



Minnesota Department of **Human Services**

Bulletin

NUMBER

#15-68-06C

DATE

June 1, 2015

OF INTEREST TO

County Directors

Income Maintenance
Supervisors and Staff

Employment Services
Providers and Staff

Social Services Supervisors
and Staff

Tribal Directors

ACTION/DUE DATE

Please read information
and prepare for
implementation

EXPIRATION DATE

May 30, 2017

Corrected #15-68-06: Implementing the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant

TOPIC

This bulletin summarizes Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) policy guidance related to the \$110 MFIP Housing Assistance Grant.

PURPOSE

To provide information and instructions to county and tribal financial eligibility supervisors and staff.

CONTACT

Submit questions on income maintenance program or employment services policy through Policy Quest. Submit a PF11 for all MAXIS related questions.

SIGNED

JAMES G. KOPPEL
Assistant Commissioner

TERMINOLOGY NOTICE

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

I. MFIP Housing Assistance Grant Background

During the 2013 legislative session, a new MFIP benefit available to all MFIP-eligible families was established. This benefit is effective July 1, 2015.

To be eligible for the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant, families must meet statutory provisions listed below:

- Meet MFIP general eligibility requirements (Minnesota Statutes, sections 256J.10 - 256J.15, 256J.20 - 256J.21, 256J.30, and 256J.42)
- Meet the MFIP Housing Grant eligibility rules (Minnesota Statutes, sections 256J.35 and 256J.35, subdivision (1))

II. MFIP Housing Assistance Grant Eligibility

Currently, families on MFIP receive a monthly grant including cash and food portions. Beginning July 1, 2015, MFIP-eligible families will also receive a \$110 MFIP Housing Assistance Grant unless:

- (a) An assistance unit is currently receiving public housing or assisted rental subsidies (Section 8 vouchers) through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) **AND** up to \$50 of this assistance is counted as unearned income.
- (b) An assistance unit is a child only case.
- (c) An assistance unit opted out of the MFIP cash portion.
- (d) A case is closed.

MFIP-eligible, for the purpose of the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant includes families who are receiving only the food portion of MFIP, and those whose grant has been reduced to \$0 issuance (due to suspension).

Note: Review details of eligibility and budgeting factors related to the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant in the Q&A Attachment section of this bulletin.

III. Transitioning New and Existing Cases

In early June 2015, MAXIS will run an auto-approval of MFIP cases that are eligible for the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant. DHS recommends that counties and tribes continue to review cases that have subsidized housing to ensure the STAT/SHEL panel is up to date.

Note: Instructions on how to complete MAXIS coding for this new grant are included in the Q&A Attachment section of this bulletin.

IV. Next Steps

A. MAXIS Workarounds

MAXIS workarounds are explained in the Questions and Answers Attachment section of this bulletin.

B. Manuals Update

The Combined and the TEMP Manuals will be updated to reflect the policy guidance related to the MFIP Housing Grant eligibility and budgeting factors in July 2015.

C. Client Notices and Brochures

A mass mailing went out to all MFIP cases on May 12, 2015 informing families they may be eligible for the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant.

A brochure will be created to encourage families to understand their rights and responsibilities to receive the new MFIP Housing Assistance Grant.

V. Authority for MFIP Housing Assistance Grant

Laws of Minnesota 2013, [chapter 108, article 3, sections 29 and 46](#)

VI. Attachments

MFIP Housing Assistance Grant Policy Questions and Answers

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Advisory

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

MFIP Housing Assistance Grant Policy Questions and Answers May 2015

Q1. Who is eligible for the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant?

Effective July 1, 2015, the \$110 MFIP Housing Assistance Grant is available to all MFIP-eligible assistance units **unless**:

- An assistance unit is currently receiving public housing or assisted rental subsidies (Section 8 vouchers) through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) AND up to \$50 of this assistance is counted as unearned income (see Combined Manual section 17.15.99 for more details).
- An assistance unit is child-only case.
- An assistance unit opted out of the MFIP cash portion.
- A case is closed.

Q2. What are the exemption categories for those who live in public subsidized housing?

Exemptions from counting \$50 of the value of the housing subsidy as unearned income include:

- Caregivers age 60 or older
- Caregivers caring for a disabled family member
- Caregivers who meet Special Medical Criteria (SMC)
- Caregivers who are disabled and do not anticipate being able to work for 20+ hours for more than 30 days
- Caregivers who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

In addition to the five exemptions listed above, the new \$110 MFIP Housing Assistance Grant includes an exemption for those who receive Mille Lacs Band Tribal TANF (for whom the current policy of counting \$50 housing subsidy as unearned income does not apply).

