

# EMPLOYABILITY MEASURE & USER'S GUIDE



Minnesota Department of Human Services

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# EMPLOYABILITY MEASURE



**DEPARTMENT OF  
HUMAN SERVICES**

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Level	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Transportation</b> <i>Getting to work and child care</i></p>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Participant's transportation is dependable with multiple back-up options available.</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant can get to work everyday <b>AND</b></li> <li>• There are multiple sources of reliable alternative transportation (such as convenient public transit, a second family vehicle, bike, resources to purchase another car, long-term carpooling available)</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Participant's transportation is dependable with a back-up option available.</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant can get to work everyday <b>AND</b></li> <li>• There is usually reliable alternative transportation</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Participant's transportation arrangements minimally affect employment.</b></p>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant has valid driver's license, up-to-date insurance and tabs, and vehicle is generally reliable, but there are no reliable alternatives for transportation</li> <li>• Public transportation meets most daily work needs but has limitations (route, hours, convenience, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Participant's transportation issues often interfere with employment.</b></p>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant has access to a vehicle that is not reliable</li> <li>• Vehicle fuel, maintenance and repairs are unaffordable</li> <li>• Time spent commuting is excessive (child care drop-offs, bus or carpool schedule, etc.)</li> <li>• Private transportation for hire, like taxis, is available but too expensive</li> <li>• Public transportation exists but is not always available when needed</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Participant's transportation issues prevent employment.</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Car transportation is not adequate: driving illegally (no license or no insurance) or no access to vehicle <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Public transportation is not adequate: unavailable or unaffordable or participant refuses to use <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Other transportation arrangements are not adequate: getting rides, walking, etc. are unavailable, impractical, or inconsistently available</li> </ul>

**Reason for level chosen:**

# TRANSPORTATION

## Area #1

*Ask questions that will help you figure out whether the participant's access to transportation affects his/her ability to work.*

*Here are some questions you might use to get started.*

*If you are not sure of the level, check the matrix for ideas for questions that will help you decide between levels. Focus on the bold level descriptions first.*

### **Sample Questions**

- How do you get to work (job search / job club / child care / ...)? How well does this work?
- Do you have back-up transportation? *(If yes)* What is it? Can you count on it?
- Is public transportation available where you live? *(If yes)* Is it available when you need it?
- Do you have a driver's license? *(If no)* Why not (suspended, revoked, never got one)? Do you have unpaid fines?
- *(If participant owns car)* Do you have insurance coverage on your car right now?

### **Follow-up Question**

- How does this affect your ability to work or look for work?

Level	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Dependent Care</b>  <i>Effect of care arrangements for children under age 13, teens with special needs, or vulnerable adults on participant's employment</i></p>
5	<p><b>Dependent care arrangements are good, not subsidized, and support participant's employment.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dependent care is not needed because the participant is not responsible for any children under 13, teens with special needs, or vulnerable adults <b>OR</b></li> <li>• Both of the following are true: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good quality provider cares for dependents at a safe center or home <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Back-up care arrangements are available, such as employer-provided sick leave or sick child/vulnerable adult care or a relative who is available when a dependent gets sick</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Dependent care arrangements are good, subsidized, and do not limit participant's employment.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant receives assistance with dependent care expenses <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Good quality provider cares for dependents at a safe center or home <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Back-up care arrangements are available, such as employer-provided sick leave or sick child/vulnerable adult care or a relative who is available when a dependent gets sick</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Dependent care arrangements are generally reliable and minimally affect participant's employment.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care provider is stable and safe <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Participant does not have sick leave available <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Back-up child care arrangement is usually available, although the participant occasionally misses work due to child care problems, for example when a child is sick</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Dependent care arrangements are unreliable or often interfere with participant's employment.</b></p> <p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only available care is unreliable, unsafe, or provided by unwilling family member or friend</li> <li>• No back-up care arrangement is available for days when a child is sick</li> <li>• Lack of weekend or evening child care limits participant's work hours</li> <li>• Participant is so dissatisfied with the child care (for cultural, language, educational, or other reasons) that it affects her/his work</li> <li>• Participant has temporary child care and child care application is pending</li> </ul>
1	<p><b>Absent or unacceptable dependent care options prevent participant's employment.</b></p> <p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitable providers do not have openings, or are too far away, or do not offer before/after school, weekend, or evening hours as needed</li> <li>• Child or vulnerable adult has special needs not accepted by providers</li> <li>• Care is unaffordable (participant may not be eligible for child care assistance, may be on a waiting list, or application pending)</li> <li>• No culturally or linguistically appropriate child care is available</li> <li>• Participant refuses to leave child in child care center or someone else's care</li> <li>• Child is home alone during work hours and is legally too young to care for self</li> </ul>

**Notes:**

**For children less than 13 years of age and caring for themselves, choose level 1 if legally too young to care for self. Otherwise, choose level 2 or 3 depending on how this affects participant's employment or work activities.**

**If participant is pregnant and has no other children, choose "level" N/A.**

**Reason for level chosen:**

# DEPENDENT CARE

## Area #2

*Ask questions that will help you figure out whether issues around providing care for children, teens with special needs, or vulnerable adults affect the participant's ability to work.*

*Here are some questions you might use to get started.*

*If you are not sure of the level, check the matrix for ideas for questions that will help you decide between levels. Focus on the bold level descriptions first.*

### Sample Questions

***If child(ren) under age 13 are in participant's care and participant is working or looking for work:***

- Who takes care of your children while you are at work? When you are looking for work? Where are your children cared for?
- Is child care available for all hours that you work?
- How often do child care problems make you late for work? Miss work?
- What do you do for child care during: summer vacation? snow days? holidays? when they are sick? times when the provider is closed?
- Does your child have a medical condition that makes it hard to find child care?
- Are you satisfied with the quality of your child care? Are your children learning there? Is it safe?
- Are you receiving a child care subsidy? *(If not)* Have you applied for child care assistance? Do you need help with child care paperwork?

***If not employed or not yet doing job search:***

- For job search or a new job, how would you handle child care?

***If there are other persons in household needing participant's care:***

- Do you have a teen with special needs in your home who needs care?
- Do you have an adult in your home who needs care?

### Follow-up Question

- How does this affect your ability to work or look for work?

Level	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Education</b> <i>Participant's education and training</i></p>
<b>5</b>	<b>Participant has college degree or beyond.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four-year college degree</li> <li>• Advanced degree</li> <li>• Immigrant with degree or advanced degree that does <b>NOT</b> require certification</li> <li>• Professionals with state certification in their field</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>Participant has substantial education beyond high school.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed associate degree, technical college, or apprenticeship</li> <li>• Working toward 4-year degree, with at least 2 years completed</li> <li>• Professional with foreign credentials requiring U.S. certification who is working toward certification</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>Participant has high school diploma, GED, or entry-level certificate.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certificate such as CNA, welding, or office skills</li> <li>• Some college credits (less than 2 years)</li> <li>• Professional with foreign credentials requiring certification in field but <b>NOT</b> working toward certification</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Participant is attending high school, GED, entry-level certificate classes, or other training.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting training, like General Educational Development (GED), Adult Basic Education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL), skills training, Functional Work Literacy (FWL), Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), computer skills, or other entry level certificate course</li> <li>• In supported employment</li> <li>• Working on diagnosed learning disability</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<b>Participant has no high school diploma, GED, or entry-level certificate and is not in school or training.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lacked opportunity to learn</li> <li>• Little or no education available in country of origin</li> <li>• Illiterate or very poor reader</li> <li>• Factors such as low IQ or a severe mental or physical condition interfere with learning</li> <li>• Unwilling to go to school</li> </ul>

**Reason for level chosen:**

# EDUCATION

## Area #3

*Ask questions that will help you figure out the participant's level of education and training.*

*Here are some questions you might use to get started.*

*If you are not sure of the level, check the matrix for ideas for questions that will help you decide between levels. Focus on the bold level descriptions first.*

### **Sample Questions**

- Do you have a high school diploma? *(If no)* A GED? *(If no)* What was the last grade you completed?
- *(If appropriate)* Have you had any schooling beyond high school? *(If yes)* What type?
- Do you have any certificates or professional licenses?
- Did you like school?
- Do you like to read? Did you have any trouble with reading in school?
- Have you ever been in special education classes?
- What other education do you have, outside the school system, which could help you with job search and employment?

### ***Immigrant-specific Questions:***

- Did you have the opportunity to attend school in your country of origin? *(If no)* What were the reasons you did not attend school?
- What kind of work did you do in your country of origin?
- What knowledge or skills did you acquire in your country of origin that you could use in a job? *(For example, ask a farmer about knowledge acquired farming and about what equipment they may have used.)*

### **Follow-up Question**

- How does this affect your ability to work or look for work?

Level	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Housing</b> <i>Stability of family's living situation and physical condition of their housing</i></p>
<b>5</b>	<b>Family has stable and safe unsubsidized housing without government assistance.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All housing expenses paid with own money <b>AND</b></li> <li>• No public assistance (cash, food, disability) <b>AND</b></li> <li>• No fuel, energy, or emergency assistance</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>Family has stable and safe unsubsidized housing with some government assistance.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unsubsidized housing <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Cash, food, disability, fuel, energy, or emergency assistance</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>Family has stable and safe housing that is subsidized formally or informally.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subsidized rental housing (for example, Section 8) or public housing</li> <li>• Supportive housing (housing with services provided to help with daily living)</li> <li>• Stable living situation in home of family or friends</li> <li>• Shared housing</li> <li>• Stable, ongoing support from family and/or friends to help with housing costs</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Family lives in temporary housing, unsafe housing, or is at risk of losing housing.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unlawful Detainer that is limiting their ability to get housing</li> <li>• Temporary or unstable housing including shelters or with family or friends</li> <li>• In danger of being evicted for reasons like late rent, complaints about bad behavior, foreclosure, or overcrowding</li> <li>• Frequent moves (three or more times in last year)</li> <li>• Participant perceives housing as substandard or structurally unsafe</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<b>Family has no housing.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eviction notice in hand and no alternative housing</li> <li>• Living on the street or living in a car</li> </ul>

**Reason for level chosen:**

# HOUSING

## Area #4

*Ask questions that will help you figure out the housing situation of the family.*

*Here are some questions you might use to get started.*

*If you are not sure of the level, check the matrix for ideas for questions that will help you decide between levels. Focus on the bold level descriptions first.*

### **Sample Questions**

- Do you like where you live?
- How long have you been there?
- Are you planning to move?
- How many times have you moved in the last year?
- Have you ever been evicted?
- Do you have an unlawful detainer on your record?
- Do you feel your housing is safe?
- Do you rent or have a mortgage?
- (If renting) Is your rent subsidized?
- Can you find housing you need and can afford?
- Do you share housing with anyone? (If yes) With whom?
- Are you expecting that other family members will come to stay with you?
- How much of the housing costs do you pay?
- Are you current with your mortgage or rent and utilities?
- Have you ever used emergency assistance or heating assistance?
- Do you have credit issues which could prevent you from getting housing?
- Is there enough space for your family?

### **Follow-up Question**

- How does this affect your ability to work or look for work?

<b>Social Support</b>	
<i>Effect of personal influences of family, friends, and community on the participant's employment</i>	
<b>Level</b>	Community organizations may include religious, spiritual or cultural institutions, civic or educational organizations, community support groups, clubs, and so on. For the purposes of the EM, social support does <b>NOT</b> refer to paid professional helpers such as therapists, social workers, job counselors, or financial workers.
<b>5</b>	<b>Participant has leadership role in the community.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participant is a community leader, mentor, sponsor, or role model who gives as well as receives social support</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>Participant has consistent and effective social support.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participant has a network of friends, family, or fellow members of one or more community organizations (like the groups listed above) <b>AND</b></li> <li>Some are role models or mentors <b>AND</b></li> <li>They help participant overcome barriers</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>Participant has generally reliable social support.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The participant has some generally reliable supportive adults among family, friends, or fellow members of community organizations (like the groups listed above) <b>AND</b></li> <li>Support is received sometimes, but may not always be there <b>AND</b></li> <li>Destructive behaviors of others have little effect on the participant, direct or indirect</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Participant has limited social support.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Few stable mature adults are involved in the participant's life other than paid professional helpers</li> <li>Participant has very limited connection to community organizations</li> <li>Destructive behavior of others negatively influences the participant</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<b>Participant has no social support.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participant is socially isolated</li> <li>No connection to any community organization</li> <li>Other people sabotage the participant's efforts to work</li> <li>Destructive behaviors of others greatly affect or harm the participant</li> </ul>

**Reason for level chosen:**

# SOCIAL SUPPORT

## Area #5

*Ask questions that will help you figure out whether social support affects the participant's ability to work.*

*Here are some questions you might use to get started.*

*If you are not sure of the level, check the matrix for ideas for questions that will help you decide between levels. Focus on the bold level descriptions first.*

### **Sample Questions**

- Do you have a support network of friends and family? Who are they?
- How well do you get along with your family?
- Who can you confide in? (For example, a friend, mentor, counselor, elder, therapist)
- Is there someone in your life that you look up to or admire?
- What kinds of things do you do with your friends?
- Do you regularly attend any groups or organizations? (For example, church, support groups, volunteering, coaching, sports)
- Who wants you not to work? Who causes problems so you cannot go to work? (For example, your children, spouse, boyfriend, friends)

### **Follow-up Question**

- How does this affect your ability to work or look for work?

Level	<b>Child Behavior</b> <i>Effect of actions of children in the family on participant's employment</i>
<b>5</b>	<b>Child(ren)'s behavior supports participant's employment.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All children have strong attendance and are getting good marks at school, child care, preschool, or Head Start <b>AND</b></li> <li>All children exhibit positive behaviors (for example, helping at home and doing homework) and support parent's ability to work <b>AND</b></li> <li>All children engage in healthy activities outside of school (for example playing with friends, youth groups, or hobbies)</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>Child(ren)'s behavior problems do not limit participant's employment.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All children attend school regularly <b>AND</b></li> <li>All children get school work done and are making progress <b>AND</b></li> <li>Parent has no serious concerns about children's behavior</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>Family is working on child(ren)'s behavior problems and they minimally affect participant's employment.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child with behavior problems is working with professionals to stabilize behavior</li> <li>Occasional problems at school or child care are managed, with parent seldom required to be present during work hours</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Time necessary to deal with child(ren)'s behavior problems often interferes with participant's employment.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School misbehavior or truancy frequently requires parent to visit school</li> <li>Child does not cooperate with morning routines</li> <li>Frequent misbehavior, like biting or hitting other children, requires parent to visit child care provider</li> <li>Other risk behavior by child (for example, anger, impulsiveness, destructive behavior, involvement with a gang, addiction, or problematic social relationships) interferes with participant's employment</li> <li>While individual children in the family are reasonably well-behaved, when they are together, they cause a great deal of trouble</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<b>Time necessary to deal with child(ren)'s behavior problems prevents participant's employment.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parent has lost job because of tardiness, absenteeism, or poor performance due to child's behavior problems</li> <li>Parent is unable to obtain child care due to child's behavior problems</li> </ul>

**Notes:**

**If the only child is an infant/toddler and there are no behavior issues, choose level 4. If there are behavior issues with this only child, choose level 1, 2, or 3.**

**If the infant/toddler is not the only child, choose a level based on the combined effect of all children (including the infant/toddler) on employment. This situation cannot be level 5.**

**If the participant is a pregnant woman with no other children, the appropriate "level" is N/A.**

**Reason for level chosen:**

# CHILD BEHAVIOR

Area #6

*Ask questions that will help you figure out whether her/his children's behavior affects the participant's ability to work.*

*Here are some questions you might use to get started.*

*If you are not sure of the level, check the matrix for ideas for questions that will help you decide between levels. Focus on the bold level descriptions first.*

## **Sample Questions**

- How are your children doing in school?
- How are your children getting along in child care?
- How do your children spend their free time?
- Do your children get along with each other?
- Are any of your children having problems at school? At home? In the neighborhood?
- Do you ever miss work because of your children's behavior?
- Do your children listen to you?
- [*For immigrants*] Did your children attend school prior to coming to the U.S.?

## **Follow-up Question**

- How does this affect your ability to work or look for work?

Level	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Financial</b> <i>Family income in relation to expenses</i></p> <p>Basic living expenses include food, shelter, and other necessary expenses particular to this family, like medical care and child care</p>
<b>5</b>	<b>Family has income well above basic living expenses.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stable income/employment <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Current on basic bills <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Savings for emergencies and discretionary spending <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Income at least equal to the state median income</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>Family income is stable and pays for more than basic living expenses.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stable income/employment <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Current on basic bills <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Extra for discretionary spending or savings for emergencies</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>Family income is stable, but pays only for basic living expenses.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dependable income sources <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Current on basic bills <b>AND</b></li> <li>• No extra for discretionary spending or savings for emergencies</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Family income is sometimes adequate to meet basic living expenses.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One or more major sources of income erratic, like earnings or child support</li> <li>• New job but poor employment history</li> <li>• Not paying basic bills even though income appears sufficient</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<b>Family income is inadequate to meet basic living expenses.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rent exceeds income</li> <li>• Misses meals even with food support and regular visits to food shelves</li> </ul>

**Reason for level chosen:**

# FINANCIAL

## Area #7

*Ask questions that will help you figure out the relationship of the family's income to expenses.*

*Here are some questions you might use to get started.*

*If you are not sure of the level, check the matrix for ideas for questions that will help you decide between levels. Focus on the bold level descriptions first.*

### Sample Questions

**Note: Responses to the first six questions are required and entered in Workforce One.**

- Are you currently working?
  - *(If yes) Where?*
  - *(If yes) How long have you worked there?*
  - *(If yes) How many hours per week do you work?*
  - *(If yes) How much do you earn per hour?*
- How many jobs have you had in the last 6 months?
- Are you current on your rent and utilities? (If no) Why not?
- How much MFIP cash and food portion did you receive this month?
- Do you receive any other type of income like child support or SSI? (If yes) Type and amount? How often do you receive this income?
- Do you have unpaid medical expenses?
- Do you have concerns about having enough money to buy food?
- Do you have money left over after you have paid your bills?
- Do you have any money saved?
- Are you providing financial support to family members who do not live with you?

### Follow-up Question

- How does your financial situation affect your ability to work or look for work?

Level	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Legal</b> <i>Effect of any family member's criminal or civil legal issues on participant's employment</i></p>
<b>5</b>	<b>Family has no current legal issues.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There may have been legal issues in the past, but they have been settled</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>Family members' legal issues do not affect participant's employment.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pending civil court case does not affect employment</li> <li>• Legal issues are not work related and do not take work time</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>Family members' legal issues minimally affect participant's employment.</b>
	<p>For example, time is needed for things like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Probation requirements</li> <li>• Issues requiring occasional court appearances during work hours, such as an open child protection case, divorce case, child custody case, or bankruptcy</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Family members' legal issues often interfere with participant's employment.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Felony conviction limits type or hours of work, including preferred or previous work</li> <li>• Professional license or driver's license required for doing a particular job has been revoked due to child support nonpayment, conviction for driving under the influence, or professional misconduct</li> <li>• Recent job has been lost due to a legal issue</li> <li>• Issues requiring frequent court appearances during work hours, such as an open child protection case, divorce case, child custody case, or bankruptcy</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<b>Participant's legal issues prohibit employment.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-citizen has no work permit</li> <li>• Participant is under threat of deportation</li> <li>• Participant is incarcerated or scheduled to be incarcerated</li> </ul>

**Reason for level chosen:**

# LEGAL

## Area #8

*Ask questions that will help you figure out whether legal issues affect the participant's ability to work.*

*Here are some questions you might use to get started.*

*If you are not sure of the level, check the matrix for ideas for questions that will help you decide between levels. Focus on the bold level descriptions first.*

### Sample Questions

- Do you or a family member:
  - Have to go to court for any reason?
  - Have any legal issues that prevent you from working or limit the type of work you can do? *(If yes)* What are they?
  - Have any legal convictions in the last ten years? *(If yes)* What are they?
  - Have any probation or parole obligations?
  - Have community service obligations?
- Have you lost a professional license or driver's license needed for your job?

### Follow-up Question

- How does this affect your ability to work or look for work?

Level	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Safe Living Environment</b> <i>Effect of participant's perception of household and neighborhood safety on employment</i></p>
5	<p><b>Participant feels safe at home and in the neighborhood.</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family interactions are nonviolent <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Participant considers the neighborhood very safe <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Crime is rare</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Participant feels safe from violence most of the time at home and in the neighborhood.</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All household members avoid or leave unsafe situations <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Participant considers the neighborhood safe most of the time</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Participant feels some threat of violence at home or in the neighborhood, but it minimally affects employment.</b></p>
	<p>For example,</p> <p><b>Home</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant feels safe enough to go out to work, leaving other family members at home</li> <li>• Abuser is currently incarcerated or a safe distance away</li> <li>• Abuser is developing skills to interact nonviolently</li> </ul> <p><b>Neighborhood</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant feels safe enough to go out to work, traveling through neighborhood</li> <li>• Neighborhood is a relatively safe place to live</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Participant feels home or neighborhood is dangerous, but is either working or has initiated interventions.</b></p>
	<p>For example,</p> <p><b>Home</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A safety plan is being followed or the participant is working with an advocate</li> <li>• Frequent battered women's shelter visits</li> <li>• Children or vulnerable adults are placed in a stable situation outside the home</li> <li>• Participant has begun to engage with helping agencies like a domestic violence advocate or battered women's shelter</li> <li>• An Order for Protection is in place</li> </ul> <p><b>Neighborhood</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shootings, break-ins, or drug dealing occur in the neighborhood</li> <li>• Police are called to respond to violence in the neighborhood</li> <li>• Neighborhood watch or block club</li> </ul>
1	<p><b>Participant feels home or neighborhood is dangerous and is not working, and no interventions have begun.</b></p>
	<p>For example,</p> <p><b>Home</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A violent abuser threatens the safety of household members</li> <li>• Police are frequently called to respond to violence in the home</li> <li>• There is no safety plan or Order for Protection</li> </ul> <p><b>Neighborhood</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Police are called to respond to violence in the neighborhood</li> <li>• Participant or family members are victims or impacted by frequent shootings, break-ins, or drug dealing in the neighborhood</li> </ul>

**Reason for level chosen:**

# SAFE LIVING ENVIRONMENT

Area #9

*Ask questions that will help you figure out whether there are violence issues that affect the participant's ability to work.*

*Here are some questions you might use to get started.*

*If you are not sure of the level, check the matrix for ideas for questions that will help you decide between levels. Focus on the bold level descriptions first.*

## Sample Questions

- Do you feel safe from violence at home?
  - *(If no)* Are you working with a domestic violence advocate, or some other professional helper?
  - *(If no)* Do you currently have an Order for Protection against anyone? *(If yes)* Why and against whom?
  - *(If no)* Have you received services from a domestic abuse center or women's shelter? *(If yes)* What happened?
- Do you feel safe in your neighborhood? *(If no)* Why not?
  - How often are the police called to your neighborhood?
  - Do you participate in a neighborhood watch organization or block club?

## Follow-up Question

- How does this affect your ability to work or look for work?

Level	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Health</b> <i>Effect of physical, mental, and chemical health of family members on participant's employment</i></p>
<b>5</b>	<b>Family is healthy and participates in preventive health measures.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally good health for all family members <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Preventive measures include eating healthy, exercising, getting regular check-ups, not smoking, and using alcohol in moderation (for adults) or not all <b>AND</b></li> <li>• If participant is working, employer offers time off for medical reasons, either sick, personal, or unpaid leave</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>Family has no physical, mental, or chemical health concerns that affect participant's employment.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally good health for all family members <b>AND</b></li> <li>• If participant is working, employer offers time off for medical reasons, either sick, personal or unpaid leave <b>AND</b></li> <li>• If participant is working, no risk of losing employment due to health concerns that occasionally interfere with work attendance or performance</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>Family has physical, mental, or chemical health concerns that minimally affect participant's employment.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following any treatment plans, including taking medication <b>OR</b></li> <li>• Any chronic conditions of family members are managed <b>OR</b></li> <li>• If participant is working, slight risk of losing employment due to health concerns that occasionally interfere with work attendance or performance <b>OR</b></li> <li>• On leave from employment due to medical condition <b>OR</b></li> <li>• If participant is not employed, health concerns do not prevent job search</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Family has physical, mental, or chemical health concerns that often interfere with participant's employment.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work absences due to health concerns or treatment place client at risk of losing job</li> <li>• Access to health care provider limited by appointment times or clinic locations</li> <li>• Lack of access to culturally appropriate and acceptable care</li> <li>• Poor work history because of health issues</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<b>Family has physical, mental, or chemical health concerns that prevent participant's employment.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incapacitated or ill family member needing care</li> <li>• Cannot care for self and personal care is not available</li> <li>• Medication or treatment does not control condition</li> <li>• Not compliant with treatment plan, leading to negative health consequences</li> </ul>

**Reason for level chosen:**

# HEALTH

## Area #10

*Ask questions that will help you figure out whether the health of the participant or a family member affects the participant's ability to work.*

*Here are some questions you might use to get started.*

*If you are not sure of the level, check the matrix for ideas for questions that will help you decide between levels. Focus on the bold level descriptions first.*

### Sample Questions

- How is your general health? Do you have concerns about your health?
- Do you or any family members have any medical conditions that affect your ability to work or look for work?
- Who provides your medical care?
- Do you have a regular doctor?
- Is there any type of health care that you or a family member need but are not getting? *(If yes)* What is it? Why aren't you getting it?
- Do you need to take medications daily? *(If yes)* Do you take them?
- Do you or anyone in your household use tobacco? Alcohol or drugs? *(If yes)* How much and how often?
- *(If you suspect health concerns that the participant has not mentioned-for example, depression or bipolar disorder- you could ask a general question like the following)* What is a typical day like for you?

### Follow-up Question

- How does your health affect your ability to work or look for work?

<b>Workplace Skills</b>	
<i>Effect of self-management and job-seeking skills on participant's getting and keeping employment</i>	
<b>Level</b>	<p><b>Workplace skills include</b> decision making, communication, conflict resolution, problem solving, anger management, time management, crisis management, planfulness, relationship skills, prioritizing, grooming, and other capabilities that facilitate job performance.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Complete this area last, using information obtained from participant's responses to all other areas. Ask additional questions as needed.</p>
<b>5</b>	<b>Participant's workplace skills enhance current employment.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently employed <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Has proven ability to get, hold, and manage jobs <b>AND</b></li> <li>• No employment gaps for at least a year <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Any job changes are to jobs with better pay, better benefits, or a better match to abilities or interests <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Effectively manages routine and crisis situations</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>Participant's workplace skills support employment.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May or may not be currently employed</li> </ul> <p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anticipates problems, has back-up plans, and can problem solve in unpredictable circumstances</li> <li>• Makes good decisions about employment changes by securing another job before quitting previous job, getting a better paying job or job with better benefits, or finding a job that is a better match</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>Participant's workplace skills are adequate for employment.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May or may not be currently employed</li> </ul> <p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate or improving job seeking skills</li> <li>• Learning workplace skills so can now handle minor conflicts, time management issues, or problems at work with support</li> <li>• Workplace skills may be adequate for entry level employment, but may limit career advancement</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Participant's lack of workplace skills often interferes with employment.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May or may not be currently employed</li> </ul> <p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequently loses jobs because of absenteeism or not calling in when sick or tardy</li> <li>• Frequently cannot problem solve, resolve conflicts, or manage anger at work which causes job losses or disciplinary measures</li> <li>• Quits jobs impulsively</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<b>Participant's lack of workplace skills prevents employment.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fails to manage time or anger so misses job interviews or is hostile at interview</li> <li>• Lacks budgeting and planning skills necessary to secure transportation to work or clothing for work</li> <li>• Lacks skills to effectively manage work activities such as returning phone calls or keeping a daily schedule</li> </ul>

**Reason for level chosen:**

# WORKPLACE SKILLS

Area #11

*Ask questions that will help you figure out whether self-management and job-seeking skill level affect the participant's ability to get and keep employment.*

*Here are some questions you might use to get started.*

*If you are not sure of the level, check the matrix for ideas for questions that will help you decide between levels. Focus on the bold level descriptions first.*

## Sample Questions

- *(If not employed)* When were you last employed? How long did you work there?
- *(If not employed)* What steps do you plan to take to get a job?
- How did you get your last job?
- What is the longest any of your jobs lasted?
- How well do you get along with others (at work, at home, in general)?
- Describe a conflict you had with a co-worker or supervisor. How did you resolve it?
- What other kinds of problems come up at work?
- What do you do if someone “disrespects” you at work?
- Have you ever been fired? *(If yes)* What happened?
- Are you frequently late for appointments? Can you give me an example of what happened when you were late?

