



Minnesota Department of **Human Services**

MINNESOTA STATE PLAN

FOR

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES
(TANF)

IN ACCORDANCE WITH

THE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND WORK
OPPORTUNITY RECONCILIATION ACT OF 1996

(P.L. 104-193)

EFFECTIVE DATE: JANUARY 1, 2015-DECEMBER 31, 2017

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**State of Minnesota
TANF State Plan Renewal
December 2014**

A. General Provisions

- 1. *Outline how the state intends to conduct a program designed to serve all political subdivisions in the State that provides assistance to needy families with children and provides parents with job preparation, work and support services to enable them to leave the program and become self-sufficient.***

Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)

The Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), Minnesota's TANF program, provides temporary (60 months or less) cash and food assistance to:

- Families with children under age 18 (up to age 19 if in secondary or vocational school full-time), and pregnant women and their spouses when financially eligible,
- Grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, or other relatives who take responsibility for children whose parents cannot or will not. These adult relatives may receive assistance through MFIP for children in their care and may choose to be on the MFIP grant or to get a child-only grant. When the non-parental caregiver receives assistance only for the children, the income and assets of the relative caregivers are not considered and the case is not subject to the 60-month lifetime limit.

MFIP helps families work toward economic stability and greater self-sufficiency. MFIP provides a grant to supplement family income, help with child care costs, employment services and opportunities for education and training for workforce preparation. MFIP encourages employment by providing work incentives, and promotes personal responsibility by expecting families to actively pursue employment. Some of the family's earned income is disregarded before calculating the MFIP grant. Starting October 1, 2014, the disregard amount is 50 percent of the gross earnings for applicants and participants. The remaining earnings are subtracted from the Family Wage Level grant standard, which is 10 percent higher than the standard allowed for families who receive only unearned income. For applicants, the Family Wage Level is the single standard used when determining MFIP eligibility regardless if the applicant has earnings or not

Child care is a key component in Minnesota's strategy to help families leave and remain off welfare. In Minnesota, the Child Care Assistance Program provides financial assistance to families to support access to child care that is affordable so that parents can work and/or attend school and children are well cared for and ready for school.

Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) families who participate in work activities such as work, job search, education, or social services activities that are approved for their employment plans are eligible to receive childcare assistance. In addition, Transition Year child care is available to eligible families for a full year after their MFIP case closes to help families move toward economic stability. MFIP child care and Transition Year child care assistance are fully forecasted in the state's budget. The Basic Sliding Fee program is available for non-MFIP/DWP income eligible families and is funded through a capped allocation. If a family finishes their transition year child care assistance and there is a waiting list in their county for the Basic Sliding Fee program, the Transition Year bridge program will continue to provide them child care assistance until they reach their turn for Basic Sliding Fee child care assistance.

Families receiving MFIP are encouraged to apply for medical services at the same time they apply for MFIP. Families not receiving cash assistance can apply for the Medical Assistance program and the MinnesotaCare program-(Minnesota's health care program for the uninsured).

Families who receive MFIP must cooperate with the Child Support agency to establish and enforce their child support orders. In state fiscal year 2013, the Child Support agency collected \$604 million in child support. Through the child support pass-through, Minnesota counties collected and distributed to MFIP families \$6.6 million in child support. Minnesota passes through 100 percent of the child support payments made to the families receiving MFIP and counts that support dollar-for-dollar as unearned income against the MFIP grant.

MFIP combines cash and food per the provisions of a waiver from the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services. Families who are not eligible for MFIP can apply for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Diversionsary Work Program (DWP)

The Diversionsary Work Program provides help to families in crisis who are new to the welfare system by supporting them in their efforts to immediately obtain and retain employment rather than go on welfare. DWP may be provided to families in crisis for a maximum of four months once in a 12-month period.

Families with children under age 18 (up to age 19 if in secondary or vocational school full-time), or pregnant women and their spouses are eligible for DWP.