Q3. Are the \$50 housing subsidy policy and the MFIP Assistance Grant policy the same thing?

No, they are two separate policies that have separate eligibility factors. Currently, we count up to \$50 of the value of HUD-funded public housing or rental assistance subsidy as unearned income toward the cash portion of the MFIP grant (unless certain exemptions are met as described in Combined Manual section 17.15.99). In contrast, the \$110 MFIP Housing Assistance Grant is a new benefit available to all MFIP-eligible households who meet the conditions listed above in the response to Question #1. Those who meet the six exemptions for living in subsidized housing described in the response to Question #2 are also eligible for this new grant.

The MFIP Housing Assistance Grant is in addition to, and will be issued separately from, the MFIP cash portion and food portion. However, from a client perspective, the benefit transfer and withdrawal processes remain the same.

Q4. Despite receipt of public housing or rental subsidy, can families still be eligible for this benefit?

Yes, an assistance unit is eligible for the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant if:

- The project or property where the family lives is NOT funded by HUD resources.
- A rent subsidy is not funded by HUD resources.
- An assistance unit qualifies for an exemption from the counting of the housing subsidy (up to \$50) as unearned income --see response to Question #2 above.

Q5. Will MAXIS be fully automated to implement this new benefit for July 1, 2015?

Yes, the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant is automated. However, the current automation does not include the exemptions from counting \$50 of housing subsidy as unearned income (see Combined Manual section 17.15.99 for more details). The eligibility definition was expanded late in the programming stage, which meant that there was not sufficient time to include the list of exemptions from counting subsidized housing in the programming logic.

The exemptions list will be added in a follow-up programming task when system resources allow. Until that programming happens, counties need to use a workaround to identify the appropriate cases to ensure that the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant is issued to the eligible households each month. Please enter CASE/NOTES **monthly** as these cases are processed in FIAT.

Workaround procedure

Each month:

Review REPT/MFCM for any MFIP case with “EMPS status” of

- { 02 Age >= 60, 07 Ill/Incap > 30 Days, 08 Care Of Ill/Incapacitated Family Member, 12 Special Med Criteria, 21 Age 60 or Older (UP), 23 Ill/Incap > 30 Days (UP), 23 Ill/Incap > 30 Days (UP), 24 Care Ill/Incap Family Member (UP), 27 Special Med Criteria (UP).
- Because the ES Status hierarchy for Disabled is lower than Mentally Ill and SSI/RSDI pending, also look for cases with “EMPS Status” of {15 Mentally Ill, 18 SSI/RSDI Pending, 30 Mentally Ill (UP) and 33 SSI/RSDI Pending (UP)}. For these caregivers, examine the DISA panels to see if there is a disability of greater than 30 days duration coded. Remember that the caregiver doesn’t need to have 31+ days left in the disability, just

a cumulative 31+ day's duration, and a day into the benefit period being considered.

- The ES status at the top of the hierarchy when the system is choosing between multiple possibilities is: {10 Care Of Child Less Than 1}. Any caregiver with this ES status may also have a SMC, be needed in the home, or be disabled, but have been assigned the "Child under 1" exemption. Consider these cases also.
- To ensure that these cases get considered for potential MFIP Housing Assistance Grant eligibility, SHEL panel should be reviewed. If "Subsidized (Y/N)" is a {Y}, then the worker will need to look at the EMPS and DISA panels to discern whether the caregiver meets an exemption from the Subsidized Housing Policy, and is therefore eligible for the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant.
- Use the "Go To" field, with an {S} selection to navigate to SHEL. Verify whether or not the household has a {Y} in the "Subsidized (Y/N)" field on SHEL. If the field is coded as a {Y}, this case would likely be an MFIP Housing Assistance Grant case that was not caught by background processing due to late clarification from policy.
- Cases with one parent only - who is on SSI – are not part of this workaround, as those cases would be "child-only". But if a household contains two parents, with one parent on SSI, and receives subsidized housing, they will need to be identified for manual processing. REPT/ACTV can sometimes be of assistance, as these cases often have Uncle Harry SNAP open as a companion to the MFIP and this can be found by a review of REPT/ACTV.