## Follow-up Question

- How does this affect your ability to work or look for work?



# EMPLOYABILITY MEASURE USER'S GUIDE



**DEPARTMENT OF  
HUMAN SERVICES**

Minnesota Department of Human Services

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# Introduction

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The **purpose** of the Employability Measure (EM) is to measure a participant's status in eleven 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, and workplace skills. The EM consists of a matrix for each area, with descriptions of the five levels, from Level 1, an area of challenge, to Level 5, an area of strength. These matrices provide a way to quantify status and, over time, progress in these areas in a consistent way.

The level assigned reflects the current situation in the person's life as it affects employability. It is a description, an indication of whether an area should be a focus for the participant and the job counselor, whether resources may need to be applied. It is not a judgment about the person. The participant does not see the levels. The 11 area levels help prioritize next steps to take.

Here are some potential **benefits** of using the EM:

- Get a quick overall picture of a person's barriers and strengths
- Create better employment plans with better information
- Organize information on the participant
- Develop rapport with the participant
- Help eliminate barriers and build strengths by first identifying and prioritizing them
- Avoid prolonged job search and multiple placements
- Improve employment outcomes
- Get caseload summary data:
  - to describe needs of Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) participants at the state, county, tribe, or employment services provider level
  - to help redirect MFIP resources based on needs
  - to more effectively use community resources
  - to provide policy-relevant data

This **user's guide** brings you one part of what you need to measure employability: the EM itself and supporting materials. The second part is the in-person and web-based training. The third essential part is your skill and experience as a job counselor and interviewer.

**The beginning sections of the user's guide** give the history and method of development of the EM, outline policy decisions agencies need to make and resources they need to identify to implement the EM, and describe the training required before using the EM,

**What you need to work with the EM** starts in the fourth section of the guide:

- the matrices defining the areas and describing the levels
- sample questions you may want to use to start discussing a specific area (these are optional and job counselors may use their own questions if they wish)
- ideas on how to start the conversation
- general tips on choosing the best level and using the information shared by the participant
- how to enter the EM data on Workforce One (the employment services database) and
- supporting materials for each area, including the following:
  - the sample questions and matrix (again)
  - area definition
  - guidance on choosing levels in the area
  - notes about issues related to the area
  - examples of situations at each level and
  - practice scenarios

**Finally**, data entry for recording the EM on Minnesota's Workforce One database for employment services providers is explained, with pictures of the screens.

The **appendix** includes:

- a sample form for recording notes during the EM interview
- a handout for interpreters when using the EM with non-English speakers
- information sources (DHS contacts, accessing the online EM User's Guide and Getting Ready for the EM, subscribing to the EM mailing list, accessing the DHS bulleting announcing the EM implementation and the 2006 EM pilot study final report)
- excerpts from the EM materials for managers and supervisors in *Getting Ready for the EM* that are useful for job counselors.

# I. Development of the Employability Measure

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Two state agencies in Minnesota work with people who are not succeeding in the labor market. The Department of Human Services (DHS) supervises the state's family cash assistance program. The Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) administers various employment and training programs and Unemployment Insurance for displaced workers. Early in this decade, staff from both agencies started discussing a common need to measure areas in people's lives that affect the stability of their lives and also their ability to get and keep jobs and support themselves and, often, families.

Work started on this project in the spring of 2003. The charge for the core group was to develop a way to measure barriers and strengths of program participants that affect their employment in a quantifiable and consistent way. Doing this across time could show progress in overcoming barriers and building strengths, even for people who had not yet attained goals of employment and self-support.

The core group reviewed existing assessments and adopted some ideas, including dimensions to consider for inclusion, a five-point scale for each, and asset-based language for higher scores. They wanted a measure whose levels were described in qualitative terms. The working name of the instrument was the "Life Stability Progress Measure." They brainstormed all the areas that might affect employment and drafted a matrix for each area with descriptions for each of the five levels. People in the welfare and employment fields who reviewed the measure reacted positively to continuing this work.

The core group brought this draft to an advisory committee that convened in the fall of 2003. Representatives from the state agencies and county and tribal employment services providers met regularly to provide guidance and feedback to the development, implementation, and piloting of the measure. They also provided staff with front-line experience to a workgroup to revise the measure and make sure it had real-world relevance.

The workgroup's members included experienced job counselors who worked directly with clients, employment services supervisors, a vocational rehabilitation specialist, two trainers, and staff from DEED and DHS. Among them were representatives from five pilot sites. They completely overhauled the measure, starting with giving it a new name that pointed to the focus they endorsed for it: Employability Measure.

DHS funded the pilot to try out the new measure with participants in the state's family assistance program, the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP). The five pilot sites were a variety of employment services offices in urban, suburban, and rural areas around the state, some working primarily with African American and American Indian participants. The pilots only used the measure with fluent English speakers.

The pilot lasted from January 2005 to June 2006 and provided practical information on the use of the EM, evidence of its validity and reliability, ideas for how to revise it, and highlighted the necessity for effective training on the EM and also on interviewing and case management skills for job counselors.

For more information on the development of the original version of EM and the pilot, see the final report, published in December 2006, at <http://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Legacy/DHS-4966-ENG> .

DHS decided to revise the EM and implement it statewide. Work started on the revision in the spring of 2007. The Revision Workgroup used their experience with the EM and MFIP participants as well as input from the other two workgroups to inform the reworking of area and level descriptions in the matrices and the sample questions and also to contribute to talking points, instructions on choosing levels, notes, and scenarios. The Language and Culture Workgroup used their experience working with MFIP participants from immigrant groups and their own knowledge of these communities to review the EM matrices and materials with a view to their cultural appropriateness and use with non-English speakers. The Domestic Cultures Workgroup reviewed the EM and provided input based on their work with MFIP participants from their own African American and American Indian communities. Both of these cultural groups also suggested many ideas for notes and scenarios and for fine tuning the levels in all areas.

All this work was pulled together into a user's guide by DHS staff. Knowledge gained from the beginning of the project through the contributions of the workgroups was distilled into the notes and other supporting materials. Additional scenarios were written. The matrices were tested against the scenarios, with further editing to make the distinctions between levels as clear as possible. Then all workgroup members were invited to review the completed EM and the user's guide. Their feedback was incorporated and final editing was completed.

An Advisory Group for the new EM was recruited from the management of county and tribal employment services providers and state staff. Their charge included giving input to DHS evaluation and policy staff as they introduce the new version of EM to several sites in early 2009 and afterwards expand to statewide implementation by region.

## II. Statewide Implementation of the Employability Measure

---

Job counselors in Minnesota employment services offices will use the EM with every MFIP applicant, including non-English speaking participants, as part of the **intake** process. The measure will be phased in by regions, as job counselors are trained across the state.

Two DHS divisions share responsibility for the project as it moves from development to implementation: Program Assessment and Integrity Division (PAID), which had primary responsibility for the development of the EM, and Transitions to Economic Stability (TES), the policy division which oversees the operation of the MFIP program.

Areas that counties, tribes, and employment services providers need to consider and develop to prepare for and to use the EM include the following:

- Agency policy on when to do an EM within the **three-month period** starting with enrollment into an employment services provider
- How to **streamline the intake process** to include the EM and eliminate any redundancies
- How to apply the county Limited English Proficiency (LEP) plan to using the EM with people not fluent in English. **Meaningful access** to all programs is required. The ideal of bilingual and bicultural job counselors working with immigrants from their own country and culture of origin is not always possible.
- Agency **resource list** for linking services with needs highlighted by the EM
- **Skill building for job counselors**, including interviewing, cultural competency, case management, best practices, and training about the EM areas
- How to write an **employment plan** that reflects both the strengths and challenges facing the participant
- Agency policy on whether and when to do **follow-up EMs**

The Appendix includes additional material on several topics that will be useful for job counselors.

## III. Employability Measure Training

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### In-person training

Job counselors who will conduct assessments using the EM are required to attend a full-day, in-person training offered by DHS. The training provides an overview of the history and purpose of the EM, an in-depth segment on each of the 11 areas covered by the EM, and a review of critical things to remember. Many examples, largely derived from actual participant experiences, illustrate the five levels within each area. Trainees have the opportunity to practice assigning levels to sample cases. The scenarios increase in complexity covering multiple areas and culminating in an example in which trainees interview a trainer playing the role of an MFIP participant. They interview the trainer in all 11 areas, assign levels and then discuss their decisions.

### Web-based training

After completion of the in-person training, job counselors are required to complete a web-based training session. The session provides an opportunity to test their understanding of the EM by applying it to a variety of scenarios from each area and several combination scenarios. Trainees should allow approximately one and a half hours to complete the course. They must score 28 out of 39 items correctly to be given access to the Workforce One (WF1) assessment tab. Trainees may retake the course as many times as necessary to get a passing score and may also retake it as a refresher. The in-person training is the prerequisite for the web training.

Both types of training are requirements for using the EM and recording EM results on WF1. **Job counselors should begin using the EM with MFIP participants only after completing the classroom and online trainings.**

## **IV. Talking Points for Getting Started**

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### **Things to remember:**

- The Employability Measure is designed for face-to-face contact only.
- Building a relationship is the first and a very important step. Gain the participant's trust without making her/him feel threatened.
- Asking "How can I help you?" gives the participant a share of the responsibility.
- Ask whatever questions are necessary to find out the information you need to determine the best level.
- You might explain services offered through employment services before asking questions.

### **Things to say every time you do an EM (in your own words):**

- I will be asking you about various areas of your life so I can understand your strengths and challenges and help you develop goals.
- We will use the information as we work together to develop an employment plan that makes sense to you.
- Everything that is said is confidential (except mandatory reporting issues).
- We may not have resources to deal with every issue that you tell me about, but we will assist you in every way possible.

### **Things you might say to the participant:**

- What is your employment goal?
- What's stopping you from getting to your goals?
- I am a partner and resource in helping you reach your goals.
- What does success look like for you?
- What do you want or need from this program to be successful?
- The EM interview takes a half hour to an hour in most cases.

- I am asking questions about many personal areas today. Answer as much as you're comfortable with today. But remember that as we move forward the door is always open for you to discuss these issues further.
- Share stories of how you have helped other participants in similar situations (while respecting confidentiality).
- The EM will help me be a better job counselor to you.

### **Things to tell the interpreter:**

- This is an interview about 11 areas of life functioning used to assess the participant's ability to work or look for work.
- The interview asks some very personal questions. Confidentiality is essential.
- It is very important that you, the interviewer, are told everything the participant is saying for you to make a proper assessment and develop an appropriate Employment Plan with the participant.
- Please read the EM information sheet for interpreters (see Appendix). Let's talk about any questions you have before we meet with the participant.

### **Order of the areas:**

You can talk about the 11 areas in **any order** you choose. Job counselors with EM experience suggested the order in which they appear in this user's guide.

## V. Conducting the Employability Measure Interview

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**The Employability Measure must be administered during an in-person interview. The matrices and sample questions should never be handed out to participants, nor should they be given the number of the Level.**

Here are some suggestions for how to conduct the EM interview:

- Bring the Employability Measure (11 matrices and the sample questions) and the EM Interview Notes handout (from the appendix). Have all three within your view during the conversation.
- It is generally best to begin the discussion of each area with an open-ended question from the sample questions or of your own choosing.
- Your challenge is to ask whatever follow-up questions are needed to select the appropriate level. The sample questions are designed to help you get closer to the correct level. They are not in a sequence, nor would all be appropriate in every case. The best second question depends on the participant's answer to the first question. So you will need to choose a sequence and possibly devise additional questions to be able to choose a level. It is important to **pay careful attention to the actual matrix when asking follow up questions** to get all the information you need to choose a level. Using actual language in the matrix can be very helpful, for example, asking whether their job has sick leave (between Levels 3 and 4 for Dependent Care) and "How often do you get called to your child's school (between Levels 2 and 3 for Child Behavior).
- Take notes during the interview on the matrix, the sample question page, the EM Interview Notes or on a note sheet that you devise. Do not enter any EM information on WF1 while the participant is present. It is particularly important that if you choose a level for an area during the interview that the participant is unable to see the number.

You will likely need both open and close-ended questions to complete the EM. Generally, **open-ended questions** are useful in starting the discussion of the area and giving you an overview of the situation. **Close-ended questions** are generally most useful in helping you learn the specifics that you need for choosing the best level. The sample questions contain both types of questions, and you will need to design follow-up questions of your own during the interview. Initially it may be challenging to decide whether an open or close-ended question is appropriate, but you will learn from experience and your skill at this will improve over time.

There is a **learning curve** with the Employability Measure. As the job counselor becomes more familiar with the areas, levels, and other materials, guiding the interview, selecting or composing questions, and selecting the levels gets easier. Typically the average length of the interview drops by about half over time with increasing experience.

## VI. Choosing Levels and Using Information

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### Definitions

Throughout the EM user's guide and EM training, the term "**job counselor**" will be used to refer to the person conducting the EM interview. This is done entirely for simplicity. Other types of professionals may also be using the EM.

Throughout the EM itself, the EM user's guide, and EM training, the term "**work**" is used to refer to either work or job search-related activities. This was done for brevity. "Employment" refers to a job.

### Choosing the Best Level

1. There are **five levels** for each **area**, from Level 1 (lowest) to Level 5 (highest).
2. The level is a numeric indicator of what impedes or facilitates employability. Inflating scores can prevent the participant from receiving needed services. It is important to **choose an accurate level** for each area so that both strengths and challenges can be addressed in the employment plan. Most families will have a mix of low and high scores.
3. **Level 1** generally means the participant is **not work ready**. Assigning a Level 1 is not a judgment about the person, but a description of the person's situation on the area and how it affects employability.
4. **Level 5** indicates an area of **great stability**. It is unusual, but not impossible.
5. Rate the participant's **current situation**.
6. Focus on how the area affects **employability**.
7. Some areas refer to the whole **family**, some to the **participant only**.
8. As you select levels, keep a **narrow focus on each area**, and avoid rating based on your overall impression of the participant.
9. Issues that affect **multiple areas** should be reflected in the level for each

appropriate area. For example, a child with ADD may have an impact on both the Child Behavior and Health areas.

10. Choose the level based on **evidence** of what the participant tells you and external verified information.
11. Always look at bold **level headings** in the area first before checking the bullet points.
12. Work from the **bottom level up**. But also check the level above the first level that may be the correct choice. **When in doubt choose the lower level.**
13. **“AND” and “OR”** are important. AND means every point in the level must be true while OR means that any one point can be true, for that level to be chosen.
14. **“For example”** points give the flavor of the level. None may describe your participant’s specific situation, but they describe some possible situations at this level.
15. The recommendation is to do the areas in the **order listed**, but sometimes the interviewer will have a reason to change the order.
16. Areas are complex; the **worst situation** currently should be used in choosing a level.
17. Sometimes a **self-imposed barrier** determines the level.
18. Use **N/A** when participant refuses to answer or discuss an area, or if it does not apply.
19. When speaking with the participant, share **general comments** about their situation in an area, but **not the level selected**.
20. Once completed, **do not go back to change the EM** when new information comes in. If a participant reveals an issue after the EM is completed, you may want to note new information in case notes.
21. Be aware of **issues of class, age, culture, and race** that may be especially sensitive. For example, telling participants who are older or from a different culture how to raise their children may not be accepted.
22. Trust depends on **confidentiality**. The possibility of having personal information disclosed may be especially threatening to persons living in immigrant communities, in African American communities, on reservations, and in small towns or rural areas.

## Employment Plans

23. After completing the EM, offer hope to the participant by acknowledging strengths and explaining how those strengths will help them accomplish activities in the employment plan. Where possible, **incorporate the strengths into the employment plan.**
24. Areas with **Levels 1 or 2** may need to be addressed immediately, especially areas that impact other areas, like mental health. Steps to address issues should be included in the employment plan.
25. Develop employment plans that **coordinate** demands placed on participants by multiple services providers.

## Immigrants

26. The EM is in English, but the conversation may not be. There are interpretation and cultural issues for using it with immigrant populations. A bilingual, bicultural job counselor is the ideal. Each county has a Limited English Proficiency Plan that will inform plans for communicating with participants who are not fluent in English.
27. **Refugees**, especially those from war torn countries, may be more vulnerable and may require more services than U.S. born participants with similar cultural backgrounds.
28. Do not assume that immigrants can understand complex policies without an **interpreter**, even if they speak and understand English at a conversational level.
29. Remember the **diversity within immigrant communities**. Immigrant job counselors sometimes find that participants are reluctant to trust them because they are from a different clan.



## VII. Supporting Materials for Each Area

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### Source of the Notes

In this guide, there are sections for each EM area titled “Notes on Transportation”, “Notes on Dependent Care” and so on. These notes were compiled with the help of three workgroups convened to revise the EM.

The **Revision Workgroup** included job counselors and advocates who had extensive experience using the EM, either in the pilot or as part of an Integrated Service Project. Their charge was to revise the EM based on the recommendations made by the pilot sites, the other workgroups, and the knowledge and experience of the members of their workgroup.

The **Language and Culture Workgroup** consisted of job counselors from around the state who work with immigrants, many of whom were immigrants themselves. Their charge was to review the EM and training materials and provide input on cultural appropriateness.

The **Domestic Culture Workgroup** was comprised of African American and American Indian job counselors from around the state. The charge of this workgroup was to recommend ways to make the EM and training materials more culturally appropriate for their populations.

The workgroups’ comments and suggestions have been included in the EM user’s guide and incorporated in the EM itself. The notes address issues within an area that may affect how the job counselor conducts this part of the interview or chooses a level for a participant in this area. We have combined many of the notes from the different workgroups. We did not identify a specific demographic group if the notes also apply to the broader MFIP population. Only when the note applied to a specific group of participants was that group identified. Because of the unique challenges of moving to a new country with an unfamiliar language and culture, many of the items singled out in the notes sections were on new immigrant participants.



# TRANSPORTATION

Area #1

Level	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Transportation</b> <i>Getting to work and child care</i></p>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Participant's transportation is dependable with multiple back-up options available.</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant can get to work everyday <b>AND</b></li> <li>• There are multiple sources of reliable alternative transportation (such as convenient public transit, a second family vehicle, bike, resources to purchase another car, long-term carpooling available)</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Participant's transportation is dependable with a back-up option available.</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant can get to work everyday <b>AND</b></li> <li>• There is usually reliable alternative transportation</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Participant's transportation arrangements minimally affect employment.</b></p>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant has valid driver's license, up-to-date insurance and tabs, and vehicle is generally reliable, but there are no reliable alternatives for transportation</li> <li>• Public transportation meets most daily work needs but has limitations (route, hours, convenience, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Participant's transportation issues often interfere with employment.</b></p>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant has access to a vehicle that is not reliable</li> <li>• Vehicle fuel, maintenance and repairs are unaffordable</li> <li>• Time spent commuting is excessive (child care drop-offs, bus or carpool schedule, etc.)</li> <li>• Private transportation for hire, like taxis, is available but too expensive</li> <li>• Public transportation exists but is not always available when needed</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Participant's transportation issues prevent employment.</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Car transportation is not adequate: driving illegally (no license or no insurance) or no access to vehicle <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Public transportation is not adequate: unavailable or unaffordable or participant refuses to use <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Other transportation arrangements are not adequate: getting rides, walking, etc. are unavailable, impractical, or inconsistently available</li> </ul>

**Reason for level chosen:**

## Sample Questions for Transportation

*Ask questions that will help you figure out whether the participant's access to transportation affects his/her ability to work.*

*Here are some questions you might use to get started.*

*If you are not sure of the level, check the matrix for ideas for questions that will help you decide between levels. Focus on the bold level descriptions first.*

- How do you get to work (job search / job club / child care / ...)? How well does this work?
- Do you have back-up transportation? *(If yes)* What is it? Can you count on it?
- Is public transportation available where you live? *(If yes)* Is it available when you need it?
- Do you have a driver's license? *(If no)* Why not (suspended, revoked, never got one)? Do you have unpaid fines?
- *(If participant owns car)* Do you have insurance coverage on your car right now?

### Follow-up Question

- How does this affect your ability to work or look for work?

## Transportation IS:

- A participant-based area
- Ability to get to and from work and work-related activities such as job interviews, job search, and child care

## Transportation IS NOT:

- Ability to get around in order to carry out every day activities such as going to the store or running other errands, visiting friends and relatives, or getting to entertainment

## Choosing the Best Transportation Level

1. **Level 1** includes participants who:

- Are driving illegally (without driver's license, insurance, or registration), no matter what the reason.
- Refuse to ride available public transit and have no alternative transportation. This is a self-imposed barrier.
- Get rides from someone but cannot always count on them and have no alternative transportation.

2. A participant who gets rides from someone as needed, but has no alternative transportation is **Level 3**.

3. A participant who gets rides from someone as needed and does have reliable alternative transportation, like public transit, is **Level 4**.

4. If participants work out of their homes and do not need to transport children to and from child care, they do not need back-up transportation to be **Level 5**.

## Notes on Transportation

### Legal Issues

1. **Driving illegally** is not an approved transportation option for participants and there are serious consequences for participants caught doing so. If participants are driving illegally, you will need to help them find a way to become a legal driver or find another means of transportation.
2. Some participants have accumulated large **fin**es for illegal parking, driving under the influence, driving without insurance, and driving without a license. (Licenses can be revoked for a variety of reasons including non-payment of child support.) MFIP policy prohibits paying fines with MFIP monies, but there are other alternatives. For example, some courts will allow people to work off fines and some participants have been able to get loans that enable them to pay fines.

### Logistical Issues

3. When both parents are working, take into consideration how transportation arrangements affect both of their jobs (for example, **conflicting schedules** with only one car available).
4. Urban participants are often confronted with the issue that many jobs, especially good-paying jobs, are located in the suburbs with **limited public transportation** to these jobs. For rural participants, the **commuting time** to a job is often long and there is limited or no public transportation as an alternative or a back-up. While there have been some initiatives that provide alternatives to private car ownership (for example, ride share programs and van pooling), these programs may lack the flexibility that participants need. Private ownership of a reliable car may be the best solution for some of these participants.
5. For many participants, a primary mode of transportation is getting **rides from friends or family members** with cars. Transportation from these people can range from very dependable to totally undependable, and the correct level will depend on their degree of reliability.

### Immigrant Issues

6. **Auto insurance and driver's licenses** were not always important in the cultures from which some participants come. Their importance and the consequences for not having them may need to be explained. Large fines and loss of the option of driving can provide serious barriers to employment.

7. Participants with **limited English** who are willing to take driving lessons face two issues. The written driver's test is not available in all languages, and non-English versions are only available at some offices of the Division of Motor Vehicles. In addition, they often cannot find driving schools that will enroll them because of the language barrier. In some areas, immigrants have started driving schools to meet this need in their community.
8. New immigrants, and others with no public transit experience, may need someone to teach them the steps involved in **riding the bus**, including finding a route, getting on and off, paying, transferring, and knowing what to do if they get lost.

### **Financial Issues**

9. **Gas** cards may not be enough to get to work or to the employment services office; **car repairs** and **car insurance** may not be affordable; and there may be little money available for grants or loans.

### **Examples of Transportation Levels**

**Level 5:** Aurora has a 5-year-old Toyota which she uses to commute to and from work and child care. It is very reliable and she has \$1500 in a separate checking account reserved for car repairs. Several of her co-workers have started a carpool that she is considering joining. She also lives close to the bus which is convenient for getting to and from work and child care.

Moma is a single woman with 3 school-age children who take the bus to school. She works in her home as a child care provider. She has no driver's license, but she does live near the bus line, and uses the bus for daily transportation needs. Moma's sister is regularly available to give her rides.

**Level 4:** Lilah is a young mother with 2-year-old twins. She lives with her mother in the suburbs and recently found a child care center a few miles away from her home. She is being required to do job search and attend job readiness workshops in the city. Her mother has a car, and allows her to use it for this purpose. The car is current on registration and insurance and Lilah has a valid driver's license. Also, just a block away from her home is a bus stop. One bus route runs to and from the city regularly and passes by her child care provider. She can get to job search activities by bus if the car is not available.

- Level 3:** Hallie and Gabe live in rural Minnesota and own a vehicle. It is in good condition and current on registration and insurance. Both parents have valid driver's licenses and seem to be able to manage their work schedules with the children's child care schedule. If their car broke down, it would be inconvenient to get around because, although they could get rides from co-workers, child care pick-up would be more difficult.
- Level 2:** Marin, a single mother of four just moved to out-state Minnesota. She recently was given a car by her mother. It needs a lot of repairs before it can be considered a reliable vehicle. Until she can get the car fixed she has to spend one hour in the morning and two hours in the afternoon commuting (dropping kids off at child care and getting to and from work), since public transportation is very limited and her job is far from her home.
- Level 1:** Krissa, single mother of two toddlers, just moved in with her boyfriend, Kamal. She has asked him a couple of times for rides downtown to meet with her job counselor. Last time she missed her ten o'clock appointment because Kamal did not want to get up and give her a ride. She says she relies on him giving her rides because she does not "do the bus."

## **Scenarios: Transportation**

### **Case 1:**

Angela and her four children (ages 8, 4, 3, and 4 months) live in an area with little employment and no public transportation. She has a driver's license and vehicle, but her car is not reliable. She does not have access to a friend or relative's vehicle. Angela is working but last month missed a week of work due to car trouble.

### **Case 2:**

Sherrie and her two children (ages 16 and 11) reside in Minneapolis. She is currently working. Her children no longer need child care. She has a driver's license, insurance and a reliable car. Sherrie lives near a bus line and the buses run frequently and on a regular schedule.

### **Case 3:**

Betty is a single woman with two children who lives with her boyfriend, Pete. They live about a half hour from town. There are no buses where she lives. She does not have her license and has no car. Pete has a car and has been dependably giving her rides for job search. She has no other reliable transportation. Pete does not work.

### **Case 4:**

Candy is married and she and her husband, Jeff, do not work. They have three children (ages 13, 14, and 15). Candy's license has been revoked. Her husband has a car, but there is no insurance on the car. There are no buses available in their area. They can get rides occasionally from friends or family members.

### **Case 5:**

Jennifer, who is unemployed and doing job search, does not have a car or license. Her boyfriend, Kevin, sometimes gives her rides places, but not always. She lives near the bus line, but she refuses to ride the bus.

### **Case 6:**

Derek lives with his 6-year-old daughter and his parents. He does not have his own car, but has access to one of his parents' cars whenever he wants or needs it. They live in the suburbs where bus routes are limited, but his parents have several cars so alternative transportation is never a problem.

### **Case 7:**

Carly lives in Forest Lake. She has two daughters (ages 22 and 13). Both are living with her. She is not working, but is job searching. Her older daughter has her own car and works part time. Carly has a driver's license, but no car. There is no bus that runs close to her house. The daughter lets her mom use the car when she is not working. Carly has only made it to job club once this month.

### **Case 8:**

Nakeya and her three children (ages 7, 3 and 2) reside in St. Paul. She is working part time as a housekeeper for a local hotel. She does not have a valid driver's license due to unpaid speeding tickets. She does have access to public transportation that would meet her needs for both working and personal reasons. Her boyfriend, Latrell, and her mother also help out with rides whenever asked.

### **Case 9:**

Jackie has a driver's license but no vehicle, and lives four miles from town with her three teenagers. They all ride the school bus together as she works three days a week for the school her children attend. This special arrangement was made after she hit a deer and her car was totaled.

### **Case 10:**

Jane and her five children moved back to the city two months ago, and she just started a new job. The four older children ride the school bus to school and her 2-year-old is in child care just three houses down the block. During school breaks all of the children will be with the same nearby child care provider. She relies on her sister to take her grocery shopping occasionally and to appointments if needed. Her driver's license was revoked six months ago due to unpaid fines and she no longer owns a car. Jane walks three blocks to the bus stop, transfers once and gets to work in 30 minutes.

### **Case 11:**

Bao has been a part-time CNA for many years at a nursing home near her home. She walks to work most days, and usually gets a ride from a co-worker if the weather is bad. Her daughter, Kia, rides the bus to school and has been able to get rides from friends if there are after-school events.

## Decision Points

### Case 1

**Level 2: Participant's transportation issues often interfere with employment.**

Angela has a driver's license but her car is unreliable.

### Case 2

**Level 4: Participant's transportation is dependable with a back-up option available.**

Sherrie has a driver's license and a reliable car. She can use the bus if needed.

### Case 3

**Level 3: Participant's transportation arrangements minimally affect employment.**

Betty has no license or car. She gets rides from her boyfriend whenever she needs them, and he is dependable. She is not Level 1 or 2 because her rides are available when she needs them, and not Level 4 because she has no reliable alternative transportation.

### Case 4

**Level 1: Participant's transportation issues prevent employment.**

Candy has no license and no insurance, and there are no buses in the area. She can get transportation sporadically from friends.