All parents, including both parents in a two-parent family, are required to develop and sign an employment plan before the family is approved for DWP. Most parents must seek full-time work immediately when approved. Employment services can help the family identify and address issues that may prevent the parents from obtaining or retaining employment. DWP employment service providers help parents find work that fits with the employment plan. The employment plan may include limited training that can be completed in four or fewer months.

DWP supports families during a crisis situation and is not intended to meet recurrent needs. The short-term supports provided may include temporary help with rent, utilities or other housing costs and a personal allowance. Other supports for which families might be eligible are Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, health care and child care assistance. After four months of DWP, a family may be eligible for MFIP. Families also may be eligible to continue Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, health care and child care assistance.

Families who receive DWP are required to cooperate with the Child Support agency to establish and enforce their child support orders. Although families on DWP are required to cooperate with the Child Support agency, child support is not assigned to the state. All child support is passed through to the family and it reduces the DWP grant dollar-for-dollar.

DWP is available for a maximum of four consecutive months. Because DWP benefits are meant to address the family's crisis and divert them from long-term assistance, receipt of DWP does not count against the 60-month TANF time limit.

Work Benefit Program (WB)

Minnesota's will suspend its Work Benefit Program on December 1, 2014. The Commissioner of Human Services has the authority to reinstate the program any time he or she would choose to do so. This

program is funded with maintenance of effort state funds under a separate state program. It is intended for families who exit DWP or MFIP. To be eligible for the \$25 benefit, families must be working:

- At least 87 hours per month in a one parent family with a child under 6 years old or
- At least 130 hours per month in one parent family with no child(ren) under six years of age or a pregnant woman with no other children
- At least 130 hours per month in a two-parent family with at least one caregiver working

Net income for the Work Benefit Program must not exceed 200% of the Federal Poverty Guideline (FPG) for the family size. Eligibility for WB may continue for up to 24 consecutive months, if all eligibility factors are met and the asset limit is below \$5,000. Work Benefit Program follows MFIP policy when determining counted and excluded assets.

2. *Show the State intends to require a parent or caregiver receiving assistance under the program to engage in work once the State determines the parent or caregiver is ready to engage in work, or once the parent or caregiver has received assistance under the program for 24 months (whether or not consecutive), whichever is earlier.*

Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)

Caregivers must begin participating in work activities within 30 days of being determined eligible for MFIP. Counties have the option of requiring that work activities begin sooner.

MFIP uses a combination of work incentives and required work activities such as job search, short-term training or subsidized work. Sanctions enforce work activity requirements and include grant reductions, vendor payments of shelter costs from the grant, and even case closure (when there are seven occurrences of noncompliance). When a case is closed, the financial worker re-determines the family's continued eligibility for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. MFIP must remain closed for a minimum of one full month when closed for sanction reasons. Before ending a family's assistance, because of sanction, the county agency must review the case to determine if the employment plan is still appropriate, and must attempt to meet with the participant face-to-face.

Diversionsary Work Program (DWP)

The goal of the Diversionsary Work Program is to provide short-term, necessary services and supports to families, which will lead to unsubsidized employment, increased economic stability, and reduced risk of those families needing longer term assistance under MFIP. DWP supports families during a crisis situation and is not intended to meet recurrent needs. Short-term supports provided may include temporary help with rent, utilities or other housings costs and a personal allowance.

Eligibility for DWP begins the date a signed application form is received by the county agency. State statute requires financial workers to hold the interview for an applicant who appears to be eligible for DWP within five working days of the receipt of the application. If it appears that child care is necessary to enable a parent to work or look for work, and the parent has not applied for child care, the application for child care assistance must be completed before the interview with the financial worker is completed. As soon as possible, but no later than ten working days before being notified by the county agency that the applicant is financially eligible for DWP, the employment services provider must meet with the applicant and develop an employment plan.

The county agency must issue DWP benefits within one working day after receiving notice that an employment plan has been signed. By requiring a child care application to be completed during the DWP interview process, and by requiring the applicant to meet with workers and develop an employment plan prior to issuing any cash benefits to the applicant, Minnesota stresses work as the means to address the family's ongoing needs and places a high priority on starting to work or increasing the number of hours a person is employed.

