additional study time hours recommended by the instructor or school, the study sessions must be supervised. In order to count ANY hours of study time: • Obtain from the school or training provider or course instructor a statement which specifies the amount of study time that is required or advised in order to make satisfactory progress or complete the education and training program. • Have the class schedule in the case file as a reference for the required study time. • Have the person supervising the study time sign the DHS activity log. • Confirm that the total unsupervised and supervised study time does not exceed the amount of study time required or advised by the education program or instructor.

Documentation and Verification - Job Skills Training

Who collects the documentation?	Employment counselor.
What information needs to be included in the verification?	Attendance verification should include: • The participant's name. • The dates covered. • The actual number of hours of class time each day. • The actual number of hours of study time. • The participant's signature. • The name, signature and phone number of responsible individual providing the daily supervision. Electronic attendance records produced by the school do not need a signature of the person providing daily supervision.
Which documents meet the requirements?	One of the following: • Participant activity logs. • Ensure that activity log documents the amount of study time. • Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) Education Activity Log (DHS-4209N) (PDF). • Electronic Attendance Records • Group Attendance Sheets

When is the documentation due?	At least monthly.
Where should documents be kept for this activity?	In the participant's case file. Follow the county's or tribe's Human Services General Records Retention Schedule.
Who provides daily supervision?	Option 1: Someone employed at the agency or school, including: • Course instructors. • Student advisors. • Attendance office personnel. Option 2: The participant's employment counselor. In order for an employment counselor to provide the daily supervision, the employment counselor must do all of the following: • Keep in contact monthly by phone, in person, or electronically in order to discuss attendance along with progress. Do not create additional expense or unnecessary travel for the participant to provide updates. • Confirm the participant's satisfactory progress by receiving and reviewing the quarterly or semester grades.
Who or what standard determines acceptable performance?	The training program. Review progress on acceptable performance when grades or other information comes from school.

Related Links - Job Skills Training

Verification and documentation requirements for Online Programs, see 13.18 (Online Education and Training).

This includes 4-year bachelor and advanced degree programs at any state-certified college or university.

Workforce One - Post-Secondary Education

Activity Type in Workforce One.	Training/Education 13+ months. Training/Education up to 12 months.
Workforce One Employment Plan Section.	Education.

TANF Work Participation Rate - Post-Secondary Education

Core or non-core activity.	Core: • For the 1st 12 months in a post-secondary education program. • MFIP participants may be credited for Training/Education up to 12 months once in a lifetime. Non-core: • For any months past 12 months in post-secondary program. Participants who have used 12 months of post-secondary education and are in graduate education, must combine the graduation education with core activities. DHS will calculate the 12-month lifetime limit and determine which months to report as core or non-core to the federal government. Include education activities in the employment plan even when they do not contribute to the Work Participation Rate.
How to calculate hours for this activity.	Use the actual hours of classroom time. For study or homework time: • Allow up to 1 hour of unsupervised study time per class time hour. • To count any additional study time hours recommended by the instructor or school, the study sessions must be supervised. In order to count ANY hours of study time: • Obtain from the school or training provider or course instructor a statement which specifies the amount of study time that is required or advised in order to make satisfactory progress or complete the education and training program. • Have the class schedule in the case file as a reference for the required study time. • Have the person supervising the study time sign the DHS activity log. • Confirm that the total unsupervised and supervised study time does not exceed the amount of study time required or advised by the education program or instructor.

Documentation and Verification - Post-Secondary Education

Who collects the documentation?	Employment Counselor.
What information needs to be included in the verification?	Attendance verification should include: • The participant's name.

	• The dates covered. • The actual number of hours of class time each day. • The actual number of hours of study time. • The participant's signature. • The name, signature and phone number of responsible individual providing the daily supervision. Electronic attendance records produced by the school do not need a signature of the person providing daily supervision.
Which documents meet the requirements?	One of the following: • Group attendance sheets. • Participant activity logs. • Ensure that activity log documents the amount of study time. • Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) Education Activity Log (DHS-4209N) (PDF).
When is the documentation due?	Participants should submit attendance records and study time logs monthly.
Where should documents be kept for this activity?	In the participant's case file. Follow the county's or tribe's Human Services General Records Retention Schedule.
Who provides daily supervision?	Option 1: Someone employed at the school, including: • Course instructors. • Student advisors. • Attendance office personnel. Option 2: The participant's employment counselor. In order for an employment counselor to provide the daily supervision, the employment counselor must do all of the following: • Keep in contact monthly by phone, in person, or electronically in order to discuss attendance along with progress (Do not create additional expense or unnecessary travel for the participant to provide updates.) • Confirm the participant's satisfactory progress by receiving and reviewing the quarterly or semester grades.
Who or what standard determines acceptable performance?	The educational institution. Review progress on acceptable performance when grades or other information comes from school.

Related Links - Post-Secondary Education
Verification and documentation requirements for Online Programs, see 13.18 (Online Education and Training).

Workforce One - Online or Distance Learning

Activity Type in Workforce One.	Use the activity code associated with the level of education being pursued.
Workforce One Employment Plan Section.	Education.

TANF Work Participation Rate - Online or Distance Learning

Core or non-core activity.	Core: • The first 12 months of post-secondary education. • Post-secondary education is considered a core activity for up to 12 months in a participant's lifetime. Non-core: • Adult Basic Education. • GED Preparation. • Adult High School Diploma. • English Language Learning. • Jobs skills training directly related to employment. • Any month after the 1st 12 months of post-secondary education (13+ months). Include education activities in the employment plan even when they do not contribute to the Work Participation Rate. DHS will calculate the 12-month lifetime limit and determine which months to report as core or non-core to the federal government.
How to calculate hours for this activity.	For class time hours, use 1 of these options: Option 1: Use the actual hours a participant is logged into an online program for class time hours. Option 2: Count 1 class hour per credit hour. For example: For a 4-credit class, allow 4 hours per week of class time. Use the participant's class schedule to determine the number of credits per class. For study or homework time • Allow up to 1 hour of unsupervised study time per class time hour. • To count any additional study time hours recommended by the instructor or school, the study sessions must be supervised. In order to count any hours of study time: • Obtain from the school or training provider or course instructor a statement which specifies the amount of study time that is required or advised in order to make satisfactory progress or complete the education and training program. • Have the class schedule in the case file, as a reference for the required study time • Have the person supervising the study time sign the DHS activity log. Confirm that the total unsupervised and supervised study time does not exceed the amount of study time required or advised by the education program or instructor.

Documentation and Verification - Online or Distance Learning

Who collects the documentation??	Employment Counselor.
Who provides daily supervision?	Option 1: Someone employed at the school, including: • Course instructors. • Student advisors. • Attendance office personnel. Option 2: The participant's employment counselor. The employment counselor can only provide daily supervision to participants 18 and older. In order for an employment counselor to provide the daily supervision, the employment counselor must do all of the following: • Keep in contact monthly by phone, in person, or electronically in order to discuss attendance along with progress (Do not create additional expense or unnecessary travel for the participant to provide updates.) • Confirm the participant's satisfactory progress by receiving and reviewing the quarterly or semester grades.
What information needs to be included in the verification?	Attendance verification should include: • The participant's name. • The dates covered. • The actual number of hours of class time each day. • The actual number of hours of study time. • The participant's signature. • The name, signature and phone number of responsible individual providing the daily supervision. Electronic attendance records produced by the school do not need a signature of the person providing daily supervision.
Which documents meet the requirements?	To count hours of attendance, use either program-generated reports or someone must be able to confirm attendance and participation. The method of supervision will determine the option to be used. Option 1: Automated Reports • Use reports from the on-line or distance training program, if those reports document the actual log-in and log-out times the participant is accessing the online training program. No signature is needed for automated reports. Option 2: A representative of the online or distance training program is signing off on the attendance logs. • This could be either the course instructor or another training agency staff person overseeing the participant's course work and progress. Option 3: An MFIP employment counselor is signing off on the attendance logs (can only be used for adults 18 and older). The employment counselor must meet the daily supervision requirements: • Keep in contact monthly by phone, in person, or electronically in order to discuss attendance along with progress (Do not create additional expense or unnecessary travel for the participant to provide updates.) • Confirm the participant's satisfactory progress by receiving and reviewing the quarterly or semester grades. For options 2 and 3 one of the following documents is acceptable:

	• Group attendance sheets. • Participant activity logs. • Ensure that activity log documents the amount of study time. • Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) Education Activity Log (DHS-4209N) (PDF).
When is the documentation due?	At least monthly.
Where should documents be kept for this activity?	In the participant's case file. Follow the county's or tribe's Human Services General Records Retention Schedule.
Who or what standard determines acceptable performance?	The online or distance learning program. Review progress on acceptable performance when grades or other information comes from school.

Specific Instructions - Online or Distance Learning:

For information about when teen parents can participate in an online education program, see 13.18 (Online Education and Training).

In this chapter you can find information about:

- Role of social services activities in employment plans.
- Activity types and employment plan sections used for different social services activities.
- Documenting and tracking requirements for Social Services and other activities.
- Treatment and Rehabilitation Services.
- Documentation and tracking requirements for Treatment and Rehabilitation Services.

MFIP participants may require social, cultural, medical or other services to address their needs or purse their goals.

Participation in these services can often be combined with work or other work preparation activities.

These activities can be used in any employment plan, including a Family Stabilization Services or Family Violence waiver employment plan.

The social services or other Workforce One activities cover 12 employment plan sections.

Use “Other” activity type, if the activity a participant needs in their plan to address their specific challenges is not listed under any other activity.

Activity types and employment plan sections in Workforce One

Employment plans may include additional services not listed here and would be coded as an “other activity type.

Participant Activity	Employment Plan Section	Workforce One Activity Type
Chemical Health Treatment.	Health: Chemical.	Use Social Services. Use Job Search, if the activity alone or combined with other work activities meet the minimum hourly requirements.
Child Behavior: Addressing Concerns.	Child Behavior.	Social Services.
Child Care Search and Arrangements.	Child Care.	Other.
Child Protection.	Child Protection.	Social Services.
Child Support: Complying with requirements, including establishing paternity.	Child Support.	Other.
Culturally specific activities.	Other.	Other.
Financial: Financial literacy training, counseling, services, etc.	Financial.	Other.
Homeschooling, distance, and hybrid learning.	Other.	Other.
Housing: Searching, arranging, moving, etc.	Housing.	Other.
Legal: Getting legal help, attending court, etc.	Legal.	Other.
Medical Appointments: Preventative or short-term.	Health: Physical. Health: Mental Health: Chemical.	Social Services.
Mental Health Treatment.	Health: Mental.	Use Social Services. Use Job Search, if the activity alone or combined with other work activities meet the minimum hourly requirements.
Rehabilitation Services.	Rehab Services.	Use Social Services. Use Job Search, if the activity alone or combined with other work activities meet the minimum hourly requirements.
Transportation: Arranging driver’s ed, licensing tests, etc.	Transportation.	Other.
Other Activities to Help Stabilize Families.	Other.	Other.

Some MFIP participants may need treatment or rehabilitation services.

Participants can choose these activities, but can never be required to participate in treatment.
- Do not sanction a participant who puts treatment or rehabilitation into their employment plan but does not follow through.

Treatment or rehabilitation services may be either of the following:
- An intensive full-time activity for a short-period of time.
- An on-going activity combined with other activities.

Include treatment or rehabilitation services in the employment plan when either of the following have occurred:
- Assessments or screenings indicate the services are needed and the participant opts for treatment.
- A treating professional has accepted a participant as a client for services.

Include these services in the employment plan even if the activities do not:
- Meet minimum hourly requirements, see 7.15 (Hourly Requirements for Plans).
- Count in the Work Participation Rate, see 23.51 (Performance Measures).

The length of time the participant should continue these services will be determined by a qualified professional. See 17.45 (Qualified Professionals).

Participants in fulltime treatment may or may not continue to be eligible for MFIP.
See Combined Manual 0014.09 (Assistance Units - Temporary Absence) for detailed information about the temporary absence policy.

When participants enter one of the following facilities outside the county or tribal boundaries where they live, they are still considered a resident of the original county or tribal site for their services:
- Chemical dependency residential treatment center.
- Correctional facility.
- Family violence shelter.
- Foster home.
- Halfway house.
- Hospital.
- Nursing home.
- Residential care facility.
- Sanitarium.
- Shelters.
- Board and lodging facilities with a care or supervisory component.

Federal law recognizes chemical dependency as a disability under certain conditions.

For more information, see 7.33 (Accommodating Disabilities).

Inpatient treatment can affect whether a participant remains eligible for MFIP during treatment. More information is available in the Combined Manual at:
Combined Manual 0014.09 (Assistance Units - Temporary Absence).
Combined Manual 0011.21 (Receipt of Other Assistance).

Workforce One - Social Services, Assessment, and Other

Activity Type in Workforce One.	Social Services. Other. Assessment. To determine which activity type to use, see 14.6 (Social Services Activities).
Workforce One Employment Plan Section.	To determine which plan section to use, see 14.6 (Social Services Activities).

TANF Work Participation Rate - Social Services, Assessment, and Other

Core or non-core activity.	Neither. Not counted.
How to calculate hours for this activity.	Record the actual hours of participation in the social services activities.

Documentation and Verification - Social Services, Assessment, and Other

Who collects the documentation?	The employment counselor.
Who provides daily supervision?	No daily supervision is required. Check in at least monthly with the participant. Document the check in meetings with case notes or in the employment plan.
What information needs to be included in the verification?	Verification is not required for social services or other activities.
Which documents meet the requirements?	Help the participant in any way that makes sense to document activities. Examples include: • Case notes by the employment counselor. • Monthly activity log. • Phone call. • Email, text messages and other electronic communications – follow local county, tribal or and agency guidelines. • Medical Forms or medical documentation. Additional verification is only necessary if any reported activities are questionable.
When is the documentation due?	Monthly.
Where should documents be kept for this activity?	In the participant's case file. Follow the county's or tribe's human services general records retention schedule.

Who or what standard determines acceptable performance?	The social service, medical or behavioral health professional.

Specific Instructions - Social Services, Assessment, and Other

Documentation and Verification for these activities can vary, and can include the following:

Assessment: professional mental health or chemical dependency assessments, ES Counselor's assessments and/or case notes that assess participants for (including but not limited to): chemical health, mental health, physical health, child behavior, personal skills, childcare, dependent care, transportation, legal, safe living environment, housing, financial, education, and social support (Employability Measure). If this information is already in Workforce One, additional documentation in paper file is not necessary.

Other: Medical Opinion Form. Correspondence and other statements from qualified medical providers.

Social Services: Treatment plans, correspondence from health care, chemical dependency, and mental health professionals, counseling, meeting with advocates, and child protection (signatures of professionals are recommended to reduce complication).

Homeschooling, distance, and hybrid learning is not considered a core or non-core activity. It can be tracked as "other" activity and be included in the Employment Plan if childcare or other support services are needed for the other children. The hours spent in this activity will not count towards the WPR. Non-FSS participants or participants without good cause will still need to meet the minimum hourly requirements for participation hours.

MFIP participants may require social, cultural, medical, or other services to address circumstances that prevent them from getting or holding a job.

Use "Other" activity type, if the activity a participant needs in their plan to address their specific challenges is not listed under any other activity, including culturally specific activities.

Workforce One - Treatment and Rehabilitation

Activity Type in Workforce One.	Social Services. Job Search. To determine which activity type to use, see 14.6 (Social Services Activities).
Workforce One Employment Plan Section.	To determine which plan section to use, see 14.6 (Social Services Activities).

TANF Work Participation Rate - Treatment and Rehabilitation

Core or non-core activity.	Core – for up to 240 or 360 hours if tracked and reported as job search and if the treatment engagement stand alone or combined with other work activities meets minimum hourly requirements (Chapter 7.15 – Hourly Requirements for Plan). If hours are reported in job search, follow the same verification requirements in Chapter 12.3.6 – Job Search: Documenting/Tracking. The State is responsible for calculating which hours of job search count in the Work Participation Rate and which do not. Use the same documentation and verification standards for any job search hours entered. Neither core nor non-core when: • When this activity is tracked in the Social Services category. • More intensive treatment lasting beyond 240 or 360 hours in a 12-month period, if tracked in job search.
How to calculate hours for this activity.	Record the actual hours of participation.

Documentation and Verification - Treatment and Rehabilitation

Who collects the documentation?	The employment counselor.
Who provides daily supervision?	The professional responsible for overseeing the treatment services, or another responsible individual employed by or stationed at the treatment or service provider facility. Check in at least monthly with the participant.
What information needs to be included in the verification?	• The name of the participant. • The name, signature and phone number of the person providing daily supervision or another representative of the treatment agency. • The actual number of hours and dates of participation. • Participant's signature. • Time sheets. • Monthly activity log.
When is the documentation due?	Monthly.

Where should documents be kept for this activity?	In the participant's case file. Follow the county's or tribe's human services general records retention schedule.
Who or what standard determines acceptable performance?	The treating professional.

Specific Instructions - Treatment and Rehabilitation

Information on these conditions is medically protected information.	• A signed release from the participant is necessary in order to seek a medical opinion from a qualified professional. • To see the policies on handling medical information in case notes, see 4.12 (Special Types of Private Data). • To see the policies on handling information about someone's mental health, chemical dependency or experience with family violence, see 4.12 (Special Types of Private Data). • Participants have the right to see most of the private medical information about themselves – 4.15 (Participants' Rights to Review Information).

Related Links - Treatment and Rehabilitation, see 14.9 (Treatment & Rehabilitation Services).

In this chapter you will find information about:

- When to use Holding of Local Flag as MFIP activities.
- Documentation and tracking requirements for Holding & Local Flag.

Use holding as an activity when hours do not need to be tracked:

- A participant has taken the child under 12 months exemption.
- A participant has taken the Minnesota Paid Leave exemption.
- A participant is in an employment services sanction.
- Any situation where there is not a trackable activity possible – for instance, child care is not available or is in the process of being authorized.

Keep someone in holding only as long that situation remains in effect.

Use local flag as an activity when hours do not need to be tracked:

- Special projects that your county or Tribal Nation is working on.
- Any activity between enrollment and the first meeting with the participant.

Workforce One – Holding & Local Flag

Activity Type in Workforce One.	Other Allowable Activity • Holding. • Holding-Sanction. • Holding – Child Under 12 months. • Holding – MN Paid Leave. • Local Flag
Workforce One Employment Plan Section.	None

TANF Work Participation Rate – Holding & Local Flag

Core or non-core activity.	Neither core nor non-core activity.
How to calculate hours for this activity.	Does not apply to these activities. Workforce One does not allow hours to be tracked in these activities.

Documentation and Verification – Holding & Local Flag

Who collects the documentation?	The employment counselor.
Who provides daily supervision?	The employment counselor.
What information needs to be included in the verification?	Information about the situation that has created the status.
Which documents meet the requirements?	Document in case notes why the holding or local flag activity is being used. For Holding – Sanction: • Copies of notices of intent to sanction. • Case notes documenting the reason for the sanction and attempts to contact the participant to cure the sanction. • For FSS participants: Family Stabilization Services Pre-Sanction Checklist (DHS-6075) (PDF). • A copy of the status update form sent to the eligibility worker requesting sanction status to be coded on MAXIS. For Holding – Child Under 12 Months: • If the employment counselor receives the request for the exemption: Copy of status update sent to eligibility worker requesting coding for exemption or case note that exemption form was sent to eligibility worker. • If the eligibility worker processed the request for the exemption: Case note that the child under 12-months exemption status is coded on MAXIS. For Holding – MN Paid Leave: • Verification of receiving Minnesota Paid Leave benefit payment. • Acceptable proof can be any written or electronic verification if it confirms what the participant reports. Do not demand a specific document or form if another is more readily available.

	• When proof is not available despite efforts of the worker and the participant, get a signed statement from the participant attesting to the correctness of the information. • If the verification and request for exemption is received by either the employment counselor or eligibility worker, share this information between workers. • Document in case notes the verification and request for exemption and track the activity in Workforce One. MAXIS does not track the exemption for MN Paid Leave.
When is the documentation due?	Does not apply to this activity.
Who or what standard determines acceptable performance?	Does not apply to this activity.

Minnesota helps pay for child care to ensure that:

- Parents can work, go to school, or participate in employment services.
- Their children are well cared for and prepared for school.

In this chapter you will find information about:

- The 3 sub-programs in Child Care Assistance. See 16.3 (Child Care Assistance Sub-Programs).
  - MFIP Child Care. See 16.12 (MFIP Child Care Assistance).
  - Transition Year and Transition Year Extension Child Care. See 16.48 (Transition Year Child Care).
  - Basic Sliding Fee Child Care.
- Roles and responsibilities of employment counselors and child care assistance workers.
- Policies and requirements in the Child Care Assistance Program.
- Methods for determining hours of authorized child care.
- What 12-month eligibility means for child care assistance.
- Participants' child care reporting requirements.
- School breaks and child care assistance.
- Types of child care settings.
- Services to help families find child care.
- Two-parent families and child care assistance.
- Sanctions and child care assistance.
- Inability to obtain child care as a good cause reason for not complying.
- Medical restrictions on participants and child care authorizations.
- Maximum rates that child care assistance pays.
- Overpayments in child care assistance.

There are 3 Child Care Assistance sub-programs.

Child Care Sub-Program	Who It Covers
MFIP child care.	Participants receiving assistance through the MFIP and participating in authorized activities.
Transition Year (TY) child care. Transition Year Extension (TYE) child care	Participants whose MFIP assistance ends and who: • Received MFIP for at least 3 of the 6 months before their benefits ended. • Received MFIP child care or applied for child care assistance within 12 months of leaving MFIP. • Meet income requirements. • Participate in work and education activities. Transition Year Extension child care helps families who received 12 months of Transition Year child care, but are still on the waiting list for Basic Sliding Fee child care.
Basic Sliding Fee (BSF) child care.	Families who: • Meet income requirements. • Participate in authorized activities. • May or may not have been on MFIP Some counties and tribes have waiting lists. The waiting list can be found on the Basic Sliding Fee website.

The Child Care Assistance Program Manual (CCAP) includes details about each program's policies.

To find out more detail about any of the sub-programs, use these links:

MFIP child care, Child Care Assistance Program Manual 4.3.3 (MFIP).
Transition Year (TY) child care, Child Care Assistance Program Manual 4.3.6 (Transition Year (TY)).
Transition Year Extension (TYE) child care, Child Care Assistance Program Manual 4.3.9 (Transition Year Extension (TYE)).
Basic Sliding Fee (BSF) child care, Child Care Assistance Program Manual 4.3.12 (Basic Sliding Fee (BSF)).