### Case 5

**Level 1: Participant's transportation issues prevent employment.**

Jennifer has no car or driver's license. Sometimes she gets rides from her boyfriend, but Jennifer won't take the bus. Until she decides to take the bus or find other means of transportation, she is Level 1.

### Case 6

**Level 5: Participant's transportation is dependable with multiple back-up options available.**

Derek does not have his own car. He has access to his parents' cars whenever he wants it. There is limited bus availability, but with several cars in the household, he has reliable alternatives.

### Case 7

**Level 1: Participant's transportation issues prevent employment.**

The only transportation Carly has is her daughter's car, and only when her daughter is not using it.

### Case 8

**Level 5: Participant's transportation is dependable with multiple back-up options available.**

Nakeya has access to public transportation that meets her needs. She also has reliable alternative transportation from her mother or boyfriend.

**Case 9**

**Level 3: Participant's transportation arrangements minimally affect employment.**

Jackie has a ride to and from her job on the school bus, but she does not have alternative transportation.

**Case 10**

**Level 3: Participant's transportation arrangements minimally affect employment.**

Jane can get to work on the bus, but needs to ask her sister for rides for anything other than work. She has no alternative transportation.

**Case 11**

**Level 4: Participant's transportation is dependable with a back-up option available.**

Bao walks to work and has alternate transportation for herself and daughter.



# DEPENDENT CARE

Area #2

Level	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Dependent Care</b>  <i>Effect of care arrangements for children under age 13, teens with special needs, or vulnerable adults on participant's employment</i></p>
5	<p><b>Dependent care arrangements are good, not subsidized, and support participant's employment.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dependent care is not needed because the participant is not responsible for any children under 13, teens with special needs, or vulnerable adults <b>OR</b></li> <li>• Both of the following are true: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good quality provider cares for dependents at a safe center or home <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Back-up care arrangements are available, such as employer-provided sick leave or sick child/vulnerable adult care or a relative who is available when a dependent gets sick</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Dependent care arrangements are good, subsidized, and do not limit participant's employment.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant receives assistance with dependent care expenses <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Good quality provider cares for dependents at a safe center or home <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Back-up care arrangements are available, such as employer-provided sick leave or sick child/vulnerable adult care or a relative who is available when a dependent gets sick</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Dependent care arrangements are generally reliable and minimally affect participant's employment.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care provider is stable and safe <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Participant does not have sick leave available <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Back-up child care arrangement is usually available, although the participant occasionally misses work due to child care problems, for example when a child is sick</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Dependent care arrangements are unreliable or often interfere with participant's employment.</b></p> <p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only available care is unreliable, unsafe, or provided by unwilling family member or friend</li> <li>• No back-up care arrangement is available for days when a child is sick</li> <li>• Lack of weekend or evening child care limits participant's work hours</li> <li>• Participant is so dissatisfied with the child care (for cultural, language, educational, or other reasons) that it affects her/his work</li> <li>• Participant has temporary child care and child care application is pending</li> </ul>
1	<p><b>Absent or unacceptable dependent care options prevent participant's employment.</b></p> <p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitable providers do not have openings, or are too far away, or do not offer before/after school, weekend, or evening hours as needed</li> <li>• Child or vulnerable adult has special needs not accepted by providers</li> <li>• Care is unaffordable (participant may not be eligible for child care assistance, may be on a waiting list, or application pending)</li> <li>• No culturally or linguistically appropriate child care is available</li> <li>• Participant refuses to leave child in child care center or someone else's care</li> <li>• Child is home alone during work hours and is legally too young to care for self</li> </ul>

**Notes:**

**For children less than 13 years of age and caring for themselves, choose level 1 if legally too young to care for self. Otherwise, choose level 2 or 3 depending on how this affects participant's employment or work activities.**

**If participant is pregnant and has no other children, choose "level" N/A.**

**Reason for level chosen:**

## Sample Questions for Dependent Care

*Ask questions that will help you figure out whether issues around providing care for children, teens with special needs, or vulnerable adults affect the participant's ability to work.*

*Here are some questions you might use to get started.*

*If you are not sure of the level, check the matrix for ideas for questions that will help you decide between levels. Focus on the bold level descriptions first.*

### ***If child(ren) under age 13 are in participant's care and participant is working or looking for work:***

- Who takes care of your children while you are at work? When you are looking for work? Where are your children cared for?
- Is child care available for all hours that you work?
- How often do child care problems make you late for work? Miss work?
- What do you do for child care during: summer vacation? snow days? holidays? when they are sick? times when the provider is closed?
- Does your child have a medical condition that makes it hard to find child care?
- Are you satisfied with the quality of your child care? Are your children learning there? Is it safe?
- Are you receiving a child care subsidy? (*If not*) Have you applied for child care assistance? Do you need help with child care paperwork?

### ***If not employed or not yet doing job search:***

- For job search or a new job, how would you handle child care?

### ***If there are other persons in household needing participant's care:***

- Do you have a teen with special needs in your home who needs care?
- Do you have an adult in your home who needs care?

### **Follow-up Question**

- How does this affect your ability to work or look for work?

## Dependent Care IS:

- A family-based area
- Child care for a child under 13 years of age provided by someone other than the participant
- Care for teens with special needs
- Care for a vulnerable adult family member

## Dependent Care IS NOT:

- Staying home to supervise a teenager with disruptive behavior

## Choosing the Best Dependent Care Level

1. If there are **children under age 13 who are caring for themselves**, the Level cannot be 4 or 5. The level depends on the age and degree of responsibility of the child and the length of time left alone. Choose from Level 1, 2, or 3 using the following criteria:
  - If the child(ren) are too young to legally care for themselves or if the proposed self-care arrangement has previously caused the participant to lose a job, choose **Level 1**.
  - If they are old enough to legally care for themselves AND the arrangement often interferes with the participant's employment, choose **Level 2**.
  - If they are old enough to legally care for themselves AND the arrangement minimally affects the participant's employment, choose **Level 3**.
2. **Level 1** should be used for participants who are **unwilling** to use available care and also for those who are willing but who have **not yet arranged** the care.
3. **Level 1** should be used for participants who are staying home to care for a dependent without being paid, for example a quadriplegic child or parent with Alzheimer's.

4. **Level 2** should be used only when arrangements are in place, so that care is already being provided or is scheduled to start, and the quality of care is unsatisfactory.
5. Use **Level 2** if the participant is employed and receiving Child Care Assistance but you have verifiable evidence that the subsidy will end soon because of failure to comply with paperwork requirements.
6. The difference between Levels 2 and 3 is quality of the care and its effect on the safety and overall **well-being** of dependents receiving care.
7. The difference between Level 2 and Level 3 is based on the **reliability** of the person providing care. For example, if a responsible teenager is caring for siblings, then you may rate the situation as **Level 3**. On the other hand, if this teenager is not regularly responsible, it would be **Level 2**.
8. The primary difference between Level 3 and Level 4 is that at **Level 3** back-up arrangements are **usually** available and at **Level 4** they are available.
9. **Level 4** and **Level 5** both mention a **good quality provider**. Participants differ in what they consider good quality in a provider; use the participant's definition within reasonable limits.
10. The major difference between Level 4 and Level 5 is that at **Level 4** the participant has good quality care that is safe and **subsidized**. At **Level 5** the participant has good quality care that is safe and is **not subsidized**.
11. If the family has no children under age 13 or other family members who need care, choose **Level 5**.

## Notes on Dependent Care

1. Children may be **home alone** during some of the time that the parent is at work. This may be part of the plan for where and with whom the child will be in the absence of the caregiver (for example, an hour or two after school) or where the child is the entire time the parent is away for work. The appropriateness in any case depends on both the **legal limit** for how long a child of that age may be left home alone and **maturity level** of the child. Considering these factors when self-care is in the mix could lead to assigning a level anywhere from 1 to 5, depending on the complete situation.
2. **Parents may not agree** on who should provide child care. For example, the wife may be willing to use child care and the husband may think that only his wife should care for the children. Or parents may fear that a child will be molested in a child care center.

3. Child care may be inaccessible because of **transportation issues**. Lack of public transportation or long driving distances may make child care difficult or impossible to arrange. Where public transportation is available, it may be very complicated especially when there are multiple providers involved.
4. Child care may be difficult to arrange because of medical and/or behavioral issues of the children, or teen with special needs, or vulnerable adult. These issues should also be considered in scoring the **Health** and/or **Child Behavior** areas.

### **MFIP Child Care Assistance**

5. Issues that may affect child care access include eligibility for Child Care Assistance. This may depend on:
  - whether or not the chosen provider can afford and/or has passed a criminal background check
  - whether or not the legal, non-licensed provider has completed the paperwork necessary to be registered
  - availability of waived services for children with special needs
  - whether or not the MFIP participant is in sanction
  - whether repayment for child care overpayments has been arranged
6. **MFIP Child Care Assistance rules** are complicated and can be confusing to participants. Telling participants about the program could prevent problems. For example, knowing the approximate length of time that it will take for child care to be approved is important. Some participants have lost jobs because of the time lag. This is especially a problem when children return to a household with little notice, for example from the other parent's household or from foster care.
7. Some counties offer training on MFIP Child Care Assistance for participants but in other places it is up to the job counselor. In addition to the complications of MFIP Child Care Assistance, some **child care centers** also have **complicated paperwork** with which participants may need assistance.
8. Some participants have trouble reading and comprehending paperwork from the county and child care programs and routinely **discard paperwork** when it arrives in the mail. This could jeopardize the participant's child care.

9. In some cases, the inability to understand child care rules and complete child care paperwork suggests more **serious cognitive issues** which should also be dealt with in the appropriate area, for example, Workplace Skills or Health.
10. Sometimes MFIP policy is counter to a **family's understanding of male and female roles**. MFIP Child Care Assistance generally will not pay for child care when a parent is in the home during the hours when the children need care. If the wife in a two-parent family is working and the husband is not, it is generally expected that he will provide child care while she is at work.

### **Immigrant Issues**

11. Immigrants frequently prefer to have their children only **cared for by family members**.
12. For some immigrant groups, there is an increasing number of licensed **child care providers from their culture** that can be accessed through the state resource and referral list.
13. Immigrants may experience more than average **difficulty understanding** and navigating the child care system due to both language and cultural differences. Completing paperwork and reading correspondence from MFIP Child Care Assistance can be especially challenging, and they may need help. They may not be able to communicate with the care provider.
14. In immigrant families especially, the **second parent** may not be in the U.S. and able to help with child care.
15. In some cities, there are **culturally competent medical providers** who can help the participant stabilize an elderly family member so that the participant can work, at least part time.
16. For some families, especially immigrant families, it is difficult to talk about **vulnerable adults**. Some want to care for their elderly parents at home rather than work, but MFIP rules do not allow this unless there is a medical need. Eligibility for Family Stabilization Services and being paid for their work as caregivers for their family member are possibilities to explore.

## Examples of Dependent Care Levels

**Level 5:** Sasha and Andre are able to place their toddler in a private facility, paid for by them, where early childhood stimulation programs and child care for sick children are offered. This is the place the parents have always wanted their toddler to attend. Both Sasha and Andre have leave time available from their employers when the center is closed for holidays.

**Level 4:** Nicole, a 9-year-old girl, stays with her grandparents after school, during holidays, on snow days, and when she is sick. This arrangement began when Nicole started school three years ago. Her child care is paid for through the MFIP Child Care Assistance program. She also goes to a summer camp subsidized by the state. Nicole's mother is very pleased with the quality of care Nicole receives.

**Level 3:** Tommy, age 3, goes to a family child care provider down the street. His mother is receiving MFIP Child Care Assistance. She trusts the child care provider, and her sister usually looks after her son if he gets sick because the child care provider does not take sick children.

**Level 2:** Rob, a teen, is responsible for after-school care for his second grade sister, Katie. His mom leaves for work as soon as he arrives home. However, some days he does not get there until after she is due at work. This occasional tardiness has created tension with her employer.

**Level 1:** Sarah and Jason, parents of 2-year-old Ella, refuse to place her in a child care center because of an accident she suffered when at another facility. They do not trust anybody with the care of their child.

Fowzia has severe health issues. Her parents have not found a Somali provider and are concerned that the child's health could be seriously jeopardized if they use a provider who does not speak Fowzia's language.

## **Scenarios: Dependent Care**

### **Case 1:**

Kelly works part time and has a 6-year-old child. She doesn't need child care during the school year, but holidays and summer she has no back-up. She had to find a co-worker to cover her shifts over her child's spring break.

### **Case 2:**

Debra has two children (ages 10 and 7). Debra is looking for work, and has child care set up for her children through the MFIP Child Care Assistance program. Both of her children are in school, so she only needs care for them after school and when school is not in session. A woman on her block does her child care for her, and Debra feels comfortable with this child care provider. Debra's mother also helps her out with child care when needed.

### **Case 3:**

Margaret and her three children (ages 13, 7, and 3) reside in Duluth. Because of multiple problems with child care, she is having difficulty with job search. She lost her job recently because her mother was no longer able to care for her 3-year-old who has special needs. The two older children do not present a problem, as the 13-year-old is able to care for the 7-year-old, but not for the child with special needs. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the family is ineligible for MFIP Child Care Assistance due to a past overpayment.

### **Case 4:**

Mary and her two children (ages 6 and 4) are living in Cloquet. Mary has a part-time job as a CNA at a nursing home. Although the hourly pay is not high, she does have some good benefits that include being able to use her sick leave to care for a sick child at home. Otherwise, the children are normally cared for by her sister who does in-home child care and only asks for a nominal payment from Mary. The child care is not subsidized.

### **Case 5:**

Lois and her two children (ages 14 and 7) are living in St. Cloud. Lois is working full time at a fast food restaurant. The younger child is enrolled in an after-school program that is paid for by a subsidy. When school is closed, the older child can usually provide care. Lois does not have sick leave, but is usually able to switch

shifts when her child is home sick from school. One day last month she did have to miss work to care for her 7-year-old.

#### **Case 6:**

Maria is self-employed as an in-home child care provider. She and her daughter have lived in their home five years and although she has only earned \$400 the last two months it does cover her rent of \$121 and \$50 for utilities. Maria's daughter Julie is 13 years old.

#### **Case 7:**

Shannon and her 8-year-old son, Tyler, live with her fiancé, Chad, and share household expenses. Shannon has a part-time job and is going to the university. She receives MFIP Child Care Assistance to pay for Tyler's after-school care plus the extra hours during the time school is not in session. He has been with the same provider for two years. Her sister has also been a reliable back-up whenever needed.

#### **Case 8:**

Jessica has three children and works part time as a unit coordinator for a hospital in Bemidji. Her children are 7, 5, and 2 years of age. Her child care provider was seriously injured in a car accident two weeks ago and she's having trouble finding a replacement. Almost every day is a challenge finding someone to take care of her children. Her mother has helped out a lot and a neighbor helped a few days. However, when her sister forgot about her promise to take care of the kids twice last week, Jessica had to miss two days of work.

#### **Case 9:**

Celia's 4-year-old son, Carlos, is cared for by his grandmother while Celia works. Celia's sister is usually available as a back-up when the grandmother has a conflict. The grandmother provided the care without compensation for several months while waiting for Celia to be approved for MFIP Child Care Assistance, but Celia has since been approved and this child care arrangement is expected to continue.

#### **Case 10:**

Sharon has two teenage sons and is not currently employed. Last month, her mother had a stroke. She was released from the hospital two weeks ago to

Sharon's home. The doctor says it will be another month before Sharon's mom can return home and live independently. Sharon's mother requires 24-hour supervision and Sharon doesn't have other family in the area to help out and cannot afford to send her mother to the adult day facility across town. Sharon could look for work in the evenings when her kids get home from school, but Sharon says she wouldn't feel comfortable leaving her mother with the boys because they aren't very responsible or attentive.

#### **Case 11:**

Shelly is employed full time and her mother, a retired nurse, provides care for her 15-year-old quadriplegic son. Shelly's mom enjoys spending time caring for her grandson and does not want to be paid. When her mother is not available Shelly uses paid time off to care for him.

#### **Case 12:**

Lynette is working part time and has trouble reading and comprehending child care paperwork. She routinely discards mail from the MFIP Child Care Assistance program. While care arrangements are currently in place, last week she discarded a notice without reading it. The child care worker called to explain Lynette's child care subsidy is about to end because she hasn't turned in required paperwork. Lynette does not have a back-up arrangement.

#### **Case 13:**

Erica started work at a local diner four weeks ago. Her application for MFIP Child Care Assistance is still pending. Her sister-in-law has agreed to provide care for her 2-year-old daughter but is now threatening to quit because she hasn't received a payment from the county. So far, Erica has not had to miss work but she is very nervous that her provider could quit at any time.

## Decision Points

### Case 1

**Level 2: Dependent care arrangements are unreliable or often interfere with participant's employment.**

Participant has no back-up for sick days, holidays, and summer vacations.

### Case 2

**Level 4: Dependent care arrangements are good, subsidized, and do not limit participant's employment.**

Debra is receiving MFIP Child Care Assistance, has a good provider, and has her mother for back-up. Only the fact that child care is subsidized keeps her from being Level 5.

### Case 3

**Level 1: Absent or unacceptable dependent care options prevent participant's employment.**

No care is available. The child has special needs with no provider willing to provide this care. The participant is unable to get a child care subsidy.

### Case 4

**Level 5: Dependent care arrangements are good, not subsidized, and support participant's employment.**

The employer provides sick leave that includes sick child/adult care. Participant has a good quality provider and care is not subsidized.

### Case 5

**Level 3: Dependent care arrangements are generally reliable and minimally affect participant's employment.**

Subsidized after school program is available for younger child with older child usually able to provide back-up. Lois is usually able to change her schedule, but she has had to miss work due to lack of child care.

### Case 6

**Level 5: Dependent care arrangements are good, not subsidized, and support participant's employment.**

Dependent care is not needed because Maria's daughter is 13 years old.

### Case 7

**Level 4: Dependent care arrangements are good, subsidized, and do not limit participant's employment.**

Participant's son has had the same provider for two years and his aunt is a reliable back-up. Shannon is receiving Child Care Assistance, so would not be Level 5.

### **Case 8**

#### **Level 2: Dependent care arrangements are unreliable or often interfere with participant's employment.**

Jessica has unstable and unreliable care at this time. While the mother, neighbor, and sister are helping out, the sister is not always reliable. The situation is affecting her attendance at work.

### **Case 9**

#### **Level 4: Dependent care arrangements are good, subsidized, and do not limit participant's employment.**

Celia's MFIP Child Care Assistance has been approved and her son's grandmother provides quality care while she is at work. She also has a back-up arrangement.

### **Case 10**

#### **Level 1: Absent or unacceptable dependent care options prevent participant's employment.**

Caring for her mother prevents Sharon's employment. Her mother requires 24-hour care and Sharon does not have a back-up because she does not feel safe leaving her mother with her teenage sons, she doesn't have other family in the area, and cannot afford the adult day facility.

### **Case 11**

#### **Level 5: Dependent care arrangements are good, not subsidized, and support participant's employment.**

Shelly's mother has the skills to care for Shelly's son who is disabled. Shelly has paid time off available to care for her son when her mother cannot.

### **Case 12**

#### **Level 2: Dependent care arrangements are unreliable or often interfere with participant's employment.**

Lynette's MFIP Child Care Assistance is in jeopardy due to not reading her notices and keeping up with paperwork. Because she has no back-up arrangement and her current arrangement will be ending, she is a Level 2.

### **Case 13**

#### **Level 2: Dependent care arrangements are unreliable or often interfere with participant's employment.**

Erica is at risk of losing her child care provider if her application for MFIP Child Care Assistance is not approved soon



# **EDUCATION**

Area #3

Level	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Education</b> <i>Participant's education and training</i></p>
<b>5</b>	<b>Participant has college degree or beyond.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four-year college degree</li> <li>• Advanced degree</li> <li>• Immigrant with degree or advanced degree that does <b>NOT</b> require certification</li> <li>• Professionals with state certification in their field</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>Participant has substantial education beyond high school.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed associate degree, technical college, or apprenticeship</li> <li>• Working toward 4-year degree, with at least 2 years completed</li> <li>• Professional with foreign credentials requiring U.S. certification who is working toward certification</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>Participant has high school diploma, GED, or entry-level certificate.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certificate such as CNA, welding, or office skills</li> <li>• Some college credits (less than 2 years)</li> <li>• Professional with foreign credentials requiring certification in field but <b>NOT</b> working toward certification</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Participant is attending high school, GED, entry-level certificate classes, or other training.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting training, like General Educational Development (GED), Adult Basic Education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL), skills training, Functional Work Literacy (FWL), Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), computer skills, or other entry level certificate course</li> <li>• In supported employment</li> <li>• Working on diagnosed learning disability</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<b>Participant has no high school diploma, GED, or entry-level certificate and is not in school or training.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lacked opportunity to learn</li> <li>• Little or no education available in country of origin</li> <li>• Illiterate or very poor reader</li> <li>• Factors such as low IQ or a severe mental or physical condition interfere with learning</li> <li>• Unwilling to go to school</li> </ul>

**Reason for level chosen:**

## Sample Questions for Education

*Ask questions that will help you figure out the participant's level of education and training.*

*Here are some questions you might use to get started.*

*If you are not sure of the level, check the matrix for ideas for questions that will help you decide between levels. Focus on the bold level descriptions first.*

- Do you have a high school diploma? *(If no)* A GED? *(If no)* What was the last grade you completed?
- *(If appropriate)* Have you had any schooling beyond high school? *(If yes)* What type?
- Do you have any certificates or professional licenses?
- Did you like school?
- Do you like to read? Did you have any trouble with reading in school?
- Have you ever been in special education classes?
- What other education do you have, outside the school system, which could help you with job search and employment?

### ***Immigrant-specific Questions:***

- Did you have the opportunity to attend school in your country of origin? *(If no)* What were the reasons you did not attend school?
- What kind of work did you do in your country of origin?
- What knowledge or skills did you acquire in your country of origin that you could use in a job? *(For example, ask a farmer about knowledge acquired farming and about what equipment they may have used.)*

### **Follow-up Question**

- How does this affect your ability to work or look for work?

## Education IS:

- A participant-based area
- The participant's education and training
- Primarily the amount of formal education but may also include:
  - job training and/or job readiness
  - computer literacy, reading, writing and math skills (these do not always match the years of schooling)
  - foreign degrees or credentials that may not transfer to the U.S.
- Sometimes affected by factors such as:
  - ability and desire to learn
  - learning disabilities
  - physical and mental health issues

## Education IS NOT:

- Workplace and personal skills like stress and anger management, time management, communication skills, conflict resolution, crisis management, and interviewing
- Intelligence or English language ability (note under Other Barriers)

## Choosing the Best Education Level

1. Use **Level 2** for a participant who is in the process of getting a high school diploma, GED, or entry level certificate.
2. Use **Level 3** if a participant has a high school diploma but has trouble reading or writing, and note this under Other Barriers.
3. Use **Level 3** if the participant has an entry-level certificate, even if no high school diploma.

#### 4. For **immigrants**:

- Use **Level 3** for an immigrant who has an advanced degree from another country and is not working on getting credentialed in the U.S.
- Use **Level 4** for an immigrant who has professional certification from another country and is pursuing certification in the U.S.
- Use **Level 5** for an immigrant who has a degree and is now credentialed to work in their field or who has a degree that does not require certification (for example, a degree in computer science).

### Notes on Education

1. Ask about education in general, including **informal education**, not just formal educational credentials. Focusing on degrees and diplomas may result in the participant feeling put down and frustrated that important learning they do have is being ignored.
2. Participants sometimes do not remember or are **reluctant to tell** how low their education level is. Participants may tell different things to different people or claim to be high school graduates when they are not.
3. Education level is sometimes affected by factors such as ability and desire to learn, learning disabilities, and physical and mental health issues.
4. A **certificate** may be required to get an entry-level job. Sometimes it is possible to work with employers to waive this requirement.
5. With participants who **cannot read or write**, ask how they learn to adapt and figure things out without this source of information. Do not assume they have a learning disability or low capacity to learn.
6. DHS provides the “**Brief Screening Tool for Special Learning Needs**” and training on how to use the instrument.
7. Take the participant’s **educational level and interests** into account when including education activities in the employment plan.
8. It is important to explain **career laddering** and how it is related to education.
9. **Supported work** includes structured coaching and training received at work to help a participant develop skills for unsubsidized employment.

## Immigrant Issues

10. Some **traditional** immigrant women do not want to be involved in education. They may believe that it is their children's responsibility to care for them.
11. Participants with degrees from countries other than the U.S. do not always have job opportunities comparable to those with equivalent degrees from U.S. institutions.
12. Some immigrants with **degrees from other countries** are not willing to be involved in additional education and are willing to work at lower level jobs instead.
13. Some immigrants with degrees from other countries may have **unrealistically high expectations** about which jobs they will be able to get and when. For example, some immigrants with limited English will not immediately be able to work in their field of expertise. It is important to help them manage expectations.
14. Some immigrants **cannot read and/or write in their own language**, so learning English can be a very tough challenge.
15. **Do not assume** that participants who cannot read or write in their own language and who have difficulty learning English have a learning disability or a low capacity to learn.
16. **Tests** to assess learning disabilities or IQ for participants with limited English **may not be culturally appropriate**, and testing formats can be intimidating for some participants.

## Examples of Education Levels

**Level 5:** Amanda has a college degree in social work.

**Level 4:** Mario has an associate degree in surveying.

**Level 3:** Desiree has a high school diploma and has taken 3 semesters of college classes in computer programming.

Shandra is a displaced homemaker with a high school diploma.

Kristel has a high school diploma but can't read. She is willing to go to ABE classes as part of her employment plan.

**Level 2:** Nadine was diagnosed with dyslexia and has received special help which allows her to attend school to obtain a GED.

Fahima had little education in Somalia but is currently enrolled in Functional Work Literacy.

**Level 1:** Derrick dropped out of 8th grade and has no interest in going back to school.

## **Scenarios: Education**

### **Case 1:**

Monique is a single mother with one child. She graduated from high school 5 years ago and has 3 years of college in computer science. She would like to do something in the medical field now, and is starting a program to become an LPN next month.

### **Case 2:**

Jane lives with her two children (ages 6 and 4). Jane has her high school diploma. She is proud of this because school was always hard for her; she was involved in special education classes. Her high school counselor told her about a special CNA training course at the VoTech school that is offered for students with learning disabilities. Jane has just finished the course and will be looking for work.

### **Case 3:**

Stephen, his wife, Melissa, and their five children (ages 12, 11, 6, 3, and 1) reside in Fergus Falls. Stephen is the participant who is in the office today. Stephen has not finished high school; he left while still in the 9th grade. He has been working for several months for a tire store making \$7.50 per hour. His employment history consists of a string of low paying jobs that only last for short periods. Stephen has mentioned that he has an “impulsive streak” and sometimes acts out before thinking and that this has resulted in him being fired from a number of jobs. He reports that this type of behavior was also noticed by a school social worker just before he dropped out.

#### **Case 4:**

Tenille did not finish high school or a GED. She had a CNA certificate, but it is now expired. She would like to go back to school for medical assistant training, but first she needs to finish her GED, which she started last month. She has worked on and off in the past as a CNA.

#### **Case 5:**

Michelle has three children and the father of her two youngest children is living with her. He has not worked in the last five years or so. Michelle is in the office today to develop an employment plan and does not have a high school diploma or GED, but she does have a CNA certificate. She has worked in the past as a CNA.

#### **Case 6:**

Hamsa is a recent immigrant with three small children. She speaks very little English, but is attending ESL. She attended classes in Somalia until age 12 but was forced to quit because of political strife. She says she has had a couple of jobs, but due to her limited English and her lack of knowledge about work rules, she was let go at both those jobs after only a couple of weeks at each.

#### **Case 7:**

Linda and her three children (ages 13, 10, and 5) are living in Milaca. Linda has a high school diploma. She worked full time as a CNA at a nearby nursing home for years. She had to quit two years ago when her youngest child became severely ill. Now that this child is doing better, she is ready to return to work but will now need to retest as her CNA certificate has lapsed.

#### **Case 8:**

Enrique, his wife, and two children are recent immigrants who speak only Spanish. They moved to Minnesota two months ago because Enrique's brother had relocated here. His brother helped him to get a job in the kitchen of a restaurant. Most all of the employees speak Spanish, so his lack of English is not a problem at work. Enrique and his wife both completed school in their home country through the 8th grade. They are both enrolled in an ESL course at the local community center.

### Case 9:

William and his three children are recent immigrants. William was a family physician in Monrovia, Liberia before his family came to the U.S. William is unable to practice medicine in the U.S. with his foreign credentials. He is not currently working toward a medical license but instead is driving a taxi.