Use FIAT to set the case up for MFIP Housing Assistance Grant Eligibility:

- On MFB1, in the "Subsidy/Tribal" pop-up, select the "Housing Subsidy" sub-pop-up (see Figures 1, 2, and 3 for sample screenshots on pages 4 and 5).
- In the "SHEL Housing Subsidy Budget", on the "Prosp" column, change the amount to \$0.
- This should roll eligibility for the \$110 MFIP Housing Assistance Grant out to the main FIAT budgets.
- Process and save the FIAT budget as usual for all other policy factors.

UNAPPROVED	(MFB1)	Prev Approval:	STAT
Family Wage Level.....	\$ 829.00	Net Food Portion.....	\$ 317.00
- Monthly Earned Income..	- \$ 0.00	Net Cash Portion.....	\$ 437.00
Difference.....	= \$ 829.00	Unmet Need.....	\$ 754.00
- Sanction: % & Vendor..	- \$ 0.00		
Transitional Standard..	\$ 754.00	Unmet Need Subtotal..	\$ 754.00
Monthly Need.....	\$ 754.00		
- Unearned Income.....	- \$ 0.00	Food Portion.....	\$ 317.00
- Deemed Income.....	- \$ 0.00	- Food Portion Deduct..	- \$ 0.00
Unmet Need.....	= \$ 754.00	Net Food Portion.....	= \$ 317.00
Food Portion.....	\$ 317.00		
- Tribal Counted Income	\$ 0.00	MFIP Housing Grant...	\$ 110.00
Cash Portion.....	\$ 437.00		
X Subsidy/Tribal.....	\$ 0.00		

Function: ELIG Case Nbr: __563525 Month: 05 15 Command: _____
 Sv: 90 PW: PNBMS35 SW: Name: KUBAT, SEAN E User: PNBMS35

Enter-PF1---PF2---PF3---PF4---PF5---PF6---PF7---PF8---PF9---PF10--PF11--PF12---
 HELP EXIT CNOTE NOTC TRBL INFO

Figure 1 - Sample ELIG MFB1

UNAP	Subsidy/Tribal	STAT
Fa		317.00
- Mo		437.00
- Di		754.00
	X Housing Subsidy.....	+ \$ 0.00
Tr	- Amount of Tribal Child Support..	\$ 0.00
Mo	Total Cash Portion Deduction....	= \$ 0.00
- Un		317.00
- De		0.00
Un		317.00
- Tribal Counted Income	\$ 0.00	MFIP Housing Grant... \$ 110.00
Cash Portion.....	\$ 437.00	
x Subsidy/Tribal.....	\$ 0.00	

Function: ELIG Case Nbr: __563525 Month: 05 15 Command: _____
 Sv: 90 PW: PNBMS35 SW: Name: KUBAT, SEAN E User: PNBMS35

Enter-PF1---PF2---PF3---PF4---PF5---PF6---PF7---PF8---PF9---PF10--PF11--PF12---
 HELP EXIT CNOTE NOTC TRBL INFO

Figure 2 - Sample Subsidy/Tribal Pop-up

04/08/15 09:33:16		MAXIS		PWMS3AM8	
SHEL Housing Subsidy Budget				Date: 04/07/15	
Budget Cycle.... P				82A7	
Ref				317.00	
Nbr	Nbr	Name	Retro	Prospect	437.00
01	A	KUBAT, SEAN	0.00	0.00	754.00
				0.00	
				754.00	
				317.00	
				0.00	
				317.00	
				\$	110.00
Total Countable Housing Subsidy.....				\$	0.00
Exempt... N					

Figure 3 - Sample SHEL Housing Subsidy Budget Pop-up

Q6. If a MFIP case does not have housing costs, does eligibility still exist for families?

Yes, as long as a case meets all other MFIP eligibility rules. Examples of eligible households include:

- Families who are homeless
- Households living in shelters, facilities and in state paid care, while MFIP eligible
- Renters & homeowners
- Teen parents living at home
- Families living rent-free with friends or family members
- Those whose housing needs have been met for the month by county consolidated funds
- Migrant/Seasonal Farmworkers who are MFIP eligible

Note: An assistance unit does not have to have any housing costs nor is any separate verification of housing or housing-related expenses required to be eligible for the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant.

Q7. Are there general MFIP policies that do not apply to this new benefit?