Helping participants obtain child care assistance requires close cooperation between the employment counselor and the child care assistance worker.

The employment counselor is responsible for:

- Developing and monitoring the employment plan's activities
- Providing enough information to the child care assistance worker to support authorizing child care
- Communicating changes to the child care assistance worker to ensure the child care authorization is current and correct.

The child care assistance worker is responsible for:

- Authorizing child care assistance according to program rules and in support of the employment plan
- Acting on reported changes.

County and tribal human services agencies make many of the operational decisions for administering child care assistance:

- Decide whether the child care assistance worker or the employment counselor determines how many hours of child care are needed
- Develop a plan for communication between employment counselors and CCAP workers
- Direct what duties the employment counselor and child care assistance worker have in verifying the schedule of activities covered by child care assistance.

Ways to communicate with child care assistance workers:

- The MFIP Employment Services Child Care Request (DHS-7054) (PDF).
- The MFIP Status Update Form (DHS-3165) (PDF).
- A county or tribal-created form to send information to the child care assistance worker.
- Phone.
- Encrypted email.
- In-person communication at case consultations, etc.

Roles and responsibilities

Task	Job Counselors	Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Workers

Initial childcare application and plan.	• Determine with the participant the activities and hours in the Employment Plan.
	• Communicate to the CCAP worker.
	  • The participant's activities.
	  • The date the activity begins.
	  • The participant's schedule in those activities, including travel time and breaks.
	• Work with the participant to cluster or group employment plan activities to create blocks of times that will work with child care providers' schedules and practices, when possible.
		• Determine how many hours of child care are needed.
		• Authorize child care that the family is eligible for in full hour increments.
		• Obtain verification of the participant's schedule only if the employment counselor has not provided the schedule information.

Determining start and end dates of activities for child care assistance authorizations.	• Do not indicate an end date on employment plan activities if the participant plans to continue in that activity.	• Determine whether child care can be authorized for activities outside of an employment plan. • Use the start and end dates communicated by the job counselor.

	• Use the start date for specific activities – as long as the family was MFIP eligible. Workforce One assigns a Plan Start Date on the front page of the employment plan that cannot be adjusted. Individual activities can sometimes have earlier start dates than the "Plan Start Date."	• Do not treat a review date on an employment plan as an end date. • Do not automatically end child care assistance if the review date has passed and a new employment plan has not been signed.
Ongoing child care approval.	• Monitor participation in employment plan activities. • Adjust employment plan activities and hours as needed. • Determine if the participant is out of compliance with the employment plan. • Communicate changes in a family's child care needs to the CCAP worker.	• Ensure that families receive 15-day notice of adverse action when a family's child care benefits are reduced.
Changes, including sanctions.	Notify CCAP worker within 10 days about changes in: • Employment plan hours. • Employment plan activities. • Participant's schedule. • Participant's participation. • Sanction status.	Act on information received from the job counselor within 10 days.
Documentation and verification.	Keep current child care assistance-related activity documentation in the physical case file or case notes.	• Obtain income verification. • Case note authorization and schedule information provided by job counselor.
General policy information.	State policies do not require the child care assistance worker to have a copy of the employment plan in order to authorize child care assistance.	Do not monitor participant's participation in employment plan activities. CCAP workers are encouraged to communicate with the employment counselor if there are discrepancies in information.

Information about job counselor and child care assistance worker roles and responsibilities is also available in the Child Care Assistance Program Manual 9.1.5 (Authorizing Care-Employment Plans).

To receive child care assistance, participants must:

- Turn in an application and provide required verifications. For more information, See Child Care Assistance Manual 7.3 (Verification - Initial Application).
- Be in an authorized activity. See 16.12 (MFIP Child Care Assistance).
- Meet income limits and pay a copay, if a copay is assigned
- Use a legal child care provider who is registered with the county or tribe. See list of types of legal providers, 16.24 (Types of Child Care Settings).
- Cooperate with child support enforcement for all children in the family at application and redetermination.

The age of children who are covered by child care assistance:

- Infants through 12 years old.
- 13 and 14 year olds with a disability.

The factors that determine how much child care is authorized:

- A maximum limit of 120 hours of child care can be authorized in a two-week period per child.
- The activity schedule of the parent or guardian.
- The school schedule of the children.
- The child care provider's availability.

Each child can use up to 2 providers who can be paid by child care assistance: 1 primary provider and 1 secondary provider.

- Payments and the amount of care is limited for the secondary provider.
- The participant designates which provider is the primary provider.
- Legal non-licensed providers do not count toward the 2 provider limit and their authorization and payment is not limited.

For more information, see: Child Care Assistance Program Policy Manual 9.1.9 (Authorizing Care-Multiple Providers).

Limitations on providing child care assistance to child care providers and to people working in child care:
1. The following people cannot receive child care assistance during the hours they are providing child care, but can receive child care assistance when they are in other activities:
    - Licensed family child care providers and their employees.
    - Legal non-licensed providers and their employees.
    - Anyone providing care in a setting other than a child care center.

2. No more than 25 children or dependents of child care center employees can be authorized for child care assistance at a child care center. For more information, see the Child Care Assistance Program Manual 9.15.21 (Children of Child Care Providers).

Almost all participants receiving assistance through MFIP are eligible for child care assistance.

- This includes participants in Family Stabilization Services and participants who have opted out of cash assistance but still receive MFIP food support.
- To be eligible, participants must be participating in approved activities.
- Participants must apply for child care assistance. Counties will have different offices and procedures for taking those applications.

When eligibility for child care assistance begins:

Participant's situation.	Eligibility for child care begins on 1 of following dates, whichever is later:
For participants working or doing job search outside of an employment plan.	• The start date of employment or job search. • The start date of MFIP eligibility.
For participants in employment services.	• The start date of employment services. • The start date of MFIP eligibility.
Retroactive eligibility.	Eligibility for child care assistance cannot go back further than 3 months prior to the child care assistance application date.

For more information, see Child Care Assistance Program Policy Manual 4.18 (Date of Eligibility).

The activities and hours that can be covered by MFIP child care assistance differ depending on whether the participant has an employment plan or not.

Activity	MFIP child care assistance: With an Employment Plan	MFIP Child Care Assistance: Outside an Employment Plan
Job Search.	As defined in the employment plan.	Up to 20 hours a week, but no more than 240 hours in a calendar year. Only allowed at application and redetermination for child care assistance eligibility.
Employment.	As defined in the employment plan.	Must work an average of: • 20 hours per week. • 10 hours if a full-time student.
High school, GED, Adult Basic Education, English Language Learning.	As defined in the employment plan.	Not covered.
Post-Secondary Education.	As defined in the employment plan.	Not covered.
MFIP financial assistance orientations and employment services overviews.	Covered.	Covered.
Assessments.	Covered.	Covered.
Appeals and hearings.	Covered.	Covered.
Social Services and other activities.	As defined in the employment plan.	Not covered.
Any other activity included in an employment plan.	Covered.	Not covered.

Child care assistance never supports the following activity:

- Paid or unpaid work done for political purposes. This means any work done to directly or indirectly influence voting in public elections.

Some activities have specific policies related to how many hours child care assistance will be authorized.

Authorized hours will include travel time as necessary.

- There is a 2-hour daily maximum for travel time, unless the employment counselor indicates that additional hours are needed.

County and tribal human services agencies decide whether the employment counselor or the child care assistance worker determine the hours of authorized child care.

Activity	What to Know About Child Care Authorizations for Different Activities
Job Search.	• The job search activities can be on or off the agency's site. • Authorizing child care for job search activities done at home should be by exception, not standard practice, according to MFIP policy.
Employment.	Child care assistance can cover: • Work hours. • Break or meal time.
Self-Employment.	• Child care assistance will authorize care for actual hours specified in the employment plan. • Child care does not limit authorized hours based on a calculation with the minimum wage.
Training and Education.	Child care assistance will cover the activities identified in the employment plan. This includes: • Classroom time. • Study time. • Credit hours for independent study and internships. • Academic appointments. This applies to all education and training activities.
Social Services.	Child care assistance can support social services if the services are included in an approved employment plan.

Participants do not immediately lose their eligibility for child care assistance when an activity ends.

Child care assistance will continue for up to 3 months for participants who lose a job or permanently end an activity. This is called extended eligibility.

There are 2 categories of participants in the Child Care Assistance Program:

Schedule Reporters are families who meet at least 1 of the following criteria:

- A parent in the family is employed by a child care center that is licensed by the Department of Human Services.
- At least 1 child in the family is authorized for care with a legal non-licensed provider.
- At least 1 child in the family is authorized for care with more than 1 provider.

12-month reporters are all other families.

The category and participant activity determine whether the authorization of child care hours may change.

The Participant's Activity Level	What Happens to the Child Care Authorization for Schedule Reporters	What Happens to the Child Care Authorization for 12-Month Reporters
Stays the same.	Does not change.	Does not change.
Participation increases.	Can increase if verified.	Can increase if verified.
Participation Decreases.	Decreases.	Does not change.

Participants' reporting requirements

Participants must report the following changes within 10 days:

Information That Needs to Be Reported	Schedule Reporters	12-Month Reporting Families
Family income that puts the family over 85% of the state median income for their family size.	Yes.	Yes.
Address or residency.	Yes.	Yes.
Child's school schedules.	Yes.	Yes.
Family status, such as marriage or divorce.	Yes.	Yes.
Household composition changes.	Yes.	Yes.
Citizenship or immigration status for the child.	Yes.	Yes.
Visitation schedule or custody arrangement.	Yes.	Yes.
Child care provider changes.	Yes.	Yes.
Permanent end to authorized activity.	Yes.	Yes.
Status changes in authorized activity, including:	Yes.	No.

• Activity starts. • Activity schedule changes.		
A change in employment that makes the family a schedule reporter.	N/A.	Yes.

Participants who intend to change child care providers must report that to the child care assistance worker at least 15 days before the change.

- This does not apply if the provider's license has been temporarily immediately suspended or if there is imminent risk of harm to the children.

School breaks can affect child care authorization, depending upon whether participants are 12-Month Reporters or Scheduled Reporters.

12-Month Reporters

Family's Situation	How the Child Care Authorization Will Respond
12-Month Reporters on break who are expected to return to school at the end of the break (including summer break).	Continues.

Scheduled Reporters

Family's Situation	How the Child Care Authorization Will Respond
If the break is expected to last 15 calendar days or less.	Continues.
If education is the participant's only authorized activity and the break is expected to last more than 15 calendar days.	Suspended.
If education is not the participant's only authorized activity and the break is expected to last more than 15 calendar days.	Reduced to reflect the hours for the other authorized activities during the break period.

The child care assistance program will pay for care at 4 types of child care settings.

Type of Provider	Description
Licensed Center. Child Care Assistance Program Policy Manual 11.3 (Licensed Child Care Providers).	A center licensed by Minnesota, another state or a tribe.
Licensed Family Child Care Provider. Child Care Assistance Program Policy Manual 11.3 (Licensed Child Care Providers).	A family child care provider licensed by Minnesota, another state or a tribe. Care is typically in the provider's home.
Certified License-Exempt Center. Child Care Assistance Program Policy Manual 11.6 (Certified License Exempt Centers).	A center that is exempt from being licensed. These programs often provide care only to preschool or school age children.
Legal Non-Licensed Provider. Child Care Assistance Program Policy Manual 11.9 (Legal Non-Licensed (LNL) Providers).	A person who cares only for children related to them or cares for children from a single, unrelated family. Requirements include: • At least 18 years old. • Not living in the same home as the child. • Background check completed for the provider and household members age 13 and older. • Has current certification in First Aid and CPR. • Completes other required training. Care is typically in the provider's home. Care in the child's home can be approved in limited situations. See Child Care Assistance Program Manual 11.27 (In-Home Child Care Requests and Provider Information).

How much child care assistance is authorized depends on the activities of both parents.

Even if only 1 parent is receiving MFIP assistance, child care assistance takes into account both parents.

The following are examples of what child care assistance will cover for various family situations at application and redetermination. If the parents change their activities during the 12-month eligibility child care assistance eligibility period, what happens to the family's child care authorization will depend on the type of change and whether the family is a 12-Month Reporter or not, see 16.18 (Eligibility Periods & Required Reporting).

Examples of Family Situations	Child Care Assistance Will Cover
Both parents are in an authorized activity.	The time periods when both parents are participating simultaneously in authorized activities – including travel times and meals or breaks.
One parent: Complying with an employment plan. Other parent: Unable to care for the children as determined by a licensed physician, licensed psychologist, or the local social services agency.	The time periods when the parent with an employment plan is scheduled for activities.
One parent: Participating in authorized activities. Other parent: Not participating in authorized activities.	No time – because the other parent is available to care for the child.
One parent: Self-employed. Other parent: Participating in employment plan activities.	The time periods when both parents are participating simultaneously in authorized activities – including travel times and meals or breaks.
One parent: Receiving MFIP benefits with an employment plan. Other parent: Not receiving MFIP benefits and not working or in an education activity.	No time – because the other parent is available to care for the child.
One parent: Receiving MFIP benefits and has an employment plan. Other parent: Not receiving MFIP benefits and is working or in education or training.	The time periods when both parents are participating simultaneously in authorized activities – including travel times and meals or breaks

The child care assistance worker is responsible to verify the situation of parents not working with employment services.

If the employment counselor has any verified information about the activity schedule for the parent not working with employment services, share it with the child care assistance worker.

For parents working with employment services, the child care worker is only responsible for obtaining verification of the activity

schedule for activities included in the Employment Plan if the job counselors has not already indicated the activity schedule (days and times of the activities) or the days and times that child care is needed.

Inform the child care assistance worker within 10 days that the participant is sanctioned.

If the sanctioned participant is:	How child care authorization responds:
Participating in some activities of the employment plan.	Child care authorization continues. Hours may decrease for Schedule Reporters.
Continuing to work at least some hours.	Child care authorization continues. Hours may decrease for Schedule Reporters.
Not participating in any eligible activities.	The child care authorization will extend up to 3 months under “extended eligibility”.
Not cooperating with child support.	Child care will continue unchanged until the next redetermination.

If a 7th sanction closes the MFIP case, the participant is no longer eligible for MFIP child care.

- Child care assistance will assess whether the participant is eligible for Transition Year.
- If the participant is not eligible for Transition Year, child care assistance will assess whether the family is eligible for Basic Sliding Fee.

If the participant reopens on MFIP after resolving the sanction and is still receiving child care assistance, a new application for child care assistance will not be necessary. See the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Manual 4.3.3.9 (MFIP Sanctions).

Do not sanction participants unable to comply with MFIP activities if they are unable to obtain appropriate child care.

If any 1 of the following situations occurs, the participant would have a good cause reason for not being able to secure child care:

- The child care provider is not licensed or is a legal non-licensed provider not registered with the county or tribe.
- The child care provider cannot speak the same language as the parent or meet other demonstrated needs for a specific language.
- The child care is not appropriate to the child's age and any disabilities.
- The total commute time to the child care provider and work exceeds 2 hours round trip.
- The provider does not meet basic health and safety standards.
- The provider charges in the excess of the maximum amount the child care assistance program will pay.

Employment Counselors should provide information to help participants find child care.

Child Care Aware helps Minnesota families find child care and early education programs by offering:

- An online search tool at Parent Aware that has information about location, hours of operation and ages served.
- A statewide hotline at 1-888-291-9811.
  - A Parent Services Specialist will offer a personalized consultation.
- A Parent Toolkit that offers important interview questions and tips for visits to child care programs.
  - It is available in English, Spanish, Hmong and Somali.
  - Download or order a free copy of the Parent Toolkit on the Parent Aware website.
- Resource guides to help with the search for child care, figure out the best fit, understand the Parent Aware rating system, other statewide early childhood resources and more. Available at Assessing Quality Checklist.

Child care can be authorized for some situations in which medical restrictions temporarily prevent other activities, including:

- Medical Restrictions due to pregnancy – such as bed rest, appointments with doctors, nutritionists and public health nurses.
- Short-term medical restrictions – for medical appointments and activities needed to improve health or recovery, such as doctors' appointments, physical therapy, and dialysis.

Impact of medical leave during 12-month eligibility period for child care assistance

Status of Participation in Employment Plan Activities	Schedule Reporter	12-Month Reporter
Participating for any number of hours in any activities.	Care would decrease based on activity schedule.	Care continues at same level.
Not participating but expected to return after leave.	If they are involved in other activity: care would decrease based on activity schedule. If they meet CCAP medical leave policy conditions: care continues for a limited period of time. See Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Policy Manual 9.15.3 (Care During Temporary Breaks from Authorized Activities). If they are on a temporary leave from all activities and do not meet the CCAP medical leave policy conditions: care is suspended. See Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Policy Manual 9.15.3 (Care During Temporary Breaks from Authorized Activities).	Care continues at same level (temporary leave of absence).
Not participating and not expected to return after leave. .	Care continues at same level for up to 3 months or until redetermination, whichever occurs first (Extended Eligibility).	Care continues at same level for up to 3 months or until redetermination, whichever occurs first (Extended Eligibility).

Impact of medical leave on redetermination of child care assistance

Status of Participation in Employment Plan activities	Schedule Reporter	12-Month Reporter
Participating for any number of hours in any activities.	Care is authorized based on activity participation.	Care is authorized based on activity participation.
Not participating but expected to return after leave.	• Care authorization ends with a 15-day notice. • Eligibility continues for a limited time.	• Care authorization ends with a 15-day notice. • Eligibility continues for a limited time.
Not participating and not expected to return after leave.	• Care authorization ends with a 15-day notice. • Eligibility may end.	• Care authorization ends with a 15-day notice. • Eligibility may end.

The Child Care Assistance Program has maximum rates for care based on 3 factors:

- The age of the child.
- The type of child care provider.
- The county where care is provided.

For details about standard maximum rates for child care providers, see:

Minnesota Child Care Assistance Program Standard Maximum Rates – No Quality Differential DHS-6441B-ENG (PDF).

Child care providers who meet certain quality standards can be reimbursed at higher rates. See:

Minnesota Child Care Assistance Program 15 Percent Quality Differential Maximum Rates (DHS-6442B-ENG) (PDF).
Minnesota Child Care Assistance Program 20 Percent Quality Differential Maximum Rates (DHS-6824-ENG) (PDF).

Child care assistance can pay for 2 child care registration fees per year for each child.

For the maximum amount that can be paid, see Minnesota Child Care Assistance Program Maximum Child Care Registration Fees (DHS-6433) (PDF).

Child care assistance pays the provider directly, unless the provider is providing the care in the child's own home.

- To request in-home child care, the participant must complete the Parent Request for In-Home Child Care (DHS-6475) (PDF) and submit the form with the appropriate documentation to the child care assistance worker.
- If approved, the participant receives the payments directly and the participant must pay the provider.

What costs participants are responsible to pay:

- A copay based on the family size and income.
- Activity fees charged by the child care provider.
- The difference if the child care provider's charges are higher than the maximum rate the child care assistance program will pay.

Participants may be charged with overpayments if the participant does not provide timely reports of changes in:

- Income that goes over 85% of state median income.
- Family composition.
- Other factors related to the family's eligibility for child care assistance.

Report any changes in employment plan participation to the child care assistance worker within 10 days.

- Check with the child care assistance worker if unsure whether a change in the employment plan needs to be reported.

To be eligible for Transition Year Child Care, participants must meet all the following requirements:

- Have received MFIP for at least 3 of the 6 months prior to closing their cash assistance case.
- Be income eligible. See Child Care Assistance Program Manual 6.3 (Income Limits).
- Be engaged in 1 of the 2 following activities:
  - Employment.
  - Education or training.

If a participant is receiving MFIP child care when their MFIP benefits end:

- Transition Year Child Care begins the day after an MFIP case closes.
- A new child care assistance application is not necessary. The family automatically moves onto Transition Year Child Care.
- The participant will retain eligibility for Transition Year Child Care for up to 12 months after application – as long as the family continues to meet all eligibility requirements.
- If participants are not in an approved activity when the MFIP case closes, they receive Transition Year Child Care for up to 3 months under extended eligibility.
  - To continue child care after the 3 months extended eligibility, the participant must be employed or pursuing education and training.
  - Minimum hourly requirements for these activities will only apply at the child care assistance redetermination or application.

If a participant did not have or maintain eligibility on MFIP child care assistance before leaving 1 of those programs:

- The participant needs to submit a child care assistance application.
- The participant can apply anytime within the 12 months after MFIP closed.
- The participant must meet Transition Year eligibility requirements.
- Child care can be approved retroactively to the date of Transition Year eligibility requirements were met – up to a maximum of 6 months from the child care assistance program application date.

If families still need child care assistance after Transition Year Child Care ends:

If there is no waiting list for Basic Sliding Fee Child Care.	The family moves to the Basic Sliding Fee child care.
If there is a waiting list for Basic Sliding Fee Child Care.	The family moves to Transition Year Extension Child Care and their name is put on the waiting list as a Priority 2 family. For more information about priorities on the waiting list see the Child Care Assistance Program Policy Manual 4.3.12.9 (BSF Priorities).

In this chapter you can find information about:

- A description of the Family Stabilization Services (FSS) track.
- Eligibility.
  - Illness, injury and incapacity.
  - Needed in the home to care for an ill or incapacitated member.
  - Special Medical Criteria.
  - Developmental disability.
  - Mental illness.
  - IQ below 80.
  - Learning disability.
  - Family Violence Waiver.
  - In the country for 12 months or less.
  - Applying for SSI or RSDI.
  - Age 60 or older.
  - Unemployable.
- Qualified professionals.
- Documenting conditions that qualify participants for FSS.
- Enrolling someone in Family Stabilization Services.
- The employment plan.
- Referrals to SSI and disability services.
- Sanctions.
- Returning participants to regular MFIP.

The instructions in this chapter apply both to participants who have NOT used all 60 months and those who are post-60 months. See 18 (Time Limits and Extensions).

Family Stabilization Services is a service track within MFIP to serve families with significant challenges.

This service track exists to:

- Provide more flexibility in services and program expectations in order to help families address health and personal challenges.
- Help families achieve the greatest degree of economic self-sufficiency and family well-being.

The months in Family Stabilization Services count toward the 60-month time limit with 2 exceptions for participants:

- With a Family Violence Waiver.
- Who are 60 years old or older.

Participants in the Family Stabilization Services do not count in the Work Participation Rate, but they do count in the Self-Support Index. See 23.51 (Performance Measures).

The instructions in this chapter apply to participants who:

- Have NOT used all 60 months.