When a participant fails to comply with the DWP employment plan or with child support enforcement without good cause, the DWP case is closed. The family is not eligible for MFIP during the DWP disqualification period and the case remains closed unless the parent comes into compliance within four consecutive months of the DWP eligibility period. The disqualification of the family from DWP does not affect receipt of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or health care benefits.

3. *Show how the State ensures that parents and care takers receiving assistance under MFIP engage in work activities.*

Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)

Minnesota ensures that parents receiving assistance through MFIP engage in work activities through three mechanisms: Requiring all adults receiving MFIP assistance to develop an individualized employment plan that identifies the activities the adult will participate in and that meets the hours required for participation (256J.561, subd.2); imposing sanctions if the participant does not comply with the work requirements (256J.46); and offering employment services to all adults receiving assistance. Services available to participants include, but are not limited to: job readiness assessment, job readiness assistance, job clubs, job counseling, job coaching, job skills training, work experience, subsidized employment, on-the-job training, job placement, educational programs and post-employment follow-up services. The Department of Human Services and the Department of Employment and Economic Development jointly operate MFIP employment and training services. The Minnesota Department of Human Services also releases regular management indicator reports to counties in order for the counties to track state-mandated performance measures for MFIP.

Child care assistance is available to all MFIP participants who engage in activities in an approved employment plan.

Minor caregivers under the age of 18 who have not received a high school diploma or its equivalent are required to engage in appropriate educational programs and are provided with child care assistance and supportive services to enable successful participation. Caregivers ages 18 and 19 can choose whether they want to complete their high school education or participate in work activities leading to employment. Whichever choice is made, child care assistance is available to enable the parents to participate in the chosen activity.

Bilingual employment and training services and work literacy language programs may be available for those lacking English proficiency, although the lack of proficiency in English is not necessarily presumed to be a barrier to employment. Interpreter services are provided when necessary.

Diversionsary Work Program (DWP)

DWP stresses that work is the means for families to meet their ongoing needs and provides support services as needed to help participants in crisis obtain and retain employment. After establishing financial eligibility, participants must meet with an employment counselor and develop an employment plan in order to be found eligible to receive assistance through DWP. Work activities available for participants include, but are not limited to: job search, job readiness assessment, job readiness assistance, job clubs, job counseling, job coaching, job skills training, work experience, subsidized employment, on-the-job training, job placement, educational programs and post-employment follow-up services. Education for DWP recipients is allowed, but the education program must be completed within the four-month DWP period or an education activity cannot be approved as part of the employment plan.

Work Benefit Program (WB)

Effective December 1, 2014 Minnesota's Work Benefit Program will be suspended. The Commissioner of Human Services has the authority to reinstate the WB program any time he or she would choose to do so. When in operation, the Work Benefit is available for up to 24 months only to families leaving MFIP with employment.

- 4. Show how the State takes reasonable steps it deems necessary to restrict the use and disclosure of information about individuals and families receiving assistance under the program attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government.***

Minnesota Family Investment Program, Diversionsary Work Program and Work Benefit Program

Data on recipients is classified as private and may not be disclosed pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 13. Access to Minnesota's eligibility computer system (MAXIS) is defined by a security role that is attached to a worker's ID, and access to information is defined and limited by worker job responsibilities. A personal logon ID cannot be issued until the worker completes a state developed orientation course. The orientation includes a review of data privacy and ethics as they pertain to client information. Staff must complete annually two data privacy courses designed to increase compliance with data practices and security, and meet federal training requirements for all those with access to DHS information and networks. Mastery of these courses is now required prior to receiving access to DHS systems including the new eligibility system, MMIS, MAXIS and MEC². In addition, printed reports distributed by the State are reviewed individually to ensure data provided to the requestor are appropriate for the recipient of the report.