### Case 10:

Jenna graduated last spring from Metropolitan State University with a degree in accounting. She was hired on at a non-profit where she completed her senior internship. She likes her job and the people she works with. Jenna is planning to stay a few years and gain experience before looking for a position with better pay.

## Decision Points

### Case 1

**Level 4: Participant has substantial education beyond high school.**

Monique has a high school diploma and three years of college and is now entering school to become an LPN.

### Case 2

**Level 3: Participant has high school diploma, GED, or entry-level certificate.**

Jane has a high school education, although it was through special education. She has also finished a CNA course.

### Case 3

**Level 1: Participant has no high school diploma, GED, or entry-level certificate and is not in school or training.**

Stephen dropped out of school, and only completed the 8th grade. His level of education puts him at Level 1 even though he is able to get jobs and able to do the work with the education he has (able to read and write and do math necessary for the job). His retention problems are due to his workplace skills not lack of education. His impulsiveness and lack of job retention would be assessed in the workplace skills area.

### Case 4

**Level 2: Participant is attending high school, GED, entry-level certificate classes, or other training.**

Tenille does not have a high school diploma or GED and her CNA certificate has expired. She is working on her GED which places her at Level 2.

**Case 5**

**Level 3: Participant has high school diploma, GED, or entry-level certificate.**

Michelle does not have a high school education, but she has a current CNA certificate.

**Case 6**

**Level 2: Participant is attending high school, GED, entry-level certificate classes, or other training.**

Hamsa has not finished high school and is currently in ESL classes.

**Case 7**

**Level 3: Participant has high school diploma, GED, or entry-level certificate.**

Linda has a high school diploma and expired CNA certificate.

**Case 8**

**Level 2: Participant is attending high school, GED, entry-level certificate classes, or other training.**

Enrique is enrolled in ESL classes. He has not completed high school but is able to find work even with his limited English.

**Case 9**

**Level 3: Participant has high school diploma, GED, or entry-level certificate.**

Although William has a significant amount of schooling, he is unable to practice medicine in the U.S. with his foreign credentials. He is not currently working toward becoming a physician in the U.S.

**Case 10**

**Level 5: Participant has college degree or beyond.**

Jenna has completed a college degree.

# HOUSING

Area #4

Level	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Housing</b> <i>Stability of family's living situation and physical condition of their housing</i></p>
<b>5</b>	<b>Family has stable and safe unsubsidized housing without government assistance.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All housing expenses paid with own money <b>AND</b></li> <li>• No public assistance (cash, food, disability) <b>AND</b></li> <li>• No fuel, energy, or emergency assistance</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>Family has stable and safe unsubsidized housing with some government assistance.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unsubsidized housing <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Cash, food, disability, fuel, energy, or emergency assistance</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>Family has stable and safe housing that is subsidized formally or informally.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subsidized rental housing (for example, Section 8) or public housing</li> <li>• Supportive housing (housing with services provided to help with daily living)</li> <li>• Stable living situation in home of family or friends</li> <li>• Shared housing</li> <li>• Stable, ongoing support from family and/or friends to help with housing costs</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Family lives in temporary housing, unsafe housing, or is at risk of losing housing.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unlawful Detainer that is limiting their ability to get housing</li> <li>• Temporary or unstable housing including shelters or with family or friends</li> <li>• In danger of being evicted for reasons like late rent, complaints about bad behavior, foreclosure, or overcrowding</li> <li>• Frequent moves (three or more times in last year)</li> <li>• Participant perceives housing as substandard or structurally unsafe</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<b>Family has no housing.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eviction notice in hand and no alternative housing</li> <li>• Living on the street or living in a car</li> </ul>

**Reason for level chosen:**

## Sample Questions for Housing

*Ask questions that will help you figure out the housing situation of the family.*

*Here are some questions you might use to get started.*

*If you are not sure of the level, check the matrix for ideas for questions that will help you decide between levels. Focus on the bold level descriptions first.*

### Sample Questions

- Do you like where you live?
- How long have you been there?
- Are you planning to move?
- How many times have you moved in the last year?
- Have you ever been evicted?
- Do you have an unlawful detainer on your record?
- Do you feel your housing is safe?
- Do you rent or have a mortgage?
- (If renting) Is your rent subsidized?
- Can you find housing you need and can afford?
- Do you share housing with anyone? (If yes) With whom?
- Are you expecting that other family members will come to stay with you?
- How much of the housing costs do you pay?
- Are you current with your mortgage or rent and utilities?
- Have you ever used emergency assistance or heating assistance?
- Do you have credit issues which could prevent you from getting housing?
- Is there enough space for your family?

### Follow-up Question

- How does this affect your ability to work or look for work?

## Housing IS:

- A family-based area
- The stability of the family's living situation and physical condition of their housing
- Affected by arrangements for paying for housing and how well people sharing housing get along
- Affected by housing history, such as not paying rent and eviction

## Housing IS NOT:

- Safety of the neighborhood (included in the Safe Living Environment area)
- Family violence (included in the Safe Living Environment area)

## Choosing the Best Housing Level

1. If the family has received an eviction notice and has no alternative housing, assign **Level 1** even if the eviction is not scheduled to happen for a few days.
2. If housing is dangerous or structurally substandard, the housing is **Level 2** even if their situation is stable.

Note: In general, job counselors should choose a level based on what the participant tells them unless they have other verifiable evidence that the participant is incorrect. For example, if the participant describes their apartment as "safe" but the job counselor knows that the landlord was recently cited for major safety violations, the housing should be considered unsafe.

3. If the family is chronically late on rent and utilities and has an unstable housing situation, then code them as **Level 2**. If the landlord has been willing to wait for late rent in the past and the housing has been stable, use **Level 3**.
4. Use **Level 3** when there is Section 8 or public housing that is stable.

5. At **Level 4**, the family has some government assistance; at **Level 5** they do not have government assistance. (For purposes of scoring the EM, Retirement Survivors Disability Insurance [RSDI] should not be considered government assistance.) However if the family is receiving MFIP cash or food, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or any fuel, energy or emergency assistance, they are not yet Level 5.

## Notes on Housing

1. Unaffordable housing, overcrowded housing, evictions, unlawful detainers, substandard housing, criminal background, bad credit history, and discrimination are **serious issues** for many MFIP participants.
2. Generally, MFIP participants are **willing to talk** about housing issues such as eviction and unlawful detainers. However, they may be less willing to discuss criminal background issues or credit issues which affect housing, housing issues which might lead to involvement of child protection, exceeding occupancy limits of the lease, and foreclosure issues (especially during early stages of the foreclosure process).
3. **Cultural misunderstandings** can create housing difficulties. For example, foods and their odors that appeal to members of some cultures may be offensive to members of other cultures.
4. Housing is in particularly short supply on some **reservations** and has resulted in overcrowding and doubling up.
5. In areas with available and affordable housing, transportation may be poor.
6. Substandard housing could also impact health.
7. There are variations in rural and metro counties with regard to **shelter availability**. In rural areas where there are few homeless shelters, cars, tents or campers are more likely to be used as crisis “housing.” In urban areas, shelters may be the more likely type of short-term housing.
8. Losing a home can sometimes lead to **losing custody of children**, depending on county child protection policies.

## Housing Law and Regulation Issues

9. Some participants do not understand their **leases** or their **rights as tenants**, for example, what they need to do to get their damage deposit refunded and how first and last month rent works. Because of the fear that a landlord can ruin their credit, participants may not report that the landlord is cheating them or failing to maintain the housing in safe condition. Immigrants are often particularly vulnerable to poor treatment by unscrupulous landlords. Legal Aid has a booklet explaining tenant rights.
10. Some families may be unaware of local laws or regulations which limit the number of **persons per bedroom** and which prohibit boys and girls from sharing a bedroom after a certain age.
11. **Large families** may be forced to live in more than one place because of the laws or regulations about maximum occupancy.
12. Ideas on **adequacy of housing space** may vary across families, or cultures, or in times of need. However, too many people in an apartment can be the cause of an eviction.

## Subsidized Housing Issues

13. Families with a member who has a **felony or a substance abuse problem** may not be able to get subsidized housing with that person in the home.
14. Participants may need help in applying for and keeping subsidized housing. **Rules** about subsidized housing can be complicated and breaking them can have serious consequences.
15. In some areas, there are very few **housing vouchers** compared to the number of people applying for or needing them.

## Examples of Housing Levels

- Level 5:** Abel and Maria are both employed and have enough earnings to purchase a home of their liking and make the mortgage payments. They do not receive assistance of any kind.
- Level 4:** Ebony and her two children live in a market-rate apartment that she can afford to pay for with her earnings and child support payments. She has occasionally applied for Emergency Assistance when falling behind in some other payments, like utilities.

**Level 3:** Nellie, a teenage mother, is living in the basement of her parents' house that has been paid for. She gives her parents some rent money when she can afford it and they want her to stay.

**Level 2:** Ellana, a teenage mother, lives with her mother. Recently, her mother's boyfriend moved in. Ellana pays half the rent from her MFIP grant and her mother could not pay the rent without this help. The mother's boyfriend does not like her staying there and her mother told her she has to be out by the end of the month.

**Level 1:** Tatum has been living in her car with her child after they were evicted from their apartment two weeks ago.

## **Scenarios: Housing**

### **Case 1:**

Debbie is living with her 3 children in a motel. She has moved 5 times during the past year. Her emergency housing is being paid by an agency. An advocate is working with her to find permanent housing.

### **Case 2:**

Janice is a 32-year-old single woman who lives with her four children (ages 16, 13, 3 and 1). She lives in a 3-bedroom apartment and receives a housing subsidy. She said she was able to pay her portion of the rent, but not the utilities this month. She has lived here for two years. She is self-employed as a child care provider and the amount she earns changes from month to month which makes it difficult to stay current on her utility bills.

### **Case 3**

Khou, Toua, and their 6 children are living in a 3-bedroom apartment in the suburbs. Their lease states that the occupancy is limited to 6 people. The landlord is not yet aware of the situation, but the family recently got into an argument with their neighbors when their sick infant cried all night. The neighbors are threatening to report the over-occupancy to the landlord who in the past has evicted her renters for exceeding occupancy limits.

#### **Case 4:**

Jane and her two children (ages 13 and 11) live in Brainerd. She just moved into her current apartment last month with help from Emergency Assistance and is charged market rent. Last week Jane discovered mold in the apartment after her 11-year-old, who has asthma, had to be taken to the emergency room with respiratory problems.

#### **Case 5:**

Shelly is 20 years old and has a 3-year-old son. She is attending a community college to get her associate degree and does job search. She lives with her parents in Woodbury. She lives in their basement apartment and pays rent of \$100 when she has money. Her parents both work, and are very supportive of Shelly and her desire to finish school so they help her with child care when they can.

#### **Case 6:**

Luz no longer has any minor children of her own but has recently started caring for three relative children (ages 5, 4, and 2). They live in Minneapolis with a friend, Annabel, and her child in a 2-bedroom apartment. Annabel was fired from her job two weeks ago and Luz doesn't know how they'll pay rent next month. Luz wants to find a place of her own because Annabel isn't very responsible.

#### **Case 7:**

Ann has three children and lives in Grand Rapids. She rents a 3-bedroom apartment and pays market rent. She is not working, and her MFIP cash grant exceeds her rent amount by \$250.

#### **Case 8:**

John has custody of his three children and moved to the Twin Cities a month and a half ago from Illinois. He and his kids have been living in their car. He is not currently working. He just applied for MFIP and is receiving the full grant for a household of four. The county is helping him to find permanent housing.

### **Case 9:**

Shantel purchased a town home three years ago with a conventional fixed-rate mortgage. She has a good job and has been able to make the monthly mortgage and association payments. The town home is in good condition and the development is well maintained by the association. She has not applied for any assistance.

### **Case 10:**

Dolores and her three children (ages 7, 5, and 4) reside in St. Paul in subsidized housing. She has been living in the same apartment for over a year. When she has been employed in the last year, it is part time through a temp agency. She is currently receiving an MFIP extension for working. Dolores is current on her rent and utility bills.

### **Case 11:**

Shandon and her three children (ages 8, 5, and 3 months) reside in a small town in southern Minnesota in a home that her mother owns. Shandon's mother does not live in the home but pays the mortgage while Shandon pays the utilities. She has had this living arrangement for over a year. Her MFIP cash benefit exceeds her utility amount by nearly \$450.

### **Case 12:**

Carly lives in Forest Lake with her two daughters (ages 22 and 13). She is not working, but is searching for a job. The family lives in subsidized housing costing \$350 per month that the mother and older daughter split. It is a 2-bedroom apartment. They have lived here for three years. Carly receives the full MFIP grant for a household of two and the cash exceeds her housing costs by over \$250. Her older daughter works part time and is able to pay her share of the rent.

## Decision Points

### Case 1

#### **Level 2: Family lives in temporary housing, unsafe housing, or is at risk of losing housing.**

Debbie is Level 2 because she is in a motel and an agency is paying for her shelter costs. She has also moved many times during the past year. She is not a Level 1 because she is not on the streets.

### Case 2

#### **Level 3: Family has stable and safe housing that is subsidized formally or informally.**

Janice has lived in the same place for two years, and her living situation is stable, even though the utilities were not paid for this month. She has subsidized rent so would not be considered a Level 4.

### Case 3

#### **Level 2: Family lives in temporary housing, unsafe housing, or is at risk of losing housing.**

The family is in danger of being evicted because of overcrowding. If the landlord were willing to accept the situation, the level could be higher.

### Case 4

#### **Level 2: Family lives in temporary housing, unsafe housing, or is at risk of losing housing.**

Jane's housing is unsafe for her family because of the mold.

### Case 5

#### **Level 3: Family has stable and safe housing that is subsidized formally or informally.**

Shelly is in stable living situation and living with family. She is not Level 4 because she is in shared housing. If her living situation would become unstable (for example, relationship conflicts), then she would be Level 2.

### Case 6

#### **Level 2: Family lives in temporary housing, unsafe housing, or is at risk of losing housing.**

Luz and her children have housing but it is a temporary situation. Her roommate is not responsible and this is making Luz's housing situation unstable.

### Case 7

#### **Level 4: Family has stable and safe unsubsidized housing with some government assistance.**

Ann can pay for her rent with income from MFIP and the housing is not subsidized.

**Case 8**

**Level 1: Family has no housing.**

John and his children are living in a car.

**Case 9**

**Level 5: Family has stable and safe unsubsidized housing without government assistance.**

Shantel is purchasing a home and does not receive any assistance.

**Case 10**

**Level 3: Family has stable and safe housing that is subsidized formally or informally.**

Dolores is in subsidized housing and able to pay for rent.

**Case 11**

**Level 3: Family has stable and safe housing that is subsidized formally or informally.**

Shandon's mother is subsidizing her housing so she is not Level 4.

**Case 12**

**Level 3: Family has stable and safe housing that is subsidized formally or informally.**

The housing is subsidized and Carly shares the rent with the daughter. They have lived here 3 years and the situation is stable.



# **SOCIAL SUPPORT**

Area #5

<b>Social Support</b>	
<i>Effect of personal influences of family, friends, and community on the participant's employment</i>	
<b>Level</b>	Community organizations may include religious, spiritual or cultural institutions, civic or educational organizations, community support groups, clubs, and so on. For the purposes of the EM, social support does <b>NOT</b> refer to paid professional helpers such as therapists, social workers, job counselors, or financial workers.
<b>5</b>	<b>Participant has leadership role in the community.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participant is a community leader, mentor, sponsor, or role model who gives as well as receives social support</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>Participant has consistent and effective social support.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participant has a network of friends, family, or fellow members of one or more community organizations (like the groups listed above) <b>AND</b></li> <li>Some are role models or mentors <b>AND</b></li> <li>They help participant overcome barriers</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>Participant has generally reliable social support.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The participant has some generally reliable supportive adults among family, friends, or fellow members of community organizations (like the groups listed above) <b>AND</b></li> <li>Support is received sometimes, but may not always be there <b>AND</b></li> <li>Destructive behaviors of others have little effect on the participant, direct or indirect</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Participant has limited social support.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Few stable mature adults are involved in the participant's life other than paid professional helpers</li> <li>Participant has very limited connection to community organizations</li> <li>Destructive behavior of others negatively influences the participant</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<b>Participant has no social support.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participant is socially isolated</li> <li>No connection to any community organization</li> <li>Other people sabotage the participant's efforts to work</li> <li>Destructive behaviors of others greatly affect or harm the participant</li> </ul>

**Reason for level chosen:**

## Sample Questions for Social Support

*Ask questions that will help you figure out whether social support affects the participant's ability to work.*

*Here are some questions you might use to get started.*

*If you are not sure of the level, check the matrix for ideas for questions that will help you decide between levels. Focus on the bold level descriptions first.*

- Do you have a support network of friends and family? Who are they?
- How well do you get along with your family?
- Who can you confide in? (For example, a friend, mentor, counselor, elder, therapist)
- Is there someone in your life that you look up to or admire?
- What kinds of things do you do with your friends?
- Do you regularly attend any groups or organizations? (For example, church, support groups, volunteering, coaching, sports)
- Who wants you not to work? Who causes problems so you cannot go to work? (For example, your children, spouse, boyfriend, friends)

### Follow-up Question

- How does this affect your ability to work or look for work?

## **Social Support IS:**

- A participant-based area
- The effect of personal influences of family and friends on the participant's employment
- The impact of community organizations - including religious, spiritual or cultural institutions, civic or educational organizations, community support groups, clubs, and so on – on the participant's employment

## **Social Support IS NOT:**

- The support of paid professional helpers such as therapists, social workers, job counselors, skills workers, advocates, and financial workers

## **Choosing the Best Social Support Level:**

1. When destructive behaviors of others are present in a participant's life, **Levels 1, 2 or 3** should be chosen and determined by the consistency and amount of positive social support the participant receives.
2. Choose **Level 2** if participant expresses feelings of sometimes being alone.
3. When trying to decide between **Level 3** and **Level 4**, asking the participant about role models in her life may help distinguish which level to choose.
4. Choose **Level 3** when support is sometimes there. Support that is consistent would be **Level 4**.

## **Notes on Social Support**

1. If the participant speaks about family and friends in their lives, it is important to find out whether they are:
  - **Positive influences** or role models who support the participant's efforts or
  - **Negative influences** who interfere with or sabotage the participant's progress
2. Observe whether the participant accesses community organizations or friends, family, and other individuals willing to help. Sometimes people feel

reluctant to **ask for help** from friends or family and especially reluctant to discuss their personal affairs with people they consider strangers.

3. Here are some **things that help** participants:

- Last minute back-up child care or transportation
- Advice and information from people who have gone before so they do not have to figure everything out themselves
- Support with work-related issues such as gossip and backstabbing
- Support to persevere with treatment and recovery for physical, mental, and chemical health issues
- Help finding good role models or mentors, a group of friends, or a support group
- A place outside of their families where they can discuss unhealthy relationships and other family difficulties and learn to recognize when someone is sabotaging their progress
- A place where they can learn about healthy relationships

4. Participants may have family, friends or professionals who generally provide valuable social support but who mistakenly give them **inaccurate information** about MFIP rules. One example of this is a participant whose friend told her that women did not have to work while on MFIP, but could stay home and raise their children.

5. Participants do not always recognize an **unhealthy relationship** or when someone is sabotaging their progress. Asking what happened the day before they did not show up for work can uncover this. Counselors can teach participants assertiveness skills to help them deal with family members or friends who are doing this.

6. **Do not assume** that the presence of family is a help. Some families have issues that make it difficult to provide social support. Listen for clues as you ask clarifying questions in other EM areas.

7. A **role model** is someone who others look up to or whose behavior others would like to emulate. A person need not have actual contact with a role model. A **mentor** is someone who is actively advising others and following their progress.

## Immigrant Issues

8. Immigrants who have recently arrived in the U.S. are sometimes **surprised by the lack of support** they receive. Some will discover that family and friends they expected would provide support are too busy with their own lives to be much help. Others may have sponsors who provide less support than they promised. This adds to feelings of vulnerability that many immigrants experience, especially during their first year in the U.S.

## Examples of Social Support Levels

- Level 5:** Odessa and her two children acquired their home with the assistance of the Habitat for Humanity program. She contributed substantial “sweat equity” as the home was being constructed. She was so thankful for and impressed by the program that she now volunteers to lead the group which trains potential Habitat families in the skills necessary to own and maintain a home. Odessa counts on the help of her parents and ex-husband.
- Level 4:** Tabitha is a single mother with three children. She is a member of a support group for parents of children with ADHD, a condition one of her children has. This has been a great help for her since she has met other parents with the same concerns as hers. One of the other mothers in the group has been particularly inspiring and encouraging for Tabitha. It has also allowed her to meet professionals in this field who have helped her better understand her child’s condition.
- Level 3:** Stacy, Peter and their two children just moved to Minnesota from Louisiana. They have a couple of friends in town who helped them move, but these friends are often busy. They sometimes feel lonely because they don’t know many other people so they have started attending a nearby church where they feel welcome.
- Level 2:** Brock recently got custody of his four children since their mother, Amber, was taken to jail. Amber calls him from jail and criticizes his parenting. He has no idea how to parent, since he has never done it before, so his mother is helping him out whenever she gets a chance.
- Level 1:** Brittney, a single pregnant teenager is looking for housing since she got kicked out of her parents’ home for being unwed and expecting. She had to drop out of school and has not seen her friends or teachers since. The father of her child is involved with another woman and this has left her heartbroken and depressed.

## **Scenarios: Social Support**

### **Case 1:**

Erin is a single mother with 5 children. She was living with the father of her youngest child, but he recently moved out. The two fathers of her other children have not had any contact with her children for several years. Erin sees her mother often and can usually depend on her for help when needed. She said that the father of her youngest child is somewhat involved in their lives. She has a few friends who also have children and live in her apartment building. They get together a few times a week to hang out and let their kids play together.

### **Case 2:**

Lori has been on her own since she was 16 years old. She lived on the street, sometimes in shelters until she got pregnant and became eligible for MFIP. Lori and her baby live in an efficiency apartment, only venturing out to buy food and other necessities. Her only somewhat consistent contact is a cousin and a few of her cousin's friends. They show up at Lori's apartment to drink and do drugs.

### **Case 3:**

Sophie is a 35-year-old single mom with two children (ages 7 and 6). Both children are ADHD and one of them is developmentally delayed. Some days can be very exhausting considering that she has a part-time job and is also attending school to finish her LPN training. She is grateful for all the help that she receives from her parents, her current boyfriend (not the father of the boys), her aunt (who is a nurse and her role model) and a counselor at school. Her job counselor has been especially helpful in assisting with car repairs.

### **Case 4:**

Mustaf is a 21-year-old newly arrived refugee from Somalia. He learned a great deal of English before leaving Somalia. During his year in a refugee camp he had several excellent teachers from whom he learned a great deal about American history and culture and who helped him continue to improve his English. Mustaf spends a lot of time with his brothers and sisters who live nearby. They invite him for dinner a few times each week and he goes with them to the mosque.

### **Case 5:**

Annie, a single mother of two young children, moved from the city to an outer-ring suburb to escape her abusive ex-boyfriend. She moved about three months ago and has not been threatened by him since the move. She didn't know anyone in her new area and has not kept in contact with many of her old friends because she does not want the ex-boyfriend to find out where she is living. There is another young mom in her apartment building and they get together occasionally and sometimes trade babysitting favors. Annie has a part-time job at a local retailer where she has started to develop a friendship with a co-worker. Even though Annie has started to build relationships in her new community, she often feels lonely and misses her old friends.

### **Case 6:**

Kelly started part-time work this week at a local bank. Kelly's boyfriend Chad does not approve of her new job. Chad is unemployed and has been taking care of the couple's 4-year-old son while Kelly is at work. The night before she was to start work, Chad had friends over late into the night making noise and partying. In the morning she found that he had hid her car keys. This made her 30 minutes late to work on her first day. On day two, Chad called twice in the morning and three times in the afternoon complaining about the behavior of their child. Today, Chad turned off her alarm clock and Kelly didn't wake up until 20 minutes after she was supposed to be at work. Kelly has to meet with her supervisor this afternoon and is worried she will be fired.

### **Case 7:**

Angie and her two children were recently evicted from their apartment and have been staying in a shelter for a month. She moved to Minnesota last year. Angie occasionally talks to her sister, who lives in Brooklyn Park. Angie has made a few friends since coming to Minnesota. Now that she is in the shelter Angie is receiving services from the shelter staff. An advocate has been working closely with her to help her find permanent housing and to find a job. Angie's kids really like the advocate and have started calling her 'auntie'.

### **Case 8:**

Laisha and her three children live in Minneapolis. Laisha's mother passed away a few years ago but she does have a few aunts and cousins nearby. Laisha is still close with her girlfriends from high school and a couple of them live in her neighborhood. They get together regularly and have children that are the same age. One of Laisha's cousins, Kiesha, is always asking her for money. Laisha used to try to help her cousin as often as she could but this became a habit for Kiesha and was draining Laisha's resources. Since then she has learned how to say no to her cousin and instead helps connect her with community agencies that might be able to help. Laisha still misses her mother but she usually has friends around and people to help out when she needs it.

### **Case 9:**

Keyshawn lives in Saint Paul with his fiancé and their 1-year-old daughter. He and his fiancé have a great relationship and they both have a lot of friends and family in the area. Keyshawn works full time at a distribution center. Three evenings a week he organizes youth basketball games at the local park. There are many single mothers in his neighborhood with teenage boys and he enjoys being a role model for the kids.

## Decision Points

### Case 1

#### **Level 3: Participant has generally reliable social support.**

Erin has some support from her mother and from her friends.

### Case 2

#### **Level 1: Participant has no social support.**

Lori is relatively isolated and has no supportive adults in her life. The people she does see encourage destructive behaviors.

### Case 3

#### **Level 4: Participant has consistent and effective social support.**

Sophie has a network of friends and family, and they are helping her overcome barriers. Her aunt is her role model. She is not yet at Level 5 because she has not taken on leadership roles in the community.

### Case 4

#### **Level 3: Participant has generally reliable social support.**

There is usually social support available from Mustaf's extended family.

### Case 5

#### **Level 2: Participant has limited social support.**

Annie has recently left an abusive relationship and is starting to build a support system in a new community. Her new relationships are not 'generally reliable' support and she sometimes feels alone.

### Case 6

#### **Level 1: Participant has no social support.**

Kelly's boyfriend is sabotaging her efforts to work.

### Case 7

#### **Level 2: Participant has limited social support.**

Angie has little support other than paid professional helpers.

### Case 8

#### **Level 3: Participant has generally reliable social support.**

Laisha usually has friends and family around. Her cousin's destructive behaviors no longer impact Laisha.

### Case 9

#### **Level 5: Participant has leadership roles in the community.**

Keyshawn has a good family life and has reached out to teens in the neighborhood by organizing basketball games.

# **CHILD BEHAVIOR**

Area #6

Level	<b>Child Behavior</b> <i>Effect of actions of children in the family on participant's employment</i>
<b>5</b>	<b>Child(ren)'s behavior supports participant's employment.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All children have strong attendance and are getting good marks at school, child care, preschool, or Head Start <b>AND</b></li> <li>• All children exhibit positive behaviors (for example, helping at home and doing homework) and support parent's ability to work <b>AND</b></li> <li>• All children engage in healthy activities outside of school (for example playing with friends, youth groups, or hobbies)</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>Child(ren)'s behavior problems do not limit participant's employment.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All children attend school regularly <b>AND</b></li> <li>• All children get school work done and are making progress <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Parent has no serious concerns about children's behavior</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>Family is working on child(ren)'s behavior problems and they minimally affect participant's employment.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child with behavior problems is working with professionals to stabilize behavior</li> <li>• Occasional problems at school or child care are managed, with parent seldom required to be present during work hours</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Time necessary to deal with child(ren)'s behavior problems often interferes with participant's employment.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School misbehavior or truancy frequently requires parent to visit school</li> <li>• Child does not cooperate with morning routines</li> <li>• Frequent misbehavior, like biting or hitting other children, requires parent to visit child care provider</li> <li>• Other risk behavior by child (for example, anger, impulsiveness, destructive behavior, involvement with a gang, addiction, or problematic social relationships) interferes with participant's employment</li> <li>• While individual children in the family are reasonably well-behaved, when they are together, they cause a great deal of trouble</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<b>Time necessary to deal with child(ren)'s behavior problems prevents participant's employment.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent has lost job because of tardiness, absenteeism, or poor performance due to child's behavior problems</li> <li>• Parent is unable to obtain child care due to child's behavior problems</li> </ul>

**Notes:**

**If the only child is an infant/toddler and there are no behavior issues, choose level 4. If there are behavior issues with this only child, choose level 1, 2, or 3.**

**If the infant/toddler is not the only child, choose a level based on the combined effect of all children (including the infant/toddler) on employment. This situation cannot be level 5.**

**If the participant is a pregnant woman with no other children, the appropriate "level" is N/A.**

**Reason for level chosen:**

## Sample Questions for Child Behavior

*Ask questions that will help you figure out whether her/his children's behavior affects the participant's ability to work.*

*Here are some questions you might use to get started.*

*If you are not sure of the level, check the matrix for ideas for questions that will help you decide between levels. Focus on the bold level descriptions first.*

- How are your children doing in school?
- How are your children getting along in child care?
- How do your children spend their free time?
- Do your children get along with each other?
- Are any of your children having problems at school? At home? In the neighborhood?
- Do you ever miss work because of your children's behavior?
- Do your children listen to you?
- [*For immigrants*] Did your children attend school prior to coming to the U.S.?