And

- Are post-60 months. See 18 (Time Limits and Extensions)

Participants must meet one of the following eligibility criteria to be in Family Stabilization Services:

- Illness, injury or incapacity.
- Needed in the home to care for an ill or incapacitated family member.
- Special medical criteria.
- Developmental Disability.
- Mental Illness.
- IQ Below 80.
- Learning Disability.
- Family Violence Waiver.
- In the country 12 months or less.
- Applying for SSI or RSDI.
- Age 60 or older.
- Unemployable.

In the status update to the eligibility worker include all categories that qualify a participant for Family Stabilization Services.

- The MAXIS interface to Workforce One, however, can transmit only 1 Family Stabilization Services code.
- MAXIS automatically follows a hierarchy to determine which FSS code will be used.

Family Stabilization Services Criteria:

Description.	The condition must: • Prevent the participant from working at least 20 hours a week. • Be expected to last more than 30 days. • Be certified by a medical professional.
Who Can Confirm the Condition.	Any one of the following: • Licensed physician. • Physician's assistant. • Nurse Practitioner. • Certified Midwife. • Licensed chiropractor.
Workforce One Employment Plan Type.	FSS – Ill, injured or incapacitated.
Activity Type.	Social Services.
Plan Sections	Health: Physical. Rehab Services.
How Often to Review Documentation.	Request updated verification at least annually, but sooner if the medical opinion indicates a shorter time frame.
Additional Requirements.	The documentation should include a determination that the participant is unable to work 20 or more hours a week. If the statement from the qualified professional is not specific or clear, ask the professional to clarify.

Family Stabilization Services Criteria:

Description.	Participants who are needed to care for 1 of the following individuals who has a professionally certified illness or incapacity that is expected to last for more than 30 days: • Another member of the MFIP assistance unit. • A relative in the household. • A foster child in the household.
Who can confirm the condition.	The eligibility worker verifies that someone is living in the household and that is recorded in MAXIS. If the person is not listed on MAXIS, have the participant communicate with the eligibility worker. See list of qualified professionals to identify the professionals designated to certify whatever condition the household member has. See 17.45 (Qualified Professionals).
Workforce One Employment Plan Type.	FSS – Needed in the Home.
How often to review documentation.	Request updated verification at least annually – but sooner if the medical opinion includes a shorter time frame.
Additional Requirements.	The participant must provide verification that they are needed to provide the care. The documentation should include: • The household member's name. • The diagnosis or condition that requires the participant's care.

Family Stabilization Services Criteria:

Description.	Does not apply to participants directly but to an adult or child in the household who has 1 of the following conditions: • Meet the criteria for home care services. • Meet the criteria for a home or community-based waiver services program. • Serious mental illness in a child – an organic disorder of the brain or disordered thought, mood, perception, orientation, memory or behavior that has led to one of the following: inpatient or residential treatment, the need for such treatment, significant impaired functioning or a diagnosis of psychosis, depression, risk to self or others or symptoms of trauma. • Serious and persistent mental illness in an adult – mental illness that has led to 2 or more episodes of inpatient care; hospitalization or residential treatment of more than 6 months; treatment by a crisis team 2 or more times; or a combination of specific diagnosis of serious mental illness with significant impairment in functioning and the likelihood of needing inpatient treatment in the future.
Who Can Confirm the Condition.	If the family member is receiving home or community-based services: The person receiving the services or the disability case manager (if there is a signed release) could provide a copy of either of the following: • The Community Support Plan. • The Coordinated Services and Support Plan. If the family member is NOT receiving the services under the special medical criteria but is claiming eligibility: Participants can learn whether a household member meets any of these criteria by having a MNChoices Assessment done by the county or tribe. For more information about these assessments, participants may contact: • The county or tribe where they live. • The Disability Linkage Line at 1-866-333-2466. • Senior LinkAge Line at 1-800-333-2433.
Workforce One Employment Plan Type.	FSS – Special Medical Criteria.
How Often to Review Documentation.	Request updated verification at least annually, but sooner if the medical opinion indicates a shorter time frame.
Additional Requirements.	Do not require these participants to verify their ability to get or keep a job. If the participant cannot get the necessary information from the health care provider: 1. Get a release of information allowing you to contact the family member's health care provider. 2. Explain that you need the information in order to provide the appropriate services to the caregiver. 3. If that is not successful, contact the consumer representative at the family member's health plan. 4. If that is not successful, contact the DHS Health Care Purchasing Division at 651-296-3386 or 1-800-657-3756. Banked Months: • Participants eligible for special medical criteria receive "banked months": Each month a participant is eligible for Special Medical Criteria before reaching the 60 month limit is "banked". • MAXIS uses these banked months once a participant has reached 60 months. • Only after the banked months are expended is the participant assessed for an extension.

Family Stabilization Services Criteria:

Description.	A participant who meets both of the following conditions: • Having a developmental disability – which means an impairment of general intellectual functioning that was present before the person's 22nd birthday. • Being unable to get or keep work for at least 20 hours a week.
Who Can Confirm the Condition.	See 17.45 (Qualified Professionals)
Workforce One Employment Plan Type.	FSS – Developmental Disability.
How Often to Review Documentation.	Request updated verification at least annually, but sooner if the medical opinion indicates a shorter time frame. For lifelong conditions such as Developmental Disability, request verification at least annually that the condition prevents the participant from getting or working at least 20 hours per week or significantly limits the types of employment a participant may do.
Additional Requirements.	The documentation should include a determination that the participant is unable to work 20 or more hours a week. If the statement from the qualified professional is not specific or clear, ask the professional to clarify.

Family Stabilization Services Criteria:

Description.	A participant who meets both of the following conditions: • Having a mental illness. • Being unable to get or keep work for at least 20 hours a week.
Who Can Confirm the Condition.	See 17.45 (Qualified Professionals)
Workforce One Employment Plan Type.	FSS – Mentally Ill.
How Often to Review Documentation.	Request updated verification at least annually, but sooner if the medical opinion indicates a shorter time frame.
Additional Requirements.	The documentation should include a determination that the participant is unable to work 20 or more hours a week. If the statement from the qualified professional is not specific or clear, ask the professional to clarify.

Family Stabilization Services Criteria:

Description.	The participant meets both of the following criteria:
	• Has an IQ below 80.
	• Meets 1 of the following conditions:
	  • Unable to get and keep work for at least 20 hours a week.
	  • Significantly restricted in the range of employment able to be performed.

Who Can Confirm the Condition.	See 17.45 (Qualified Professionals)
Workforce One Employment Plan Type.	FSS - Participants with an IQ below 80.
How Often to Review Documentation.	Request updated verification at least annually, but sooner if the medical opinion indicates a shorter time frame. For lifelong conditions such as IQ below 80, request verification at least annually that the condition prevents participant from getting or working at least 20 hours per week or significantly limits the types of employment a participant may do.
Additional Requirements.	In the case of a non-English-speaking person: • The determination must be made by a qualified professional with experience conducting culturally appropriate assessments, whenever possible. • The county or tribe may accept reports that identify an IQ range as opposed to a specific score. • These reports must include a statement of confidence in the results. • Ensure that the assessment identifies the interpreter and the interpreter's qualifications and relationship to the participant or assessor.

Family Stabilization Services Criteria:

Description.	The participant must meet all of the following criteria: • Have a disorder in 1 or more of the neurological processes involved in processing or organizing information. • Have been assessed by a vocational specialist or qualified professional. • Be restricted in the range of work able to be done or unable to get or keep work of at least 20 hours a week.
Who Can Confirm the Condition.	See 17.45 (Qualified Professionals)
Workforce One Employment Plan Type.	FSS- Learning Disabled.
How Often to Review Documentation.	Request updated verification at least annually, but sooner if the medical opinion indicates a shorter time frame.
Additional Requirements.	If the participant speaks only limited or no English: • The determination must be made by a qualified professional with experience conducting culturally appropriate assessments whenever possible. • The county or tribe may accept reports that identify an IQ range as opposed to a specific score. • These reports must include a statement of confidence in the results. • Ensure that the assessment identifies the interpreter and the interpreter's qualifications and relationship to the participant or assessor.

Family Stabilization Services Criteria:

Description.	Participants who have verified safety concerns and have a family violence waiver.
Who Is Qualified to Certify the Condition.	For more information about how a participant gets a Family Violence Waiver, see 8 (Family Violence Waiver).
Workforce One Employment Plan Type.	FSS – Family Violence Waiver.
How often to review documentation.	See 8.24 (Employment Plans & Family Violence Waiver).
Additional Requirements.	For information about the verification needed to confirm family violence, see 8.15 (Verifying Family Violence).

Family Stabilization Services Criteria: Family Stabilization Services Criteria:

Description.	Legal non-citizens in the United States 12 months or less.
Who Can Confirm the Condition.	Newly arrived non-citizens will be automatically coded as in the country for 12 months or less.
Workforce One Employment Plan Type.	FSS - In the Country for 12 months or less.
How Often to Review Documentation.	Every 6 months.
Additional Requirements.	These participants can continue in Family Stabilization Services for more than 12 months if: • They are still in an English Language Learning Program. • Their Student Performance Level (SPL) or CASAS equivalent is at or below Level 6. See 13.6 (English Language Learning).

Family Stabilization Services Criteria:

Description.	Participants who are applying for, or appealing, a denial of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Retirement Survivors Disability Insurance (RSDI) benefits.
Who Can Confirm the Condition.	• Eligibility workers can confirm through Verify MN if someone is applying for, or appealing, a denial of SSI or RSDI. • The participant may also be able to show an application or correspondence. Ask the participant for that documentation only if the eligibility worker is unable to confirm through Verify MN.
Workforce One Employment Plan Type.	FSS- Applying for SSI/RSDI.
How Often to Review Documentation.	Review the progress of the application process at least annually.
Additional Requirements.	Consult with the local county or tribe about its policy for reviewing the status of these applications. The Minnesota Department of Human Services contracts with organizations that help people apply for federal disability benefits. There is no charge for the services. More information is available at Social Security Advocacy Directory.

Other Information – Approved/Receiving RSDI

Participants approved for or receiving RSDI do not automatically meet FSS. There are different reasons a person may be eligible for RSDI and the Social Security Administration's RSDI eligibility is not the same as MFIP's FSS eligibility criteria.

Participants approved for RSDI with a disability basis must still provide documentation that they meet the criteria for one or more FSS categories. If current documentation does not provide sufficient information to determine FSS eligibility, additional documentation is required.

Family Stabilization Services Criteria:

Description.	Participants who are 60 or older.
Who Can Confirm the Condition.	The MAXIS interface on Workforce One will show participant's age.
Workforce One Employment Plan Type.	FSS – Age 60 or older.
How Often to Review Documentation.	Not applicable.
Additional Requirements.	MAXIS will automatically code this status based on the participant's birth date.

Family Stabilization Services Criteria:

Description.	Participants not eligible under another Family Stabilization Services category and assessed to be unemployable. No single factor makes someone unemployable. The determination must take into account: • The reasons why someone has left work or barriers to employment if the participant has not worked over the last 5 years. • Extremely limited ability to speak English that makes communication even with an interpreter difficult and even when the participant has taken English Language Learning classes. (Document the participation in English Language Learning). • Felony record that inhibits employment. • Other severe and chronic mental health or chemical dependency issues that have not been professionally certified because the nature of the illness impedes the participant's ability to seek assessment or treatment. (Document employment services' or other professionals' attempts to engage the participant in necessary services).
Who Can Confirm the Condition.	A vocational rehab specialist. • The county or tribal human services program administering MFIP. (Check with the local county or tribe to learn who is designated to make these assessments).
Workforce One Employment Plan Type.	FSS – Unemployable.
How Often to Review Documentation.	Request updated verification annually, sooner only if the medical opinion indicates a shorter time frame.
Additional Requirements.	Case note the explanation and background information.

A qualified professional must provide the information about a participant's physical health, mental health, or disabilities. See Combined Manual 0011.39 (Qualified Professionals).

Qualified professionals can use DHS forms or their own forms or letters.

Medical opinion forms

The state provides a medical opinion form that employment services counselors may ask qualified professionals to complete: Request for Medical Opinion (DHS-2114) (PDF).

There is also a FSS Medical Cover letter, Family Stabilization Services Medical Cover Letter (DHS-5285) (PDF).

The information to be included whether qualified professionals use a DHS form or their own forms:

- The professional's name.
- Date of most recent exam.
- Diagnosis.
- The length of time the condition is anticipated to last.
- Identification of any permanent physical or mental limitations.
- Indication of whether there is a treatment plan and whether the patient is following the plan.
- Information about any limitations on the type of work or amount of work the participant can do, including whether the participant can sustain 20 hours of work a week.

End dates and renewals of medical opinions.

- Request a new medical opinion form before the current form expires.
- Assume the condition continues until the end date the qualified professional has indicated in the medical opinion.
  - If the medical opinion indicates that there is not an end date for a condition, that opinion is valid for a year from the date the professional signed it.
- Request a new medical opinion form each year in order to assess the participant's ability to work at least 20 hours a week if the participant's condition is permanent. A new diagnosis of the condition itself is not necessary if the condition is permanent.

Information on these conditions is medically protected information.

- There must be a signed release from the participant to seek a medical opinion from a qualified professional.
- For policies on handling medical information in case notes, see Chapter 04 (Participants' Rights).
- For policies on handling information about someone's mental health, chemical dependency or experience with family violence, see Chapter 04 (Participants' Rights).
- Participants have the right to see most of the private medical information about themselves, see Chapter 04 (Participants' Rights).

Either the eligibility worker or the employment counselor may enroll a participant in Family Stabilization Services.

Worker:	Role:	How the Information Is Communicated to the Other Worker:
Eligibility Worker.	• To collect and verify information the participant shares during intake or recertification that indicates eligibility for Family Stabilization Services. • To receive and act on information the employment counselor communicates about a participant's eligibility for Family Stabilization Services. • To code the participant's status in MAXIS. (DCYF uses this for Work Participation Rate reporting).	1. MAXIS will send an electronic status update to the status update page on Workforce One when the eligibility worker changes a participant's status on Family Stabilization Services. 2. Ensure that the employment counselor has a copy of the documentation.
Employment Counselor.	• To collect and verify information that would establish eligibility for Family Stabilization Services. • Keep the documentation in the participant's file. • To share that information with the eligibility worker. • To review the participant's status when the medical opinion expires.	1. Send a secure email or paper status update to eligibility worker. • Eligibility workers do not need to have the actual medical opinion form or other documentation in order to code someone in the appropriate Family Stabilization Services category. • Note in the status update to the eligibility worker that documentation is in the participant's employment services file. 2. Check the MAXIS tab on Workforce One to confirm the coding has been updated. 3. Contact eligibility worker if the coding update does not appear. 4. Many counties have specific procedures for enrolling and tracking Family Stabilization Services participants. Use the local procedural policies.

Meet with participants within 30 days to develop an employment plan after eligibility for Family Stabilization Services has been determined.

The employment plan in Family Stabilization Services should take into account the participant's family circumstances and identify the most appropriate path to:

- Reducing barriers.
- Stabilizing the family.
- Securing unsubsidized employment.

Individuals with disabilities should receive individualized services and meaningful opportunities. See 4.24 (Americans With Disabilities Act).

Take the following steps to developing an employment plan with a participant in the Family Stabilization Services Track:

1. Complete an assessment of strengths, barriers and special circumstances that impact – or may impact – progress toward the goals in the Employment Plan.

2. Identify services, supports, education, training and accommodations needed to address barriers and to meet the participant's personal and family obligations.
- Participants in Family Stabilization Services must have access to all the services an employment services agency offers other MFIP participants.
- They are also likely to need services that other families do not.

3. Identify activities and hourly requirements appropriate to the participant's individual circumstances.

4. Assist participants in accessing services and supports necessary to help them progress in their plan.

5. Maintain monthly contact.

6. Review the plan at least every 6 months, including whether referrals were successful, and modify the plan as necessary.

7. Rewrite the plan annually, even if there are no changes.

If participants report having a condition that would make them eligible for Family Stabilization Services, but the verification is not yet available:
- Use a reduced hours good cause plan until the verification is received. See 7.21 (Reduced Hours Plans).

If a participant appears to have a permanent condition preventing work, consider referring the participant to appropriate services.

Disability Income – Supplement Security Income (SSI) or Retirement, Survivors and Disability Income (RSDI).

The Minnesota Department of Human Services contracts with organizations that help people apply for federal disability benefits. There is no charge for the services. More information is available at Social Security Advocacy Directory.

Likely candidates include participants with:

- An IQ below 70.
- A severe learning disability.
- A permanently incapacitating illness.
- Unemployable.
- Serious mental illness that prevents work.

Others may also qualify.

Qualifying for SSI benefits will depend on evidence available (medical records, vocational training records, past work, failed past work, school records, and general services currently receiving).

Disability services through the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

MnCHOICES is a web-based application that is comprehensive and integrates assessment and support planning for Minnesotans who need long-term services and supports. MnCHOICES is for people of all ages who have any type of disability or need for long-term services and supports.

Only impose sanctions when participants are confirmed able to comply but are not doing so.

Family Stabilization Services has special sanction policies because participants in this track of MFIP have barriers or challenges that make complying with program requirements difficult.

These special sanction policies apply to participants:

- With an employment plan in the Family Stabilization Services track.
- Without an employment plan but in the Family Stabilization Services track, such as a new referral who has not yet met with employment services.
- Not in the Family Stabilization Services track but for whom information indicates possible eligibility for Family Stabilization Services either because of their own circumstances or a family member's circumstances. Examples of information could include:
  - Documentation of a previous mental illness diagnosis.
  - Past involvement with services in adult or children's mental health, developmental disability programs or other county/tribal-administered services for people with disabilities.
  - Self-reported attempts to get help for a mental health condition.
  - Previous diagnosis of a chronic health condition that has been a barrier to getting or keeping a job.

Each of the steps below must occur in whatever order fits the circumstances.

- Case note each of the steps in Workforce One.
- Use the Family Stabilization Services Pre-Sanction Checklist (DHS-6075) (PDF) and keep it in the case file.

Ensure the employment plan accommodates the participant's condition or circumstances:

Review the existing plan: to be sure it is appropriate to the participant's and family's needs. If the participant has documented good cause, do not proceed with sanction. Remember: many of the conditions making someone eligible for Family Stabilization Services are also good cause conditions. If there is not an employment plan or current employment plan, review information from the most recent contacts and move to the next steps.

Get confirmation from a behavioral health or medical professional that the participant can comply with the employment plan.

There are 3 likely options to get this consultation.

A. Get a release of information from the participant so that you can contact the treating professional whose diagnosis resulted in assigning the participant to the Family Stabilization Services track. Ask the treating professional if the activities in the employment plan are activities within the capacity of the participant. That consultation can be in writing or verbally over the phone. Case note any conversations.

B. The participant can choose to obtain the needed assessment themselves if they do not want the employment counselor to contact the primary treating professional.

- Provide the participant with a copy of the most recent employment plan for them to share with the treating professional.
- Have the participant bring back a written response from the treating professional.

C. Some counties have consulting professionals available.

- Consult a professional whose expertise aligns with the conditions that make the person eligible for, or likely to be eligible for, Family Stabilization Services.
- For a newly arrived immigrant, that may be an Adult Education/English Language Learning instructor.
- Provide that consultant with information about the medical or mental health information available about the participant and the employment plan. Do NOT identify the participant – unless you have a signed release of information to do so.

Meet with the participant face-to-face.

The face-to-face meeting, home visit or a written letter should:

- Remind the participant of how the plan can be developed to address the family's challenges.
- Explore good cause exemptions that might apply to the participant's circumstances.
- Consider how the challenges or barriers the participant is experiencing might explain why they have not complied.
- Review the plan to determine if the activities are appropriate to the family's circumstances.

- Confirm that the participant understands the consequences of continued non-compliance.
- Identify other resources that may be available to meet the need of the family.
- Ensure the participant understands his/her right to appeal.

NOTE: If an activity or service that could help the participant comply is not currently in the plan, the county or tribe must work with the participant to provide that activity or service.

Arrange a face-to-face meeting following these steps in order:

1. Invite the participant to a face-to-face meeting to a county, tribal or Employment Services agency office or at a community location.
    - The county, tribe or Employment Services agency must inform participants that they may bring a family member, friend or a professional advocate as their advocate.
    - If a phone conversation clarifies why the person has not been able to comply with activities, act on that information, identify additional services or supports that may be necessary and revise the employment plan. This would stop the sanction process. A phone conversation, however, does not meet the requirement for a face-to-face meeting in order to move the sanction process forward.

2. If the participant fails to attend the face-to-face meeting, attempt a home visit.
    - The case manager or another designated worker must make at least 1 trip to where the participant lives or stays and attempt to make in-person contact.
    - If the county, tribe or employment services agency does not allow home visits, the sanction process cannot move forward.

3. If the home visit does not result in a meeting, send a written agency letter.
    - Include all the information that should be covered in the face-to-face meeting.

Send a Notice of Intent to Sanction only if all the above steps have been done.

If the participant does not respond to the notice, send a status update to the eligibility worker to impose a sanction.
See Family Stabilization Services Pre-Sanction Checklist (DHS-6075) (PDF).

When participants no longer meet the criteria for the Family Stabilization Services track, they return to regular MFIP services.

Notify the eligibility worker when information is available that the participant no longer is eligible for FSS.

Eligibility workers should not remove a participant's eligibility for FSS without consulting with the employment counselor.

Create an employment plan for the participant returning to regular MFIP that fits that participant's needs and circumstances. See Chapter 7 (Employment Plans).

In this chapter you can find information about:

- The 60-month time limit policy.
- Agency responsibilities.
- Transition period in MFIP.
- Extension Decisions.
- Sanctions and extensions.
- Extension categories.
  - Employed.
  - Ill/injured or incapacitated.
    - The participant's illness, injury or incapacity. See 18.18.6 (Ill/Injured or Incapacitated).
    - Need in the home to care for a household member. See 18.18.12 (Needed in the Home).
    - Special Medical Criteria. See 18.18.15 (Special Medical Criteria).
  - Hard to employ.
    - Developmental Disability.
    - Mental illness.
    - Learning Disability.
    - IQ Below 80.
    - Unemployable.
    - Family Violence.
- Two-Parent families and extensions.

The time limit is 60 months (5 years) over an adult's lifetime.

- Receiving cash assistance from MFIP, TANF cash assistance from other states, and from tribal TANF programs count toward the 60-month time limit.
- Any month receiving either the cash portion of the MFIP benefit and/or the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant counts as 1 of the 60 months.
- July 1997 was the 1st month that could count in the time limit in Minnesota. (Other states counted months before that date).
- The 60 months do not have to be consecutive.
- The number of months a participant has used is recorded on the STAT/TIME panel on MAXIS.
- Emergency Assistance does not count towards the lifetime limit.

Verify with an eligibility worker how many months a participant has left.