Yes, there are five general MFIP policies that do not apply to this new benefit as follows:

- 1) There is no proration for the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant. If a family is eligible one day in the month, there is eligibility for the full MFIP Housing Assistance Grant that month.
- 2) The MFIP Housing Assistance Grant is NOT subject to sanction. When the 10% or 30% sanction policy is applied to the MFIP cash, the \$110 MFIP Housing Assistance Grant is not affected. When a vendor is in place for a sanction, the \$110 is not required to be vendored as part of the sanction policy. However, if a case closes for a 100% sanction, the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant benefit will also be closed as part of the MFIP case closure.
- 3) There is no recoupment from the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant for cash, food or Housing Assistance claims.
- 4) Only two types of mandatory vendoring apply to the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant:
 - (i) Drug felony offenses (see Combined Manual section 0011.27.03 for more details)
 - (ii) Money mismanagement (see Combined Manual section 0024.09 for more details)
- 5) Suspended MFIP cases which are reduced to \$0 issuance due to the household being over-income, including child support, lump sum income, extra paycheck, will continue to receive the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant in a suspension month (that means that the \$110 MFIP Housing Assistance Grant is paid out in a suspended month).

Q8. How will the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant impact suspended cases?

Currently, benefits are not issued for a case that is in a SUSPEND status. The time and resources available for this project did not allow for the significant reprogramming that would have been needed to change MAXIS functionality to allow for an issuance through ELIG on a SUSPENDED case.

DHS staff will issue the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant for these cases. On the last day of each month, DHS will run a report to identify suspended MFIP cases that meet, on that day, the conditions for the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant. This report will be reviewed by BENE staff, and BENE will issue the \$110 MFIP Housing Assistance Grant to those households, using restricted access codes on MONY/CHCK. They will also mark the TIME panel for the caregivers who receive the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant in a suspended benefit month.

On the first of a benefit month, and ongoing, as county workers process REIN cases and other case management actions, and they become aware of a suspended result, they must review the case for MFIP Housing Assistance Grant eligibility, and contact BENE directly to request an issuance of the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant for the

suspended benefit month. Please see HOUSING GRANT ISSUANCE FOR MFIP SUSPENSIONS TE02.11.12 for additional information.

Q9. Does the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant affect the Time Panel if no other cash is issued?

The MFIP Housing Assistance Grant affects the TANF TIME LIMIT even if no other cash is issued that month (i.e., in suspended months when there is \$0 cash issuance OR during MFIP food portion only months). It is considered an assistance payment.

Therefore, if an assistance unit receives the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant during a suspension month or MFIP food portion month, the 60-month time clock would run.

Q10. Can families exercise their opting out option regarding this benefit?

Yes, they can if they choose to do so. Opting out encompasses both MFIP cash and the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant. The two are tied together.

Note: Opting out of the MFIP cash portion triggers opting out of the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant. **Encourage** families to consider opting out (if available) as a method of saving their TANF time limit months.

Q11. Is the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant prospectively or retrospectively budgeted?

The MFIP Housing Grant does not follow the budget cycle, like income does. However, the housing subsidy exemptions are looked at prospectively, even if the budgeting cycle is retrospective.

The MFIP Housing Grant is always determined prospectively. In contrast, the housing subsidy deduction follows the budget cycle for a case, so could be prospective or retrospective. However, the housing subsidy deduction exemptions which may impact Housing Grant eligibility are only looked at prospectively, even if the MFIP budget cycle is retrospective. What that means on the system is that the conditions existing in the household for the benefit (footer) month will decide the eligibility for the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant.

For example, you are determining benefits for July. MFIP is in the retrospective budget cycle. Client's housing subsidy of \$400 ended June 1. In footer month of July, SHEL would be coded "Y" for subsidy, in the "Subsidy" field, RETRO side would show \$400 and PROSP side would show \$0. The \$400 retrospective subsidy amount determines the \$50 housing subsidy deduction will still be budgeted for July. However, the prospective \$0 subsidy indicates the subsidized housing has ended for the household. Therefore, in July, there is no longer a subsidized housing bar to eligibility for the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant.

Q12. Does the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant follow the usual MFIP funding factors?