### **Follow-up Question**

- How does this affect your ability to work or look for work?

## Child Behavior IS:

- A family-based area
- The combined effect of actions of all children in the family on the participant's employment
- Concerned with the minor children for whom the participant is responsible

## Child Behavior IS NOT:

- Whether or not the participant has child care

## Choosing the Best Child Behavior Level

1. At **Level 1**, children are engaging in negative behaviors like truancy or getting involved in illegal activities. In this situation, parents may be late to work or miss work so often that they are **unable to get or sustain a job**.
2. The difference between Levels 1 and 2 is that at **Level 1** the person is unable to get a job or, if they do, they quickly lose it, while at **Level 2**, the person has a job that is at risk because of continuing child behavior issues.
3. Child behavior can support a parent's employability. At **Level 5**, children excel in school and are involved in healthy activities outside of school, such as playing with friends, youth groups, and hobbies. They provide **support for a parent's employability** as parents can stay focused while at work without worries about child behavior issues.
4. The behavior of infants and toddlers can also impact a parent's employment. Families with very young children should be rated appropriately.
  - If the infant/toddler is an only child and there are no behavior issues affecting employment, choose Level 4.
  - If the infant/toddler is an only child and there ARE behavior issues affecting employment, choose either 1, 2, or 3 using the criterion in the matrix.
  - If the infant/toddler is NOT an only child, choose a level based on the combined effect of all children (including the infant/toddler) on employment.

5. If the participant is a **pregnant** woman with **no other children**, the appropriate “level” is **N/A**.

## Notes on Child Behavior

1. Job counselors with experience using the EM suggest **not beginning with Child Behavior** because it makes participants fear you are inquiring about child protection issues. If the participant appears to be concerned about questions about their children, explain that you are asking questions because this could play an important role in their ability to get and keep a job.

Note: Job counselors who have knowledge of child abuse or child neglect, however, **ARE mandated to report** this to the police or county social services and must inform participants of this obligation.

2. Here are some reasons that families may be especially **hesitant to talk** about issues of child behavior:
  - Fear that **child protection** will get involved if they talk about child behavior problems
  - Concern about their children being **labeled** by mental health professionals
  - Worry that they will be **judged** negatively on the basis of their children’s behavior, especially if they believe that their success in the community depends on how well they raise their children
  - Unwillingness to talk about **drug use** of children due to cultural values around alcohol and drugs or fear of legal implications

Also, African American and American Indian families may be concerned because children from their communities are disproportionately referred to child protection and placed in foster care.

3. While parents typically like discussing good things about their children, when children have behavior issues, parents may be reluctant to share this information. They may be more willing to share problems when they are experiencing a high level of frustration, when there is an emergency, or when outside agencies like school, courts, or child protection have gotten involved. **Explaining services** before asking questions and giving examples of how families have faced similar issues may be helpful.
4. **Parenting classes** have been very helpful to some MFIP parents in learning to nurture and get along with their children. Some parenting classes are culturally specific. Some programs have youth advocates who work with

schools. Participants may not respond positively to suggestions from job counselors about how to parent, especially young counselors without children.

5. Communities have differing opinions about the **value of extracurricular activities**. Some parents would prefer that their children do homework, help with housework, or help with activities in their community rather than engage in more formal extracurricular activities or volunteering. Some parents do not want homework interfering with sports activities.
6. Some parents would like their children to participate in social, cultural, and sports activities, but they **cannot afford** them.
7. In some households **children are in charge**. This can occur when children in an immigrant family are more proficient in English and American culture than their parents, when male children are considered superior to females in a culture, or when a parent is disabled or chemically dependent.
8. **Parents and schools** often have conflicting expectations about their respective roles in handling child behavior issues. Parents may expect that the schools have authority and responsibility to control child behavior. Schools, however, may expect parents to ensure that children complete school work and cooperate in school even when parents feel inadequate to help children with their homework. This is especially difficult for immigrant parents with limited English.
9. A **child's physical, mental or chemical health** may have a significant impact on their behavior. These issues impact the **Health** area, as well as Child Behavior.
10. If **adult children** of the participant are having a negative impact on their employment, this can be noted under Social Support or Other Barriers.

### **Immigrant Issues**

11. Immigrant parents may have issues connected to the **placement of their children in the schools**. Some immigrant children are placed based on age, for example a 15-year-old may be placed in 10th grade even though he or she has never attended school previously. Others may be placed in special education when this is inappropriate. Behavior problems often result in these situations.
12. Some immigrant parents may not know or agree with **U.S. laws and customs** concerning child behavior and child rearing. Even parents born in the U.S. do not always know things like curfew times and how long a child of a certain age may be left alone.

13. Some immigrant parents will prefer to discuss child behavior issues within their **community** rather than with the job counselor.

## Examples of Child Behavior Levels

**Level 5:** Darnell, age 16, gets A's and B's in school and is on the track team. During summer breaks he works for his uncle's landscaping business. He has been putting money away for college and after graduation he plans to enroll in an apprenticeship program to become an electrician.

**Level 4:** Vanessa is 9 years old and in the fourth grade. She has good attendance and is an average student. After her parents' divorce two years ago, she exhibited some hostile behavior at home and in school. After several sessions with a therapist, her parents have no serious concerns.

**Level 3:** Amy and her boyfriend, Joe, broke up and she began acting out in a number of ways including getting into fights. Her mother was called to school a few times to deal with this behavior. Her school counselor referred her to anger management classes which she is attending. While she is still getting into occasional arguments, there have been no fights and no calls to her mother for a couple of weeks.

**Level 2:** Two-year-old Adam is going to child care for the first time. He has started biting everyone around, even the child care provider. Mom is being called at work several times a week.

Abdi, a 15-year-old male refugee, never attended school prior to coming to the U.S. Once here he was placed in 10th grade. He has struggled academically but lately his grades have been improving. However, other students tease him and he has gotten into fights. This requires his mother to frequently leave work and go to the school.

**Level 1:** Will is a violent teenager who is a high school dropout and is involved with gangs. His mother refuses to return to the workplace because, in her opinion, he requires constant supervision.

Andrew is an autistic child who generally behaves well at child care and in school, but his behavior at home caused his mother to lose so much sleep that she was recently fired for sleeping on the job.

## **Scenarios: Child Behavior**

### **Case 1:**

Susan and her two children (ages 14 and 10) have been living with her fiancé and his son (age 13) for three years and plan to marry soon. At first, all three children were resistant to the arrangement and fought a lot, destroying each others possessions, as well as being disrespectful to both adults. When fights broke out after school, the youngest child often called Susan at work which caused problems with her supervisor and co-workers. After about a year in family counseling, and some individual therapy, bitter battles have ceased and there are only occasional disagreements which are handled in a much more mature way. The kids' behavior is no longer a problem for the parents or Susan's employment, and the children are getting good grades and making progress in school.

### **Case 2:**

Marcy is the mother of three, all junior high school students. She is unemployed because she is so often dealing with her children's problems with truancy, frequent misbehavior, and accusations of gang activity. She tried working nights for a while with one of her neighbors "keeping an eye on them" but it didn't work out.

### **Case 3:**

Nina has three children in elementary school. They all attend school full time; all are well behaved and all are doing exceptionally well in school. They participate in after school activities and even help with household chores. She is working part time, and is home when they get home from school.

### **Case 4:**

Emily has three children. Her 13-year-old son is having trouble at school with truancy. She has been called numerous times by the school because of this problem. A truancy officer from the school is now working with her son. Emily was working part time, but the repeated trips to the school to talk with administrators cost her that job. She is cooperating with the school to look for solutions to help keep her son in school.

### **Case 5:**

Nadia has four children in elementary school. They attend school regularly and are all doing excellent work. Nadia makes sure that they are home after school doing their homework and helping with the housework. None of the children are involved in extracurricular activities at school but they attend Arabic school one day a week at their mosque. Nadia is very proud of their behavior.

### **Case 6:**

Rosa came to the U.S. about three years ago with her two teenage children and an infant. The youngest is now in preschool and doing very well. The two teenagers have some trouble with behavior at school which has created some problems for Rosa. Rosa does not speak English very well, and does not understand why the school needs to call her all the time about her children. She expects the school to deal with the problems at school so that she will be able to continue working. She has had to leave work several times to go to school meetings, but doesn't feel that anything is being done to resolve the issues. Her teenagers are making progress at school and they are on target to graduate. However, the behavior problems have always been stressful for Rosa and her stress is increasing because her boss seems to be getting more irritable when she misses work.

### **Case 7:**

Ena is a recent Bosnian immigrant and has an interpreter present for a meeting with her job counselor to develop her employment plan. She is married, but her husband is still back in Bosnia. She has four children and all are in school. When asked about her children's behavior, she is hesitant to answer and finally through the interpreter says that they are all doing well in school and there are no behavior problems. You know that she recently had to leave job club twice to pick up a child who was suspended for bad behavior. You are not sure what the issues are and you try to talk to her and ask her more questions about school, but she states that everything is OK with her children's behavior.

### **Case 8:**

Vicki is a single mother of three teenagers. Her 14-year-old son smokes marijuana and hangs out with the wrong crowd during times when he is supposed to be at school. His fighting and stealing have required him to go to court constantly and Vicki is routinely missing work to be there to assist him. Her other two children attend school regularly and receive good grades. Vicki suspects that the 14-year-old may be in a gang.

### **Case 9:**

Carrie has two children. Robert is 15 and Egon is 12. Robert has been missing school frequently and is not allowed to go back to public school. He went to the alternative school one day and told his mother that he will never go back. He has been charged with possession of drug paraphernalia and Carrie suspects he has also been selling drugs. Robert is frequently not at home and his mother is unsure of where he is. Carrie is concerned about her frequent absences from work as she tries to deal with Robert's behavior.

### **Case 10:**

Mary has one son, Alex, who is in the fifth grade. Mary and Alex's father have never lived together, but Alex was spending every other weekend with his father until last spring when the father moved to another state. Now, Alex's dad only calls about once every couple of weeks. Alex has been attending school regularly, but on his last report card he earned mostly C's and a D in math. Mary has gotten a few calls while at work from the school about Alex's disruptive behavior in class. Last month, when she explained that Alex is having trouble dealing with his father's move, Alex was assigned a math tutor and was connected with a Big Brother who has been meeting with him once a week, and his school behavior has improved.

### **Case 11:**

Nikki is unemployed and has three boys (ages 14, 13 and 8). The family is currently receiving services from two social workers. She reports Nicholas, the 14-year-old, is doing fine in school but often "acts out" at home. Her 13-year-old son, Sam, has ADHD and ODD and Nikki is often called to the school to deal with his behavior. He is receiving children's mental health case management services through the county. Child Protection Services opened a case for this family last week following reports of neglect from 8-year-old Isaiah's teacher. Nikki is feeling overwhelmed and frustrated—not only does she have difficulty disciplining her children and controlling their behavior, now she reports she has to run all over town to meet with the social workers

## Decision Points

### Case 1

#### **Level 4: Child(ren)'s behavior problems do not limit participant's employment.**

All three bullet points under Level 4 are met. The only thing that keeps this from being Level 5 is that we have no evidence that the children are engaging in healthy activities outside of school.

### Case 2

#### **Level 1: Time necessary to deal with child(ren)'s behavior problems prevents participant's employment.**

Frequent misbehavior including truancy and possible gang activity has resulted in Marcy leaving employment.

### Case 3

#### **Level 5: Child(ren)'s behavior supports participant's employment.**

All children have strong attendance, are excelling in school, and are participating in extracurricular activities. Nina has no concerns about their behavior.

### Case 4

#### **Level 1: Time necessary to deal with child(ren)'s behavior problems prevents participant's employment.**

Emily had a job, but due to son's ongoing truancy problems, she lost it.

### Case 5

#### **Level 5: Child(ren)'s behavior supports participant's employment.**

This family meets all four of the bullet points required to be Level 5. The children attend school regularly and get good grades; after school they do homework and assist Nadia with housework; they participate in healthy activities outside of regular school (Arabic school); and Nadia has no concerns about their behavior.

### Case 6

#### **Level 2: Time necessary to deal with child(ren)'s behavior problems often interferes with participant's employment.**

Rosa has to leave work because she gets called to school "all the time". She would not be at Level 1 because she is still maintaining employment and she is not at Level 3 because the problems at school are not just occasional and appear to be having more than a minimal effect on employment.

### **Case 7**

#### **Level 2: Time necessary to deal with child(ren)'s behavior problems often interferes with participant's employment.**

In this case, what Ena tells you conflicts with other verifiable evidence about her children's behavior. Since you know that one of her children was suspended twice in the recent past for bad behavior, you would score her at Level 2 because "considerable" time is being spent dealing with the child's behavior and this is affecting her attendance at job search. You would note on Workforce One that her self-report differs from the evidence at hand. You know that many participants, especially immigrants have concerns about being referred to child protection, so you might work to create an atmosphere where she feels comfortable disclosing her issues to you.

### **Case 8**

#### **Level 2: Time necessary to deal with child(ren)'s behavior problems often interferes with participant's employment.**

In this case the behavior of two of the teens does not affect Vicki's employment. However, the 14-year-old has caused Vicki to routinely miss work and therefore Level 2 is the best choice of levels.

### **Case 9**

#### **Level 2: Time necessary to deal with child(ren)'s behavior problems often interferes with participant's employment.**

As the son is involved in illegal activities it may initially seem that this is a Level 1 situation. However, Carrie is working but concerned about her frequent absence from work, so the best level is Level 2.

### **Case 10**

#### **Level 3: Family is working on child(ren)'s behavior problems and they minimally affect participant's employment.**

Alex has been attending school, but hasn't been making good progress, especially in math. Now he's connected with a tutor and has the support of a role model. Alex's trouble in school has resulted in a few phone calls for Mary while at work, but the calls haven't threatened her employment. Both bullets under Level 3 are partially met.

### **Case 11**

#### **Level 1: Time necessary to deal with child(ren)'s behavior problems prevents participant's employment.**

Nikki reports difficulty disciplining her children at home and is not able to work at this time because of the time spent dealing with the school and working with the social workers.

# **FINANCIAL**

*Area #7*

Level	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Financial</b> <i>Family income in relation to expenses</i></p> <p>Basic living expenses include food, shelter, and other necessary expenses particular to this family, like medical care and child care</p>
<b>5</b>	<b>Family has income well above basic living expenses.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stable income/employment <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Current on basic bills <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Savings for emergencies and discretionary spending <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Income at least equal to the state median income</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>Family income is stable and pays for more than basic living expenses.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stable income/employment <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Current on basic bills <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Extra for discretionary spending or savings for emergencies</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>Family income is stable, but pays only for basic living expenses.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dependable income sources <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Current on basic bills <b>AND</b></li> <li>• No extra for discretionary spending or savings for emergencies</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Family income is sometimes adequate to meet basic living expenses.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One or more major sources of income erratic, like earnings or child support</li> <li>• New job but poor employment history</li> <li>• Not paying basic bills even though income appears sufficient</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<b>Family income is inadequate to meet basic living expenses.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rent exceeds income</li> <li>• Misses meals even with food support and regular visits to food shelves</li> </ul>

**Reason for level chosen:**

## Sample Questions for Financial

*Ask questions that will help you figure out the relationship of the family's income to expenses.*

*Here are some questions you might use to get started.*

*If you are not sure of the level, check the matrix for ideas for questions that will help you decide between levels. Focus on the bold level descriptions first.*

**Note: Responses to the first six questions are required and entered in Workforce One.**

- Are you currently working?
  - (If yes) Where?
  - (If yes) How long have you worked there?
  - (If yes) How many hours per week do you work?
  - (If yes) How much do you earn per hour?
- How many jobs have you had in the last 6 months?
- Are you current on your rent and utilities? (If no) Why not?
- How much MFIP cash and food portion did you receive this month?
- Do you receive any other type of income like child support or SSI? (If yes) Type and amount? How often do you receive this income?
- Do you have unpaid medical expenses?
- Do you have concerns about having enough money to buy food?
- Do you have money left over after you have paid your bills?
- Do you have any money saved?
- Are you providing financial support to family members who do not live with you?

### Follow-up Question

- How does your financial situation affect your ability to work or look for work?

## Financial IS:

- A family-based area
- Family income in relation to expenses
  - Income includes both earned and unearned income (for example, child support, MFIP, Food Support)
  - Basic expenses include food, shelter, and other necessities particular to the family, such as medical care and child care
- Reliability of the sources of income
- Whether the family has saved money for emergencies

## Financial IS NOT:

- Ability to pay for expenses that are not considered basic: cable TV, vacations, and so on, except at Level 5

## Choosing the Best Financial Level

1. If the family has budgeted well but still has no money for food at the end of the month choose **Level 1**.
2. If the family does not always pay their basic bills despite the ability to pay, choose **Level 2**. There are many reasons that a person chooses to spend money for things other than basic bills.
3. If the family has dependable income and is current on their bills but has nothing left for discretionary spending and no savings, choose **Level 3**.
4. Select **Level 5** when a participant has stable income at least equal to the state household median income and they have savings for emergencies and money for discretionary spending.

## Notes on Financial

1. There can be considerable variation between families in how they define “**basic living expenses**.” For purposes of choosing a level, the job counselor may need to ask the family to list their types of expenses and which get paid and determine which of these are “basic.” A discussion of what should be considered part of the basic budget may best be handled outside the EM interview, when advice may be offered.
2. Sometimes the particulars of the **family’s situation** will define whether something is a basic expense. For example, for a family with a landline, a cell phone may be convenient but not basic. For a person who has a serious medical situation or is in a shelter because of domestic violence, a cell phone may be necessary and therefore “basic.”
3. **Discretionary income** is income above the amount needed for basic bills that can be used for things beyond the necessities. Examples of discretionary income include the amount available for entertainment, vacations, and eating out.
4. For this tool, “**well above basic living expenses**” is considered at least the state median household income. In 2007, the Minnesota median household income was \$55,664 gross.<sup>1</sup> The amount can be found by entering the year and “Minnesota median income” in an internet search engine. The job counselor will need to estimate annual income from current income.
5. Financial matters may be hard to talk about. Some participants who have **trouble with budgeting** might be hesitant to admit this or ask for help. They may be more willing to talk about these issues with someone whom they have a working relationship.
6. Lack of **financial literacy**, poor budgeting skills, and not paying bills when receiving income are major difficulties. Some people prioritize things like presents, cell phones, clothes, or hair before necessities.
7. Rent for some participants is more than their income. If they have housing, it is important to ask about **who helps with the rent** and how willing they are to continue helping to determine how stable the income is.
8. People in poverty may **lack access to banks**, be unwilling to trust them, and/or not understand how they work.

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<sup>1</sup> USDA Economic Research Service (<http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/Unemployment/RDList2.asp?ST=MN>)

9. Job counselors should make sure that participants understand that **unreported income** can create serious problems including MFIP overpayments, MFIP fraud charges and convictions, and loss of child care assistance.
10. For the **work incentives of MFIP** (“Work pays”) to be effective, participants must know that they are better off financially when they combine work and MFIP than when they are on MFIP alone. Aspects of MFIP financial assistance policy, however, can be confusing to participants, especially those with limited English, including concepts like retrospective budgeting, significant change, rolling average used for self-employment, three-paycheck months, and MFIP work incentives.

### **Immigrant Issues**

11. Some families may be **supporting family members** who are not on their MFIP case and/or who do not live with them. For example, immigrant families may be sending money to family members in their country of origin. This may result in an inability to meet the basic needs of the family in the U.S. and a low level on the Financial area. The job counselor may offer to help them decide how to balance the needs of both families.
12. For some immigrants, the American focus on money may be at odds with their **home country’s culture** which may emphasize acquiring land and farming for a living or sharing resources communally.

### **Examples of Financial Levels**

- Level 5:** Naomi and Greg left MFIP a year ago and are working. Their income is equal to the state median income and allows them to pay for basic living expenses, as well as for child care of their choice for their toddler, and vacations at least once a year. They also have money saved for emergencies.
- Level 4:** Eliza, a single mother, has a good-paying job that she’s held for more than two years, stable child support income to pay for basic living expenses, and sliding fee child care. All this has allowed her to save money for emergencies such as car repairs.
- Level 3:** Stephanie and Joe are receiving income from MFIP and part-time employment which allows them to pay for basic living expenses, but they have no money saved for emergencies.
- Level 2:** Valerie, a single mother of two children, receives MFIP and child support income. The child support has been erratic. Staying

current on rent and utilities is difficult since one of her sources of income is not reliable.

**Level 1:** Melanie is on the waiting list for subsidized housing. Her current rent is more than her MFIP grant.

## **Scenarios: Financial**

### **Case 1:**

Laura lives with her 3 school-aged children. She is buying a mobile home for \$125 a month and pays \$110 lot rent. Her utilities average \$200. She paid only \$100 of utility costs this month and will catch up later on that bill. She earned \$650 working part time this month. She received \$100 child support. She's attending school for medical assisting and will finish in about a year and a half. She received \$224 MFIP cash, and the full food portion. She has some health issues. She did apply for Emergency Assistance last month but was denied because she had not used enough of her income to pay her housing and utility costs. The county referred her to another agency for help, but she hasn't heard back yet.

### **Case 2:**

Chrissy lives with her two daughters (ages 16 and 7). Chrissy recently reached her 60-month MFIP time limit and received a work-related extension. She has been working for about a month at a fast food restaurant part time for minimum wage. Her total monthly earned income is \$550. Chrissy has a sporadic work history and has not worked during the past year except for this recent job. She does not have a high school diploma or a GED. She has been in treatment for chemical dependency in the past, and she has been in jail as an adult. Her rent is \$500 and utilities are \$75. MFIP cash is \$280 and she receives the full food portion.

### **Case 3:**

Joseph, his spouse, Nancy, and their blended family of five children (ages 12, 11, 6, 3, and 1) live in Mankato. Joseph has worked full time as foreman at an auto parts store for the past 14 months, his gross checks total \$1200 per month. Nancy is a CNA who works full time at a nursing home; lately, she's been averaging 50 hours a week and her gross checks total \$2070 per month. She has worked for this employer for two years. Both parents have fairly extensive work histories in positions similar to their current employment. Joseph has had problems in the past with retaining his employment, but says his current job is the

type of work he likes to do and he plans to stick with this job. The family receives child support periodically. The family's shelter and food costs total \$1662 per month and they are current on their bills. Joseph and Nancy have not completely moved off MFIP because their income teeters on the income limit for a family of seven. But, it now looks like the MFIP case will soon be closed and they have not been eligible for a cash portion for a number of months.

#### **Case 4:**

Edith and her three children (ages 5, 4 and 1) live in an apartment. The rent is \$600 and the utilities run an additional \$80. She is current on these bills. Edith has been doing in-home child care for 4 years. Her earnings from child care are \$700. She has never received any child support; she thinks the children's father is living out of state. Her only other income is MFIP cash of \$274 and the MFIP food portion. Edith reports she has a little money for discretionary spending but she is not able to save money.

#### **Case 5:**

Cecelia and Jorge, recent immigrants from Guatemala are living in Minneapolis with their three children (ages 9, 6, and 4). Jorge has been working at an auto repair shop for 8 months and his gross checks total \$2,000 per month. The family has an active MFIP case and this month they received a small food portion. Cecelia does not work. They are living with relatives and paying \$600 per month to help with rent and utilities. They are also sending \$600 per month back to Cecelia's sister in Guatemala. They have no money saved.

#### **Case 6:**

Heath and Mary have two young children. Heath has been struggling with a gambling addiction for three years. Due to this, he lost his job and the family's apartment. They are now staying with Mary's parents. Mary's parents have not been charging them any rent. Heath and Mary are on MFIP and receiving the full grant amount. Heath has been following the treatment recommendations of his doctor and attending a support group. He has not gambled for six months. Heath is making good progress, but his insurance does not cover the cost of the treatment and the family must pay privately. They have used up their savings and are able to get by most months, but last month they needed to borrow money from Mary's parents when their car needed new tires.

### **Case 7:**

Sally and her two children (ages 6 and 4) recently moved into a 2-bedroom apartment. Sally is not working and MFIP is her only source of income. Her monthly cash income is \$532 per month and the rent is \$550. Sally thinks she will be able to afford the rent ongoing because she plans to get a job at the grocery store down the block. She has not completed an application yet and does not know whether they are hiring. Sally paid less than half of her rent this month.

### **Case 8:**

Darla and Sam are both working full time and each has been at their current job for more than a year. Their net monthly income totals \$3700 per month (\$55,500 annual gross). Their two children are in child care which costs \$800 per month and their rent is \$1100. During the winter their utilities total \$200 per month. Sam takes the car to work (\$40 in gas and \$35 for insurance monthly) and Darla takes the bus which costs \$20 per month. Their monthly food budget is \$600. Darla and Sam are current on their bills. They have a savings account that they have been building on every month and a little left over for discretionary spending.

### **Case 9:**

Ashley works on-call as a housekeeper at a local nursing home. Last week she worked 40 hours, but did not have any hours the three weeks before. She earns minimum wage and most months her net income is \$500. For the last few months she has only earned \$300 per month. Ashley and her daughter live with Ashley's mother and she charges her \$100 for rent. Ashley must pay \$60 per month for child care when she's working full time and a health insurance premium of \$75 per month. There is no public transportation where Ashley lives and she has a car to get to work. She does not have a loan, but gas and insurance cost \$100 per month. Her mom agreed not to charge her rent this month until her hours pick up again at work.

## Decision Points

### Case 1

#### **Level 2: Family income is sometimes adequate to meet basic living expenses.**

Laura is Level 2 because she is not paying basic bills although income appears sufficient. Net income after shelter expenses would be over \$500 and the food portion. She did not pay her total utility amount and applied for Emergency Assistance, but was denied because she had enough income to cover expenses. Even though she appears to have enough money to pay living expenses, this is not happening.

### Case 2

#### **Level 2: Family income is sometimes adequate to meet basic living expenses.**

Chrissy's net income after rent and utilities is \$240, plus food support. While her income is likely to cover her expenses, she is not yet Level 3 because her employment history is very poor, and she just recently started this job. She does not yet have stability with this income.

### Case 3

#### **Level 4: Family income is stable and pays for more than basic living expenses.**

Income/employment is stable and the family has some discretionary money. They are not Level 5 because their income is less than the state median.

### Case 4

#### **Level 4: Family income is stable and pays for more than basic living expenses.**

Edith's income after rent and utilities is about \$300 plus food support. She has sufficient income to cover basic living expenses and a little for discretionary spending.

### Case 5

#### **Level 4: Family income is stable and pays for more than basic living expenses.**

The family's income from Jorge's employment is stable and covers their basic expenses. The large portion of Jorge's income they are sending back to family in Guatemala would be considered discretionary spending.

### Case 6

#### **Level 2: Family income is sometimes adequate to meet basic living expenses.**

The family's major expense is Heath's bills to treat his gambling addiction. Because Mary's parents are not charging rent their other expenses are quite low, but last month they did need to borrow money to replace tires on their car.

Heath's addiction to gambling should also be rated in the Health area as an addiction.

**Case 7**

**Level 1: Family income is inadequate to meet basic living expenses.**

Sally's rent exceeds her income. She paid less than half the rent this month and has not made progress toward finding employment to increase her income.

**Case 8**

**Level 5: Family has income well above basic living expenses.**

The family's income is just above the state median. They have enough to pay for their basic expenses, contribute to a savings account, and have a little left over for discretionary spending.

**Case 9**

**Level 2: Family income is sometimes adequate to meet basic living expenses.**

Ashley's work at the nursing home is sporadic and this makes keeping up with expenses very difficult.