- There are situations in which months do not count. This includes months living on a tribal reservation where the unemployed rate is over 50%. To see a complete list of those situations, see Combined Manual 0011.30 (60-Month Lifetime Limit).

In most situations when a participant uses 60 months of assistance and does not qualify for an extension, MFIP benefits for the entire family end. See 18.18 (Extension Categories).

- The exception is in 2-parent families in which only 1 parent qualifies for an extension or still has not reached the time limit. Then benefits continue for the household.
- The participant and household members may still be eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare, and/or either Transition Year or Basic Sliding Fee child care assistance.

Extensions last as long as the participant is MFIP eligible and meets the criteria for an extension.

Participants can opt to receive only the food portion of their MFIP benefits in order to stop the 60-month clock.

This is called "opting out".

It means they receive neither the MFIP cash portion of their benefits or an MFIP housing assistance grant.

When participants "opt out", they:

- Continue to work with MFIP employment services.
- Are still eligible for MFIP child care assistance.

Participants cannot do this when their benefits are required to be paid directly to a landlord or utility instead of received as cash. This is called mandatory vendoring. See 19.15 (Vendoring Benefits).

For more information, see the Combined Manual 0014.03.03.03 (Opting Out of MFIP Cash Portion).

Help participants navigate the extension process.

Local counties and tribes will set the protocols for whether eligibility workers or employment counselors take the lead role in communicating to participants that extensions are available.

- Refer participants for assessments of conditions that might make them eligible for an extension.
- Help obtain the necessary documentation.
- Help employed participants increase paid work hours – including using subsidized work, if it is available.
- Reach out to participants.
- Work with each participant as intensively as needed.

The transition period begins in the 48th month of MFIP use.

It continues through a participant's 60th month of MFIP assistance.

The objectives of the transition period are to:

- Continue to help families secure employment.
- Identify and help families gather all information necessary to determine if the participant qualifies for an extension after month 60. See 18 (Time Limits and Extensions).
- Ensure families understand their options.
- Prepare participants unlikely to be extended by explaining which public benefits are still available and referring participants to other community resources.

Starting at month 48:

- MAXIS sends monthly notices to participants informing them that they are approaching the 60-month limit.
- The notices include:
  - Information about the 60-month lifetime limit.
  - The number of months the participant has remaining.
  - The policies for extensions.

Between the 54th and 58th months counties must:

1. Complete an administrative review. For more detail, see below.
2. Hold, or at least attempt, a face-to-face meeting with the participant.

N/A	The Administrative Review
Purpose.	To determine if the employment plan is still appropriate.
Who Should be Involved.	Counties will determine who is responsible and involved in this process. • DCYF recommends that eligibility workers, employment counselors and other professionals involved with the household be involved. Participants do not have to be involved.
Information to be Covered.	Consider whether: • The count of months is accurate. • The employment plan is still appropriate. • The participant is in the Family Stabilization Services track and whether the documentation is up to date. • The participant is aware of options to stop the 60-month clock. • Existing conditions affect the participant's progress toward self-sufficiency. • Adequate information is available to determine if the participant is eligible for an extension. • The participant has a current sanction. • Services may be available if MFIP benefits end.

N/A	The Face-to-Face Meeting
Purpose.	To ensure participants are aware of the policies, the status of their case, and their options.

How do Counties Meet the Requirements to Attempt a Face-To-Face Meeting.	• Counties and Tribal Nations should make at least 3 attempts at a face-to-face meeting.
	• The attempts should be documented in case notes.
	• Attempts must include:
	  • Efforts to reach the participant in writing as well as by telephone (if a telephone number is available).
	  • Information about a proposed time and place.
	• Participants are not required to attend. Do not sanction participants who do not attend.

Who Should be Involved	In some counties and Tribal Nations, eligibility workers will be responsible for the face-to-face meetings. In other counties and Tribal Nations, employment services agencies will be responsible.
Information to be covered.	The following information must be covered: • How many months of assistance the participant has used and when he/she will reach the 60th month. • The criteria for extensions. • What to do if the participant thinks he/she may meet the criteria. • How to request an extension and verify eligibility. • What to do to cure a sanction, if necessary. • Other resources available to meet the family's needs. • The right to appeal the closing of the MFIP case if the participant does not qualify for an extension.
If the Face-To-Face Meeting Is Not Possible and Does Not Occur.	The county or tribe administering MFIP must send the following to the participant: • Any information that would have been shared in a face-to-face meeting. • A notice of adverse action about the case closing and include an extension request form.

For participants who speak limited English, counties, Tribal Nations, and employment services agencies must:

Follow the counties or Tribal Nations Limited English Proficiency plan. See 4.27 (Limited English Skills).

- Review the plan to be clear about what language resources are available to help participants understand the information about time limits and extensions.
- Review MAXIS information about the participant's primary language and need for an interpreter before a face-to-face meeting.
- Counties, Tribal Nations, or employment services agencies are responsible to arrange for interpreters if needed.

Counties must decide to extend or close MFIP benefits in the 60th month. The eligibility worker is expected to record the decision on MAXIS no later than the 10-day cut-off in the 60th month.

If all the necessary information is not yet available, the county or tribe must make the decision based on the information available.

Scenario of Incomplete Information	What Should Happen With MFIP Benefits	What Steps the County or Tribe Is Expected to Follow
If the County Or Tribe Has Received Reasonable But Incomplete Information That Indicates a Participant Qualifies for an Extension.	Extend benefits.	• Notify the participant that an overpayment will be charged if the additional information fails to confirm eligibility for an extension. • Make it clear that the participant has the choice about whether to continue benefits or not while the additional information is being gathered. • Set a review of the extension on a date that the county or tribe expects to receive the additional information.
If There Is No Current Documentation That Indicates the Participant Is Eligible for an Extension.	Close the case.	• Notify the participant that benefits can resume if the needed documentation is submitted within 30 days of the date the MFIP case closed. • Must offer to help the participant get the documentation.

The county or tribe must have a review process before an extension is denied.

This review is different than the case review in the transition period intended to review appropriateness of the employment plan.

The review should be done by either one of the following:

- An employment services supervisor.
- A team designated by the county or tribe.

The review should:

- Determine whether extension criteria were applied correctly.
- Confirm that attempts to meet face-to-face with the participant occurred.

If the participant does not qualify for an extension after an administrative review has occurred and a face-to-face meeting was attempted or occurred:

The county or tribe should send a 10-day notice to the participant that the case will close after all of the following have occurred:

1. The participant does not qualify for an extension.
2. An administrative review was completed.
3. The county or tribe ensured that a face-to-face meeting occurred or was attempted.

If the case is closed without the administrative review or an attempt at a face-to-face meeting, the county or tribe must:

- Contact the participant and offer to do a review.
- Issue retroactive benefits if the participant is found eligible for an extension for all the months the participant should have been eligible.

Some participants can have their eligibility for MFIP cash assistance extended after 60 months of assistance.

Participants may be extended if they meet the criteria for 1 of the following categories:

- Employed. See 18.18.3 (Employed).
- Ill/injured or incapacitated. See 18.18.6 (Ill/Injured or Incapacitated).
  - The participant's illness, injury or incapacity. See 18.18.9 (Illness, Injury/Incapacity: Participant).
  - Needed in the home to care for a household member. See 18.18.12 (Needed in the Home).
  - Special Medical Criteria. See 18.18.15 (Special Medical Criteria).
- Hard to employ. See 18.18.18 (Hard to Employ Extensions).
  - Developmental Disability. See 18.18.21 (Developmental Disability).
  - Learning Disability. See 18.18.27 (Learning Disability).
  - IQ Below 80. See 18.18.30 (IQ Below 80).
  - Unemployable. See 18.18.33 (Unemployable).
  - Family Violence. See 18.18.36 (Family Violence Waiver).

Participants must cooperate with getting the documentation needed to determine if they are eligible for an extension.

Extension policies for 2-parent families differ on whether both parents reach 60 months at the same time or not.

If both parents reach 60 months in the same month, BOTH parents must meet the following conditions:
Qualify for additional time for 1 of the following reasons:

- Meeting the criteria for extension.
- Having banked months because of special medical criteria, see 18.18.15 (Special Medical Criteria).

If 1 parent reaches the 60-month time limit first, that parent must:
Qualify for additional time for 1 of the following reasons:

- Meeting the criteria for extension.
- Having banked months because of special medical criteria, see 18.18.15 (Special Medical Criteria).

Families can choose to remove 1 parent from the MFIP grant. Families may want to remove a parent because the parent does not meet the criteria for an extension.

Removing a parent from the MFIP grant means:

- The MFIP case will not close for no extension
- The household benefits will be reduced to reflect the reduced number of people counted for the grant.
- The parent removed from the grant does not have to move out of the household.
- The removed parent can apply for SNAP and medical assistance.
- The removed parent's income will continue to count towards the household's MFIP benefits.

When a parent is removed from the grant due to no extension, there is no limit on how many times they can be added back to the MFIP grant.

Direct participants who want to remove a parent from the MFIP grant to their eligibility worker. The option to remove a parent must occur as part of a discussion and decision-making process between the county or tribe, the Employment Services Provider, and the parents. The county or Tribal Nation must not automatically remove or add a parent.

The minimum hourly requirements for 2-parent families extended as employed:

Scenarios	Which Minimum Hourly Requirements Apply
Both parents are extended.	Two-parent family standard: 55 hours a week – at least 45 of those hours must be in employment.
The family has removed 1 parent from the MFIP benefits. See 18.18.3 (Employed).	Single-parent standard: 30 hours a week – at least 25 of those hours must be in employment.
One parent is extended but the other parent is not and only the extended parent is working.	Single-parent standard: 30 hours a week – at least 25 of those hours must be in employment.
One parent is extended, but the other parent is not and both parents are working.	Two-parent family standard: 55 hours a week – at least 45 of those hours must be in employment.

Participants can be extended for being employed in some situations.

Description.	Participants meeting their hourly requirements in paid work. Employment includes 1 or a combination of the following: • Unsubsidized employment. See 10.9 (Full-Time & Part-Time Employment: Described). • Subsidized employment in the private or public sector. See 10.21 (Paid Work Experience: Described). • On-the-job training. See 10.18 (On-the-Job-Training: Described). • Apprenticeship • Work Study. See 10.9 (Full-Time & Part-Time Employment: Described). • Supported Work – a subsidized or unsubsidized work experience which may include services such as individualized supervision and job coaching to support the participant on the job. See 10.21 (Paid Work Experience: Described). • Providing unpaid child care for another participant who is doing community service work – if the extended participant is also in paid work. See 11.9 (Providing Child Care/Community Service).

Specific Conditions That Meet the Criteria of This Category.	Participants meet the hourly requirements as follows:
	• Single parents: In activities for at least 30 hours per week.
	  • At least 25 hours per week must be spent in employment.
	• Two-parent families: in activities for a combined total of both parents of at least 55 hours per week.
	  • At least 45 hours per week must be spent in employment.
	• Participants with an illness or disability working as many hours as a qualified professional has determined the participant is able to work. See 17.45 (Qualified Professionals).
	  • The participant must follow the treatment recommendations of the qualified professional.
	  • If the participant is part of a 2-parent family, the other parent must meet the work requirements of a single-parent family. (If that parent is not in the employed extension criteria, that parent is not subject to the rule about being in compliance 10 out of the last 12 months).
	• Employed participants with an active child protection plan may count hours complying with the child protection plan towards their hourly work requirements for this extension category.
	• For self-employed participants, the hourly requirement for the employed extension is based on actual hours worked. Do not use net income divided by the federal minimum wage to calculate the number of hours to determine eligibility for the employed extension.

Documentation Required.	For employment: The eligibility worker will verify employment using the following sources -- paystubs or statements from the employer, private sector on-line verification systems. For disability status: Statement from a qualified professional. See 17.45 (Qualified Professionals). For child protection status: A written statement from the county or Tribal Nation social services agency.
Additional Requirements.	MFIP participants who are extended under an employed extension category are not subject to sanction when employment ends or when there is a reduction of work hours below 25 hours per week. In these cases, the participant is exempt from the hourly employment requirement for 1 month. After 1 month, if the participant is not working at least 25 hours per week, evaluate the participant for another extension category. Close with proper 10-day notice if the criteria for another extension category is not met.

	Participants extended under this extension category must meet all remaining requirements in the employment plan or are subject to sanction.
When the Extension Ends.	The participant is not meeting employment requirements. The grace period after losing a job or good cause has ended. The participant does not qualify for another extension category. Notify the eligibility worker.

Participants in 3 different types of situation can qualify for this extension category:

1. The participants themselves are ill, injured or incapacitated, and the condition must last or be expected to last longer than 30 days. See 18.18.9 (Illness, Injury/Incapacity: Participant).

2. Another adult or a child in the MFIP assistance unit (the members of a household eligible for MFIP benefits) or a relative or foster child in the household is ill, injured or incapacitated and needs the participant's care, and must last or be expected to last longer than 30 days. See 18.18.12 (Needed in the Home).

3. Another adult or a child in the household has a medical or disability condition meeting Special Medical Criteria. See 18.18.15 (Special Medical Criteria).

For more details, see Chapter 17 (Family Stabilization Services).

Description.	The participant must have a condition that meets all the following criteria: • Prevents working at least 20 hours a week. • Is expected to last more than 30 days. • Is certified by a medical professional.

Additional Considerations.	Many conditions qualify under this category. The information below is about conditions that employment counselors often have questions about:
	• Pregnancy may qualify if a medical professional certifies that the participant is unable to work.
	• Chemical dependency treatment qualifies as following treatment recommendations if:
	  • A chemical health professional is leading the activities.
	  • The treatment is based on an assessed need.
	  • The activities are provided according to a treatment plan as part of a licensed program.
	• Mental illness in most situations should be recognized under the mental illness extension category rather than illness and incapacity.

Documentation Required.	Certification by a qualified professional that the participant's illness, injury or incapacity, see 17.45 (Qualified Professionals). • Is expected to last more than 30 days. • Severely limits the participant's ability to get or keep suitable employment. • Prevents the participant from working 20 or more hours a week. If the statement from the qualified professional is not specific or clear, ask the professional to clarify.
How Often to Review Documentation.	Request updated verification annually, but sooner if the medical opinion indicates a shorter time frame.
Additional Requirements.	The participant must follow the treatment recommendations of the health care provider who has certified the condition. • End the extension if the participant does not follow treatment recommendations without good cause. • Grant good cause if the nature of the participant's disability interferes with following through on treatment recommendations.
When the Extension Ends.	When the illness or incapacity or injury ends -- if the participant does not qualify for another extension category. Notify the eligibility worker.
For More Information Related to This Category.	See 17.9 (Illness, Injury and Incapacity).

Description.	Participants who are needed to care for one of the following individuals who has a professionally certified illness or incapacity that is expected to last for more than 30 days: • Another member of the MFIP assistance unit. • A relative in the household. • A foster child in the household.
Documentation Required.	Certification by a qualified professional that the household member needs care in the home. • The verification does NOT have to include how much time the participant is needed in the home. • Request updated verification at least annually – but sooner if the medical opinion includes a shorter time frame. For information about professionals qualified to certify a household member's condition, see 17.45 (Qualified Professionals).
Additional Requirements.	The eligibility worker verifies if the person needing care lives in the household and records that information in MAXIS. If the person needing the care is not listed on MAXIS, have the participant communicate with the eligibility worker that the person needs to be added to the MAXIS case.
When Does the Extension End?	When the ill, injured or incapacitated person no longer needs the participant's care, if the participant does not qualify for another extension category. Notify the eligibility worker.
For More Information Related to This Category.	See 17.12 (Needed in the Home to Care for an Ill or Incapacitated Member).

Description.	Participants with an adult or child in the household who have one of the following conditions: 1. Meet the criteria for home care services. 2. Meet the criteria for a home or community-based waiver services program. 3. Serious mental illness in a child – an organic disorder of the brain or disordered though, mood, perception, orientation, memory or behavior that has led to inpatient or residential treatment, the need for such treatment, significant impaired functioning or a diagnosis of psychosis, depression, risk to self or others or symptoms of trauma. 4. Serious and persistent mental illness in an adult – mental illness that has led to two or more episodes of inpatient care; hospitalization or residential treatment of more than 6 months; treatment by a crisis team 2 or more times; or a combination of specific diagnosis of serious mental illness with significant impairment in functioning and the likelihood of needing inpatient treatment in the future.

1. Home Care Services.	• Medically necessary health services ordered by a physician.
	• Provided in the participant's home, not a hospital or long-term care facility.
	• Documented in a service plan.
	• Whose need is reviewed by the physician:
	  • At least once every 60 days for home health or private duty nursing services.
	  • At least once every 365 days for personal care.

2. Home or Community-Based Program Medical Care Programs.	Most are special programs run under Medical Assistance waivers and are available to people eligible for Medical Assistance. All of the services are designed to be an alternative to more costly nursing facility or hospital care. They include: • Alternative Care Program: For people 65 or older who need nursing level care but choose to stay in the community. This is the only program in this category for people NOT eligible for Medical Assistance. • Community Access for Disability Inclusion (CADI): For children and adults younger than 65 with disabilities who otherwise would need to be in a nursing facility. • Community Alternative Care: For children and adults who are chronically ill and would otherwise need hospital care. • Brain Injury Waiver: For children and adults with a disabling traumatic brain injury who are younger than 65 years old and would otherwise need nursing facility or hospital care. • Developmental Disabilities Waiver: For children and adults with a developmental disability and otherwise needing care in an Intermediate Care Facility. • Elderly Waiver: For people 65 and older who need nursing home level care but want to live in the community.
3. Serious Mental Illness.	• A child with an organic disorder of the brain or disordered thought, mood, perception, orientation, memory or behavior that has led to one of the following: • Inpatient or residential treatment • The need for such treatment • Significant impaired functioning • A diagnosis of psychosis, depression, risk to self or others or symptoms of trauma. For more information and information about state funded mental health services, see the Minnesota Provider Manual.
4. Serious and Persistent Mental Illness.	Mental illness in an adult that has led to one of the following: • Two or more episodes of inpatient care. • Hospitalization or residential treatment of more than 6 months. • Treatment by a crisis team 2 or more times.

	• A combination of specific diagnosis of serious mental illness with significant impairment in functioning and the likelihood of needing inpatient treatment in the future. For more information and information about state funded mental health services, see the Minnesota Provider Manual.
Documentation Required.	If the family member's condition is serious and persistent mental illness or serious mental illness: The documentation should confirm a diagnosis by a qualified professional. See 17.45 (Qualified Professionals). If the family member is receiving home care or home or community based services: The person receiving the services or the disability case manager (if there is a signed release) could provide a copy of either of the following for the individual's: • Community Support Plan. • Coordinated Services and Support Plan. If the family member is not receiving those services but is claiming eligibility: Participants can learn whether a household member meets any of these criteria by having a MNChoices Assessment done by the county. For more information about these assessments, participants may contact: • The county or reservation where they live. • The Disability Linkage Line at 1-866-333-2466. • Senior LinkAge Line at 1-800-333-2433. Do not require these participants to verify their ability to get or keep a job. If the participant cannot get the necessary information from the health care provider: 1. Get a release of information allowing you to contact the family member's health care provider. 2. Explain that you need the information in order to provide the appropriate services to the caregiver. 3. If that is not successful, contact the consumer representative at the family member's health plan. 4. If that is not successful, contact the DHS Health Care Purchasing Division at 651-296-3386 or 1-800-657-3756.
How Often to Review Documentation.	Request updated verification at least annually – but sooner if the medical opinion includes a shorter time frame.
When Does the Extension End?	The Special Medical Criteria earns a household additional months to receive MFIP benefits through a process called "banked months". • Participants eligible for special medical criteria receive "banked months": Each month a participant is eligible for Special Medical Criteria before reaching the 60-month limit is "banked". • MAXIS uses these banked months once the household member no longer meets the Special Medical Criteria or that person has left the household. • Only after the banked months are all used is the participant assessed for an extension. • Eligibility for banked months is not based on employment. • In a 2-parent family, only 1 parent can qualify for the Special Medical Criteria category. If the health care provider documents that both parents are needed in the home to care for the family member meeting Special Medical Criteria, extend the 2nd parent as needed in the home.

	• Banked months can be tracked retroactively if the county or tribe was not aware of the household's eligibility at the time. Notify the eligibility worker.
For More Information Related to This Category.	See 17.15 (Special Medical Criteria).

Five different situations can qualify someone for this extension category:

1. Developmental Disability or Mental Illness. See17.21 (Mental Illness), 18.18.21 (Developmental Disability).

2. Learning Disability. See 18.18.27 (Learning Disability).

3. IQ below 80. See 18.18.30 (IQ Below 80).

4. Unemployable. See 18.18.33 (Unemployable).

5. Family Violence. See 18.18.36 (Family Violence Waiver).

Description.	The participant has a developmental disability that meets all of the following: • Is diagnosed by a qualified health professional. See 17.45 (Qualified Professionals). • Prevents working 20 hours or more per week. A developmental disability means an impairment of general intellectual functioning that was present before the person's 22nd birthday.
Documentation Required.	The diagnosis must be by one of the following: • Licensed psychologist • Certified school psychologist • Certified psychometrist (a specialist in administering and scoring tests to assess neuropsychological functioning working under the supervision of licensed psychologist). The documentation should include a statement about whether the person is able to get or keep employment for more than 20 hours a week in unsubsidized employment.
How Often to Review Documentation.	Request updated verification at least annually, but sooner if the medical opinion indicates a shorter time frame.
Additional Requirements.	If the participant speaks no English or only limited English: • Consider other categories of extension first. • Ensure that the determination must be made by a qualified professional with experience conducting culturally appropriate assessments, whenever possible. • Accept reports that identify an IQ range or a specific score. • Ensure that the reports include a statement of confidence in the results. • Require the qualified professional to use a qualified interpreter, not a family member.
When the Extension Ends.	A developmental disability is a permanent condition. The extension, however, could end if both of the following are true: • A qualified professional determines that the participant is able to get and sustain at least 20 hours a week of unsubsidized employment. • The participant does not qualify for another extension category. Notify the eligibility worker. If participants in this category continue to be unable to secure or sustain employment, consider a referral to Supplemental Security Income, the federal income support program for people with disabilities. The Minnesota Department of Human Services contracts with organizations that help people apply for federal disability benefits. There is no charge for the services. More information is available at Social Security Advocacy Directory.
For More Information Related to This Category.	See 17.18 (Developmental Disability).