- 5. Show how the State establishes goals and what action it takes to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies, with special emphasis on teenage pregnancies, and what numerical goals are established for reducing the illegitimacy ratio of the State.***

Minnesota's female population age 15-44 in 2013 is estimated at 1,049,636. Of the total resident births (69,183), 46,420 were to married women, 22,739 were to women who were not married and 24 were unknowns. Thus, the out-of-wedlock birth rate in Minnesota for 2013 is 21.7/1000 for women ages 15 to 44. The out-of-wedlock birth rate in Minnesota for 2012 was 21.6/1000 and for 2011 it was

21.3/1000. While the out-of-wedlock birth rate for Minnesota has remained relatively stable over the last several years, Minnesota still continues to face significant challenges in trying to lower our out-of-wedlock birth rate.

To address the issue, Minnesota has focused significant attention on reducing unintended pregnancies, particularly those occurring to teens and young adults who are less likely to be married or prepared to care for a child. While Minnesota's teen pregnancy rate compares well to national rates, it masks significant and persistent racial and ethnic disparities. African American and American Indian youth are three to four times more likely to have a child when they are a teen than is a white youth. In an effort to address these disparities, the Minnesota legislature provided the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) with \$2 million annually in TANF funds that support non-profit and government agencies in reducing the disparities in teen pregnancy rates between Minnesota white population and Minnesota's racial, ethnic and American Indian communities.

The Department of Health also receives up to \$505,743 annually in federal abstinence funds to support evidenced-based efforts to delay sexual activity in youth. Minnesota's program is a coordinated countywide approach in Ramsey County focusing on adolescents 14 and under, reaching them before they start engaging in sexual activity. The Health Teen Initiative has three components: direct service to youth in schools through Teen Outreach Program Clubs; reaching out to parents in the community through its That Easy: Guide to Raising Sexually Healthy Children Parent Education Training; and Making Authentic Connections, a way of making authentic connections and relationships with youth in the community. The Department of Health was recently re-awarded a federal Personal Responsibility Education Program grant which targets young people of color and American Indian youth, youth in foster care or ageing out of foster care, youth in juvenile detention or on probation, youth in Alternative Learning Centers, homeless or runaway youth and LGBT youth. This initiative's goal is to support high-risk adolescents to successfully transition from youth to adulthood.

The Minnesota Department of Health also administers programs directed at increasing access to family planning services for low-income Minnesotans and those at high risk for unintended pregnancies. The State legislature funds Minnesota's Family Planning Special Projects (FPSP), a grant program that made available \$10,706,000 (including \$2,312,000) to community family planning clinics across the state in the current two-year grant cycle. In state fiscal 2013, FPSP provided family planning services to 30,489 women and 2,475 men who were low income and at risk for unintended pregnancy. Twenty nine percent of the people receiving services were under the age of 19. To assist Minnesotans in accessing subsidized family planning services, the Department also funds a 1-800 family planning hotline. Minnesota receives \$3.1 million in a federal Title X funds to augment this work (through Planned Parenthood of Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota and Ramsey Public Health). Access to subsidized family planning services has also been increased through The Minnesota Family Planning Program, the name for Minnesota's 1115 family planning waiver, which covers those age 15 to 50 who are not eligible for Medicaid and have incomes at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines and are U.S. citizens or eligible non-citizens qualified to participate in federally funded programs. For state fiscal year 2013, the Minnesota Family Planning Program served about 35,000 people, with a monthly average enrollment of about 20,000. Reimbursement for family planning services under this program was nearly \$14.9 million.

Other state efforts that support reducing unintended pregnancies include The Family Home Visiting Program administered by the Minnesota Department of Health. Approximately \$8 million in federal TANF funds are directed to the Family Home Visiting Program, which provides funding to all of Minnesota's local public health agencies and to nine of the 11 tribal governments to serve families at or below 200 percent of poverty. The goal of the program is to:

- prevent child abuse and neglect,
- reduce juvenile delinquency,
- promote positive parenting and resiliency in children ;and
- promote family health and economic self-sufficiency.