# **LEGAL**

Area #8

Level	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Legal</b> <i>Effect of any family member's criminal or civil legal issues on participant's employment</i></p>
<b>5</b>	<b>Family has no current legal issues.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There may have been legal issues in the past, but they have been settled</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>Family members' legal issues do not affect participant's employment.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pending civil court case does not affect employment</li> <li>• Legal issues are not work related and do not take work time</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>Family members' legal issues minimally affect participant's employment.</b>
	<p>For example, time is needed for things like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Probation requirements</li> <li>• Issues requiring occasional court appearances during work hours, such as an open child protection case, divorce case, child custody case, or bankruptcy</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Family members' legal issues often interfere with participant's employment.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Felony conviction limits type or hours of work, including preferred or previous work</li> <li>• Professional license or driver's license required for doing a particular job has been revoked due to child support nonpayment, conviction for driving under the influence, or professional misconduct</li> <li>• Recent job has been lost due to a legal issue</li> <li>• Issues requiring frequent court appearances during work hours, such as an open child protection case, divorce case, child custody case, or bankruptcy</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<b>Participant's legal issues prohibit employment.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-citizen has no work permit</li> <li>• Participant is under threat of deportation</li> <li>• Participant is incarcerated or scheduled to be incarcerated</li> </ul>

**Reason for level chosen:**

## Sample Questions for Legal

*Ask questions that will help you figure out whether legal issues affect the participant's ability to work.*

*Here are some questions you might use to get started.*

*If you are not sure of the level, check the matrix for ideas for questions that will help you decide between levels. Focus on the bold level descriptions first.*

- Do you or a family member:
  - Have to go to court for any reason?
  - Have any legal issues that prevent you from working or limit the type of work you can do? *(If yes)* What are they?
  - Have any legal convictions in the last ten years? *(If yes)* What are they?
  - Have any probation or parole obligations?
  - Have community service obligations?
- Have you lost a professional license or driver's license needed for your job?

### Follow-up Question

- How does this affect your ability to work or look for work?

## Legal IS:

- A family-based area
- Effect of any family member's criminal or civil legal issues on the participant's employment
- Effect of legal Issues including but not limited to the following:
  - Felonies
  - Misdemeanors
  - Arrests
  - Court orders
  - Loss of professional license
  - Divorce proceedings
  - Child support cases
  - Child protection cases

## Legal IS NOT:

- The presence or type of legal issue but its effect on employment

## Choosing the Best Legal Level

1. **Level 1** means that work is legally prohibited.
2. **Whether and to what degree legal issues interfere with employment** depends on the nature of the job and employer policies on work absences. For example, divorce proceedings or custody issues may require participants to miss work to meet with lawyers or be present in court. If the employer allows the participant to use personal time off, vacation, or allows the participant to make up missed work, there may be minimal effect on employment. However, if the type of work makes it difficult to leave the workplace or the employer is unwilling to tolerate these absences, they could have adverse effects on employment. These considerations affect distinctions among **Level 2, Level 3, and Level 4.**
3. **Level 5** indicates that there are no current legal issues.

## Notes on Legal

### Effect of Legal Issues on Employability

1. A **history of incarceration** is common among MFIP caregivers and their partners.
2. Some **felonies** result in a participant being forbidden to hold jobs related to the offense committed. For example, if a participant has been a child care provider and child protection removes her own children due to neglect. This would prevent her from obtaining employment in child care. A conviction for theft prevents work in casinos for some number of years. Convicted sex offenders cannot work with children or vulnerable adults. This type of barrier calls for a **change of occupation**.
3. Employers' decisions about **whether to hire felons** depend on factors such as:
  - When the felony was committed
  - Nature of the felony
  - Whether the offender is still under supervision by corrections ("on paper")
  - The job market
  - Whether the person was honest about his or her legal status
4. There are **some jobs open to felons** when the offense is not related to the type of work. So the statement, "I'm a felon, I can't work" is not a legitimate excuse. For example, people convicted of theft can work in food preparation.
5. Some employers have a **policy not to employ ex-felons**, no matter what their offense. In this case, the participant should focus their job search efforts on employers willing to hire those with a criminal background.
6. An open **child protection case** should be considered a legal issue and may require participants to go to court during work hours.
7. People on probation have to report for **random drug checks** whenever called, regardless of job status.
8. Some people refuse to work because of **child support liability**. They don't want their earnings to go to a former spouse or partner. This is a self-imposed barrier and they should be Level 2.

## Participant Disclosure about Legal Issues

9. Participants may be reluctant to disclose information about their legal issues during the EM interview, perhaps fearing value judgments. They may wait until they have worked with the job counselor long enough to **develop sufficient trust**, as with some other areas. Sometimes job counselors or employers discover issues from a criminal background check.
10. Some participants who have been convicted of illegal activities are willing to discuss their legal issues but have **incomplete or inaccurate information**. Often people involved in the justice system do not know how it works. For example, they may not understand the effect on their record when they plea bargained from a felony to a lesser charge; they may not know the implication of a felony for their future employment. They may not know how their legal issues affect jobs, voting, and housing. Helping participants acquire accurate information could be useful for both the participant and job counselor.

## Partnering with Other Professionals

11. Participants with legal issues may have a number of other professionals with whom they are required to work, for example a child protection worker or a parole officer. Developing good communication and positive **working relationships with other professionals** can help ensure that participants do not have competing or contradictory plans.
12. Job counselors can develop working relationships with **“felon-friendly” employers** to whom they can refer participants. Informing employers about tax credits available for hiring felons could be very helpful.

## Changing Demographic Issues

13. At present, many youth, predominantly members of minority groups, are being incarcerated. This is occurring to such an extent that the phrase **“cradle to prison pipeline”** has been coined to describe the experience. According to Children’s Defense Fund America’s Cradle to Prison Pipeline<sup>SM</sup> ([http://www.childrensdefense.org/site/DocServer/ CPP\\_report\\_2007\\_pt1ch1.pdf?docID=5042](http://www.childrensdefense.org/site/DocServer/ CPP_report_2007_pt1ch1.pdf?docID=5042)), an African American boy born in 2001 has roughly a 1 in 3 chance of going to prison in his lifetime and a Latino boy has a 1 in 6 chance (1 in 17 for African American girls and 1 in 45 for Latino girls).
14. The **incarceration rate for women** aged 16 to 25 is increasing rapidly, with physical assault as the most frequent conviction for American Indian women and drug convictions most frequent for African American women, according to job counselors.

15. According to a 1993 Minnesota Supreme Court report on racial discrimination ([http://www.mncourts.gov/documents/0/Public/Court\\_Information\\_Office/Race\\_Bias\\_Report\\_Complete.pdf](http://www.mncourts.gov/documents/0/Public/Court_Information_Office/Race_Bias_Report_Complete.pdf)) in the justice system, the justice system is unfair for people of color.

### **Immigrant Issues**

16. Immigrant families may be reluctant to discuss legal issues because some **fear deportation.**
17. Sometimes job counselors discover legal issues in discussions about child care. **MFIP Child Care Assistance** rules require an unemployed second parent to provide child care, but sometimes in immigrant families, the second parent is working (without documentation) and cannot provide this care.

### **Examples of Legal Levels**

- Level 5:** Raquel's only legal issue was a speeding ticket 8 years ago.
- Level 4:** Abby has no criminal background. She has a current divorce case pending and child custody is being settled. This has not taken time away from her job and both she and her spouse are civil to each other.
- Level 3:** Paul has a son going through juvenile court for an offense and his presence is required on some occasions, but his boss is understanding.
- Level 2:** Sharon had been employed as a CNA, but she has been convicted of child abuse and neglect. She now has to look for a different type of job that does not involve being around children or vulnerable adults.
- Level 1:** Kennan has been convicted of a felony and is scheduled to be incarcerated next week.

## **Scenarios: Legal**

### **Case 1:**

Kendra is a single mother with 6 children. She has been on and off assistance since her 16-year-old was born. She has been looking for jobs, but has never held a job for more than one month. The jobs she has had are in the helping fields with children or as a CNA. She had a felony conviction in 1999, and is not allowed to work with vulnerable people. She has obtained several such jobs, but when they do a background check, she is let go.

### **Case 2:**

Denise and her 14-year-old daughter receive MFIP. Denise is working but needs time off sometimes to visit her probation officer. Her boss is flexible when she needs the time off.

### **Case 3:**

Amy was first on MFIP as an 18-year-old parent. She finished high school and completed a CNA certificate. She has a poor work history. She recently worked at a hair cutting salon, but was fired for allegedly stealing from the employer. Amy was in jail in the past month for chemical dependency (CD) related issues, and has been in CD treatment several times in the past five years. She has a felony record for theft, which makes it hard for her to find a job. She also has an upcoming court appearance for her last arrest for theft from her employer.

### **Case 4:**

Dana is a 25-year-old single woman with one 3-year-old child. Dana has had her license revoked for driving under the influence (DUI). She was a truck driver, but she lost that license also because of the DUI. She is now looking for other types of work, but has not yet been able to find anything.

### **Case 5:**

Maria's request for asylum is pending and she is not eligible to apply for a work permit for another four months.

### **Case 6:**

Shannon's daughter Chelsea, a sophomore in high school, has been skipping school and now has her third court date this school year for truancy. Shannon is determined to accompany Chelsea to court but Shannon is scheduled to work that day and hasn't been able to find a co-worker to switch shifts with her. Shannon has talked with her boss about approving her absence but her boss is not willing to do this because he has already approved two other days off due to Chelsea's truancy. Shannon fears she will be fired if she doesn't show up for work.

### **Case 7:**

Tony is living with his wife and two children and is currently under house arrest. Tony lost his job due to his legal trouble and now cannot get out in the community to do job search because of the rules surrounding his house arrest.

### **Case 8:**

Aletha was involved in a bad motor vehicle accident last year. She was not at fault and has hired an attorney to win her compensation for her medical bills, lost wages, and pain and suffering. Aletha is back at work now, the case should be settled out of court, and she is no longer required at meetings regarding her case.

### **Case 9:**

Hillary and Greg are in the process of getting a divorce. They have two school-age children together. Hillary is employed full time and has had to take a lot of time off to meet with lawyers and arrange custody agreements. She has leave time available.

### **Case 10:**

Rochelle got a parking ticket last month while she ran an errand downtown and her parking meter expired. She paid the fine and has not had any other legal issues. Her spouse and children also do not have any legal issues.

## Decision Points

### Case 1

**Level 2: Family members' legal issues often interfere with participant's employment.**

Kendra is able to get jobs, but when they do background checks, she is let go because of her felony.

### Case 2

**Level 3: Family members' legal issues minimally affect participant's employment.**

Denise can work, but needs time off occasionally for probation requirements.

### Case 3

**Level 2: Family members' legal issues often interfere with participant's employment.**

Amy has a felony conviction and still has ongoing legal issues.

### Case 4

**Level 2: Family members' legal issues often interfere with participant's employment.**

Dana had a professional driver's license for trucking but lost this due to DUI.

### Case 5

**Level 1: Participant's legal issues prohibit employment.**

Maria is legally forbidden to work in the U.S. until a work permit has been approved.

### Case 6

**Level 2: Family members' legal issues often interfere with participant's employment.**

Shannon's employer does not approve of her taking time off from work to be with her daughter for her multiple truancy court appearances.

### Case 7

**Level 1: Participant's legal issues prohibit employment.**

Tony is unable to look for work due to his house arrest.

### Case 8

**Level 4: Family members' legal issues do not affect participant's employment.**

Aletha's current legal issue is being handled by her attorney and does not require any time away from work.

**Case 9**

**Level 3: Family members' legal issues minimally affect participant's employment.**

Hillary's divorce is having a minor impact on her job performance.

**Case 10**

**Level 5: Family has no current legal issues.**

No one in Rochelle's family has legal issues.



# **SAFE LIVING ENVIRONMENT**

Area #9

Level	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Safe Living Environment</b> <i>Effect of participant's perception of household and neighborhood safety on employment</i></p>
5	<p><b>Participant feels safe at home and in the neighborhood.</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family interactions are nonviolent <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Participant considers the neighborhood very safe <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Crime is rare</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Participant feels safe from violence most of the time at home and in the neighborhood.</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All household members avoid or leave unsafe situations <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Participant considers the neighborhood safe most of the time</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Participant feels some threat of violence at home or in the neighborhood, but it minimally affects employment.</b></p>
	<p>For example,</p> <p><b>Home</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant feels safe enough to go out to work, leaving other family members at home</li> <li>• Abuser is currently incarcerated or a safe distance away</li> <li>• Abuser is developing skills to interact nonviolently</li> </ul> <p><b>Neighborhood</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant feels safe enough to go out to work, traveling through neighborhood</li> <li>• Neighborhood is a relatively safe place to live</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Participant feels home or neighborhood is dangerous, but is either working or has initiated interventions.</b></p>
	<p>For example,</p> <p><b>Home</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A safety plan is being followed or the participant is working with an advocate</li> <li>• Frequent battered women's shelter visits</li> <li>• Children or vulnerable adults are placed in a stable situation outside the home</li> <li>• Participant has begun to engage with helping agencies like a domestic violence advocate or battered women's shelter</li> <li>• An Order for Protection is in place</li> </ul> <p><b>Neighborhood</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shootings, break-ins, or drug dealing occur in the neighborhood</li> <li>• Police are called to respond to violence in the neighborhood</li> <li>• Neighborhood watch or block club</li> </ul>
1	<p><b>Participant feels home or neighborhood is dangerous and is not working, and no interventions have begun.</b></p>
	<p>For example,</p> <p><b>Home</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A violent abuser threatens the safety of household members</li> <li>• Police are frequently called to respond to violence in the home</li> <li>• There is no safety plan or Order for Protection</li> </ul> <p><b>Neighborhood</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Police are called to respond to violence in the neighborhood</li> <li>• Participant or family members are victims or impacted by frequent shootings, break-ins, or drug dealing in the neighborhood</li> </ul>

**Reason for level chosen:**

## Sample Questions for Safe Living Environment

*Ask questions that will help you figure out whether there are violence issues that affect the participant's ability to work.*

*Here are some questions you might use to get started.*

*If you are not sure of the level, check the matrix for ideas for questions that will help you decide between levels. Focus on the bold level descriptions first.*

- Do you feel safe from violence at home?
  - *(If no)* Are you working with a domestic violence advocate, or some other professional helper?
  - *(If no)* Do you currently have an Order for Protection against anyone? *(If yes)* Why and against whom?
  - *(If no)* Have you received services from a domestic abuse center or women's shelter? *(If yes)* What happened?
- Do you feel safe in your neighborhood? *(If no)* Why not?
  - How often are the police called to your neighborhood?
  - Do you participate in a neighborhood watch organization or block club?

### Follow-up Question

- How does this affect your ability to work or look for work?

## Safe Living Environment IS:

- A family-based area
- The effect of participant's perception of household and neighborhood safety on employment
- Dependent on the participant's feelings about the safety of the home and neighborhood, unless there is verifiable evidence of greater danger
- A rating of the greatest danger in either the neighborhood or the domestic situation

## Safe Living Environment IS NOT:

- The condition of the structure of the house or apartment where they reside (note in Housing)
- The safety of the work environment (note in Other Barriers)
- Abuse committed by the participant (note in Other Barriers)

## Choosing the Best Safe Living Environment Level

1. Safe Living Environment includes both safety in the home and safety in the neighborhood. Choose the level that best describes **the aspect of the environment presenting the greater difficulty**. For example, if the family is safe from violence within the home but lives in a dangerous neighborhood, then chose a level based on the dangerous neighborhood or vice versa.
2. At **Level 1**, the participant feels that the home or neighborhood is dangerous, is not working, and has not initiated interventions.
3. At **Level 2**, the participant feels that the home or neighborhood is dangerous, but is working or has initiated interventions or both. The perceived level of danger may be the same in **Levels 1 and 2**.
4. At **Level 3**, the participant feels that there is some threat of violence but it is less than at Levels 1 and 2 and it minimally affects employment.

## Notes on Safe Living Environment

1. DHS publishes a **Domestic Violence Information** brochure (DHS 3477-ENG) that discusses treatment of domestic violence issues in MFIP at: <http://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Legacy/DHS-3477-ENG>.
2. Abuse can be life threatening. **Treat abuse reports seriously**, even when in doubt about the report. Refer the participant to a domestic violence advocate for help in developing a safety plan. It is better to overestimate rather than underestimate the danger.
3. A good **working relationship with agencies and advocates** with expertise in domestic violence prevention helps when participants need referrals for services. Working together with these professionals can be critical in ensuring participants' safety. Domestic violence advocates and programs **do not share confidential information**.
4. People are much more willing to talk about neighborhood safety than domestic safety. They will tell about violence outside the home more than violence in the home.
5. The rating should be based on the participant's perception of safety, therefore **abuse or neglect committed by the participant** is not a factor in this area. This should be recorded under Other Barriers. If Child Protection is involved, rate in the Legal area. Remember, job counselors are mandatory reporters.
6. The level chosen in this area depends to a large degree on the participant's feelings about the safety of the home or neighborhood, unless there is **verifiable evidence** that the participant is giving inaccurate or incomplete information, for example, underestimating the danger. If the participant says that she feels absolutely safe in her home, but it is known that she has been in a battered women's shelter twice in the last month, that information should be used in selecting a level. If she recently lost her job because of the chaos of violence and moving between home and shelter, the choice would be Level 1. On the other hand, when the participant's assessment is that the issue is more serious than other evidence suggests, her opinion should be used to assign a level.
7. In cases of abuse, the abuser does not necessarily reside in the home and may be a "**friend**" or **acquaintance** rather than a family member. Another category of abuse reported by job counselors is adult females being abused by their own teenaged children.

8. Sometimes violence in the home or neighborhood makes it impossible to work. However, sometimes it does not make work impossible but does determine **which shifts a participant can work**. For example, gang violence in the neighborhood may make it necessary for the participant to be home with the children at certain times or may make it impossible to use the bus during certain hours.
9. **Some individuals and groups do not view** a man hitting his wife or a male child telling his mother what to do, as physical or verbal abuse. The person being abused may accept it as normal and keep quiet unless hurt so severely that she is hospitalized.
10. Some communities prefer to rely on elders to help abused community members, and **not to go outside the community** to police or domestic violence advocates. On occasion, however, when community elders or other leaders have agreed to help abused participants they failed to provide the follow-up needed to ensure their safety.
11. Abuse in the home or violence in the neighborhood may have significant effects on the behavior of the children. These should be recorded in the **Child Behavior** area.
12. The mental health of a participant or the children may suffer when abuse is present or the neighborhood is violent. Post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, and depression can result. Abusers may have mental health issues or chemical dependency issues which contribute to their abusive behavior. This should be recorded in the **Health** area.
13. Many participants live in unsafe neighborhoods only because **housing** is more **affordable** there. Resolving these safety issues may require the participant to find different housing.

## Examples of Safe Living Environment Levels

- Level 5:** Sienna, a divorced mother of two young children, has just moved to a neighborhood she considers very safe for the family. She is comfortable having the kids play outside with other neighbors' children. The father of her children is very involved in their lives, as a financial and an emotional support.
- Level 4:** Rachel, a single mother with a 1-year-old girl, has moved in with her mother. Her former boyfriend used to abuse her while she was pregnant, so she decided to move away. She likes the neighborhood where she lives now. Her former boyfriend tried to get back together with her, but she refused. He has stopped threatening her and she feels safe from violence most of the time.
- Level 3:** Keith and Sarah moved to Minneapolis from Chicago last year. They relocated to keep Keith away from his circle of friends and their negative influence on him. Since the move, Keith has been trying to stay sober and keep from abusing Sarah and the children, as he often would while intoxicated. They like living in Minneapolis. They consider the city to be a lot safer than Chicago. Keith attends AA meetings regularly and Sarah feels safe enough to look for work.
- Level 2:** Ellen and her two children have been placed in a battered women's shelter after her ex-husband beat her and threatened to kill the family. An Order for Protection is in place as well as a safety plan.
- Level 1:** Katie and her child have been living with her boyfriend for over 6 months. During that period, the police have been called by neighbors at least a dozen times due to their heated arguments, screaming, and shouting obscenities. She admits he has tried to choke her twice and once knocked her out. Katie hasn't been able to get a job because of the violence at home.

## **Scenarios: Safe Living Environment**

### **Case 1:**

Mary and her three children (ages 16, 12, 11) are living in an apartment in St. Paul. Although the apartment building is nice and well maintained, it is in a neighborhood that has gone downhill. There are incidents of shootings, break-ins, and drug dealings in the neighborhood. Mary works the night shift at a nearby fast food restaurant. She worries about the safety of the children while she's away. The oldest child is in charge while she is at work.

### **Case 2:**

Rachel was first on MFIP as an 18-year-old parent. She is now 24 years old and has 3 children. Rachel was in jail in the past month for chemical dependency (CD) issues, and has been in CD treatment several times in the past five years. The father of her two youngest children is chemically dependent and has threatened and abused her. He cared for their children while she was in jail, but now he is in jail for a short time for a DUI. He continues to threaten her with violence and she is afraid. There is no Order for Protection, and she remains in contact with him. She was working, but was fired recently when he came to her workplace and threatened her.

### **Case 3:**

Kari is currently living in her mother's home and has one child who is 8 years old. She pays her mother \$300 per month to live there. This is a temporary living arrangement until Kari can get on her feet. She moved in with her mother a couple of months ago because she was fleeing an abusive relationship. She has an Order for Protection against her ex-boyfriend but still worries that he may try to find her. She has had no contact with him since the order was filed. She is working on a safety plan with her job counselor.

### **Case 4:**

Mai and her 3-year-old daughter are living with her parents. She is working part time and attending school to become a Medical Assistant. It was too difficult living on her own because of money issues and she was getting concerned about the neighborhood after she learned of a recent drug house raid on her block. She has a very good relationship with her parents and they are fine with this temporary living arrangement. There are no safety issues in their neighborhood and no violence issues in the family.

### **Case 5:**

Valerie and her two children (ages 5 and 3) moved to Minnesota a year ago to get away from the children's father, who had been incarcerated after assaulting her. Valerie is working part time at the grocery store in her neighborhood. The children's father has since followed her to Minnesota and is now living with her. Although there have been no reoccurrences of violence, she feels the situation is dangerous but has not sought help.

### **Case 6:**

Michelle lives with her 4-year-old child, and was recently divorced. She and her ex-husband maintain a good relationship. He has regular visitation and is willing to help out when Michelle is in need. This has come in handy for when she has had to work overtime at night (he keeps the child overnight). The only drawback to working overtime at night is that she has concerns about safety at night, although she has not heard about any of violent incidents in the neighborhood.

### **Case 7:**

Judy, a single mom of two children, characterizes her neighborhood as a very safe, good neighborhood and feels safe in her home. They live in an area where there is a neighborhood police office. However, the police have never been called to her knowledge and there has been no violence in her home or neighborhood.

### **Case 8:**

Sue and her partner Sam have been together off and on for several years. They have three children together. Sam has been very violent towards her. She and the children have been forced to seek help at battered women's shelters in the past and were living with a friend. Sam served time in prison because he severely beat her. He was just recently released and Sue knows that he has been looking for them and she is very frightened. She has an Order for Protection and entered the women's shelter today.

### **Case 9:**

Cali left an abusive relationship a year ago and moved across town to a nice neighborhood with her kids. She had been living with the father of her two children. He was an alcoholic and would threaten and physically harm her when

he was drinking. Cali developed a safety plan with her job counselor and moved to her new apartment with the help of a women's advocacy organization. Cali is now working full time for an insurance company and feels that she has transformed her life. She feels empowered and is no longer afraid, even though he once called to threaten her.

## Decision Points

### Case 1

**Level 2: Participant feels home or neighborhood is dangerous, but is working or has initiated interventions.**

There are occasional shootings, break-ins, and drug dealing occur in the neighborhood which worry Mary, but she continues to work.

### Case 2

**Level 1: Participant feels home or neighborhood is dangerous and is not working, and no interventions have begun.**

Rachel's situation continues to be violent. There is no Order for Protection and the abuser continues to threaten her, even though he is currently in jail. She continues to have contact with him.

### Case 3

**Level 2: Participant feels home or neighborhood is dangerous, but is working or has initiated interventions.**

Kari has an Order for Protection and ex-boyfriend has not made contact or threatened her since she filed it. Kari still worries that he might try to find her, but she has initiated interventions.

### Case 4

**Level 5: Participant feels safe at home and in the neighborhood.**

Mai characterizes the neighborhood as safe and family interactions are nonviolent.

### Case 5

**Level 2: Participant feels home or neighborhood is dangerous, but is working or has initiated interventions.**

Violent abuser threatens safety of household members; no involvement of helping agencies in violent household situation. Valerie has no safety plan but she is still employed at present.

### Case 6

**Level 3: Participant feels a threat of violence at home or in the neighborhood, but it minimally affects employment.**

Michelle has mild concern about neighborhood although there are no known incidents. Participant has some reservations about travel through neighborhood so would not be Level 4.

### Case 7

**Level 5: Participant feels safe at home and in the neighborhood.**

There has never been violence in Judy's home or neighborhood and she feels safe.

**Case 8**

**Level 2: Participant feels home or neighborhood is dangerous, but is working or has initiated interventions.**

Sue and her children are being threatened with violence. They have taken some steps to safety, which includes an Order for Protection, going to a women's shelter and moving in with a friend.

**Case 9**

**Level 4: Participant feels safe from violence most of the time at home and in the neighborhood.**

Cali has been living in a good neighborhood and away from her former abuser for a year. She no longer feels afraid.

# HEALTH

Area #10

Level	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Health</b> <i>Effect of physical, mental, and chemical health of family members on participant's employment</i></p>
<b>5</b>	<b>Family is healthy and participates in preventive health measures.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally good health for all family members <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Preventive measures include eating healthy, exercising, getting regular check-ups, not smoking, and using alcohol in moderation (for adults) or not all <b>AND</b></li> <li>• If participant is working, employer offers time off for medical reasons, either sick, personal, or unpaid leave</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>Family has no physical, mental, or chemical health concerns that affect participant's employment.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally good health for all family members <b>AND</b></li> <li>• If participant is working, employer offers time off for medical reasons, either sick, personal or unpaid leave <b>AND</b></li> <li>• If participant is working, no risk of losing employment due to health concerns that occasionally interfere with work attendance or performance</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>Family has physical, mental, or chemical health concerns that minimally affect participant's employment.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following any treatment plans, including taking medication <b>OR</b></li> <li>• Any chronic conditions of family members are managed <b>OR</b></li> <li>• If participant is working, slight risk of losing employment due to health concerns that occasionally interfere with work attendance or performance <b>OR</b></li> <li>• On leave from employment due to medical condition <b>OR</b></li> <li>• If participant is not employed, health concerns do not prevent job search</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Family has physical, mental, or chemical health concerns that often interfere with participant's employment.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work absences due to health concerns or treatment place client at risk of losing job</li> <li>• Access to health care provider limited by appointment times or clinic locations</li> <li>• Lack of access to culturally appropriate and acceptable care</li> <li>• Poor work history because of health issues</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<b>Family has physical, mental, or chemical health concerns that prevent participant's employment.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incapacitated or ill family member needing care</li> <li>• Cannot care for self and personal care is not available</li> <li>• Medication or treatment does not control condition</li> <li>• Not compliant with treatment plan, leading to negative health consequences</li> </ul>

**Reason for level chosen:**

## Sample Questions for Health

*Ask questions that will help you figure out whether the health of the participant or a family member affects the participant's ability to work.*

*Here are some questions you might use to get started.*

*If you are not sure of the level, check the matrix for ideas for questions that will help you decide between levels. Focus on the bold level descriptions first.*

- How is your general health? Do you have concerns about your health?
- Do you or any family members have any medical conditions that affect your ability to work or look for work?
- Who provides your medical care?
- Do you have a regular doctor?
- Is there any type of health care that you or a family member need but are not getting? *(If yes)* What is it? Why aren't you getting it?
- Do you need to take medications daily? *(If yes)* Do you take them?
- Do you or anyone in your household use tobacco? Alcohol or drugs? *(If yes)* How much and how often?
- *(If you suspect health concerns that the participant has not mentioned-for example, depression or bipolar disorder- you could ask a general question like the following)* What is a typical day like for you?

### Follow-up Question

- How does your health affect your ability to work or look for work?

## Health IS:

- A family-based area
- The effect of physical, mental, and chemical health of family members on the participant's employment

## Health IS NOT:

- Ability to pay for health care coverage

## Choosing the Best Health Level

1. While the actual degree of the family's health is of concern in this area, it is important to remember that the level is primarily determined by how much health affects the participant's employment. It is possible that two participants could have the same health condition and be scored differently for such reasons as how accommodating their employer is or how willing they are to follow treatment protocols.
2. At **Level 1**, the health condition in the family is so severe that it makes employment or job search impossible for the participant. At **Level 2** the participant is employed or job searching but the health issue frequently interferes.
3. When the participant claims to have physical, mental and chemical health issues that would make them unable to get employment, even if they have no documentation, score them as **Level 1**.
4. Refusal to take medication or follow a treatment protocol may be a self-imposed barrier. If effective medical treatment is available but participants or family members do not use it, it may be impossible for the participants to work and they are **Level 1**.
5. At **Level 3**, the family's health issues are under control enough that they are able to work or do job search. Participants still employed but on leave from their job for medical reasons are also at **Level 3**.
6. At **Level 4**, no one in the family has a chronic health condition.
7. At both **Level 4** and **Level 5**, all family members are generally in good health. The primary distinction is that at **Level 5** the family practices preventive health measures.