Description.	A participant who meets BOTH of the following conditions: 1. Having a mental illness. 2. Being unable to get or keep work for at least 20 hours a week.
Documentation Required.	A diagnosis must be made or documented by one of the following: • Licensed physician. • Social worker licensed for independent clinical social work. • Social worker with a master's degree in social work from an accredited university or college. • Licensed psychologist. • Psychiatrist -- a licensed physician certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology or eligible for board certifications in psychiatry. • Licensed marriage and family therapist experienced in clinical mental health services. • Licensed professional clinical counselor. • A registered nurse who are clinical specialists with certification or degrees in behavioral health. The documentation should include a statement about whether the person is able to get or keep employment for more than 20 hours a week in unsubsidized employment.
How Often to Review Documentation.	Request updated verification annually, but sooner if the medical opinion indicates a shorter time frame.
When the Extension Ends.	If the participant does not qualify for another extension category and when a qualified professional determines 1 or both of the following: • That the participant has recovered from the mental illness. • The mental illness is no longer preventing the participant from working at least 20 hours a week. Notify the eligibility worker.
For More Information Related to This Category.	See 17.21 (Mental Illness).

Description.	The participant must meet ALL of the following criteria: • Has a disorder in 1 or more of the neurological processes involved in processing or organizing information. • Has been assessed by a vocational specialist or qualified professional. • Is significantly restricted in the range of work able to be done or unable to get or keep unsubsidized work of at least 20 hours a week.
Specific Conditions That Meet the Criteria of This Category.	Learning disabilities can impair the ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations.
Documentation required.	Documentation by either: • Licensed psychologist with experience determining learning disabilities. • School psychologist with experience determining learning disabilities. The documentation should include a statement about whether the learning disability prevents the ability to work in unsubsidized employment at least 20 hours a week.
How Often to Review Documentation.	Request updated verification annually, but sooner if the medical opinion indicates a shorter time frame. For lifelong conditions such as Learning Disability request verification at least annually that the condition prevents participant from getting or working at least 20 hours per week or significantly limits the types of employment a participant may do.
Additional Requirements.	If the participant speaks no English or only limited English: • Consider other categories of extension first. • The determination must be made by a qualified professional with experience conducting culturally appropriate assessments, whenever possible. • These reports must include a statement of confidence in the results. • The qualified professional must use a qualified interpreter, not a family member.
When the Extension Ends.	A learning disability is permanent. The extension would end, however if both of the following are true: • A qualified professional determined the participant is able to work at least 20 hours a week. • The participant does not qualify for another extension category. Notify the eligibility worker.
For More Information Related to This Category.	See 17.27 (Learning Disability).

Description.	The participant meets both of the following criteria:
	• Has an IQ below 80.
	• Meets 1 of the following conditions as documented by a qualified professional:
	  • Unable to get and keep suitable unsubsidized work for at least 20 hours a week. see Chapter 4 (Participants' Rights).
	  • Is significantly restricted in the types of jobs able to be performed.

Documentation Required.	A statement from one of the following: • Licensed psychologist. • Certified school psychologist. • Certified psychometrist (a specialist in administering and scoring tests to assess neuropsychological functioning working under the supervision of licensed psychologist).
How Often to Review Documentation.	Request updated verification annually, but sooner if the medical opinion indicates a shorter time frame. For lifelong conditions such as IQ below 80 request verification at least annually that the condition prevents participant from getting or working at least 20 hours per week or significantly limits the types of employment a participant may do.
Additional Requirements.	If the participant speaks no English or only limited English: • Consider other categories of extension first. • Ensure that the determination is made by a qualified professional with experience conducting culturally appropriate assessments, whenever possible. • Accept reports that identify an IQ range or a specific score. • Ensure that the reports include a statement of confidence in the results. • Require the qualified professional to use a qualified interpreter, not a family member.
When the Extension Ends.	An IQ level is a permanent condition. An extension could end, however, if both of the following are true: 1. A qualified professional determines the condition no longer prevents the participant from working at least 20 hours a week in unsubsidized work or no longer severely restricts the type of work the participant can do. 2. The participant does not qualify for another extension category. Notify the eligibility worker.
For More Information Related to This Category.	See 17.24 (IQ Below 80).

Description.	Participants not eligible under another extension category and assessed to be unemployable by one of the following: • A vocational rehabilitation specialist. • The county or tribe responsible for administering MFIP. Each local site will define its assessment process. If a participant is unemployable because of a condition covered by another extension category: • Use that category for extending the participant. • Do not use the Unemployable category. Use "unemployable" only if the participant does not meet the criteria for another extension category. Participants who have demonstrated that they are able to work in unsubsidized employment should NOT be extended in this category.
Specific Conditions That Meet the Criteria of This Category.	No single factor makes someone unemployable. The determination must take into account: • The reasons why someone has left work or the barriers to employment that would explain why a participant has not worked over the last 5 years. • Extremely limited ability to speak English that makes communication even with an interpreter difficult and even when the participant has taken English Language Learning classes. (Document the participation in English Language Learning.) • Felony record that inhibits employment. • Other severe and chronic mental health or chemical dependency issues that have not been professionally certified because the nature of the illness impedes the participant's ability to seek assessment or treatment. (Document employment services' or other professionals' attempts to engage the participant in necessary services). A lack of child care, transportation or housing does not constitute a basis of eligibility by themselves for this category.
Documentation Required.	A statement from a vocational rehabilitation specialist or from the county or tribe responsible for administering MFIP. (Check with the local county or tribe to learn who is designated to make these assessments).
How Often to Review Documentation.	Request updated verification at least annually, sooner only if the medical opinion indicates a shorter time frame.
When the Extension Ends.	When the conditions preventing employment end, if the participant does not qualify for another extension category. Notify the eligibility worker.
For More Information Related to This Category.	See 17.42 (Unemployable).

Description.	Participants who have verified safety concerns and have a family violence waiver. For more information about how a participant gets a Family Violence Waiver, see Chapter 8 (Family Violence Waiver).
Documentation Required.	See 8.15 (Verifying Family Violence).
How Often to Review Documentation.	See 8.24 (Employment Plans & Family Violence Waiver).
When the Extension Ends.	When the family violence waiver ends, unless the participant qualifies for another extension category. See 8.27 (Non-Compliance & Family Violence Waiver). Notify the eligibility worker.
For More Information Related to This Category.	See Chapter 8 (Family Violence Waiver).

In this chapter you can find information about:

- Non-compliance - described.
- When not to sanction someone.
- Good cause.
- Overview of different sanction types.
- Steps before imposing a sanction.
- Notices of Intent to Sanction.
- How participants can prevent a sanction being imposed.
- Steps in imposing a sanction.
- Employment services sanctions.
- Closing cases for 100% sanctions.
- Face-to-face meetings for 100% sanctions.
- Sanction reviews and outreach.
- Ending and correcting sanctions.
- Dispute resolution.
  - Conciliation conference
  - Fair hearing (appeals)
- Child support sanctions.
- Dual sanctions.
- Drug felony sanctions.

Two service tracks within MFIP have special policies for sanctions that are explained in other chapters.

- See the Family Stabilization Services chapter. See Chapter 17 (Family Stabilization Services).
- See the Family Violence chapter. See Chapter 8 (Family Violence Waiver).

Participants are not complying with MFIP employment services if they fail to:

Required Activity.	The Sanction Reason to Use In the Status Update to the Eligibility Worker
Attend the employment services overview.	Failed to attend ES overview.
Cooperate in developing an employment plan, including attending appointments to develop and sign the plan.	Failed to develop an employment plan.
Comply with activities in the plan.	Non-compliance with employment plan.
Complete the mental and chemical health self-screening tools, see 6.24 (Mental/Chemical Health Screening/Assessments). Include this activity in the employment plan.	Non-compliance with employment plan.
Complete a professional chemical use assessment if required by the employment counselor, see 6.24 (Mental/Chemical Health Screening/Assessments). Include this activity in the employment plan.	Non-compliance with employment plan.
Accept a suitable job. See SUITABLE EMPLOYMENT in 2.39 (Glossary: S...).	Failed to accept suitable employment.
Continue working at a job that is suitable, see 10 (Paid Employment).	Quit suitable employment without good cause.
Report any change in employment status within 10 days.	Non-compliance with employment plan.
Meet school attendance requirements for teen parents. See 9.6 (Education Requirements).	Under 20; failed education requirements.

Do not sanction participants if they:

- Are unable to comply for a good cause reason, see 19.9 (Good Cause).
- Cannot meet participation hours because their employer is closed for a holiday and does not provide holiday pay to participants. (Participants do not have to engage in increased hours of activity to offset unpaid holiday hours).
- Are meeting the minimum hourly requirements for their family situation when the employment plan is written for more than the minimum hours. See 7.15 (Hourly Requirements for Plans).
- Fail to follow through on medical treatment recommendations after having been extended after reaching 60 months.
- Do not follow through on activities that are NOT part of the employment plan.
- Are receiving Minnesota Paid Leave benefits. See 5.23 (Minnesota Paid Leave Exemption).

Do not sanction participants or send a Notice of Intent to Sanction if participants do not submit paystubs to the employment services agency.

Do not sanction participants who have good cause reasons for not complying.

Act on information about good cause available from the participant or other sources.

- When an employment counselor is aware that good cause applies, even if the participant has not claimed good cause, do not sanction the participant.
  - Verify and document the good cause reason.
  - Work with the participant to decide what the next step should be.

To verify good cause:

- Use professional judgment about which circumstances require verification.
- Request formal verification anytime the claim of good cause is questionable or repeated.
- Verification can include the following examples (but allow room for other):
  - Medical statements.
  - Proof of judicial proceedings.
  - Documentation of participation in acceptable activities.

In most cases, good cause situations should not be approved for longer than 90 days.

Apply good cause only for the portion of the month during which the good cause reason occurs.

If the situation continues longer than 90 days:

- Case note why it should continue beyond that time frame.
- Consider whether the participant should be in the Family Stabilization Services track.

MFIP Good cause does NOT apply if participants have sanctions for:

- Not cooperating with child support (see Child Support good cause reasons, 19.51 (Child Support Sanctions).

Good cause reasons:

Good Cause Reason	Definition and Details
Appropriate Child Care Is Unavailable.	See 16.33 (Inability to Obtain Child Care). Reschedule mandatory meetings at a time that works for the participant.
The Job Is Not Suitable Employment.	Suitable employment: • Is within the participant's physical and mental capacity. • Pays hourly gross wages that are not less than the state or local minimum wage, whichever applies. • Meets federal, state and county health and safety standards. • Complies with federal, state and local anti-discrimination laws.
The Participant Is Ill or Injured.	An illness or injury of any length of time that prevents the participant from participating in an activity. If the illness or injury lasts for more than 30 days, they should be considered for the Family Stabilization Services track. See 17.9 (Illness, Injury and Incapacity). Reschedule mandatory meetings at a time that works for the participant.
Ill and Injured: Presumptive Medical Disability.	This is a specific good cause reason under ill and injured. This includes the month a mother gives birth and the 2 months following that birth. • A participant does not need a medical statement from a physician that she is incapacitated after the baby's birth. • If the pregnancy does not result in a live birth, a medical statement is necessary to document incapacity. • A participant granted good cause because of the birth of a child is still expected to work with employment services, but cannot be sanctioned during the 3-month good cause time period.

	• Mothers who do not want to work with employment services should take the child under 12 months exemption if available to them. See 5.18 (Participation Requirements). • Presumptive medical disability good cause does not apply to minor parents or 18- and 19-year old parents who take the education option. See 9.27 (Child Under 12 Months & Teen Parents). • A presumptive medical disability does not make someone eligible for the Family Stabilization Services track. • Sanctions on participants found to have given birth should be removed and their benefits restored for that period.
The Participant Needs to Provide Care to Someone Who Is Ill or Incapacitated.	The person needing care can include: • Another member of the household receiving MFIP assistance. • A relative in the household. • A foster child in the household. The participant must provide verification that they are needed to provide the care. Reschedule mandatory meetings at a time that works for the participant.
The participant Cannot Secure Transportation.	Reschedule mandatory meetings at a time that works for the participant.
An Emergency Situation Prevents Complying.	This includes but is not limited to: • Being homeless. See ESM 2.24 (Glossary: H-K) for the definition of homeless. • Having utilities shut off. • Receiving a utility shut-off notice. • Receiving an eviction notice. The participant's verbal statement is acceptable, except when there is a pending eviction or pending utility shut-off and the participant must provide verification.
A Judicial Proceeding.	This includes judicial proceedings affecting the participant directly or juvenile court matters affecting a young person in the household and that conflicts with either of the following: • The schedule for activities in the employment plan. • A mandatory MFIP meeting. Reschedule mandatory meetings at a time that works for the participant.
The Participant Is Already Participating in Acceptable Work Activities.	Do not sanction working participants who have submitted pay stubs to the eligibility worker but have not submitted them to the employment counselor.
An Appropriate Education Program Is Not Available for a Parent Younger Than 20 Whose Employment Plan Requires Education.	This applies to: • A parent younger than 18 without a high school diploma. • A parent 18 or 19 years old choosing the school option.
Activities identified in the employment plan are not available.	No additional information.
Suitable Employment Is Not Available to a Participant Willing to Work.	No additional information.

The Participant Faces Other Verifiable Obstacles to Complying That Are Beyond the Participant's Control.	No additional information.
The Participant Appears to Be Eligible for Family Stabilization Services. See Chapter 17 (Family Stabilization Services).	The documentation to make that determination, however, is not available even with the participant's cooperation in trying to obtain it.

The information about what is good cause is available to participants:

- At the employment services overview.
- On the Employment Services Responsibilities, Rights and Consent (DHS-3172) (PDF).
- On the MFIP Notice of Intent to Sanction (DHS-3175) (PDF).

A sanction is a reduction of benefits for not complying with MFIP requirements.

- The reduction is applied to the full household's cash benefits, not just to the participant's portion of those benefits.
- Months that a participant is sanctioned count toward the 60-month limit.

Sanction processes, see 19.27 (Sanction Timelines and Provisions).

N/A	Employment Services or Failure to Attend Orientation Sanctions	Child Support Services Sanctions
Which Worker Initiates Sanction Process?	Employment counselor.	Child support worker.
How Much Are Benefits Reduced?	1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th consecutive occurrence: 5% of the cash portion of the MFIP grant received by the assistance unit. 7th consecutive occurrence: 100% -- case closes. See 19.30 (Closing Cases for 100% Sanction).	1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th occurrences: 25% of the cash portion of the MFIP grant received by the assistance unit. 7th consecutive occurrence: 100% -- case closes. See 19.30 (Closing Cases for 100% Sanction).
Do These Sanctions Count towards the 7th sanction?	Yes, if sanctions occur consecutively.	Yes, if sanctions occur consecutively.
Other.	Employment Services agencies may opt to discontinue support services, such as transportation. • Follow local policies, including about whether to consult eligibility or child care assistance workers first. See 16.30 (Sanctions & Child Care Assistance) about how child care assistance responds to MFIP sanctions.	For more information about Child Support Sanctions, see 19.51 (Child Support Sanctions).

For more information about sanctions and participants who:

Have 2 sanction types in the same month, see 19.54 (Dual Sanctions).

Also receive child care assistance, see Chapter 16 (Child Care).

Do the following before starting the sanction process:

- Review the employment plan to determine if the plan is still appropriate.
- Determine whether the participant has a good cause reason for not complying. See 19.9 (Good Cause).
- Consider whether providing a pre-employment activity in the plan will help the participant address challenges that have prevented compliance. See 19.33 (Face-to-Face Meetings for 100% Sanctions).

Continue these and other activities to attempt to engage participants and resolve the sanction in subsequent months of sanction. See:

- 19.30 (Closing Cases for 100% Sanction).
- 19.33 (Face-to-Face Meetings for 100% Sanctions).

A Notice of Intent to Sanction (NOITS) is the 1st step in the sanction process.

NOITS is the short-hand way to refer to a Notice of Intent to Sanction.

Use the MFIP Notice of Intent to Sanction (DHS-3175) (PDF).

Check off the specific requirements the participant failed to meet.

- Be very specific about what actions the participant must take under what deadlines, so that the participant knows exactly how to prevent the sanction.
- MFIP Notice of intent to Sanction (DHS-3175) must be mailed.
- Allow the participant at least 10 calendar days from mailing to comply. (The 10th day should not be on a weekend or a holiday.) Do not send a status update to impose the sanction before the 11th day.
- Case note all actions.

Never use this notice as a first step for engaging the participant.

Do not send a Notice of Intent to Sanction if information is already available that good cause exists.

Impose a sanction when a participant does not do one of the following:

- Comply with the employment services requirements after receiving the Notice of Intent to Sanction.
- Provide information to claim good cause for not complying.

To initiate the sanction process:

1. Send the eligibility worker a status update.
    - That can be done using one of the following, according to policy set by local county or tribe responsible for administering MFIP:
        - The MFIP Status Update Form (DHS-3165) (PDF).
        - A local form.
        - Email.
        - Another locally established process.
    - Include the following information:
        - Date of non-compliance.
        - The appropriate reason for imposing the sanction on the list on the front of the MFIP Status Update Form.
        - The reason given to the eligibility worker must be the same as the reason given to the participant.

2. Case note that a status update was sent.

3. Keep a copy of the status update in Workforce One or the case file.

4. Check to see that the sanction was imposed by using Workforce One interface or MAXIS view.
    The eligibility worker will send the participant a notice that a sanction will be imposed.
    - This will be a notice of adverse action.
    - This notice must be sent at least 10 calendar days before a sanction is imposed.

The policies in this section apply to all participants.

Every month that a participant fails to comply with a requirement is counted as a separate occurrence of non-compliance.

- If both parents in a 2-parent family, however, are out of compliance in the same month, that counts as 1 occurrence of non-compliance for the household.
- The count of occurrences restarts once a participant cures their sanction.
- For participants with dual sanctions, see 19.54 (Dual Sanctions).

The number of occurrences result in different sanction policies.

1st- 6th Consecutive Occurrences in Sanction.

What Sanction Is Imposed.	A 5% sanction of the MFIP cash portion received by the assistance unit.
Timelines for Curing the Sanction.	If the participant cures their sanction on or before the 15th of the month in which the sanction is being imposed: • The sanction is lifted and the participant's grant for that month is fully restored. If the participant cures their sanction after the 15th of the month in which the sanction is being imposed: • The sanction remains for that month and is lifted the following month.
Curing the Sanction.	Once a participant cures their sanction, the sanction count will be reset to zero.
Workforce One.	Place sanctioned participants in "Holding – Sanctioned".
Requirements to Review .	Yes. See 19.18 (Steps Before Imposing a Sanction).

100% sanction

What Sanction Is Imposed.	• The eligibility worker closes the MFIP case. • When the MFIP case is closed in MAXIS, a status update will come across the WF1 interface notifying the employment counselor that the case is closed and the closure reason. The eligibility worker will determine the participant's eligibility for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits when MFIP closes. A face-to-face meeting must be attempted before the case closes. For information about procedures for face-to-face meetings, see 19.33 (Face-to-Face Meetings for 100% Sanctions).
How Long the Sanction Must Remain in Place.	At least 1 full month.
Timelines for Curing the Sanction.	Before the effective date. The case can be re-opened after 1 month of the case closing if the participant demonstrates compliance during that time and reapplies.

Procedures for Curing the Sanction.	Check to see if the participant qualifies for good cause, see 19.9 (Good Cause).
	
	If the participant does qualify for good cause, immediately lift the sanction. If not:
	• A participant must complete a new MFIP application after a case has been closed due to a 100% sanction.
	  • The participant can choose to start cooperating with the employment counselor even before applying to re-open the case.
	  • The day the participant connects with the employment counselor can start counting towards being in compliance.
	• Employment Services must develop an Employment Plan that identifies the specific activities and time frames required to be considered compliant.
	  • The participant must be in compliance with the employment plan for up to 30 days in order to have MFIP benefits re-opened. The actual number of days a particular participant needs to be in compliance to have benefits re-opened will depend on the participant's specific circumstances.
	  • The employment plan may include activities that last between 1 and 30 days.
	• The eligibility worker will not act on the application until the scheduled activities have been completed.
	• Once the participant comes into compliance, notify the eligibility worker immediately of the date of compliance.
	• The MFIP case must stay closed for at least 30 days and can be reopened as soon after that point as compliance has occurred.

Special Provisions for 2-Parent Families.	If both parents in a 2-parent assistance unit are out of compliance during the same month, it counts as 1 occurrence.
How a 100% Sanction Affects Other Programs.	• The participant and household can apply for SNAP. • Medical assistance is not closed because of the 100% MFIP sanction. • For information about effect on child care, see 16.30 (Sanctions & Child Care Assistance).

An MFIP staff person must attempt a face-to-face meeting with the participant before closing the case.

The county or tribe responsible for administering MFIP may designate whether it is an eligibility worker or the employment counselor who should initiate the face-to-face meeting.

The meeting must:

- Determine whether the participant has good cause for continued non-compliance. See 19.9 (Good Cause).
- Determine whether the participant is in non-compliance due to the need for a pre-employment activity. Pre-employment activities include:
  - Chemical and mental health assessments.
  - Chemical and mental health treatment and services.
  - Learning disability services.
  - Child protection services.
  - Family stabilization services.
  - Other programs designed to enhance someone's employability.
- If a pre-employment activity would make compliance possible, revise the employment plan to include that activity. Participation in that activity should be considered to cure the sanction.
- Determine if the activities in the employment plan are appropriate, including whether the plan addresses barriers and has included the Family Violence Waiver, if appropriate. See 8 (Family Violence Waiver).
- Determine whether the participant qualifies for the Family Violence Waiver. See 8 (Family Violence Waiver).
- Ensure the participant understands the sanction status and the consequences of continuing non-compliance.
- Provide information about resources that may be available to help meet the needs of the family.
- Ensure the participant understands the right to appeal.

Provide the information in a written notice to the participant when a face-to-face meeting cannot be conducted.

When the face-to-face meeting or case review determine the sanction should not have been imposed: 19.45 (Ending & Correcting Sanctions).

Review circumstances when participants have been in sanction for at least 2 months. Review the case file to determine if the employment plan is still appropriate:

This includes:

- Determining whether the participant has a good cause reason for not complying. See 19.9 (Good Cause).
- Considering whether a pre-employment activity would help the participant address challenges that have prevented compliance. Participation in these activities could cure the sanction.

Case note the review of the employment plan and what was learned.

- Reach out to participants in sanction.
  Make sure the participant understands what must be done to come back into compliance.
  - Schedule a meeting with sanctioned participants as soon as possible to discuss ways to cure the sanction.
  - Coordinate efforts with the eligibility worker and other appropriate county, tribal 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.
  - Continue to try to make contact at least once a month, even if the participant does not respond.
  - Provide the client every opportunity to cure the sanction and offer the necessary support and assistance.
  - Revise the plan if it is not possible to comply with activities in the current plan or the Notice of Intent to Sanction (NOITS).