The program also focuses on providing family supports that would reduce the risk of teen pregnancies. To work even more closely with pregnant or parenting teens to delay subsequent pregnancies. Minnesota has received an additional \$8.5 million in federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program funds that augment the state's TANF-funded home visiting efforts.

6. *Show how the state conducts a program designed to reach State and local law enforcement officials, the education system, and relevant counseling services, that provides education and training on the problem of statutory rape so that teenage pregnancy prevention program may be expanded in scope to include men.*

The state of Minnesota considers sexual violence, including statutory rape, a public health problem. Sexual violence is defined as any of the following conditions: statutory rape, date/acquaintance rape, same-sex assault, child sexual abuse, incest, pornography, prostitution, sexual exploitation by professionals, stalking, sexual harassment, and any other sexual activity in which a person is forced, coerced or manipulated without her/his consent.

In order to address this problem, the State passed provisions that outline consequences for sexual violence including age of consent laws (For further details, see Minnesota Statute 609.342 at <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=609.342>)

In addition, statewide partnerships approach sexual violence in a holistic manner that work towards the elimination of violent sexual behaviors including statutory rape.

These efforts are provided under the leadership of a statewide stakeholder workgroup involving the following organizations and grassroots advocacy entities:

- Minnesota State Department of Health
- Minnesota Department of Human Services
- Minnesota Department of Corrections
- Representatives of county and local legal, health , law enforcement and abuse prevention organizations and workgroups
- Minnesota Department of Education and representatives of local school districts
- Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault
- Teenwise Minnesota
- The MN Men's Action Network (Alliance to Prevent Sexual and Domestic Violence)

These statewide public/private collaborative efforts support and fund annual conferences, periodic meetings, and ad hoc taskforces to shape the development of sexual violence prevention curriculum that is available and distributed to communities, youth, and professionals. Two Minnesota innovations used to combat sexual violence and abuse are the Duluth Model on Public Intervention and the Men As Peacemakers initiative of The MN Men's Action Network, which was initiated by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to build a public/private prevention effort that promotes male leadership. To this end, a collaborative effort between the MDH, Men As Peacemakers in Duluth and the Gender Violence Institute in Clearwater had been created to develop a network of men and male leaders involved in primary prevention practices. These efforts are currently coordinated by MDH, the Bush Foundation and the MN Department of Public Safety.

7. ***Outline how the state implements policies and procedures necessary to prevent access to assistance provided under the State program funded under this part through any electronic funds transaction in an automated teller machine or point-of-sale device located in a place described in section 408(a)(12) including a plan to ensure that recipients of the assistance have adequate access to their cash assistance.***

The State of Minnesota has taken several steps to ensure the prevention of TANF assistance in being used at prohibited locations under Section 4004 of the Middle class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (P.L. 122-96). Minnesota has primarily focused on the following approaches: 1) Enforcing a complementary state law prohibiting the purchase of tobacco products and liquor with any EBT transaction, 2) informing EBT users of their responsibilities and limitations with EBT card use, 3) directing counties who deliver the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), Minnesota's TANF program, to communicate the restrictions to program participants at application and recertification, and; 4) provide trainings to county financial workers and ES providers that incorporate new EBT restrictions and prohibitions.

8. ***Outline how the state ensures that recipients of assistance provided under the State program funded have access to using or withdrawing assistance with minimal fees or charges, including an opportunity to access assistance with no fee or charges, and are provided information on applicable fees and surcharges that apply to electronic fund transactions involving the assistance, and the such information is made publicly available.***

While there are client restrictions regarding EBT access and use of TANF benefits, Minnesota is required by federal law to ensure that applicants and recipients are provided adequate access to cash assistance with minimal or no fees or charges for withdrawal. This standard will be met on a case-by-case basis which depends on client need and barriers. This may include issuing TANF benefits via direct deposit into the client's bank account or issuing TANF benefits via paper check.