8. A pregnant woman can be scored anywhere from a Level 1 to Level 5 depending on how the pregnancy – in combination with all family health issues – is affecting her ability to work.

## Notes on Health

### Referrals and Distinctions among Types of Health Issues

1. The EM is not intended to be an in-depth assessment for mental illness or chemical dependency.
2. Social stressors can cause physical symptoms. The **boundary between physical and mental** can be thin, and different for different cultures. Participants may interpret their mental health issues as physical health symptoms, in terms of American medical practices.
3. Use the EM to **identify the possible presence of a health issue**, without necessarily narrowing it to a specific type – physical, mental, or chemical health – or diagnosis. To determine whether it is a physical, mental or chemical issue, **refer the participant** to a medical professional who can make the diagnosis.
4. For example, when not sure whether the participant's symptoms indicate exhaustion or depression, refer the participant to a **general practitioner**.
5. Some job counselors have found that referring participants with mental health issues is more likely to work if it described in terms of **getting help with stress**. Because of the stigma surrounding mental illness, participants may be more willing to seek help for physical symptoms.
6. Job counselors are not expected to be chemical dependency counselors, mental health practitioners, or medical professionals, but should develop a **network of professionals to whom they can refer participants**.
7. The focus of the Health area is on **how** physical, mental and chemical **health affects employment**. It is possible that someone may have a relatively serious health issue that currently has no clear effect on employment. Some people with mental illness can mask their symptoms and work effectively.
9. Some people refuse to take **medications** or **follow through** with referral or treatment, making themselves less employable. Sometimes treatment is stopped because of scheduling conflicts when the person gets full-time work or has other family responsibilities.

10. Mental, chemical, and physical health issues commonly cause **barriers in other areas**, for example, **Workplace Skills, Safe Living Environment, and Legal**.
11. Ability to pay for health care coverage is covered as a basic need in the **Financial** area. An addiction like gambling can cause financial problems, but is also considered a mental health issue and relevant to the Health area.

### **Accuracy and Completeness of Participant Reports on Health**

11. **Denial** is often a central feature of chemical dependency. Participants will likely not talk about or admit to chemical health problems, especially at intake. If they do later, the situation may be written into case notes and a referral may be made, but the EM level cannot be changed after the EM has been completed.
12. Job counselors should be alert to issues that may affect the accuracy of **what participants disclose about their mental health**. The stigma surrounding mental illness and the fear that their children could be removed may keep participants from talking about mental health issues, especially in some African American, American Indian, and immigrant communities or other small communities. On the other hand, some participants may overstate the extent of their issues to avoid participating in employment-related activities.
13. Immigrants who come from situations where surviving occupies most of their time and energy may have mental health issues (for example, post-traumatic stress disorder) that they do not or cannot identify when they arrive in the U.S. Having been struggling for **survival**, they may not recognize a mental health issue or think that it merits mention. As a working relationship with the job counselor develops over time, they may be more able or willing to disclose these issues.

### **Availability of Culturally Appropriate Health Care**

14. While **culturally appropriate care** is generally available in metro areas, it is less available in some parts of rural Minnesota which may make the health issues a greater barrier to employment.
15. Even when culturally appropriate and acceptable physical, mental, and chemical health care is available where the participant lives, it may be **inaccessible** because the participant does not know how to navigate the health care system. Job counselors may need to provide assistance in this area.

## Examples of Health Levels

- Level 5:** Teresa is a working single mother with two children. She takes both children for annual physicals and they are current on their vaccinations. Teresa also gets an annual physical and they all visit the dentist twice a year. Teresa makes sure all family members get plenty of exercise and eat a healthy diet.
- Level 4:** Carrie, Sam and their daughter are all in good health. Carrie and Sam both have sick leave benefits through their employers.
- Level 3:** Rachel had a substance abuse problem about 2 years ago. After going through treatment and attending regular support group meetings, she has been sober for over a year. Rachel is employed, but doesn't have sick leave benefits.
- Level 2:** Rob, a single father has been very depressed after his mother's death. He has seen a doctor and is currently on medication. The medication makes him groggy and this has caused him to be late or absent from work a number of times.
- Level 1:** Karla has been in treatment a number of times to address her chemical dependency, but her doctor discovered she also suffers from mental health issues, especially depression. She does not yet have a treatment plan or take medication to control the depression. She is barely able to do tasks of daily living at this point and is not able to get a job.

## Scenarios: Health

### Case 1:

Chantelle is a single mom with three kids. She started working two months ago because all of her children are in school full time now. Her youngest child has moderate asthma, and she has already had to leave work to take him to the doctor. He has attacks 3 to 4 times a year in which he needs to be seen by a doctor. Her employer allowed her to take time without pay to go to the doctor. Her employer was aware of her situation when he hired her and seems willing to work with her around her son's illness.

### **Case 2:**

Ana is a single mother with five minor children. She works 30 hours per week and earns \$1200 per month. Two of the children have chronic health problems and she has had to stay home or leave work early on multiple occasions to care for them. Her employer has been sympathetic until recently but now she fears losing her job as she has no one to count on for back-up.

### **Case 3:**

Jeanine has bi-polar disorder and has also been diagnosed with ADHD. She is on medication, but is not yet working, because of the medication's side effects. She is working on an application for SSI, and she is on MFIP and has health insurance through Medical Assistance. Jeanine has had a number of minimum wage jobs, but none of them lasting very long, probably due to her illness.

### **Case 4:**

Linda is the mother of two children (ages 12 and 10). She and her children have no health issues. She is not currently working, and lives with her mother in a mobile home. Linda and the kids have regular check-ups. Both children participate in sports activities at school and Linda makes sure the family eats a healthy diet.

### **Case 5:**

Lila is a single woman with one child who is 7 years old. Her son, John, was just diagnosed with severe autism, and Lila takes him to a psychologist once a week during school hours to work on behavior management at home and at school. John often acts out at school and she is often called to the school to help manage his behavior. Lila is unable to work and feels that until her son's behavior gets better, she cannot get a job. She last worked two years ago and had to quit after her child care provider would no longer accept her son at the center. Lila feels that even if she could find employment, she would have a very difficult time finding appropriate child care for John.

### **Case 6:**

Janice is in her late twenties and had her first child 8 weeks ago. Her doctor has released her to work. Both she and the child are healthy and she did not have any complications. She is employed at a local retailer and is taking a leave through FMLA.

### **Case 7:**

Betsy is the single mother of three children. She is in the employment office today to develop an employment plan. Betsy appears to be in generally good health, but tells you she cannot do job search because of chronic urinary tract infections.

### **Case 8:**

Sabrina was awarded custody of her two children after she got divorced two years ago. She has been struggling with depression for the last year and is not working. She was hospitalized due to her depression three months ago. Her doctor prescribed medication for her, but she admits that she hasn't been taking it regularly because she says it makes her feel 'foggy'. She complains she cannot take care of kids while taking the medication because of the side effects.

### **Case 9:**

Kayla had an emergency appendectomy two weeks ago and is taking pain medication. She is not supposed to lift anything for six weeks and her recovery is expected to take two months. She's on leave from her job at a warehouse and is expecting to return in two months. Her mom is staying with her to help her take care of her 7-month-old son so she can follow her doctor's recommended treatment plan.

### **Case 10:**

Cassandra has ADHD, is a recovering methamphetamine user, and has spent some time in jail. She completed treatment for CD and violence issues last year and has maintained sobriety. She has six children and appears to be truly dedicated to her sobriety, nonviolence, and to family unity and mental health. Currently she is working with a CD counselor, regularly attending AA meetings, and family therapy with her children. She is also taking medication for ADHD as prescribed. Cassandra is only working part time so she can attend her counseling sessions and AA meetings.

### **Case 11:**

Mohamed is in the office to develop his employment plan. Mohamed, his wife Sofiyo and their three children recently arrived in the U.S. from a refugee camp in Kenya. Conditions in Kenya were fair, but the children developed illnesses, such as respiratory problems and infections. Since their arrival, they have been seeing a specialist regularly and the conditions have been controlled. Mohamed has been looking for work, but Sofiyo wants to remain home with the children until she is sure they are well.

## Decision Points

### Case 1

**Level 3: Family has physical, mental, or chemical health concerns that minimally affect participant's employment.**

Chantelle's son has moderate asthma with attacks and needs to see a doctor 3 to 4 times per year. Chantelle's boss is being flexible to allow her to take time from work to deal with son's medical condition.

### Case 2

**Level 2: Family has physical, mental, or chemical health concerns that often interfere with participant's employment.**

Ana fears that she will lose her job due to absences to care for her children's health needs.

### Case 3

**Level 2: Family has physical, mental, or chemical health concerns that often interfere with participant's employment.**

Janine has a bi-polar disorder and ADHD, but she has been able to work on and off, and is currently working. Her illness causes her to miss work a lot so it is interfering with job performance. Her condition is not yet stabilized.

### Case 4

**Level 5: Family is healthy and participates in preventive health measures.**

All family members have good health and are taking preventive health measures.

### Case 5

**Level 1: Family has physical, mental, or chemical health concerns that prevent participant's employment.**

Lila's son has a documented medical condition that needs to be attended to. She is taking him to a psychologist once a week to help control behavior at home and school. Finding child care for him would be extremely difficult.

### Case 6

**Level 4: Family has no physical, mental, or chemical health concerns that affect participant's employment.**

Janice would be a Level 4. She is not currently working due to the recent birth of her child, but she is employed and both she and the new baby are healthy.

### Case 7

**Level 1: Family has physical, mental, or chemical health concerns that prevent participant's employment.**

Betsy cannot participate in job search with her current condition.

### **Case 8**

#### **Level 1: Family has physical, mental, or chemical health concerns that prevent participant's employment.**

Sabrina's depression is very serious and caused her to be hospitalized recently. She is not following the treatment plan prescribed by her doctor.

### **Case 9**

#### **Level 3: Family has physical, mental, or chemical health concerns that minimally affect participant's employment.**

Kayla is following her treatment plan and will be able to return to work once she has recovered from surgery.

### **Case 10**

#### **Level 3: Family has physical, mental, or chemical health concerns that minimally affect participant's employment.**

Cassandra is working on her CD and other health issues and they seem to be stabilized. She is following her treatment plans and is only working part time in order to continue her treatment. She cannot be at Level 4 because she has a chronic health condition.

### **Case 11**

#### **Level 3: Family has physical, mental, or chemical health concerns that minimally affect participant's employment.**

The children's health conditions have been controlled and they are regularly seeing the doctor. Mohamed's job search is not affected by their illness.

# **WORKPLACE SKILLS**

Area #11

<b>Workplace Skills</b>	
<i>Effect of self-management and job-seeking skills on participant's getting and keeping employment</i>	
<b>Level</b>	<p><b>Workplace skills include</b> decision making, communication, conflict resolution, problem solving, anger management, time management, crisis management, planfulness, relationship skills, prioritizing, grooming, and other capabilities that facilitate job performance.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Complete this area last, using information obtained from participant's responses to all other areas. Ask additional questions as needed.</p>
<b>5</b>	<b>Participant's workplace skills enhance current employment.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently employed <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Has proven ability to get, hold, and manage jobs <b>AND</b></li> <li>• No employment gaps for at least a year <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Any job changes are to jobs with better pay, better benefits, or a better match to abilities or interests <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Effectively manages routine and crisis situations</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>Participant's workplace skills support employment.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May or may not be currently employed</li> </ul> <p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anticipates problems, has back-up plans, and can problem solve in unpredictable circumstances</li> <li>• Makes good decisions about employment changes by securing another job before quitting previous job, getting a better paying job or job with better benefits, or finding a job that is a better match</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>Participant's workplace skills are adequate for employment.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May or may not be currently employed</li> </ul> <p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate or improving job seeking skills</li> <li>• Learning workplace skills so can now handle minor conflicts, time management issues, or problems at work with support</li> <li>• Workplace skills may be adequate for entry level employment, but may limit career advancement</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Participant's lack of workplace skills often interferes with employment.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May or may not be currently employed</li> </ul> <p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequently loses jobs because of absenteeism or not calling in when sick or tardy</li> <li>• Frequently cannot problem solve, resolve conflicts, or manage anger at work which causes job losses or disciplinary measures</li> <li>• Quits jobs impulsively</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<b>Participant's lack of workplace skills prevents employment.</b>
	<p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fails to manage time or anger so misses job interviews or is hostile at interview</li> <li>• Lacks budgeting and planning skills necessary to secure transportation to work or clothing for work</li> <li>• Lacks skills to effectively manage work activities such as returning phone calls or keeping a daily schedule</li> </ul>

**Reason for level chosen:**

## Sample Questions for Workplace Skills

*Ask questions that will help you figure out whether self-management and job-seeking skill level affect the participant's ability to get and keep employment.*

*Here are some questions you might use to get started.*

*If you are not sure of the level, check the matrix for ideas for questions that will help you decide between levels. Focus on the bold level descriptions first.*

- *(If not employed)* When were you last employed? How long did you work there?
- *(If not employed)* What steps do you plan to take to get a job?
- How did you get your last job?
- What is the longest any of your jobs lasted?
- How well do you get along with others (at work, at home, in general)?
- Describe a conflict you had with a co-worker or supervisor. How did you resolve it?
- What other kinds of problems come up at work?
- What do you do if someone “disrespects” you at work?
- Have you ever been fired? *(If yes)* What happened?
- Are you frequently late for appointments? Can you give me an example of what happened when you were late?

### Follow-up Question

- How does this affect your ability to work or look for work?

## Workplace Skills IS:

- A participant-based area
- Effect of self-management and job-seeking skills on the participant's getting and keeping employment
- Workplace skills include decision making, communication, conflict resolution, problem solving, anger management, time management, crisis management, managing priorities, planfulness, relationship skills, grooming and other capabilities that facilitate job performance

## Workplace Skills IS NOT:

- Participant's level of education or ability to read and write
- Inability to handle life situations due to health issues
- Religious or cultural preferences that limit employment in certain jobs, for example, religious dress, refusal to transport alcohol or handle pork, observing prayer times, and limited days of the week a participant is willing to work **if these issues create employment difficulties, note under Other Barriers**

## Choosing the Best Workplace Skills Level

1. At **Level 1**, some participants will be unable to obtain employment. Others at this level may be able to get a job, but they lose it very quickly.
2. At **Level 2**, a participant may decide to go to a doctor's appointment during work hours without notifying his employer and is in trouble when he returns.
3. **Level 3** should be used when the participant is trying to use new ways of communicating with a difficult supervisor and is solving minor problems before they escalate, instead of walking off the job as she has done in the past.
4. **Level 4** applies when a participant finds a back-up child care provider because their primary provider is late or absent.

## Notes on Workplace Skills

1. Job counselors may learn a great deal about Workplace Skills as the other areas of the EM are discussed. For example, they may hear participant stories about decision making, problem solving, conflicts and conflict resolution, and anger and anger management. This is why **Workplace Skills should be the last area covered** during the EM interview. Thus it would come after the discussion about why the person left previous jobs, how they handle making child care arrangements, and how they deal with child care and transportation to and from work. It is even possible that the job counselor will not need to ask specific questions about Workplace Skills because sufficient information will have already been obtained.
2. Workplace Skills can be a **“make or break” area for participants**. Those who have excellent Workplace Skills may succeed in the labor force despite deficits in a number of other areas. Conversely, those who lack Workplace Skills may find it difficult or impossible to obtain or maintain employment even though they possess considerable other strengths such as intelligence, a good education, and highly marketable skills.
3. Lack of workplace skills can negatively affect many other areas covered in the EM. For example, what appears to be an issue of workplace skills may reflect underlying physical, mental, or chemical health issues. When this is the case, the levels for both the Workplace Skills and **Health** areas should reflect this. An example is a person with uncontrolled diabetes who misses work with no notice.
4. Employability is affected by **local labor markets** that differ considerably around the state. Skills that make someone employable in one area would not necessarily ensure that they are employable in another part of the state.
  - For many participants, and frequently immigrants with limited English, whether or not they are employable will depend on how willing local employers are to hire them. In some areas and some types of work, employers make accommodations so that limited English skills do not inhibit employability.
  - African Americans continue to confront discrimination in hiring practices.
  - American Indians living on or near reservations usually will only find employment with tribes or reservations. Many jobs outside of this sector may be unattainable to them due to discrimination.

5. **Participants are not necessarily good at identifying their own Workplace Skills.** If asked directly, some may underestimate their skills and will need assistance in identifying strengths. Others may exaggerate the extent of their skills and will need help in developing a more realistic assessment of their strengths. Besides discussing the other ten areas of the EM, observing participants' behavior in structured job search or supported work are possible ways to help determine the extent of their workplace skills.
6. Some participants do not recognize that getting a job can be a difficult process that requires many skills. Some may be in denial about their relative lack of workplace skills and say they can get a job whenever they want to. In either case, participants may be **reluctant to engage in classes to learn such job search skills** as interviewing, cold calling, and resume writing. A short class in how work is structured and soft skills can make a big difference, as can job shadowing. Participants often improve their skills considerably if they can be persuaded to attend these classes.
7. Some people can do a job, but **cannot get along** with co-workers, a supervisor or deal with office politics. According to job counselors, some people miss work, come in late or leave early, and have an entitlement attitude.
8. **Standards of personal hygiene** vary from person to person and culture to culture. While addressing these issues can be uncomfortable, job counselors may need to explain workplace expectations of personal hygiene to some participants.
9. Some participants are unaware of how **generational and cultural differences** can affect employers. For example, older white men in suits and ties may be reluctant to hire younger job seekers who show up at an interview late, speaking slang, and sporting sagged pants, multiple tattoos, and nose rings.
10. Similarly, some participants may be unaware that **aspects of their lives that they consider private may create problems** with work or job search. For example, participants may have voice mail messages that would offend employers who call to offer an interview or job.
11. Young people and women in some cultural groups or people with certain health conditions are very **quiet and unassertive**. They may talk very little, talk in a monotone, or avoid eye contact. They may need coaching in how to act more assertively in a workplace while not making them think they need to change in their personal life.

## Immigrant Issues

12. Some job counselors coach **immigrants** on Workplace Skills like being punctual, telling them “You don’t have to change your sense of time in your personal life, but here’s how people act in the American workplace.”
13. **Immigrants** often do not understand slang, workplace talk, or complex sentences, but say “yes” when asked if they understand.

## Examples of Workplace Skills Levels

- Level 5:** Debra has 2-year-old twins with serious health issues. Although she loved her old job of three years and excelled at it while handling the responsibilities of a single parent, she needed a job that offered better family health benefits and just changed jobs last week.
- Level 4:** After two years at a job, Amelia changed jobs a few months ago to reduce the time spent commuting and increase the time spent with her children. The new job was at a homeless shelter where she routinely handled crisis situations. The new job had better pay and offered better employee benefits, but she was recently laid off when the shelter’s funding was decreased.
- Level 3:** Karen has poor communication and grooming skills but has held down a job in a warehouse for over three years. She is known for being on time and a good worker.
- Level 2:** Meghan has been fired from three jobs in the past year for swearing at her co-workers and supervisor.
- Level 1:** Jordan routinely stays up late partying with his friends and rarely gets up before noon. He has missed several job interviews because the employers scheduled the interviews in the morning.

## **Scenarios: Workplace Skills**

### **Case 1:**

Jenna has been working on and off for the past several years. Her children are all now in school full time and she has been working part time for the past 8 months at a dry cleaners. She likes her job, and has learned to prioritize her life. She takes her work responsibilities very seriously, and is learning how to juggle the demands of work and home life.

### **Case 2:**

Monique has three small children and lives with her mother. Monique has had many problems and crises in her life, and has a great deal of trouble showing up for appointments with her job counselor. She has never had a job. She is currently doing job search, but needs much assistance with this when she is in the office because she has trouble filling out job applications. She also does not dress appropriately to do job search and interviews, and her clothes are usually very dirty.

### **Case 3:**

Delilah is a recently divorced mother with three children who relocated from Las Vegas to Minneapolis for a better paying job. She is now working as a buyer for a clothing boutique in a trendy neighborhood in Minneapolis. She has been able to secure a home, find and retain employment for two years, and locate excellent services for her physically disabled child. She is currently attending night school to obtain a master's degree in retail management.

### **Case 4:**

The furnace went out in Angela's house two nights ago and she has been struggling to figure out how to get it fixed. Her landlord is out of town and she took her two children to stay with a friend. She didn't call in to work to let them know she wouldn't be there yesterday or today.

### **Case 5:**

Natalie has been searching for a job for more than 3 months and has been completing a few applications per week. This has left her frustrated and confused. On the applications she uses her cell phone number as her contact number and she often sees that she has missed calls, but employers won't leave messages. The voice mail greeting on Natalie's phone contains nearly two minutes of a song with inappropriate language.

### **Case 6:**

Ruben is a single father with 3 children (ages 11, 7, and 5). He had been employed for many years as a forklift driver for a warehouse across town. The company he was working for had cut employee health benefits and the manual labor was taking a toll on his back. Three months ago Ruben got a new job near his home managing the warehouse of a shipping company. This new job has better pay, excellent benefits, and allows him more flexibility to manage emergencies with the children.

### **Case 7:**

Roxanne, a single mother with a 2-year-old son, has a sporadic work history. She had been working as a temp at an insurance company for four months. Her sister decided to move to another state and asked Roxanne to help her relocate. Roxanne quit her job with two days notice and plans to stay with her sister for a few weeks. She figures she'll just get a new job when she returns home.

### **Case 8:**

Cindy, her boyfriend Tom and their two children live in St. Paul. Tom has been unemployed for two years. During this time he has developed a routine staying up late watching TV and playing video games and sleeping well into the afternoon. Tom was offered a job during the day shift in a call center but the job only lasted three weeks. He woke up at noon when he was supposed to start work at 8:00 a.m. and was fired. Six months ago the same thing happened with a different job.

### **Case 9:**

Jacqueline has been working for two years at a local factory. She has learned to manage her four children in the morning, get them to child care, and still get to work on time for her shift. Jacqueline's busy morning schedule doesn't leave much time for grooming and she sometimes looks unkempt. However, at the factory this is not a problem.

## Decision Points

### Case 1

#### **Level 3: Participant's workplace skills are adequate for employment.**

Jenna is learning to juggle both work and home. She has been at her job for 8 months. She would not be considered higher than Level 3 because she is continuing to develop her workplace skills.

### Case 2

#### **Level 1: Participant's lack of workplace skills prevents employment.**

Monique has trouble getting to appointments, doesn't know how to complete job applications, and is usually inappropriately dressed. She has never had a job.

### Case 3

#### **Level 5: Participant's workplace skills enhance current employment.**

Delilah meets all five bullet points in Level 5.

### Case 4

#### **Level 2: Participant's lack of workplace skills often interferes with participant's employment.**

Angela has been absent from work for two days without calling her employer. She had difficulty handling a crisis situation at home that is now affecting her work.

### Case 5

#### **Level 1: Participant's lack of workplace skills prevents employment.**

Natalie has been unable to get a job interview because of her inappropriate voice mail greeting.

### Case 6

#### **Level 5: Participant's workplace skills enhance current employment.**

Ruben has been working consistently and managing a family of 4 on his own. His new job offers better pay and benefits and more flexibility.

### Case 7

#### **Level 2: Participant's lack of workplace skills often interferes with employment.**

Roxanne quit her job impulsively to stay with her sister for a few weeks. She did not give much notice to her former employer and does not have a plan for when she returns.

### Case 8

#### **Level 2: Participant's lack of workplace skills often interferes with employment.**

Tom has the skills to gain employment but loses these jobs due to his inability to manage time.

**Case 9****Level 3: Participant's workplace skills are adequate for employment.**

Jacqueline's factory job fits her skills and she has learned to manage a morning routine.



## OTHER BARRIERS

The category “Other Barriers” is a place to make notes on any other important information on a participant’s attributes or situation that do not fit into the 11 EM areas, but will likely impact employability.

### **Attributes may include but are not limited to the participant’s:**

- Motivation and attitude
- English language ability
- Intelligence level
- Learning disability
- Self-imposed barriers such as “I won’t work for less than \$20 per hour”

### **Other issues may include but are not limited to:**

- Abuse or harassment by an employer or someone else in the workplace
- A participant who is abusing or neglecting their children
- Safety of the participant’s work environment
- Lack of spirituality that is important to their culture
- Not wanting to work until a child is in school
- Religious or cultural preferences that create employment difficulties, such as, religious dress, refusal to transport alcohol or handle pork, observing prayer times, and limited days of the week a participant is willing to work
- Their reputation in the community

Note: No level is assigned in Other Barriers.



## COMBINATION SCENARIOS

This section will give you an opportunity to apply the EM to case scenarios covering multiple areas.

### **Combination Scenario 1: Janelle**

Janelle and 3 of her siblings were placed in foster care at age 6 due to her mother's drug use. She moved between a few different foster homes and sometimes stayed with her aunt until she was emancipated at age 17 when she had her first child. She is now 20 years old with a 3-year-old daughter and is 6-months pregnant.

She has stayed in several homeless shelters over the past two years, but has been kicked out and banned from them all due to her abusive behavior towards other residents and staff. Currently, she is staying with her mother and five siblings in a 3-bedroom apartment. Her mother wants her out as soon as possible as she has Section 8 and does not want to put her Section 8 voucher in jeopardy if her landlord finds out she has additional people staying with her.

Janelle does not have a high school diploma but is interested in enrolling in a GED program. Libby reports she never liked school, but is beginning to realize how hard it is to find a decent job without a diploma or GED.

Janelle has a valid driver's license but does not have access to a vehicle. Her temporary home is on a bus line that runs often and goes downtown and she uses the bus for transportation.

Her primary reason for not working is that she has been unable to find child care. There is only one child care center in her area but it does not currently have openings and the waiting list is a year and a half long. She refuses to send her children to a home provider that she does not know because of a bad experience she had as a child. She would like her mom to do child care for her, but her brother (who has a criminal record) is living with her mom who would not be approved as a provider by the Child Care Assistance Program. Her mom is not able to take the kids without payment.

**Transportation:**

**Education:**

**Housing:**

**Dependent Care:**

## Decision Points for Janelle

### Transportation

**Level 3: Participant's transportation arrangements minimally affect employment.**

Janelle has a driver's license, but no car. She currently lives near a bus line but she does not have back-up transportation so she cannot be a Level 4.

### Education

**Level 1: Participant has no high school diploma, GED, or entry-level certificate and is not in school or training.**

Janelle has not finished high school. Although she is interested in enrolling in a GED program, she is not currently attending classes.

### Housing

**Level 2: Family lives in temporary housing, unsafe housing or is at risk of losing housing.**

Janelle is currently staying with her mother, but has been told she must be out soon, because her mother is risking her Section 8 voucher by having Janelle and her kids there.

### Dependent Care

**Level 1: Absent or unacceptable dependent care options prevent participant's employment.**

The two child care options Janelle is willing to use (a center or her mother) are not available to her and she refuses to use a home provider that she does not know.

## **Combination Scenario 2: Tanya**

Tanya is a divorced mother of two children (ages 8 and 6) living in a small apartment where she has lived for more than 5 years. She lives in subsidized housing and pays just \$39 per month for rent and about \$50 for utilities and she is current on these bills.

Her oldest son, Alex, began receiving SSI for Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) last year. Tanya is still receiving about \$200 in MFIP cash and full food assistance for all three of them. Tanya reports she has some money each month for discretionary spending, but she does not have any money in savings.

Alex is very difficult to handle. She has had trouble over the years finding child care for him and she gets many calls from the school for his behavior which makes it very difficult for her to work. Her son has been working with the school social worker, but his behavior continues to be a problem. Tanya is called to the school an average of twice a week.

Tanya has many close friends in town that she has known since high school. They get together regularly and their children attend the same school. She doesn't have connections to any other groups or organizations. One friend, who works in the office at the school, helped Tanya to get a job in the school cafeteria. She is a single mom too and Tanya really admires her and often goes to her for advice.

Tanya is currently having some issues with her ex-husband over custody of their children. She has sole custody of the children and her ex wants joint custody. She is meeting with lawyers occasionally and will have some upcoming court dates soon. She has needed to take some time off work for this reason, but her employer has been flexible for these occasional requests for time off.

**Social Support:**

**Child Behavior:**

**Financial:**

**Legal:**

## **Decision Points for Tanya**

### **Social Support**

#### **Level 4: Participant has consistent and effective social support.**

Tanya receives social support from her parents and long-time friends. One friend even helped her to get her job at the school.