Sanctions should end and the sanction count should reset to zero when one of the following occur:

- The participant qualifies for good cause. See 19.9 (Good Cause).
- A participant comes into compliance.
  - If the participant cures their sanction on or before the 15th of the sanction month, the sanction will be lifted and the full MFIP grant will be restored.
  - If the participant cures their sanction after the 15th of the sanction month, the sanction will be lifted the following month.

Employment counselors may lift a sanction in circumstances where they feel the sanction is no longer appropriate.

- In these cases, the sanction is lifted from that point forward in time.
- It does not retroactively cure a sanction.
- Communicate to the eligibility worker to lift the sanction.

The following table includes examples of the sort of circumstances in which an employment counselor may decide that a sanction is no longer appropriate.

Possible circumstances	The response
The participant is in sanction for not submitting job logs at least 3 months ago.	Develop a new employment plan and lift the sanction. (There is no point to getting logs when the hours have already been recorded and reported).
The participant transfers from another county or Tribal Nation and is already in sanction. Local county or Tribal Nation policies will direct what to do if a sanctioned participant transfers employment services agencies within the same county or Tribal Nation.	• Invite the participant to develop a new employment plan. • Lift the sanction when the participant has attended the overview.

Notify the eligibility worker to remove the sanction if removing the sanction is appropriate.
The MFIP Status Update Form (DHS-3165) (PDF) is available for this communication.
Include the date on which the employment counselor determined that the sanction is no longer appropriate.

Correcting a Sanction

Cure the sanction for good cause and note on status update that it was imposed in error.

The participant's grant amount must be restored to the full amount retroactively to the date when the participant was found to:

- Lack necessary pre-employment activities. See 19.9 (Good Cause).
- Have qualified for good cause.

Notify the eligibility worker.

- Include the date for removing the sanction retroactive to the date in which the participant was found to:
  - Activities identified in the employment plan are not available.
  - Qualify for a family violence waiver.
  - Have a good cause reason for not complying, see 19.9 (Good Cause).
- Include in the comment section that the sanction is being lifted retroactively because of good cause.

MFIP offers participants 2 types of dispute resolution:

A participant can choose whether to pursue dispute resolution through either 1 or both of the following:

- A Conciliation Conference– an informal process. See 19.48.3 (Conciliation Conference).
- A Fair Hearing (Appeal) – a formal legal process. See 19.48.6 Fair Hearing (Appeal).

Participants must cooperate with child support requirements.

The requirement to cooperate with Child Support Services applies to parents:

- Receiving MFIP assistance.
- Receiving SSI but whose children are receiving MFIP assistance.
- Disqualified from receiving MFIP assistance because of fraud, or EBT misuse.
- Not receiving MFIP assistance because the 2-parent household chose to have that parent's assistance discontinued, see 18.21 (Two-Parent Families & Extensions).

Child support good cause exemptions

Child support good cause is different from MFIP good cause. Child Support uses good cause when exempting a participant from cooperating with Child Support Services. See 19.9 (Good Cause) for MFIP.

Participants are exempt from cooperating with child support if one of the following is true:

- The parent is enrolled in the Safe at Home program, see 8.36 (Resources for Addressing Family Violence).
- The child was conceived as a result of rape or incest.
- Legal proceedings for the adoption of the child or children are pending.
- The parent is working with a public or private social services agency in trying to decide whether to give a child up for adoption. (The decision process cannot last for more than 3 months).
- Cooperation will cause physical or emotional harm to the child.
- Cooperation will cause physical or emotional harm to the parent, reducing the parent's ability to adequately care for the child.

For more information about good cause for exemptions from cooperating with child support, see Combined Manual 0012.21.03 (Support From Non-Custodial Parents).

Participants can be simultaneously sanctioned for not complying with child support and MFIP requirements.

Scenario	The Amount of the Reduction	Sanction Count
Participant receives in the same month both: • A first occurrence of an MFIP employment services or financial orientation sanction. • A first occurrence of a child support sanction.	25% of the cash portion of the MFIP grant.	One occurrence.
A participant is already in sanction and another type is imposed in the same month.	25% of the cash portion of the MFIP grant.	The month is one occurrence. • After that each month in sanction, even months of dual sanctions, is considered one new occurrence.

To resolve the dual sanctions, the participant works with:

- The employment counselor to resolve the employment services sanction.
- The eligibility worker or child support worker to resolve the other sanctions.

Each sanction is lifted separately:

Child Support Sanction	Employment Services or Financial Orientation Sanction	Status of Sanction
Cured.	Not cured.	The 5% MFIP sanction remains in place.
Not Cured.	Cured.	The 25% child support sanction remains.

Once participants receive a Notice of Intent to Sanction, they can take the following actions to stop the sanction from being imposed:

- Follow all instructions in the Notice of Intent to Sanction.
- Show that they are already in compliance.
- Explain good cause for not complying with requirements, see 19.9 (Good Cause). This may or may not require documentation.
- Request a fair hearing or a conciliation conference. See 19.48.3 (Conciliation Conference), 19.48.6 (Fair Hearing (Appeal)).

A Conciliation Conference does not have to come before a Fair Hearing.

N/A	Conciliation Conference
What It Is.	An informal and voluntary meeting for the employment counselor and participant to discuss their disagreement. • An optional step, less procedurally complex than fair hearings and may solve disagreements more quickly.
Purpose.	To reach mutual agreement on how to settle the disagreement.
Who Initiates the Process.	Either the participant or the employment counselor.
What Can Trigger the Process.	• Receiving a Notice of Intent to Sanction. • A disagreement about the contents or interpretation of the employment plan.
The process.	An employment services agency supervisor or someone designated by the supervisor must review the outcome of the meeting.

N/A	Fair Hearing (Appeal)
What It Is.	A legal process in which an appeals referee settles the disagreement.
Who Initiates the Process.	The participant.
What Issues Can Be Appealed.	Issues that may be appealed are: • 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, and the level of recoupment. • The eligibility for an assistance payment. • The use of protective or vendor payments.
How to Initiate the Process.	Participants must submit a request for a fair hearing in writing to either DHS or the county or tribe responsible for administering MFIP within the following timelines: • Within 30 days after receiving notice of the notice of adverse action or notice of intent to sanction. • Within 90 days after receiving notice of the county's or tribe's action, if the participant shows good cause for not making the 30-day deadline.
What the Employment Counselor Should Do.	• Route the fair hearing request to the county or tribe responsible for administering MFIP as soon as possible if the participant sends it to the employment services agency. • Be prepared to attend the fair hearing. • Provide any records requested by the referee, including printing off any relevant information from Workforce One.
The Obligation of the County or Tribe Responsible for Administering MFIP to Ensure the Participant Can Participate.	Reimburse participants for reasonable and necessary expenses related to attending the hearing. This can include: • Child care. • Transportation. • Transportation costs for the participant's witnesses and representatives. • Legal fees are not a reimbursable cost.
State's Obligation.	• Schedule fair hearings at reasonable time and date. • Have an impartial referee conduct the fair hearing. • Allow for the option of conducting the hearing by telephone. • Use an accessible site if the participant has disabilities.
What Happens to Participant's Benefits During a Fair Hearing.	Participants' benefits continue at their full amount if the participant requests a fair hearing within either of the following time periods (whichever is later): • Before the effective date of the adverse action. • within 10 days of the day the county or tribe mailed the notice of adverse action. The county or tribe responsible for administering MFIP can adjust benefits if either one of the following occurs: • The participant requests in writing not to receive continued assistance while the fair hearing decision is pending. • Changes in circumstances unrelated to the issue being appealed require a change to benefits.
What Counties or Tribes Do When Decision Is Made.	If the county or tribal action is found correct: • Apply the sanction beginning with the next payment month If the participant's appeal is upheld:

	Restore any benefits that had been previously reduced.

Information to support collaboration between MFIP and Refugee Services

In this chapter find information about:

- A description of the voluntary nature of refugee services for families with children.
- Who is eligible for those services.
- Which agencies in Minnesota provide refugee services.
- General descriptions of Refugee Employment Services and Refugee Social Services.
- Collaborating with refugee services.
- Links to additional information that is available about refugees, refugee resettlement services, and resources available to support refugees in getting and keeping jobs.

Some newly arrived immigrant parents can be eligible for both MFIP and Refugee Employment Services.

- There are no formal participation requirements. Documentation, reporting, and counting of hours of activities are not required.
- Refugee Employment Services agencies work with participants on the activities in their Refugee Employment Services plan customized to the person's need.
- There are no program consequences for failure to participate; however, participants who do not wish to engage in services are closed out of Refugee Employment Services.
- MFIP sanctions have no impact on Refugee Employment Services.
- A decision by Refugee Employment Services to close a case has no impact on MFIP employment services.
- Refugee Employment Services do not change the nature of their services based on a participant’s MFIP status. Refugee Employment Services will still provide individualized services focused on getting the participant a job placement as soon as possible whether a participant is open in MFIP, the Family Stabilization Services track or not open in cash assistance at all.

Adults without children who receive Refugee Cash Assistance must participate in Refugee Employment Services.

They receive Refugee Cash Assistance for a very short period of time.

People entering the United States under the following immigration statuses:

For the purpose of this chapter, program participants with any of these listed statuses are referred to as “refugee”.

Immigration Status as Determined by Federal Immigration Authorities.	A Form of Humanitarian Protection Granted for the Following Reasons:
Refugee.	• Being forced to flee a home country because of persecution or well-founded fear of persecution and of special humanitarian concern. • The persecution must be based on the individual’s race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.
Asylum.	• Being in the US or at a port of entry and unable or unwilling to return to the country of nationality because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution. • The persecution must be based on the individual’s race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.
Special Immigrant Visa.	Facing persecution because of being an Iraqi or Afghani national who worked with U.S. government in those countries.
Cuban/Haitian Entrant.	Facing certain humanitarian crisis in Cuba or Haiti.
Vietnamese Amerasian.	Having been born in Vietnam after December 31, 1950, and before October 22, 1982, to a Vietnamese mother and a U.S. citizen father.
Victim of Trafficking Certification.	Being lured into forced labor or sexual slavery with promises of employment and better life in the United States.

Lawful Permanent Resident status (also known as Green Card or permanent residency status):

- Anyone coming to the United States with 1 of the immigration statuses listed above can apply for Lawful Permanent Resident status.
- This is the 1st step toward citizenship.
- Refugee services can continue to serve these individuals after Legal Permanent Resident status is granted.

People are eligible for refugee employment and social services for either one of the following time periods:

- Up to 5 years after arrival to the United States.
- Up to 5 years after an eligible immigration status is granted.

For more information, see:
Combined Manual 0031.01 (Groups of Humanitarian Concern).
Combined Manual 0031.01.21 (Trafficking Victims).

Agencies that offer cultural, language and programmatic expertise.

The Resettlement Programs Office at the Minnesota Department of Human Services contracts with agencies which:

- Are familiar with the refugee communities they serve and accessible to those communities.
- Serve as the initial points of contact and hubs of support for new refugees.

In many instances, the refugee employment services provider also has a contract for refugee social services. When the agency does not have both contracts, the employment services participant is connected to a social services agency.

Not every community has a refugee services provider. Funding goes to agencies in areas of the state where there is highest need and impact for supplemental services.

Current service locations are:
Twin Cities Metro.
Austin.
Faribault.
Mankato.
Moorhead.
Rochester.
St Cloud.

For a list of Refugee Employment Services and Social Services partner agencies, see: Refugee Resettlement Network Agency Contact List 2019-2021.

Refugee Employment Services and Refugee Social Services supplement MFIP and other services.

- They do not replace or compete with other services.
- They are critical foundations of support as people learn how to navigate their communities.
- The services focus on self-sufficiency and integration into the community.
- They are culturally appropriate and offer multilingual support.
- A variety of services are available and many of those services are hands-on services such as providing rides, help filling out applications, etc.

Examples of how refugee services can support MFIP employment services:

- Activities can be counted in the MFIP employment plan.
- Participants receive culturally specific support services.
- One-to-one or personalized support helps the participant navigate county program requirements and deadlines.

Refugee Employment Services focus on getting a job placement as soon as possible and include:

- Established employer connections.
- Individualized employment plans addressing barriers to employment.
- Interpretation and support for job interviews and orientation, including accompanying participants in these activities.
- One-to-one intensive support for job placement.
- Job readiness classes.
- Resume writing and mock interviewing.
- Clothing assistance for interviews or work.
- Transportation assistance.
- Job search skills and support.
- Finding child care and understanding the choices.
- Learning to use mass transit.
- Job retention and job upgrade support.
- Connection with Refugee Social Services and mainstream community supports.
- Connection with education such as ELL classes, GED classes, and vocational training.

Refugee Social Services are focused on:

- Cultural navigation.
- Student success.
- Immigration and naturalization support.
- Connection to/navigation of community resources and systems.
- Access to reliable transportation.

Collaboration requires workers in the 2 systems to reach out to each other and build personal working relationships.

MFIP employment services agencies and counties are welcome to set up direct communication between the refugee and MFIP employment services agencies about shared participants. A release of information is required to make this happen.

To find out if an MFIP participant is also open in Refugee Employment Services: Ask the participant if there is anyone else helping them.

Knowing this would make it possible to:

- Coordinate employment plans.
- Be aware of activities that could be recorded on Workforce One.
- Know when employment placements occur.

To refer an MFIP participant who is eligible for, but not already receiving refugee services to Refugee Employment Services:

1. Look up the providers in your community: Refugee Resettlement Network Agency Contact List 2019-2021.

2. Call the refugee employment services agency and ask them about their referral process and contact information for referrals.

3. Complete the referral process as described by the agency.

4. This might require completing the Refugee Employment Services Referral (DHS-3166R) (PDF) form and submitting by mail, fax or email as instructed.

There is no Workforce One interface for RES referrals.

Refugee services agencies use the Minnesota Refugee Information System (MRIS) to enroll participants and report job placements.

Refugee Employment Services activities can be incorporated into MFIP employment services plans.

- Hours spent in refugee employment services can count toward meeting MFIP hourly requirements.
- Have the MFIP plan spell out the total number of hours required, but do not sanction participants for not completing Refugee Employment Services activities. Instead have them meet the MFIP hourly requirements through other activities.
- Code the activities in Workforce One in the appropriate activity types, such as job search, education, employment, etc.
- For activities that do not fit a specific MFIP activity, code them in Workforce One as “Other” or “Social Services”.

Refugee services require little documentation, because there is not the same focus on verifying and accounting for hours and activities as MFIP.

In some cases, however, documentation gathered through refugee services may be useful to MFIP employment counselors to meet verification requirements. This might include:

- Logs used by the Refugee Employment Services agency for job search.
- Case notes or written information that the Refugee Employment Services counselor records about job search and other employment services activities.
- Notes from a phone call between the MFIP and Refugee Employment Services counselors about activities and hours.
- Monthly Status Update Form is sent to county eligibility workers and may contain information about employment status, wages, and hours of employed participants receiving Refugee Employment Services.
    - These monthly reports do NOT use the MFIP status update form or format.

If a participant starts a job through Refugee Employment Services:

- Update the MFIP employment plan to include that job.
- Open the employment activity in Workforce One.

About the Refugee Resettlement Program services in Minnesota:

- Program Facts
  The federally-funded Resettlement Programs Offices (RPO) at the Minnesota Department of Human Services supports the effective resettlement of refugees in Minnesota by providing the resources and stable foundation they need to rebuild their lives, achieve their highest potential and contribute to our state. RPO ensures access to mainstream programs for people with refugee status, distribute federal funds to local agencies for supplemental services and provide the public with education and information about refugees.
- Refugee Arrival Statistics
  These reports show the number of people with refugee status arriving in Minnesota by county and organized by country of origin.
- Resettlement Services
  Six local agencies, funded through the federal Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, provide initial reception and placement services for the first 30 to 90 days in the United States for people who have just arrived in the country with refugee status. The following agencies help meet basic needs of refugees and link them to ongoing services:
  - Arrive Ministries.
  - Catholic Charities of Southern Minnesota.
  - International Institute of Minnesota.
  - Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota.
  - Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota, St. Cloud.
  - Minnesota Council of Churches.
- Employment and Social Services.
- Food, Cash and Health Care.
- Resettlement Programs Office Overview (DHS-7587D) (PDF).

About refugees in Minnesota:

- Minnesota's refugee resettlement programs fact sheet (DHS-5937) (PDF).
- Action and involvement with refugees (DHS-7587E) (PDF). Learn about and support refugees in Minnesota.

About Employment Supports for Immigrants and Refugees

- Work authorization for refugees and asylees (DHS-7587L) (PDF) – a brochure with information about work authorization for refugees and asylees.
- Have you been granted asylum? DHS-7587K (PDF) – a brochure that describes supports available for people who have been granted asylum, and contact information for accessing services
- Do you have a Special Immigrant Visa? (DHS-7587S) (PDF) – a brochure that explains what supports are available for people who have been granted Special Immigrant Visa and contact information for accessing services.

In this chapter you can find information about:

- Fraud.
- EBT Misuse.
- Participation during disqualification.

Fraud is receiving, attempting to receive, or helping someone else try to receive benefits to which they are not eligible.

The actions that constitute fraud include intentionally:

- Making false statements.
- Making false representations.
- Withholding necessary information

Participants found guilty of fraud are disqualified.

Notify the eligibility worker whenever there are indications a participant intentionally misled the county, tribe or provider to get payments or services.

- County, tribal or state fraud investigators conduct fraud investigations.
- If the participant is found guilty: The eligibility worker will notify employment counselors if a participant is found guilty of fraud and is disqualified from receiving a grant for a period of time.
- Eligibility workers initiate the process of recovering fraudulently obtained payments if necessary.

Children of participants who are disqualified for fraud can continue to receive benefits.

- Children cannot be found guilty of fraud.
- Participants disqualified for fraud whose children continue to receive benefits must participate in employment services and comply with MFIP work requirements.

The disqualification periods are:

- One year for a 1st offense.
- Two years for a 2nd offense.
- Permanently for a 3rd offense.

Participants cannot use the cash portion of benefits on an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card to purchase alcohol or tobacco products.

A participant found guilty of using their benefits in this way will be disqualified from the program (other assistance unit members continue to be eligible).

In MFIP:
The disqualification is:

- One year for the 1st offense.
- Two years for the 2nd offense.
- A permanent disqualification for the 3rd offense.

Participants disqualified for EBT misuse whose children continue to receive benefits must participate in employment services and comply with MFIP work requirements.

Disqualification due to fraud or EBT misuse does not end participation requirements.

Disqualified participants whose children receive assistance through MFIP must participate in employment services and comply with work requirements.

Failure to comply could result in a sanction unless at least 1 of the following is true:

- Good cause is determined, see 19.9 (Good Cause).
- The participant is eligible for, and claims, the child under 12 months exemption, see 5.21 (Child Under 12 Months Old Exemption).
- The participant takes the Minnesota Paid Leave exemption, see 5.23 (Minnesota Paid Leave Exemption).

What happens to child care assistance under different disqualifications for fraud:

Scenario	Child Care or MFIP Implications
All caregivers in the household are disqualified from MFIP.	The family can use Basic Sliding Fee child care assistance if: • Funds are available. • The parent meets eligibility requirements.
One parent in a 2-parent family is disqualified.	MFIP child care can be used if both of the following are true: • The disqualified parent meets Basic Sliding Fee (BSF) requirements. • The non-disqualified parent meets MFIP child care requirements.
The disqualified parent needs child care to participate, but it is not available.	The parent has a good cause reason for not participating. • The household's benefits cannot be sanctioned.

Months of disqualification count toward the participant's lifetime limit if the fraud occurred on or after October 1, 2007.

Like all other MFIP households, months of receiving MFIP food only benefits do not count toward the time limit.

This chapter has information for county, tribal and employment services agencies managers.

In this chapter you will find information about:

- County and tribal duties.
- Tribes and MFIP and TANF.
- MFIP Data Supporting Systems.
- Workforce One.
- Family Violence.
- Duties to coordinate employment services.
- Employment services agencies.
- A choice of providers.
- Non-displacement.
- Criteria for unpaid work.
- Limited English Proficiency Plan.
- Contracts and Referrals for Qualified Professionals.
- MFIP Consolidated Fund.
- Medical assistance and TANF funding.
- Biennial Service Agreements.
- Local extension request.
- Performance measures.
- Quarterly reports.
- Grant Diversion Programs.
- Drug Testing

County and tribal human services must:

- Develop and provide employment and training services designed to put participants on the most direct path to unsubsidized employment.
- Provide those services to participants within the required timelines:
  - See 5.6 (Time Frames to Start Employment Services).
- Select at least 2 employment and training services agencies. For exceptions and some details, see 23.24 (A Choice of Providers).
- Provide information that explains the 60-month time limit and how it is tied to cash assistance benefits but not to benefits through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (including the food portion of MFIP benefits), Medical Assistance or Child Care Assistance.

Tribal nations have various roles in managing MFIP or TANF services.

Tribal TANF programs

Tribal groups recognized by the federal government may administer their own TANF programs.

For more information see the Combined Manual:
Combined Manual 0029.06.24 (Tribal TANF Programs).
Combined Manual 0029.06.24.03 (Tribal TANF - Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe).
Combined Manual 0029.06.24.06 (Tribal TANF – Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians).

MFIP Program Management

White Earth Nation determines eligibility for MFIP for enrolled band members.

White Earth Nation plays the same role counties do in delivering and managing local MFIP services.

MFIP Employment Services

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families contracts with tribal employment services agencies to provide MFIP employment services to tribal members living off reservation in northern Minnesota.

The Minnesota Chippewa Tribe provides MFIP Employment Services for members in 19 counties. Those counties include: Aitken, Becker, Beltrami, Benton, Carlton, Cass, Clearwater, Cook, Crow Wing, Hubbard, Itasca, Koochiching, Mahnomen, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Norman, Pine, Polk, and St. Louis. MCT has three offices in Cass Lake, Virginia and Duluth.

Leech Lake provides MFIP Employment Services for members of Leech Lake in 4 counties. Those counties include: Beltrami, Cass, Hubbard, Itasca. The Leech Lake office is in Cass Lake.

State law requires county MFIP agencies to cooperate with tribal governments in the implementation of MFIP.

This cooperation must include, but is not limited to the sharing MFIP duties, including:

- Screening.
- Orientation.
- Assessments.
- Provision of employment and training services.

County agencies shall encourage tribal governments to assume duties related to MFIP and work cooperatively with tribes that have assumed legal responsibility for a portion of the MFIP program to expand tribal responsibilities if the tribe requests that expansion.