B. Special Provisions

1. *Indicate whether Minnesota will treat families moving to Minnesota from another state differently from other families on the program.*

To be eligible for MFIP or DWP, an assistance unit must have established residency in Minnesota. An assistance unit is considered to have established residency in Minnesota when a child or caregiver has resided in this state for at least 30 consecutive days with the intention of making the person's home here and not for any temporary purpose. A county must waive the 30-day residency requirement when unusual hardship would result from denial of assistance. Families that have move from other states to Minnesota, and who establish state residency, are treated the same as all the other MFIP participants.

2. *Indicate whether the State intends to provide assistance under TANF to individuals who are not citizens of the United States, and if so, include an overview of such assistance.*

Persons who are either United States citizens or qualified non-citizens are eligible for TANF benefits per the provisions of section 431 of the PRWORA, as amended (8 U.S.C. 1641) if they meet all other program eligibility criteria. Qualified non-citizens who entered the United States before 8/22/1996 are considered to be eligible for federally funded cash assistance if they are Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs); paroled for one year or more; victims of battery and/or cruelty; or conditional entrants prior to 4/1/80. Qualified non-citizens who entered on or after 8/22/1996 are considered to be ineligible for federally funded MFIP/DWP cash assistance for five years. The following non-citizens may be eligible for federal funding without considering the date of admission to the U.S. if they meet all other program requirements: refugees, asylees, veterans and persons on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, their spouses or unmarried dependent children, non-citizens whose deportation/removal is being withheld, Cuban or Haitian entrants and certain Amerasians.

All lawfully residing non-citizens who are not eligible for federal funding may be eligible for state funding if they meet other program eligibility requirements for state funded cash assistance as follows: LPRs age 18 through 69 who are funded under state dollars and who have been in the country for four or more years must meet one of the following requirements to remain eligible: enrollment in literacy, ESL or citizenship classes; applied for admission to such classes and on a waiting list; applying for a waiver from the USCIS of the English language or civics requirements of the citizenship test; submitted an application for citizenship to USCIS and waiting for a testing date or swearing in ceremony; or have been denied citizenship due to failure to pass the test after two or more attempts or because of an inability to understand the rights and responsibilities of becoming a U.S. citizen as documented by the USCIS or the county agency.

3. *Outline the objective criteria for the delivery of benefits and determination of eligibility and equitable treatment, including an explanation of how the State will provide opportunities for recipients who have been adversely affected to be heard in a State administrative appeal process.*

Eligibility

An applicant for MFIP or for DWP must meet the eligibility requirements specified in Minnesota Statutes Sections 256J.01 through 256J.95 before receiving benefits and services. All requirements under Section 408 of the Social Security Act, as amended by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 are included in Minnesota law.

Assistance is provided equitably to all program recipients in accordance with State and Federal law. Neither MFIP nor DWP requires basis of eligibility tests, such as the previous AFDC 100-hour rule requirement for two-parent families.

The asset limit for both programs is \$2,000 for applicants and \$5,000 for participants. The trade-in value limit on the first licensed vehicle excluded in determining eligibility is \$10,000. In addition, the combined loan value of all other vehicles must be less than or equal to \$7,500.

For MFIP and DWP, statewide payment standards are based on the number of eligible persons in the assistance unit.

Persons convicted of a drug offense committed after July 1, 1997 may receive cash assistance subject to the conditions set forth in Minnesota Statutes 256J.26.

Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)

Time Limits

There is a 60-month lifetime limit for receiving MFIP assistance with exceptions in certain situations. Time limit exceptions apply to the months in which individuals are living in Indian country (as defined in Section 1151 of Title 18, U.S.C.) or a Native Alaskan Village where the not-employed rate is over 50 percent per the provisions under 45 CFR 264.1((b)(1)(ii)).

Under the MFIP program, some families are funded with segregated state funds and are exempt from the 60-month lifetime limit. Included are caregivers age 60 and over as well as minor caregivers under the age of 18 and caregivers 18 or 19 who are complying with education requirements.

The months a person received cash assistance as part of the MFIP field trials are also exempted from the 60-month time limit.