### **Child Behavior**

#### **Level 2: Time necessary to deal with child(ren)'s behavior problems often interferes with participant's employment.**

Tanya's older child has behavior problems that require her to come to the school an average of twice a week.

### **Financial**

#### **Level 4: Family income is stable and pays for more than basic living expenses.**

Tanya has enough money to pay bills, her income is stable, and she has some money for discretionary spending.

### **Legal**

#### **Level 3: Family members' legal issues often interfere with participant's employment.**

Tanya has some pending legal issues regarding custody of her children. She needs occasional time off work to deal with this, and her boss has been flexible.

### **Combination Scenario 3: Angel**

Angel applied for MFIP when she was pregnant with her first child at age 18. Angel now has three children (ages 7, 5 and 2.)

Angel shares housing with her boyfriend who is not the father of any of her three children. They live in a neighborhood with occasional crime. Angel does not let the kids play outside by themselves, and reports she does not walk alone at night in her neighborhood. She says that she and her boyfriend have a good relationship, but she says he sometimes criticizes her cooking and her appearance. He has never been violent towards her. He works nights at a distribution center.

Angel's living situation has not been stable. Angel and her boyfriend pay market rent. She pays \$500 towards rent and utilities. In the past year Angel and the children have moved many times. Angel has shared housing with her mother, another relative, and a boyfriend. She has also moved between rural and metro counties. Six months ago she was homeless with her children for a few months.

Angel has finished high school and reports getting her certified nursing assistant (CNA) certificate. She is currently unemployed. She has worked on and off, but never lasted very long at any one job. Angel often loses jobs due to absenteeism and tardiness. She last worked casual hours at a nursing home until her family moved last month. She is currently looking for another nursing home job.

Her primary reason for not working is that she has been unable to find child care. There is only one child care center in her area but it does not currently have openings and the waiting list is a year and a half long. She refuses to send her children to a home provider that she does not know because of a bad experience she had as a child. She would like her mom to do child care for her, but her brother (who has a criminal record) is living with her mom who would not be approved as a provider by the Child Care Assistance Program. Her mom is not able to take the kids without payment.

#### **Safe Living Environment:**

**Housing:**

**Education:**

**Workplace Skills:**

**Dependent Care:**

## **Decision Points for Angel**

### **Safe Living Environment**

**Level 3: Participant feels some threat of violence at home or in the neighborhood, but it minimally affects employment.**

Angel's boyfriend is not violent towards her, although he is sometimes critical of her. She reports occasional crime in the neighborhood.

### **Housing**

**Level 2: Family lives in temporary housing, unsafe housing, or is at risk of losing housing.**

Angel has moved multiple times in the past year, even being homeless for a period of time.

### **Education**

**Level 3: Participant has high school diploma, GED, or entry-level certificate.**

Angel has finished high school and has a CNA certificate.

### **Workplace Skills**

**Level 2: Participant's lack of workplace skills often interferes with employment.**

Angel has worked in the past, but has trouble keeping jobs due to tardiness and absenteeism.

### **Dependent Care**

**Level 1: Absent or unacceptable dependent care options prevent participant's employment.**

The two child care options Angel is willing to use (a center or her mother) are not available to her and she refuses to use a home provider that she does not know.

#### **Combination Scenario 4: Amber**

Amber was placed in foster care at age 12 when her mother remarried and Amber could not get along with her stepfather. She aged out of foster care at age 18 and is now 36 years old. She currently lives with her five children (ages 18, 16, 14, 13, and 8) and two grandchildren in a 4-bedroom rental home. Amber has Section 8 housing and is current on her rent and utility bills. She says the house is in good condition and the landlord is usually fast with maintenance requests.

She receives a full MFIP grant for herself and two of her children. Her 8-year-old receives SSI for ADHD. Amber's 18-year-old has a 2-year-old child, and is enrolled in a GED program, while her 16-year-old has a 6-month-old baby, and is enrolled in a Teen Parenting program through one of the local high schools. Both girls also receive MFIP.

Her 14 and 13-year-old attend the same middle school. She is called frequently to their school due to the children's constant bullying and misbehavior. Her 8-year-old son has been suspended several times. Amber states that on many days she does not get out of bed and just wants to sleep all day.

#### **Child Behavior:**

#### **Health:**

#### **Housing:**

## **Decision Points for Amber**

### **Child Behavior**

**Level 2: Time necessary to deal with child(ren)'s behavior problems often interferes with participant's employment.**

Three of Amber's children have behavior problems that are requiring her to go to the school frequently.

### **Health**

**Level 2: Family has physical, mental, or chemical health concerns that often interfere with participant's employment.**

Amber's 8-year-old suffers from ADHD which is contributing to his misbehavior at school. Also, Amber seems to be struggling with an undiagnosed health concern as many days she does not get out of bed.

### **Housing**

**Level 3: Family has stable and safe housing that is subsidized formally or informally.**

Amber has Section 8 and reports her housing is in good condition. She is also current on her rent and utility bills.

## **Combination Scenario 5: Rochelle**

Rochelle is a divorced mother of two children, Sammy (age 8) and Shawn (age 9). Her older son was born shortly after her 21st birthday. She is currently living with her parents and pays them \$200 per month for rent. She moved in with her parents 8 months ago following an eviction. Rochelle was behind three months in her rent payments. Living at her parents is a bit crowded. The children share a small bedroom and Rochelle has her own room. Rochelle feels very fortunate to have such supportive parents who allowed her and the children to move in.

Rochelle is currently working part time at a local high school in food service. She has only been there a few months and is not eligible for benefits. She earns \$9 an hour and her monthly take home pay totals \$500. She also receives around \$100 in MFIP cash and the full food portion for a family of three. Rochelle doesn't receive any child support from her ex-husband. Rochelle reports that this income is sufficient to meet most of their needs, but they have nothing left after paying necessary bills.

Rochelle's younger child suffers from asthma and she often gets calls at work to come and pick him up from school. In the few months that she has had this job, it has happened six times. So far, her employer has tried to be understanding; however, the last time she had to leave work her boss told her that co-workers have complained about having to pick up the slack when she leaves during the lunch rush. Rochelle and Shawn are in good health and both boys see a pediatrician for regular check-ups.

Rochelle lives in an area without public transportation. She has a driver's license and owns an older vehicle. She pays \$60 per month for insurance and about \$60 per month for gas. The car is reliable and her mother could give her and the boys rides as a back-up if something happened to the car.

She has many close friends in town that she has known since high school. They get together regularly and their children attend the same school. Rochelle doesn't have connections to any other groups or organizations. One friend, who works in the office at the school, helped Rochelle to get her job in the cafeteria. She is a single mom too and Rochelle really admires her and often goes to her for advice.

**Housing:**

**Social Support:**

**Financial:**

**Health:**

**Transportation:**

## Decision Points for Rochelle

### Housing

**Level 3: Family has stable and safe housing that is subsidized formally or informally.**

Rochelle's housing is subsidized informally by her parents. They have been there for 8 months and are willing to let her and the children stay.

### Social Support

**Level 4: Participant has consistent and effective social support.**

Rochelle receives social support from her parents and long-time friends. One friend even helped her to get her job at the school.

### Financial

**Level 3: Family income is stable, but pays only for basic living expenses.**

Rochelle has about \$300 to get her through the month after paying rent and transportation expenses. Because she does not have money for discretionary spending and no savings she cannot be a Level 4.

### Health

**Level 2: Family has physical, mental, or chemical health concerns that often interfere with participant's employment.**

Rochelle and Shawn are in good health, but Sammy's severe asthma has been interfering with her job and she may be at risk of losing her job.

### Transportation

**Level 4: Participant's transportation is dependable with a back-up option available.**

Rochelle owns a reliable vehicle and has a driver's license and insurance. If something happened to the car, her mother could give her a ride as a back-up

## VIII. Workforce One Data Entry

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This section explains how to enter data in Minnesota's Workforce One Assessment screen with copies of the screen sections.

After completing the EM interview, enter the results of the EM on Workforce One. Please do not complete this with the participant present. The EM information is entered under the **Assessment** tab in Workforce One.

**Note:** Access to the Assessment tab requires completion of the one-day in-person training and the online training.

## Step 1: Dashboard

- In WorkForce One, go to the Dashboard and click on the participant for whom you are entering an Employability Measure.

WORKFORCE ONE

Logged in as: jmcgovernacuna - E & T: User: XYZ Agency  
Switch Profile Change Password My Preferences

Home Search My Tasks Recent Work Manage Case Manage Program Reports References Resources Help

Dashboard

My Info

No Ticklers past due  
No Ticklers due today  
No Appointments today

Previous successful login was at 01/02/2020 01:36 PM

Hide Current Caseload

Name	Record ID	MAXIS Case	Program	Case Status: Role	Latest Open Activity Assigned to You/Days Open	Last Case Note
Olson, Abbie	100002363	135625653	MFIP	Enrolled: Primary	High School Completion Opened 351 days	10/19/2015 Outgoing SU by you
Olson, Bonnie	100002364	135625654	MFIP	Enrolled: Primary	Assessment Opened 1897 days	06/08/2015 Assessment by you

## Step 2: Assessment Tab

- Towards the bottom of the left navigation, you will find DHS Assessment.
- Click on “DHS Assessment” and then click on “Add New Employability Measure”.

WORKFORCE ONE

Logged in as: jmcgovernacuna - E & T: User: XYZ Agency  
Switch Profile Change Password My Preferences

Home Search My Tasks Recent Work Manage Case Manage Program Reports References Resources Help

General

At-A-Glance  
Contact  
Tickler  
Demographics  
Work Preferences  
MN Works Resume

DHS-IX

MAXIS  
Incoming Status Update  
Referral

Service

Support Service

Assessment

**DHS Assessment**

Reading/Math Test

Form/Letter/Schedule

Appointment  
Session  
NOITS  
Outgoing Status Update

DHS Assessment Summary

Abbie Olson Record ID 100002363  
Birth Date 06/22/1980 MAXIS Case 135625653

Hide Employability Measures

No employability measure found.

Add New Employability Measure

Hide MFIP Self-Screen

No MFIP self-screen found.

Add New Self-Screen

Hide Brief Screening Tool

No brief screening tool found.

Add New Brief Screening Tool

### Step 3: Completing the Employability Measure

- Fill in the field “**Interviewed by**”. : Enter the last and first name of the EM interviewer.
- For the field “**Assessment Interval**,” use the drop down menu to select “**Initial**” if this is the first Employability Measure ever done at any agency. If this is not the first Employability Measure, select “**Ongoing**”.
- For the field “Assessment Date, the date will default to today’s date. Enter the date the interview was conducted.



**WORKFORCE ONE**

Home Search ▶ My Tasks ▶ Recent Work Manage Case ▶ Manage Program ▶ Reports References ▶ Resources ▶ Help

**General**

- At-A-Glance
- Contact
- Tickler
- Demographics
- Work Preferences
- MN Works Resume

**Case Note**

- Add Case Note
- Case Note Quick
- Case Note Search

**Cases**

**Employability Measure**

Abbie Olson Record ID 100002363  
Birth Date 06/22/1980 MAXIS Case 135625653

Program MFIP  
Agency: Location XYZ Agency: Location A  
Entered by Jeanne M McGovern-Acuna  
\*Interviewed By   
\*Assessment Interval   
Initial  
Ongoing  
\*Assessment Date 02/12/2018

Assessment Date will  
always default to  
current date.

## Step 4: Entering Levels for the Employability Measure Areas

- After determining the correct level for each of the 11 EM areas by consulting the matrices and considering the information collected from the participant in the EM interview, **enter the level chosen for each of the 11 areas.**
  - You **must choose a level or N/A** for each area to be able to close the Employability Measure. Choose **N/A as indicated in training or in the EM User's Guide.**
- Complete the **Reason** box for each area using the notes you have taken during the interview that you would like to keep for the case record. **Anything you enter in the Reason box becomes part of the case record which the participant could access.**

**Employability Areas**

\*Transportation      1  2  3  4  5

**Reason**

Has a reliable newer vehicle her mother gave her and has current insurance and tabs. She also has access to the bus if needed for back-up, but it has limited hours.

\*Dependent Care      1  2  3  4  5  N/A

**Reason**

Has been approved for MFIP child care before and after school for her boys. Her mother and sister can help out when she needs a back-up.

\*Education      1  2  3  4  5

**Reason**

She has her high school diploma and completed a TCF teller course.

- For **Other Barriers and/or Comments**, you may enter here any information that was discussed by the participant during the interview that does not fit into one of the other 11 areas. **This area does not have a level associated with it.**

Program/New App	<b>Employability Areas</b>
Eligibility/Enrollment	<b>Transportation</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Score: 3</b></span>
Activity	Reason: Has a reliable newer vehicle her mother gave her and has current insurance and tabs. She also has access to the bus if needed for back-up, but it has limited hours.
Plan	<b>Dependent Care</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Score: 4</b></span>
Credential	Reason: Has been approved for MFIP child care before and after school for her boys. Her mother and sister can help out when she needs a back-up.
Participation Hours	<b>Education</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Score: 3</b></span>
Exit	Reason: She has her high school diploma and completed a TCF teller course.
Follow-Up	<b>Housing</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Score: 2</b></span>
Case Assignment	Reason: She is late on her rent and is expecting to receive an eviction notice soon.
Service Model	<b>Social Support</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Score: 4</b></span>
<b>EDS</b>	Reason: She is close to her par rents and sister. Her mother has helped her with transportation and issues with Julian's behavior. She is also active in her church and the pastor's wife has helped her find helpful services for Julian for his behavior.
Add Document	<b>Child Behavior</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Score: 2</b></span>
Document Summary	Reason: Julian's behavior requires her to be called to the school multiple times each month. He is seeing a therapist, but the behavior is still not under control.
<b>DHS-IX</b>	<b>Financial</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Score: 2</b></span>
MAXIS	Reason: She has difficulty budgeting, even though her income is adequate, she is behind on her rent.
Incoming Status Update	<b>Legal</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Score: 2</b></span>
Referral	Reason: Her conviction for theft limits her ability to find employment. She cannot work in retail stores. She has about 60 hours of community service hours she still needs to complete.
<b>Service</b>	<b>Safe Living Environment</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Score: 2</b></span>
Support Service	Reason: She has ongoing problems with Julian's father when he's off his meds. She's been in a battered women's shelter four times in the past year and she does have a safety plan. She doesn't feel safe when he's off his meds, which is most of the time.
<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Health</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Score: 3</b></span>
DHS Assessment	Reason: Her son has multiple health problems, but the conditions are managed and she is following treatment plans.
Reading/Math Test	<b>Workplace Skills</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Score: 2</b></span>
<b>Form/Letter/Schedule</b>	Reason: She has a spotty work history. She has trouble managing child care, and she quit her job impulsively, and was fired from her last job for theft.
Appointment	<b>Other Barriers and/or Comments:</b>
Session	
NOITS/SNAP ET FTC	



## Step 5: Employment Status and Interview Information

- Enter the participant's **employment information as of the day of the EM interview**.
- For the field "**Currently Employed**", click "Yes" or "No".
  - If the participant is currently employed, complete the fields for "**Hours per Week**", "**Hourly Wage**", "**Weeks at Job**", and "**Employment Type**" (whether the job is subsidized or unsubsidized).
- For the field "**Number of jobs in the last six months**", enter the number of jobs in this field.
- **Interview information:**
  - For the field "**Length of Interview**", enter the time in minutes.
  - For the field "**Quality of Interview**", click "**Satisfactory**" if the interview went well, and you feel you have received the information you needed to complete the EM. Click "**Unsatisfactory**" if the participant gave conflicting information during the interview, was unwilling to answer questions, or for any other reason you think that the information given is not complete or is inaccurate.
- If you checked the "**Unsatisfactory**" box, please list the reason in the space given.

**Employment Status**

\*Currently Employed  Yes  No

\*If Yes: Hours per Week

Hourly Wage \$

Weeks at Job

Employment Type  Subsidized  Unsubsidized

\*Number of jobs in the last 6 mo.

**Interview Information**

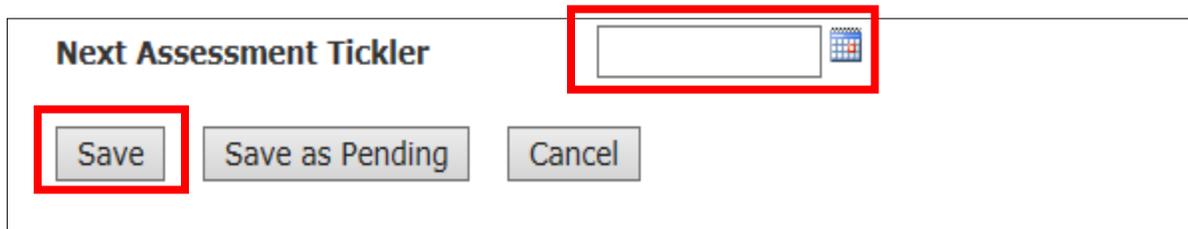
\*Length of Interview (in minutes)

\*Quality of Interview  Satisfactory  Unsatisfactory

If unsatisfactory, please explain.

## Step 6: Saving the Employability Measure

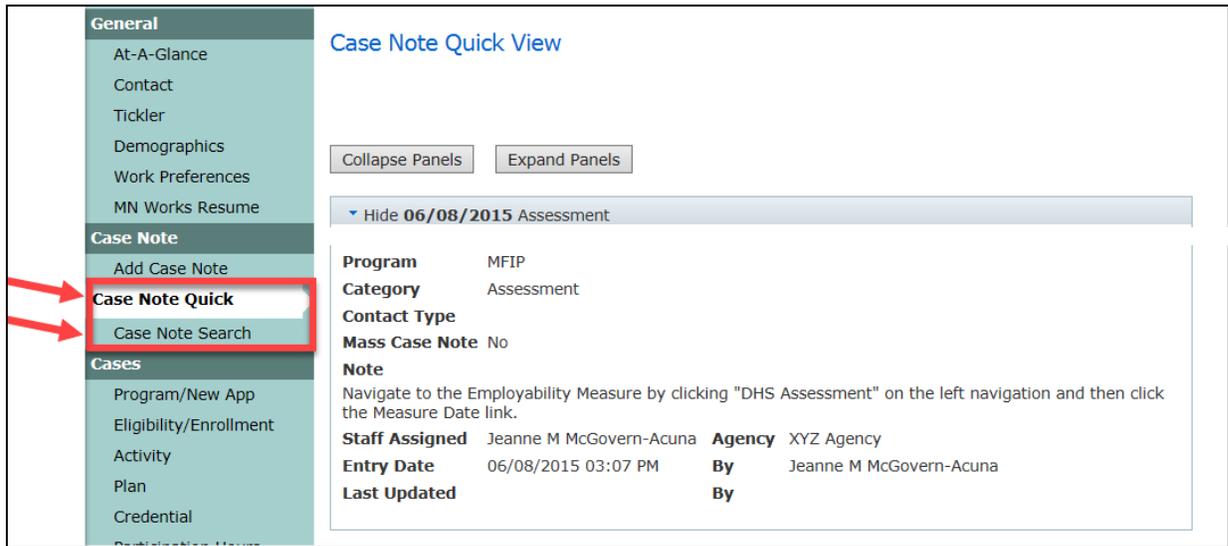
- **Next Assessment Tickler:** If your agency has chosen to do follow-up EM's, you can enter a **tickler date** to be reminded when the next one is due. Check with your supervisor to see if your agency will do follow-up EM's.
- You can either **“Save”** the Employability Measure if you are completely finished entering the information collected, or you can **“Save as Pending”** if you need to return to the Employability Measure to complete the data entry. You will only be able to choose **“Save”** if all required fields have been completed.
- **Once the EM is saved, you will not be able to modify any information on this EM.**



The screenshot shows a form titled "Next Assessment Tickler". It contains a text input field with a calendar icon to its right. Below the input field are three buttons: "Save", "Save as Pending", and "Cancel". The "Save" button and the input field are highlighted with red boxes.

## Step 7: Viewing the Employability Measure in Case Notes

- Once the Employability Measure has been saved, an automatic case note is created.



**Case Note Quick View**

Collapse Panels Expand Panels

Hide 06/08/2015 Assessment

**Program** MFIP  
**Category** Assessment  
**Contact Type**  
**Mass Case Note** No  
**Note**  
Navigate to the Employability Measure by clicking "DHS Assessment" on the left navigation and then click the Measure Date link.  
**Staff Assigned** Jeanne M McGovern-Acuna **Agency** XYZ Agency  
**Entry Date** 06/08/2015 03:07 PM **By** Jeanne M McGovern-Acuna  
**Last Updated** **By**

- To view the Employability Measure you will need to go back to the “DHS Assessment” tab.

# APPENDIX

- A. EM Interviewer Notes – a sample page for recording notes on the EM interview to be used for assigning levels
  
- B. EM Handout for Interpreters
  
- C. Sources for EM information at DHS and the DHS website:
  - DHS contacts
  - EM User's Guide
  - Getting Ready for the EM – a guide for managers and supervisors
  - EM mailing list
  - Bulletin 09-03-04 announcing implementation of the EM
  - EM Pilot Study Final Report
  
- D. Supplemental Materials



## **Employability Measure Interview Notes**

<b>Transportation</b>
<b>Dependent Care</b>
<b>Education</b>
<b>Housing</b>
<b>Social Support</b>
<b>Child Behavior</b>

<b>Financial</b>
<b>Legal</b>
<b>Safe Living</b>
<b>Health</b>
<b>Workplace Skills</b>
<b>Other</b>

# Employability Measure: Fact Sheet for Interpreters

## What is the EM?

The Employability Measure (EM) is a way to structure an interview between a job counselor and an MFIP participant around the person's challenges and strengths. The interview allows the job counselor to measure the person's status in 11 areas related to getting and keeping a job. These areas are: transportation, dependent care, education, housing, social support, child behavior, financial, legal, safe living environment, health (chemical, mental and physical), and workplace skills.

## Interpreting during an EM interview

Interpreting in an EM interview is similar to interpreting at other meetings of the job counselor and participant. There are three special considerations to keep in mind:

1. The EM itself is in English and some of its terms may be challenging to translate precisely.
2. After the interview, job counselors will assign a level from 1-5 in each area. It is important to interpret precisely to ensure accurate scoring.
3. The interview is highly personal. Data privacy and confidentiality are essential.

## Goals of the EM

Having an overview of the strengths and issues of participants helps job counselors develop an Employment Plan that fits their unique circumstances. This plan will also help participants build strengths and eliminate barriers to employment.

## Who takes part in an EM interview?

The EM is being used with every participant shortly after intake in MFIP Employment Services. Counties are required to do the EM once with each participant and are encouraged to do it at follow-up intervals.

## How long does the EM interview last?

When conducted in English, the EM usually takes about 30 minutes. It may last twice as long when interpretation is needed.

Thank you for helping to make the EM interview a process of value to MFIP participants and job counselors.

# Sources for Employability Measure Information

- **DHS contacts**

**Economic Assistance and Employment Services**

Erika Martin, project manager

[erika.martin@state.mn.us](mailto:erika.martin@state.mn.us)

(651) 431-3978

Jeanne McGovern-Acuña, Employability Measure training

[jean.mcgovern-acuna@state.mn.us](mailto:jean.mcgovern-acuna@state.mn.us)

(651) 431-3976

Ma Yang, training coordinator and registration

[Ma.Yang@state.mn.us](mailto:Ma.Yang@state.mn.us)

(651) 431-4139

- **Accessing the online EM User’s Guide**
  1. Go to the DHS public web page, [www.dhs.state.mn.us](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us)
  2. Select **County and Tribal Workers** on the top menu bar to access CountyLink.
  3. Select **Manuals** on the grey menu bar.
  4. Select **Employment Services Manuals** on the left-hand column.
  5. Select **Employability Measure (EM)** in the section titled *Employability Measure & User’s Guide*.
  
- **Getting Ready for the EM:** Follow directions for the EM User’s Guide and at step 5 select *Getting Ready for the EM*.
  
- **EM mailing list:** Subscribe by following directions for the EM User’s Guide and at step 5 select *EM mailing list*.
  
- **Bulletin 09-03-04 – DHS Announces Implementation of the Employability Measure (EM)** can be located by doing one of the following:
  1. Go to: [http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/publications/documents/pub/dhs16\\_145078.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/publications/documents/pub/dhs16_145078.pdf)
  2. Or at [www.dhs.state.mn.us](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us) select Publications (top menu), Bulletins (left menu), 2009 (left menu), Program Assessment and Integrity Division (03), Bulletin 09-03-04.
  
- **Employability Measure Pilot Study Final Report** (December 2006)
  1. Go to: <http://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Legacy/DHS-4966-ENG>
  2. Or at [www.dhs.state.mn.us](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us) select Economic Supports (top menu), MFIP (left menu), Reports (left menu), then find section titled “Reports on Special Projects” and the December 2006 final report. (Also check out other public reports on programs in Children and Family Services on that page.)

# Supplemental Materials

*From the EM guide for supervisors and managers and EM training materials.*

## **When do participants have an EM interview?**

- New MFIP participants: within 3 months of enrollment on WF1, ideally within 3 months of the start of MFIP benefits.
- Returning MFIP participants who have not had an EM: within 3 months of re-enrollment.
- All existing MFIP participants: within 18 months of the start date for EM implementation in your county.
- Participants who move to your county: Optional but DHS recommends within 3 months of enrollment on WF1.

## **Best Practices for EM Interview**

### **DHS recommendations:**

- Do the EM at the Employment Services (ES) intake appointment or at a time when the participant already has an appointment with the job counselor.
- Complete it in one meeting whenever possible.
- If takes two meeting, leave the EM open on WF1 and complete it within a week. Levels should reflect participant's situation at second meeting. Will be tickled to close.

### **Local Discretion on two Matters:**

- When in the first 3 months to do the EM.
- Whether and when to do follow-up EM's (strongly recommended by DHS but not required).

**Important: Check with your supervisor!**

## **Why Repeat the EM?**

- Ensure EP fits current situation.
- Help fulfill requirement that assessment is ongoing.
- To conduct 12-month comprehensive review required for those who have not worked in past year on MFIP.
- To further develop working relationship.
- To track progress and discover new problems.
- To acknowledge and celebrate emerging strengths.

## **Incorporating EM Results into an Effective Employment Plan**

### **What are some considerations for incorporating EM results into the Employment Plan successfully?**

- The EM may surface issues that are not typically addressed in an Employment Plan. DHS highly recommends addressing these concerns as well. For example, if a child behavior issue is identified, the job counselor should write a goal around the child.
- FSS plans require identifying strengths and barriers in the plan. Using the different areas of the EM can bring forth those strengths.

### **What steps can be taken to incorporate EM results into an effective Employment Plan?**

- Collaborate and engage the participant in the development of the plan.
- Write clear expectations and goals.
- Address and acknowledge long-term goals with the participant. This helps build and maintain rapport and tap into the participant's motivation even if the current tasks do not directly relate to those goals.
- Assist the participants in identifying intermediate steps and an appropriate sequence for reaching long-term goals.
- Document strengths for each of the areas of the EM that have a level of 5 or 4 in the plan.
- Write goals for each of the areas of the EM that have a level of 2 or 1. (Depending on individual circumstances, counselors may want to limit the number of goals.)
- Encourage participants to talk about their strengths and how to use them to help achieve their goals.

### **What are examples of the interaction between the EP and EM interview?**

Note: The following examples use Motivational Interviewing techniques.

**Strength:** Participant scores a 5 in transportation because she has a good working vehicle and solid back-up plans for replacing the vehicle if necessary.

#### **In the interview:**

- Encourage the participant to talk about this strength and how it can help her achieve her goals.
- Use this as an opportunity to encourage and compliment the participant.

**In the Employment Plan write:**

Transportation:	Strength – solid transportation plan provides flexibility for job search.
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**Barrier:** Participant scores a 2 in Legal because she has a felony for theft and this makes it difficult for her to work.

**In the interview with the participant to develop the plan:**

- Ask questions that would get at the level of concern for the participant as well as an idea of what the participant may be willing to do to address the barrier. The following open-ended questions may assist in drawing out the issue and possible goals.
  - What concerns you about the felony?
  - What kind of steps do you think you need to take to address the issue?
  - What’s one thing you could do fairly soon to start the process?
- Based on answers and subsequent discussion, help the client decide how to address their job search.

In this example, the person indicated that it has been very difficult to find a job with employers and she does not really know how to talk to employers about the felony. This is the point at which a counselor might ask if she could make a suggestion. Assume the client was open to the suggestions as written in the plan (described below).

**In the Employment Plan write:**

Legal:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meet with the job counselor to practice ways of talking about felonies with an employer.</li><li>• Learn about the bonding program.</li><li>• Get brochures on the bonding program that can be given to the employer at the time of an interview.</li></ul>
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