Many IT systems support the delivery of services in MFIP.

System	User	Function
MAXIS	Eligibility Workers	Determines eligibility and benefits for cash assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and, for people with disabilities, Medical Assistance.
MAXIS - Inquiry	Employment Counselors	Allows ES workers to access specific MAXIS information including case notes to provide case management and support for participants.
Workforce One	Employment Counselors	Supports case management and data collection for employment services.
MEC2	Child Care Assistance Workers	Determines eligibility and benefits for the Child Care Assistance Program.
PRISM	Child Support Workers	Tracks and distributes child support payments.
MAXIS Workforce One Interface	Employment Counselors	Workforce One receives limited information directly from MAXIS, including referrals to Employment Services and Status Updates.
MMIS	Eligibility Workers	Manages payments for Medical Assistance and health plans.

DHS and DCYF manages all the systems except Workforce One, which the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development manages.

Workforce One (WF1) is the web-based case management tool for employment services.

- The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) maintains the system.
- MFIP, SNAP Employment and Training, and many other DEED programs also use WF1.

DEED maintains a User Guide that can be accessed directly from Workforce One.

The MAXIS – Workforce One Interface

- Provides notification to a specific employment services provider that the county or tribe is referring MFIP or SNAP Employment and Training participants to employment services.
- Will send electronic referrals only to authorized employment services providers listed in MAXIS, as reported by counties and Tribal Nations.
- See Combined Manual 0028.03.09 (Reporting Changes to Job Counselor).

Counties and Tribal Nation human services agencies must submit an Employment Services (ES) Provider Authorization and Notification (DHS-4193) (PDF) at least 1 month prior to a change in order to:

- Add provider to the table of authorized providers.
- Remove a provider from the table of authorized providers.
- Change the programs for which a provider can receive electronic interface referrals.

This form will only be accepted from the county or Tribal Nation responsible for administering the MFIP or SNAP Employment & Training programs.

How to add a new staff person

Managers should complete the Access Form found on the Forms/Links page on Workforce One.

County and tribal human services agencies must:

- Inform all applicants and participants in writing and orally when they are referred to child support and when they are referred to employment services that, if a participant is experiencing family violence, that:
  - Referrals for counseling and supportive services are available.
  - A family violence waiver approval stops the clock for the 60-month time limit, see 8.18 (Time Limits & Family Violence Waiver).
  - Employment plans focused on safety are available, see 8.24 (Employment Plans & Family Violence Waiver).
  - Nonpermanent noncitizen residents who are experiencing family violence may have the right to seek legal permanent resident status, see 8.9 Rights for Non-Citizens.
- Explain to any participants who report they are experiencing family violence, but are denied family violence waiver, why the waiver was not approved and document that denying the plan does not interfere with the safety of the participant or children.
- Must provide applicants and participants access to a person trained in family violence, see 8.21 (Family Violence Specialists). This could be done by:
  - A county staff person.
  - The nearest organization designated as providing services in response to family violence.
- Not set across-the-board policies for when to end and renew family violence waivers: those decisions should be on a case-by-case basis in which the family's safety is the over-riding goal.
  - Call in the domestic violence specialist anytime there are questions about whether to continue the waiver, sanction the participant, or determine the current status of the family's situation.

For complete information on the policies associated with Family Violence, see Chapter 8 (Family Violence Waiver).

Counties, tribes and their employment and training agencies must consult with and coordinate with other employment services agencies to:

- Identify existing resources.
- Prevent duplication of services.
- Assure that the other programs' services are available to enable participants to achieve self-sufficiency.
- Assure that costs for those other services are not incurred by MFIP if the participants are eligible for them.

Counties and employment services agencies must coordinate with Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act services agencies. This includes:

- Identifying existing resources.
- Preventing duplication of services.
- Assuring that other programs' services are available to help MFIP participants.
- Assure that costs for those other services are not incurred by MFIP.

For more information about coordinating with Refugee Employment Services agencies, see Chapter 21 (Refugee Services).

Counties and Tribal Nations can deliver employment services through any 1 or more of the following types of organizations:

- 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.
- A local public health department.

The county or Tribal Nation must indicate the providers it is using in the biennial service agreement submitted every 2 years to the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

Counties and Tribal Nations must notify the Department of Children, Youth, and Families if they are adding or removing employment services agencies for Minnesota Family Investment Program using Employment Services (ES) Provider Authorization and Notification (DHS-4193) (PDF).

Training requirements for employment services staff

Training for employment services staff will vary depending on each county or Tribal Nation's training curriculum and staff's role. A list of all employment services courses, including recommended courses for new staff, can be found on the MFIP Employment Services Training Information webpage in the link titled MFIP Employment Services Courses and Descriptions.

Below are training requirements for specific duties of the staff:

- All staff working in MFIP must complete the Understanding Domestic Abuse, Sexual Assault, and Sexual Harassment course annually.
- If staff will be administering the Employability Measure assessment, they must complete the Employability Measure Part A class and the Employability Measure Part B online course.
- If staff will be administering the MFIP Self-Screen and the Brief Screening for Special Learning Needs assessments, they must complete the MFIP ES Screenings online course or complete the MFIP Employment Services for New Workers class.
- If staff will be using Workforce One for case management, they must receive Workforce One training. If they county or Tribal Nation does not offer their own Workforce One Training, staff must complete the MFIP Employment Services for New Workers class. Other required courses for system access will need to be completed, such as data privacy courses.

Participants must have choice between at least 2 employment services agencies unless the county or tribe:

- Uses a Careerforce Center for MFIP Employment Services

OR

- Has been approved by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families and the Department of Employment and Economic Development for an exemption because of financial hardship.

Both parents in a 2-parent family must choose the same employment services provider, unless a special need exists that 1 provider cannot meet. For instance:

- Language specific-services.
- Family violence situations.

Counties should develop guidelines that:

- Permit participants to change providers. Reasonable limitations on changes are acceptable.
- Ensure all MFIP staff are aware of the county policy.

Counties may apply for an exemption in offering at least 2 options for employment services by doing 1 of the following:

- Submit the request with their Biennial Service Agreement.
- Contact the DCYF MFIP policy team manager.

Work experience and community service cannot displace or replace other employees.

An MFIP participant cannot be placed in a paid or unpaid work experience assignment at a public or private employer where:

- Any employees in the same or substantially equivalent job are on layoff.
- The employment of a regular employee was terminated to be able to accommodate a paid work experience participant.
- An involuntary reduction of the workforce was made to accommodate a paid work experience participant.

The policies are to ensure that:

- No one loses a job because of work experience or community service placement.
- Empty jobs are not filled with work experience or community service participants instead of being filled through normal hiring practices.

States must maintain a grievance procedure for resolving complaints of alleged violations.

These policies apply to:

- Paid work experience.
- Unpaid work experience.
- Community service assignments.

Additional policies apply at union workplaces. See 23.30 (Criteria for Unpaid Work).

Counties must provide specific notifications to local bargaining units for work experience or community service assignments at union workplaces. These notifications are outlined in the management chapter.

In order to place participants in unpaid work, the following conditions must be met.

If a union workplace is the site of a paid work experience:

- The County must notify the appropriate exclusive bargaining representatives in writing at least 14 days before an MFIP participant would begin the temporary work experience. The notification must include:
  - The number of paid work experience participants involved.
  - Their work locations.
  - Their anticipated hours of work.
  - A summary of the work to be performed.
  - A description of how the participants will be trained and supervised.
- Counties should not place MFIP participants in a position that is vacant because of a lay-off or earlier downsizing or termination – unless the employer first offers the position to the employee who was laid off and then to current employees for whom the position would be a promotion.
  - If those individuals turn down the position, the participant may be placed in that position for work experience or community service.
  - The county or employer must notify the bargaining unit.
  - The bargaining unit must agree in writing to the placement.
- The county must ensure that no MFIP work experience participants are placed in a work assignment that results in the:
  - Termination, lay off or reduction of work hours of an employee;
  - Hiring that participant after the work experience if any other employee is on lay-off from the same or substantially equivalent job.
  - Infringing the promotional opportunities of any current employees.
  - Impair any existing contract for services of the collective bargaining agreement.
  - The paid work participant filling an established vacant position – except for on-the-job training.

If the County delegates these responsibilities to employment services, the county is responsible to make sure the criteria are met.

MFIP work experiences for public employers cannot be longer than 67 working days or 536 hours – whichever is greater.

- A participant who exceeds those time limits is a public employee.
- If a bargaining unit makes a written request about the hours worked by a participant in work experience or community service assignment, a county or public service employer must make that information available.

Handle disputes between an exclusive bargaining representative and a County or public employer as follows:

If the dispute is about whether job duties are within the scope of the collective bargaining agreement:

- The County or public employer may petition the Bureau of Mediation Services to determine if the job duties are within the scope of a collective bargaining unit.
- The Bureau will issue a binding decision.

If the dispute is about 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.
- If no such procedure is in place, either party may submit the dispute to the Bureau of Mediation Services.
- The Bureau's commissioner shall establish a procedure for a neutral, binding resolution.

An Injury Protection Program must be in place.

This requirement applies to:

- The Minnesota Family Investment Program.
- MFIP tribal employment services agencies' unpaid work experience programs.

The state provides this coverage for any unpaid work experience program approved by the Commissioner of Human Services through the Biennial Service Agreement and operated by:

- A county agency.

- A tribal employment service agency.
- A Minnesota state agency.

Counties that want to offer unpaid work experience programs must submit their plans for an unpaid work experience program to the Department of Children, Youth, and Families for approval.

- This should be described in the agency's MFIP Biennial Service Agreement.

All unpaid work programs need to meet the requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act. For more information see 11.12 (Fair Labor Standards).

Counties and tribes must have a plan in place that spells out how the county will serve applicants and participants who have limited proficiency in English.

The requirements for those plans are explained at 4.27 (Limited English Skills).

Ensure that professionals being asked to assess individuals have cross-cultural evaluation experience.

When contracting for or developing referral arrangements for qualified professionals to provide assessments or diagnoses, ensure that the professional:

- Has experience conducting culturally appropriate assessments.
- Uses a qualified interpreter, not a family member for interpreting for non-English speakers.

See specific conditions that assessments on non-English speakers must meet for:

- IQ Below 80, see 17.24 (IQ Below 80).
- Learning Disability, see 17.27 (Learning Disability).

Counties and tribes must use the funds to develop programs and services that improve MFIP outcomes.

The county or tribal human services agency has the authority to determine the uses of the Consolidated Fund allocated to them within the limits set by state and federal law. This information outlines the options available to county and tribal human services agencies.

The MFIP consolidated fund is an allocation from the state to counties and tribes to support them in meeting their duties in delivering MFIP services.

Who can be served

The following if they are below 200% of poverty:

- Families with a minor child.
- Pregnant women.
- Non-custodial parents of a child receiving MFIP assistance.

Who must be given priority:

- Families currently receiving MFIP or Family Stabilization Services.
- Families at risk of receiving MFIP.

Counties or tribes cannot impose residency requirements – except for the requirement that someone must be in the state at least 30 days with the hardship exemptions for being without shelter or food. See Combined Manual 0011.06 (State Residence).

The Consolidated Fund includes federal TANF funds.

Federal TANF law recognizes two types of expenditures:

1. Assistance – These expenditures impose work requirements and count towards the 60-month lifetime limit.

2. Non-assistance – These expenditures do NOT come with work requirements and do not count towards the 60-month time limit.

The expenditures can be covered with the Consolidated Fund

Allowed expenditure	What does this include?	How would TANF treat this?
Short-term nonrecurring shelter and utility benefits.	• Emergency Assistance,	Non-assistance.
Transportation needed to: obtain/ retain employment, participate in other approved work activities or family stabilization activities.	• Gas cards. • Bus cards. • Van rides. • Car repairs.	Assistance: • If the participant is NOT working. Non -assistance: • If the participant is working. • If the participant is NOT working but the transportation assistance is provided as a short-term non-recurrent benefit designed to meet a specific need or crisis and will not last more than 4 months.
Direct and administrative costs of staff to deliver employment services for MFIP and FSS.	• ES counselors. • Other staff in ES agencies. • Other programs under contract to deliver services to MFIP participants.	Non-assistance.
Direct and administrative costs of staff to administer financial assistance.	• County or tribal eligibility workers. • County or tribal eligibility case aides.	Non-assistance.
Direct and administrative costs of staff to provide specialized services to assist hard-to-employ participants to transition to work or transition from family	• Employment services agency staff. • County social services or behavioral health staff.	Non-assistance.

stabilization services to MFIP.	• Community based organizations with a county or tribal contract.	
Costs of education and training including function al work literacy and English as a second language.	• ES agency training programs. • Other training programs offered by community-based agencies. • Formal education.	Non-assistance.

Costs of Work Supports including tools, clothing, boots, telephone service and other work related expense.	N/A.	• These items or the funds designated to purchase them do not count as income against the MFIP grant.
		• These would be non-assistance if provided:
		  • To someone who is working.
		OR
		  • To someone not working but it is provided as short-term, non-recurrent benefits designed to meet a specific need or crisis instead of an on-going need and is not provided for more than 4 months.

County administrative expenses as defined in CFR 45 section 260(B).	• County or tribal eligibility worker administrative costs.	Non-assistance.
Services to parenting and pregnant teens.	• Case management. • School based services. • Home visiting. • Other community based services. • Other.	Non-assistance – if it is services and not money or benefits.
Supported Work.	• Work in which support services are provided to give someone a chance to try a job they would not otherwise receive. • Could be paid or unpaid.	Non-assistance.
Wage subsidies.	• Payments to employers to cover the wages of participants placed into jobs.	Non-assistance.
Services to help non-custodial parents to obtain/retain employment – for non-custodial parents who have minor children receiving MFIP assistance.	N/A.	• The non-custodial parent must live in MN. • A non-custodial parent receiving assistance counts in the Work Participation Rate.
Services to help families participating in FSS achieve the greatest degree of self-sufficiency.	• Employment services. • County, tribal or community social services. • Community-based services. • Medical – including behavioral health services – should NOT be	Non-assistance: • For services Assistance: • For resources, money, etc.

	paid for with TANF funds. They are funded through Medical Assistance.	
Administrative costs that are not matched with county funds may not exceed 7.5% of a county's or 15% of a tribe's allocation under this section.	• The provision in this section is to cover overhead, management, etc. costs. • Random moment time studies are used to identify eligibility worker time spent on MFIP. The county or tribe is reimbursed for half the time caught in the random moment time study.	Administrative.

Counties and tribes may serve households not receiving assistance through MFIP but whose income is below 200% of poverty under the following conditions:

- For services or short-term non-recurrent benefits designed to deal with a specific crisis or episode of need, not intended to meet recurrent or on-going needs, and not extending beyond 4 months.

Counties and tribes who opt to serve families not on MFIP must still meet the standards for determining and verifying eligibility.

The site should submit a proposal for how eligibility will be verified. That would have to include information about:
a) The application process.

b) How the site will verify key elements of eligibility.
- Reported income.
- Presence of a minor child or a pregnant woman in the home or a non-custodial parent of a minor child receiving MFIP assistance.
- Immigration status.
- Residency in Minnesota for at least 30 days.

c) How often the site will require updated income reports.

d) How will the site confirm that there is not unreported income. This includes a federal requirement to run Income and Eligibility Verification Systems matches.

For current federal poverty guidelines, see the Poverty Guidelines page of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Use income eligibility known to the agency from other programs.

The most likely successful answer to b) and d) above would be to use income and other eligibility factors already on MAXIS through other programs. This could include:
- SNAP.
- CCAP. The income limit for CCAP exceeds 200% of poverty. You still need to use the information reported to CCAP to confirm that the family you want to serve is below 200% of poverty.

There is no asset test that must be imposed.

If counties or tribes intend to serve families not on MFIP, DCYF has to approve the plan and expenditures.

The allocation formula for the MFIP Consolidated Fund

There is an initial allocation and an adjusted allocation based on the county or tribe's performance.
- Counties and tribes must receive 100% of their initial allocations.
- The allocations are for a calendar year. Unused funds do not roll over into the next calendar year. It is calculated every year. The formula is updated for number of cases the county or tribe served in the previous 12 months. The allocation is usually determined in July and August.

The initial allocation is based on the following:

Formula Element	How Much of the Allocation Is Based On That Element	What That Element Includes
The county or tribe's share of the 2002 historic spending base.	50%	County or tribal state fiscal year 2002 on: • MFIP employment and training services. • Bilingual employment and training services to refugees. • Work literacy language programs. • Supported work program. • Administrative aid. • Emergency assistance issued by the state to people living within the county or tribal boundaries.
The proportion of the county or tribe's share of the MFIP caseload in the last 12 months.	50%	The adjusted caseload factor uses the most recent 12-month period for which data is available and looks at 4 points in time. There is also a difficulty factor. The caseload difficulty factor is based on the Self-Support Index. See 23.51 (Performance Measures). The caseload information is weighted as follows: • 47% based on the number of MFIP cases in the county or tribal area multiplied by the county's or tribe's caseload difficulty factor. • 55% on the count of adults receiving MFIP in each county or tribe multiplied by the county or tribe's caseload difficulty factor.

Performance-based funding

The performance funding is based on performance in the Self-Support Index.

County or Tribal Performance Level	Adjustments to Initial Allocation Based on Performance
Within the range of expected performance.	No adjustment.
Above the range of expected performance.	A performance bonus equal to 2.5 percent of the initial allocation.
Below the range of expected performance for 2 consecutive years.	• Must negotiate a multiyear performance improvement plan (PIP). • If no improvement is shown at the end of the multiyear plan, the initial allocation must be reduced by 2.5%. • The decrease must remain in effect until the county or tribe performs within or above its range of expected performance.

If the available funds are not enough to cover all the bonuses counties and tribes have earned, the Department shall pro-rate the bonus funds.

If there are funds remaining after the initial allocations and the performance-based funding is awarded, the Department shall use the funds for innovation projects.

Counties and tribes must not use MFIP Consolidated Funds for services that are covered under Medical Assistance.

This includes:

- Transportation for medical services.
- Mental health diagnostic assessment conducted by a licensed mental health professional.
- Chemical dependency assessments.

MFIP Consolidated funds can pay for the following:

- A functional assessment done for the sole purpose of determining how a diagnosed barrier might impact a participant's employability.

Have employment counselors refer participants needing medical transportation to an eligibility worker.

Every 2 years counties and tribes must submit a Biennial Service Agreement to the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

The purpose of the Biennial Service Agreement is to provide DCYF with information about services and strategies intended to meet program measures with the goal of increasing the economic stability of low income families on MFIP. This will ensure that people served through MFIP are equipped to obtain and sustain gainful employment that will ultimately lead to greater self-sufficiency.

Counties may collaborate to develop multicounty, multi-tribal, or regional services agreements.

- Counties that include a city of the first class with a population of more than 300,000, must consider a service agreement that includes a jointly developed plan for city and county delivery of employment services.

The biennial service agreements must include:

- A statement of: Needs for the service population, strengths of the service population, and resources in the community.
- Numerical goals for participant outcome measures to be accomplished in the 2-year period.
- Strategies the county or tribe will use to achieve those outcomes, including specifically stating how Consolidated Funds will be used and whether any community partnerships will be established or strengthened.
- The strategies the county or tribe will use to serve families in the Family Stabilization Services track.
- Other items that the Department determines in consultation with counties and tribes.

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families duties include:

- Determining if any of the performance measures it reports quarterly as outcomes are ones that counties or tribes must commit to in their biennial service agreements. See 23.54 (Quarterly Reports).
- Provide each county and tribe with the information necessary to complete the biennial service agreement, including:
  - Information about the MFIP participants they serve.
  - Comparisons with the rest of the state.
  - Baseline performance on outcome measures.
  - Promising program practices.

Deadlines every other year in the odd years.

Action	Deadline
County or tribe makes draft biennial service agreement available for public review and comment.	No later than September 16.
Counties and tribes must submit their biennial service agreement.	By October 15.
The Department of Children, Youth, and Families must notify each county or tribe if the biennial service agreement has been approved.	By December 14th.

If the Department does not approve the service agreement, it must inform the county or tribe about any revisions needed prior to approval.

Counties may request a new category for extensions for participants who have reached the 60-month time limit.

- The county should submit the request to the Minnesota Department of Human Services.
- The Department may grant an extension for a category of participants that are not otherwise extended under state statute.
- The new category of participants must be consistent with the existing extension policy in which an extension is provided to participants whose MFIP requirements conflict with other statutory requirements or obligations.

The Department must confer with the legislature.

- By January 15th of each year, the commissioner must report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the senate and house of representatives committees having jurisdiction over health and human services any county-requested extensions that were granted during the previous calendar year.
- The legislature must act in order for the extensions to continue.
- If the legislature fails to act by the end of the legislative session in which the extensions were reported, the county-requested extensions would expire on June 30th of that year.

Self-Support Index

The Self-Support Index is an outcome measure that reports the number of participants no longer receiving cash assistance or working at least 30 hours a week while receiving that assistance.

- The measure looks at all adults receiving assistance through MFIP in a quarter and checks back 1 year, 2 and 3 years later in the same quarter to see how many are still receiving cash assistance through MFIP and, if so, how many are working at least 30 hours a week.
- Those who left MFIP after reaching 60 counted MFIP months (time limit), and those who left due to 100% sanction, are only counted as a success if they worked an average of 30 hours per week in their last month of program eligibility, or began receiving Supplemental Security Income after MFIP cash ended.

The 3-year Self-Support Index has a related standard called the range of expected performance used to make better, fairer comparisons across service areas and tribal providers.

- Performance is assessed as above, within or below the range of expected performance, an interval based on caseload characteristics and economic conditions in each service area.
- More challenging situations lower the expected range.
- Providers cannot influence the size or location of the range of expected performance because it is calculated based on demographic and economic characteristics beyond the control of service areas and providers.
- Providers can, however, influence the Self-Support Index through services that help MFIP participants increase employment and earnings.

The Work Participation Rate

The Work Participation Rate is the federal performance measure for TANF.

- It is a process measure.
- It focuses on the adults receiving TANF funded assistance who must meet work requirements.
- It counts the percentage of those adults in federally-recognized work activities for a minimum number of hours in a month.
  - Families with children all younger than 6 must be in at least 20 hours a week of officially recognized activities to meet the Work participation Rate requirements.
  - Those with children all 6 or older must be in at least 30 hours a week of those activities.

TANF Work Participation Reviews

To meet federal TANF requirements, the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families must develop a work verification plan.