Hardship Extensions

Extensions of the 60-month time limit are possible if any of the following hardship conditions are met:

- The participant is suffering from an illness, injury, or incapacity which has been certified by a qualified professional when the illness, injury, or incapacity is expected to continue for more than 30 days, and severely limits the participant's ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment;
- The participant is a caregiver whose presence in the home is required because of an illness, injury, or incapacity of another member in the assistance unit, a relative in the household, or a foster child in the household when the illness or incapacity and the need for a person to provide assistance in the home has been certified by a qualified professional and is expected to continue for more than 30 days;
- The participant is a caregiver with a child or an adult in the assistance unit who meets the disability or medical criteria for home care services or waived services or meets the criteria for severe emotional disturbance under Minnesota statutes;
- The participant is a caregiver who is employed the number of hours required by Minnesota Department of Human Services with a household income that does not exceed program standards;
- The participant is determined to be hard-to-employ because the individual belongs to any of the following groups:

- A person diagnosed by a qualified professional as a person with developmental disability or mental illness, and the condition severely limits the person's ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment;
- A person assessed by a vocational specialist or the county agency to be unemployable; or
- A person assessed to have an IQ below 80 assessed by a vocational specialist or a county agency to be employable, but the condition severely limits the person's ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment.
- A person who is determined by a qualified professional to be Learning Disabled and the condition severely limits the person's ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment. The initial approval of a learning disability extension must have been or confirmed within the previous 12 months. Learning disabilities do not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing or motor handicaps, mental retardation, and emotional disturbance or due to environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage.

All caregivers who are extended must develop an employment plan that meets their situation.

A person who requests the Family Violence Option (per Minnesota Statute 256J.425, Hardship Extensions), and is in compliance with a modified employment plan, also meets the MFIP extension criteria.

Appeals

Applicants and recipients of MFIP and DWP are notified in writing of their rights and the process to follow to secure a fair hearing. When an applicant is denied services, or a participant disagrees with a county agency decision, the applicant or participant may submit a request for a hearing to the county agency or directly to the Department of Human Services Appeals Office. State Human Services judges will conduct a hearing in person at the county office or by telephone. Decisions are issued by the Commissioner within 90 days of the request for a hearing. Under certain conditions, a participant may continue to receive benefits pending an appeal decision. Reasonable expenses incurred by a recipient because of the appeal are reimbursed upon request (Minnesota Statute 256.045, Administrative and Judicial Review of Human Services Matters).

4. ***No later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, unless the chief executive officer of the state opts out of this provision, the State shall require a parent or caretaker receiving TANF assistance for two months, who is not exempt from the work requirements and is not engaged in work, to participate in community service employment.***

Minnesota continues to opt out of the provision that requires parents and caregivers who have received TANF assistance for two months and who are not working to participate in community service employment.

5. ***Give a description of the strategies and procedures in place in Minnesota to ensure that victims of domestic violence receive appropriate alternative services. The State must describe how it:***
 - *screens and identifies individuals receiving TANF and MOE assistance with a history of domestic violence while maintaining confidentiality of the individuals;*
 - *refers the individuals to counseling and supportive services, and*

- *provides waivers, pursuant to a determination of good cause of normal program requirements for as long as necessary where compliance would make it more difficult to escape domestic violence.*

Minnesota has adopted the Family Violence Option under Subpart B of part 260 and seeks recognition of its good cause domestic violence waivers. At application for cash benefits, recertification, and when referred to employment services or child support, MFIP and DWP clients are provided with a self-administered screening form which allows them to self-disclose domestic abuse. This form also includes referral information about how to seek help from the county. Clients who apply for the family violence waiver must offer one of five forms of documentation verifying the abuse (256J.545). Counties must have staff trained in domestic violence matters available to help develop and review employment plans for applicants and recipients claiming the domestic violence waiver. Those employment plans must be developed to ensure the safety of the parent and children. If there are any disagreements about the contents of the employment plan, the client must be able to receive assistance from a person trained in domestic violence advocacy. Any activities that the advocate identifies as appropriate must be included in the plan.

The Domestic Violence Employment Plan is reviewed every six months or more often if appropriate. A participant may be granted a “good cause” exemption from cooperating with child support based on documentation of domestic violence if the pursuit of child support is likely to place the person at risk of further abuse.

Grantee Information

State of Minnesota

Fiscal Year 2013

1. Name of Service Program: **Minnesota Working Family Credit**
2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services and Activities.
[MN Statute 290.0671] MN Working Family Credit. This program provides a tax benefit to eligible low-income families through a refundable income tax credit.
3. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:
The purpose of the program is to provide economic support to low-income families as well as to encourage employment among low-income parents.
4. Program Type: This program is operated under the TANF program.
5. Description of Work Activities: N/A
6. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year: **\$196,618,237**
7. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year: **\$ 97,487,875**
8. Total Number of Families served with MOE funds: **116,892**

This number represents the total served over the fiscal year
9. Financial eligibility criteria for receiving MOE-funded program benefits or services:
A family that qualifies for the federal Earned Income Credit also qualifies for the MN Working Family Credit.
10. Program Authorization: Was this program authorized and allowable under prior law?
Yes _____ No X
11. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995: **\$22,800,000**

1. Name of Service Program: **Head Start**

2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services and Activities. **Head Start**
[MN Statutes 119A.50] Head Start is a federal and state funded child and family development program, helping low-income families become self-reliant while also helping prepare their children for school success.

3. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:
The purpose of the Head Start program is to provide comprehensive child development services to children, with a special focus on helping preschoolers develop the early reading and math skills required to be successful in school.

4. Program Type: This program is operated separate from the TANF program.

5. Description of Work Activities: N/A.

6. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year: **\$ 19,762,536**

7. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year: **\$5,700,000**

8. Total Number of Families served with MOE funds: **591**

9. This number represents the total served under the program in the fiscal year

10. Financial criteria for receiving MOE-funded program benefits or services:
 - a. Head Start eligibility requires that at least 90% of children enrolled be from low income families as defined by the federal poverty level. State funding to supplement the federal Head Start program is authorized under Minnesota Statute 119A.52.

11. Program Authorization: Was this program authorized and allowable under prior law?
Yes _____ No X _____

12. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995: Not Applicable - **\$11,500,000**

1. Name of Service Program: **Credit for K-12 Education Expenses**

2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services and Activities.
 The **Credit for K-12 Education Expenses** [MN Statutes 290.0674] is a refundable tax credit which is equal to 75% of eligible education expenses for a qualifying child in kindergarten through grade 12.

3. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:
 Eligible expenses include fees or tuition for instruction outside the regular school day or school year, such as tutoring and educational summer camps. Also eligible are costs required for the regular school day for textbooks, instructional materials, and transportation costs paid to others. Private school tuition does not qualify for the credit, although it does qualify for the subtraction. Eligible expenses also include personal computer hardware and educational software, limited to a maximum of \$200 per family.

4. Program Type: This program is operated separate from the TANF program.

5. Description of Work Activities: N/A

6. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year: **14,815,369**

7. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year: **11,755,372**

8. Total Number of Families served with MOE funds: **45,563**
 - i. This represents the average monthly total (Total MOE divided by \$255.28 average case cost)

9. Financial criteria for receiving MOE-funded program benefits or services:
 The maximum credit of \$1,000 times the number of children in kindergarten through grade 12 is allowed to taxpayers with total household income of \$33,500 or less. For taxpayers with one or two children, the maximum credit is phased out for household income between \$33,500 and \$37,500. For taxpayers with more than two children, the phase-out range for the maximum credit is increased by \$2,000 for each additional child.

10. Program Authorization: Was this program authorized and allowable under prior law?
 _____ No X_____

11. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995: Not Applicable There were no state expenditures in 1995.
This refundable tax credit was instituted beginning in 1997

Certifications

(To be completed after public review period is over)