- That plan must include an outline of how the state will monitor the verification of hours used to calculate the Work Participation Rate.
- Every 6 months the Department conducts case file reviews of a stratified random sample of 68 federally-funded MFIP cases to verify that proper documentation of hours is recorded in case files.
- Counties or tribes whose cases are reviewed receive a report of the individual case findings.
- DCYF also publishes semi -annual reports on the findings of the full sample. They are available on the Reports page of PartnerLink.

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families must provide the following information in quarterly reports for counties and tribes:

- Percent of the MFIP participants working in paid employment.
- Percent of the participants receiving only the food portion of MFIP assistance.
- Number of MFIP households that have left assistance.
- The median placement wage rate for MFIP participants.
- The caseload by months of TANF assistance.
- The Self-Support Index for each county or tribe.
- The TANF work Participation Rate.

Links to the Minnesota Family Investment Program Management Indicators reports, which are reported by county or tribe, are available at the DHS webpage: Economic Supports, cash, food: News, initiatives, reports, work groups.

Using MFIP benefits as hourly salaries for work experience.

Counties and Employment Service Providers may develop a grant diversion program.

- All or part of the cash portion of the MFIP grant is diverted to an employer to subsidize employment for participants as an alternative to public assistance payments.
  - Employment services funds can also be used to subsidize the Grant Diversion Payment.
- Employer must 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.
- Placement with an employer is for the purpose of training and employment with the understanding that the same employer 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.
- If a county or tribe were to decide to run a grant diversion project, detailed information would need to be provided about:
  - Placements.
  - Calculation of participant hours.
  - Participating employers.
  - Other necessary information.

Approval by the State is required for any grant diversion program before it is implemented.

Drug Testing

- It is optional for counties and Tribal Nations to subject persons convicted of felony drug offenses to random drug testing.
- If a county or Tribal Nation chooses to require random drug testing and a person fails the drug test, the local agency must provide information about substance use disorder treatment programs to the person.
- Only individuals convicted of a felony-level drug offense in the ten years prior to the date of application or recertification may be subject to random drug testing.
- Subsequent convictions for felony-level drug offenses do not impact eligibility or benefits.

In this chapter you will find information about:

- MFIP Assistance Standards.
- What is needed in Employment Services Case File.
- List of forms useful to workers.
- Electronic Document System guidance.
- Case notes guidance.
- Work Will Always Pay bulletin.
- Disability Criteria for SSI Benefits.
- MFIP Activity Guide Tip Sheet.
- FSS Pre Sanction Checklist.
- Exit Reasons for Workforce One (WF1).

Combined Manual 0020.09 (MFIP Assistance Standards).
This chart explains the monthly benefit level for MFIP participants based on number of eligible people.

DCYF Reissues “Work Will Always Pay…With MFIP”.
This document helps Eligibility Workers and Employment Service Workers explain to MFIP participants the benefits of working and how their earnings will impact their MFIP grant.

Include the following items in the MFIP Employment Services (ES) paper files:

- Employment Services Responsibilities, Rights and Consent (DHS-3172-ENG) (PDF) and Release of Information forms.
- Signed copies of the MFIP Employment Plan(s) (DHS-4209A-ENG) (PDF) and Employment Plan (EP) Modifications.
- Assessment materials, including: test scores, Chemical Dependency (CD), Mental Health (MH) and Learning Disabilities (LD) screening tools and observation check lists.
- Medical, psychological, and other pertinent health data collected.
- Verification of activity hours contained in the Employment Plan and entered on Workforce One (WF1) including:
  - Activity logs/attendance records.
  - School attendance records.
  - Non-paid employment activities attendance records.
- Copies of Status Updates generated manually by job counselor.
- Forms required for the Injury Protection Program. See 11.15 (Injury Protection Program).
- Copies of On-The-Job Training contracts or worksite agreements with employers.
- MFIP Notice of Intent to Sanction (DHS-3175-ENG) (PDF) and other communications.
- Any documents needed for an external or internal fiscal review or audit.

Forms that may or may not have to be in the paper files:

- Notice of Requirement to Attend Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) Overview (DHS-2929-ENG) (PDF).
  - If the MFIP ES overview is being scheduled by eligibility workers, this form does not necessarily need to be in the ES file. When scheduling the overview, eligibility workers have the option of using this form or the Employment Services referral SPEC/LTR.
- Case notes (may be online).

Follow the Minnesota Department of Human Services general records retention schedule: County Human Services General Records Retention Schedule.

DCYF requires certain documents to be uploaded to Workforce One EDS. Documents must be uploaded within 60 days of receipt. This guidance applies to all county and Tribal Nation MFIP Employment Service Providers.

Utilizing the WF1 EDS system creates consistency in document storage, a streamlined the process for transferring cases, and ensures documents are available for county and Tribal Nation MFIP employment services case files for the TANF WPR Case File Documentation Reviews.

The following chart contains a list of required and optional documents to be uploaded into WF1 EDS. Documents denoted with an asterisk are required.

The chart also indicates which EDS Document Type and EDS Document Name is chosen when uploading the document. The EDS User Defined Document Name are suggestions to further categorize specific documents.

Document Name	EDS Document Type	EDS Document Name	EDS User Defined Document Name
N/A	Appeals and Complaints	Sanction Document	N/A
N/A	*Appeals and Complaints	* Appeal	N/A
N/A	Appeals and Complaints	Verification of Good Cause	N/A
Brief Screening Tool for Special Learning Needs (DHS-3504)	Assessments	Skills Assessment or Inventory	N/A
MFIP Special Learning Needs Scoring Form (DHS-3504A)	Assessments	Skills Assessment or Inventory	N/A
Other Assessment Forms	Assessments	Skills Assessment or Inventory	Examples: WorkKeys, other assessments
MFIP Self-Screen (DHS-3482)	Assessments	Assessment	N/A
MFIP Self-Screen Scoring Form (DHS-3482A)	Assessments	Assessment	N/A
Personality Assessment	Assessments	Personality Assessment or Inventory	N/A
Extension Assessments and Documents	Assessments	Assessment	Example: 48 Month Interview Paperwork
Face to Face Extension Checklist	Assessments	Assessment	N/A
Employability Measure	Assessments	Assessment	N/A
Interests and Skills Summary Sheet (Assessment Summary)	Assessments	Interest Assessment or Inventory	N/A
Job Search Readiness Checklist	Assessments	Job Search Readiness Checklist	N/A
Self-Directed Search (SDS), Career Assessment Inventory (CAI), Campbell Interest and Skill Survey (CISS)	Assessments	Career Assessment	N/A
TABE Test	Assessments	Reading, Math Assessment	N/A
Employment Service Responsibilities, Rights and Consent (DHS-3172)	Consent, Release of Information	Rights and Responsibilities	N/A

MFIP Overview Checklist	Consent, Release of Information	Overview Document	N/A
Notice of Privacy Practices (DHS-3979).	Consent, Release of Information	Data Privacy Form or Tennessen Notice	N/A
	Consent, Release of Information	Equal Opportunity (EO), How We Use your Personal Information	N/A
Notice of Requirement to Attend MFIP Overview (DHS-2929)	Consent, Release of Information	Overview Document	N/A
	Consent, Release of Information	Consent to Share Wage and Employment Information	N/A
Release of Information	Consent, Release of Information	Consent for Release or Exchange of Information	Example: Consent for credential training
Authorization to Communicate Through Email and Texting	Consent, Release of Information	Authorization to Communicate via Email and Texting	N/A
Letters	Correspondence	Letter	Examples: correspondence with participant letters sent by program staff, letters received
Email Correspondence	Correspondence	Email	N/A
*MFIP Notice of Intent to Sanction (DHS-3175)	*Correspondence	*Non-Compliance Letter or Failure to Comply Notice	Example: NOITS if completed in paper form
Sanction Outreach	Correspondence	Non-Compliance Letter or Failure to Comply Notice	N/A
Background Check	Court and Legal	Background Check or Criminal History Record	N/A
N/A	Court and Legal	Court Document, Order Document or Record	N/A
N/A	Court and Legal	Other Legal Document	N/A
Books and Fees/Supplies Statement	Education and Training	School Books or Supplies List	N/A
*Class Schedule	*Education and Training	*Class List or Schedule	Example: 2020 Spring Semester
Credential	Education and Training	Credential	N/A
*Credit Hour/Study Time Policy	*Education and Training	*Verification of School Attendance or Progress	Example: School Attendance Log (Agency Form)
*Study Time Statement	*Education and Training	*Study Time Statement	Example: Century College Blanket statement, 2018
Diploma/Degree	Education and Training	Certificate of Attendance or Completion	N/A
Education Career Assessment Guide	Education and Training	Career Assessment Guide	N/A
FAFSA	Education and Training	FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) Report	N/A
Fee Statement	Education and Training	Financial Aid Award Letter or Fee Statement	N/A

Financial Aid Award Letter	Education and Training	Financial Aid Award Letter or Fee Statement	N/A
Financial Aid Information Form	Education and Training	Financial Aid Information Form (DHS-2646)	N/A
*Grades / Transcripts	*Education and Training	*Grades or Transcripts	N/A
*Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) education activity log (DHS-4209N)	*Education and Training	*Verification of School Attendance or Progress	Examples: Education Activity Log, Dates of Log
Post-Secondary Training Checklist	Education and Training	Post-Secondary Training Checklist and Request	N/A
*Request for Verification of School Attendance/Progress (DHS-2883)	*Education and Training	*Verification of School Attendance or Progress	N/A
*MFIP Education and Training Guide/Occupational Training Packet	*Education and Training	*Education Plan	N/A
Cover Letter	Employment	Cover Letter	N/A
Employee's Injury Report to Employer/Witness Report (all)	Employment	Workers Compensation Record or Claim	Examples: Proof of Income, Disability Status
*Employment Plan Signature Page	*Employment	*Employment Plan Signature Page	N/A
*Employment Verification Form (DHS-2146)	*Employment	*Authorization for Release of Employment Information (DHS-2146)	N/A
*Employment Verification	*Employment	*Employment Verification	Examples: proof of employment status/information, letter from employer, subsidized employment information
Injury Protection Program (IPP) - First Report of Injury (DHS-3995)	Employment	Injury Protection Program (IPP)	Example: First Report of Injury
Injury Protection Program (IPP) - Participant Information & Authorization to Release	Employment	Injury Protection Program (IPP)	N/A
Injury Protection Program (IPP) - Participant Injury Status Report (DHS-3997)	Employment	Injury Protection Program (IPP)	N/A
Injury Protection Program (IPP) - Participant Medical Referral and Medical Care	Employment	Injury Protection Program (IPP)	N/A
MFIP Paid Work Experience Program Participant Information	Employment	Paid Work Experience Program Participant Information	N/A
*Employment Plan (DHS-4209: 4209A-4209M)	*Employment	*Employment Plan	N/A
*Job Search Activity Log (DHS-5784)	*Employment	*Job Search Activity Log	Example: Week of 8/2/20-8/2/20
OJT Contract	Employment	On-the-Job Training (OJT) Contract or Documentation	N/A

Pay Stubs	Employment	Pay Stub or Check Stub	N/A
Resume	Employment	Resume	N/A
Safety Training/Compliance Agreement	Employment	Work Site Agreement	N/A
Sample Application for Employment	Employment	Sample Application for Employment	N/A
*Self-Employment Plan	*Employment	*Business Plan	N/A
WEP Time Card	Employment	WEP Time Card	N/A
Work Experience Evaluation	Employment	Work Experience Evaluation	N/A
Worksite Agreement	Employment	Work Site Agreement	N/A
*Authorization for Release of Employment Information (EVF)	*Employment	*Authorization for Release of Employment Information	N/A
*Social Service Activity Log	*Employment	*Job Search Activity Log	Examples: Week of 8/2/20-8/2/20, August 2020
Temporarily Unemployable Participant	Employment	Employability Assessment	N/A
Internship Evaluation	Employment	Internship	N/A
*Layoff Notice	*Employment	*Layoff Letter, Notice, or List	N/A
N/A	Employment	Professional References	N/A
N/A	Employment	Union Statement	N/A
Direct Deposit form	Financial - Assets, Income	Direct Deposit Form	N/A
N/A	Financial - Assets, Income	Car Title	Example: Proof of assets (vehicle value)
N/A	Financial - Assets, Income	Title/Deed Paper	Example: Proof of assets (property value)
N/A	Financial - Authorizations, Purchase Orders, Payments	Authorization	N/A
N/A	Financial - Authorizations, Purchase Orders, Payments	Purchase Order	N/A
N/A	Financial - Bills, Expenses	Transportation Support Request	N/A
N/A	Financial - Bills, Expenses	Bill or Bill Statement	Example: Proof of Expenses
N/A	Financial - Bills, Expenses	Bus Card Distribution Tracking Log	N/A
N/A	Financial - Bills, Expenses	Child Care	Example: Proof of Expenses
N/A	Financial - Bills, Expenses	Day Care Provider Statement	Example: Proof of Expenses
N/A	Financial - Bills, Expenses	Estimate or Quote	N/A
N/A	Financial - Bills, Expenses	Invoice and Supporting Documents	N/A
N/A	Financial - Bills, Expenses	Receipt	Example: Proof of expenses
N/A	Financial - Bills, Expenses	Lease Agreement	Example: Proof of Expenses
Mileage Form/Proof of Mileage	Financial - Bills, Expenses	Mileage Form or Log	N/A

Vehicle Insurance Card	Financial - Bills, Expenses	Insurance (Car, Property)	Example: Proof of expenses and residency
Obligation Worksheet	Financial Other	Obligation Form	N/A
W-4	Financial - Taxes	W-4	N/A
Birth Certificate	Identity	Birth Certificate	Examples: Proof of identity, citizenship, name
Driver's License	Identity	Driver's License	N/A
Immigration and Naturalization Document	Identity	Immigration and Naturalization Document	N/A
Permanent Resident Card	Identity	Permanent Resident Card	N/A
State ID	Identity	State ID	N/A
*Medical Opinion Form (DHS-2114)	*Medical	*Request for Medical Opinion (DHS-2114)	N/A
N/A	*Medical	*Assessor/Treatment Provider Report (DHS 4316)	Example: Proof of Health Conditions
N/A	*Medical	*Chemical Dependency Evaluation	N/A
N/A	*Medical	*Doctor's Statement	N/A
N/A	Medical	Health Insurance Card or Medicare Card	N/A
Medical Opinion Form (County Specific Form - NOT DHS-2114)	*Medical	*Medical Document, Form, Record, or Report	N/A
N/A	*Medical	*Physician Certification (DHS-1503)	Example: Proof of Health Conditions
N/A	*Medical	*Psychological Document, Form, Record, or Report	N/A
N/A	*Medical	*Social Worker Document or Statement	Example: Proof of Family Status
MFIP Employability Assessment	Program Specific	Intake	N/A
*FSS Case Review/FSS Pre-Sanction Checklist/Screening	*Program Specific	*Family Stabilization Services (FSS) Eligibility	Examples: FSS Pre-Sanction Checklist, FSS Eligibility Screening Form
Referrals	Program Specific	Referral	N/A
Child Care Requests	Program Specific	MFIP Child Care Transmittal, Request for Authorization	N/A
MFIP Extension Decision Form	Program Specific	Extension Decision Form	N/A
Participant Case Transfer Form	Program Specific	Case Transfer Checklist	N/A
*Minnesota Family Investment Program Employment	*Program Specific	* MFIP Employment Services Referral (DHS-3166)	Example: Referral if completed in paper form
MFIP Observation Checklist (DHS-3483).	Program Specific	MFIP Observation Checklist (DHS-3484)	N/A
* MFIP Status Update Form (DHS-3165)	*Program Specific	*MFIP Status Update Form (DHS-3165)	Examples: Emailed Status Update, County Specific Status Update Form
*Family Violence Referral (DHS-3323)	*Program Specific	*Family Violence Referral (DHS-3323)	N/A

N/A	*Program Specific	*Family Violence	Example: Verification
N/A	*Program Specific	*Family Violence Waiver Safety Plan	N/A
N/A	Program Specific	Volunteer Transportation Referral Form	N/A
N/A	*Program Specific	*Uncompensated Work Experience	Example: Activity Log
N/A	Program Specific	Sanction Policy Case Review	N/A
Notice of Intent to Sanction (NOITS)	Program Specific	Notice of Intent to Sanction (NOITS)	N/A
N/A	*Other	*Battered Women's Shelter Statement	N/A
N/A	Other	Interpreter and Translator Services	N/A
N/A	Other	Landlord Statement	Example: Proof of Residency
N/A	*Social Security	*Social Security Administration (SSA) Letter	Example: Proof of Disability Status
N/A	Veterans	DD -214 Form	N/A

DCYF required forms

The following forms cannot be replaced by a local county, tribal or employment services agency form.
MFIP Employment Services Weekly Job Search Activity Log (DHS-5784-ENG) (PDF).

Notices:

- Notice of Requirement to Attend Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) Overview (DHS-2929-ENG) (PDF).
- Employment Services Responsibilities, Rights and Consent (DHS-3172-ENG) (PDF).
- MFIP Notice of Intent to Sanction (DHS-3175-ENG) (PDF).
- Notice of Privacy Practices (DHS-3979-ENG) (PDF).

Forms related to assessments and screenings:

- Assessor/Treatment Provider Report (DHS-4316-ENG) (PDF).
- MFIP Self-Screen (DHS-3482) (PDF).
- Brief Screening Tool for Special Learning Needs (DHS-3504-ENG) (PDF).

Forms related to Injury Protection Program Injury Protection Program (IPP) - Injury Protection Program Participant Information and Authorization to Release Medical Information (DHS-3994-ENG) (PDF).

- Injury Protection Program (IPP) - First Report of Injury (DHS-3995-ENG) (PDF).
- Injury Protection Program Participant Medical Referral and Medical Care Provider Information Letter (DHS-3996-ENG) (PDF).
- Injury Protection Program (IPP) - Participant Injury Status Report (DHS-3997-ENG) (PDF).

Forms related to the Employment Plan

- MFIP Employment Plan – Either the paper version or the electronic employment plan on Workforce One (WF1) is required.
  - MFIP Employment Plan (DHS-4209-ENG) (PDF).
  - Employment (DHS-4209A-ENG) (PDF).
  - Job Search Requirements (DHS-4209B-ENG) (PDF).
  - Unpaid Work Activities (DHS-4209C-ENG) (PDF).
  - Education (DHS-4209D-ENG) (PDF).
  - Family Safety (DHS-4209E-ENG) (PDF).
  - Child Care or Transportation (DHS-4209H-ENG) (PDF).
  - Health (DHS-4209I-ENG) (PDF).
  - Housing (DHS-4209J-ENG) (PDF).
  - Personal/Family Activity (DHS-4209K-ENG) (PDF).
  - Legal Issues (DHS-4209L-ENG) (PDF).
  - County/State Social Services (DHS-4209M-ENG) (PDF).

An employment services agency can use either the DCYF form on the list below or an alternative form from their county or tribe.

Referral forms

- Minnesota Family Investment Program Employment Services Referral (DHS-3166-ENG) (PDF). A paper version is not necessary, if the electronic status update is on WF1.
- Family Violence Referral (DHS-3323) (PDF).

Requests for information

- Request for Verification of School Attendance/Progress (DHS-2883-ENG) (PDF).
- Request for Medical Opinion (DHS-2114-ENG) (PDF).

Assessment forms

- MFIP Observation Checklist (DHS-3483) (PDF).
- MFIP Self-Screen Scoring Form (DHS-3482A-ENG) (PDF).
- MFIP Special Learning Needs Scoring Form (DHS-3504A-ENG) (PDF).

Other forms

- Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) Education Activity Log (DHS-4209N-ENG) (PDF).
- Authorization for Release of Employment Information (DHS-2146-ENG) (PDF).

Employment Services links

Frequently Asked Questions: Workforce One Electronic Document Storage
A question and answer document that answers some of the most frequently asked questions after the implementation of the requirement to upload some documents into the Workforce One Electronic Document Storage system.

Guide to Effective Case Notes for Employment Services
Case notes are used to manage a case but also used in appeals and other professional reviews. Documentation is best when done in an objective and fact-based manner, understanding that records may be used by other professionals. If you are unsure of what information to include in case notes, check with your agency.

MFIP Employment Services Activity Guide Tip Sheet (DHS-5784A)
This document is a one-page summary document of the Work Activity Verification and Documentation Guide that was designed as an easy go-to sheet for employment counselors to use at their desks to quickly reference to ensure that documentation and supervision requirements for activities are met.

Family Stabilization Services Pre-Sanction Checklist (DHS-6075)
A checklist of required steps in the sanction process for participants who are eligible, or may be eligible, for Family Stabilization Services (FSS). These provisions apply to pre or post 60-month cases.

Use the following codes in Workforce One when someone leaves MFIP:

MFIP Exit Reasons

- 60 Months/Not Extended – Participant has reach 60 months of MFIP and does not qualify for an extension.
- Administrative Separation - Case is closed for failure to turn in verifications, Household Report Forms, or complete recertification process.
- Failure to File (HRF or Recertification) – Participant's MFIP case has closed due to failure to return Household Report Forms or Recertification forms and the case has remained closed for 2 consecutive months.
- Moved from the County - Moved to another county within the state in which case the eligibility case remains opens.
- Moved from the State – Participant moved out of state.
- No Eligible Child – There is no eligible child in the household and/or youngest child turned 19.
- No Longer in the Household – Participant moved out of the MFIP household.
- Sanction/Closed - Participant closes due to the 100% sanction.
- SSI/RSDI –Participant has been approved, and is receiving, SSI benefits.
- 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.
- Voluntary Separation - Participant requests closure of their MFIP (cash/food) case.
- 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.
- Other - Reasons not specified above.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR SSI?

Anyone with ONE of the following conditions:

- Advanced age (age 65 or older).
- Blindness.
- Disability.

And who:

- Has limited income and limited resources.
- Is a U.S. citizen or national, or in one of certain categories of non-citizens.
- Is a resident of 1 of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, or the Northern Mariana Islands.
- Is not absent from the country for a full calendar month or for 30 consecutive days or more.
- Is not confined to an institution (such as a hospital or prison) at the government's expense.
- Applies for any other cash benefits or payments for which he/she may be eligible, (for example, pensions, Social Security benefits).
- Gives the Social Security Administration permission to contact any financial institution and request any financial records.
- Files an application.
- Meets certain other requirements.

The Social Security Administration determines if someone is eligible for Supplemental Security Income. For further information see the Social Security Administration's listing of adult impairments and/or children impairments at:
Listing of Impairments - Adult Listings.
Listing of Impairments - ChildhoodListings.

Participants or their authorized representative may use an electronic signature to sign forms.

Employment services follows the guidance outlined in the Combined Manual for Electronic Signatures. For more information, see Combined Manual 0005.12.07 (Electronic Signatures).