Cases that are currently state-funded will receive MFIP Housing Assistance Grant that is state-funded. In contrast, cases that are TANF-funded will receive MFIP Housing Assistance Grant that is federally funded (see Figure 4 below for a screenshot illustrating how the funding factors work for the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant):

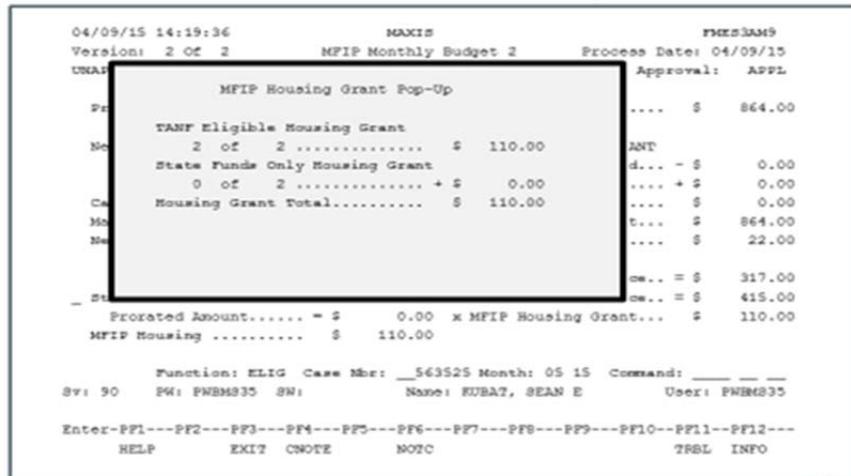


Figure 4 - Sample MFIP Housing Grant Funding Factor Pop-Up

Q13. What about 2-parent households in which one parent gets SSI and the other is disqualified?

If a case is a 2-parent household and one parent receives SSI and the other gets disqualified from MFIP, and the disqualification results in a child-only case, then that family is not eligible for the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant.

Q14. Are all Family Stabilization Services (FSS) participants eligible for this new benefit?

All MFIP eligible families, including those on FSS, are eligible for the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant as long as they meet and maintain the eligibility criteria of this new benefit (see response to Questions 1 and 2 above).

Note: FSS status does not determine eligibility for the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant (see response to Question #1 above)

Q15. How do overpayments work for the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant?

Overpayments for the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant are shown on the MFB2 screen, in the Overpayment pop-up window. Within this window, there is an additional “Housing Overpayment pop-up window showing the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant over-

payment funding source breakdown. MFIP Housing Assistance Grant overpayments are entered in CCOL/CLAM by claim workers.

The overpayment program code for MFIP Housing Assistance Grant on CCOL/CLAM is “MF”. The Original Amount pop-up window is completed for MFIP Housing Assistance Grant overpayments.

The MFIP Housing Assistance Grant overpayments can be entered at the same time as MFIP cash or MFIP food overpayments. If an adjustment needs to be made on an MFIP Housing Assistance Grant claim, CCOL/CRAA lists MFIP Housing Assistance Grant adjustment Type codes.

Q16. How do underpayments work for the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant?

A supplement for the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant is displayed in the “Supplement Due” pop-up on the MFB2 screen in ELIG. In the “Supplement Due” pop-up, supplements for the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant are displayed and determined separately from the cash and food portions of the grant (see Figure 5 below for a screenshot of the MFIP Housing Grant supplement pop-up).

The MFIP Housing Assistance Grant supplements can be issued through the regular approval process in a current month or via MONY/CHCK in a past month.

Version: 2 Of 2		MFIP Monthly Budget 2		Process Date:	
04/09/15					
Supplement					
Total Supplement.....	\$	110.00			
* Net Food Portion.....	\$	459.00	* Net Cash Portion.....	\$	532.00
Net Food Already Iss..	\$	459.00	Net Cash Already Iss..	\$	532.00
Difference.....	\$	0.00	Difference.....	\$	0.00
Food Supplement.....	\$	0.00	Cash Supplement.....	\$	0.00
* State Food Benefit....	\$	0.00	Net MFIP Housing Grant	\$	110.00
St. Food Already Iss..	\$	0.00	Housing Already Issued	\$	0.00
Difference.....	\$	0.00	Difference.....	\$	110.00
State Food Supplement.	\$	0.00	Housing Supplement....	\$	110.00
*Net Benefit Amounts 'Already Issued' Include Any Recoupment					
HELP	EXIT	CNOTE	NOTE	TREL	INFO

Figure 5 - Sample Supplement Due Pop-up

Q17. How does recoupment works for the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant?

MFIP Housing Assistance Grant claims are recouped from active MFIP cases with a cash portion. Recoupment will never be taken from the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant, for any type of claim (see below for a screenshot on recoupment).

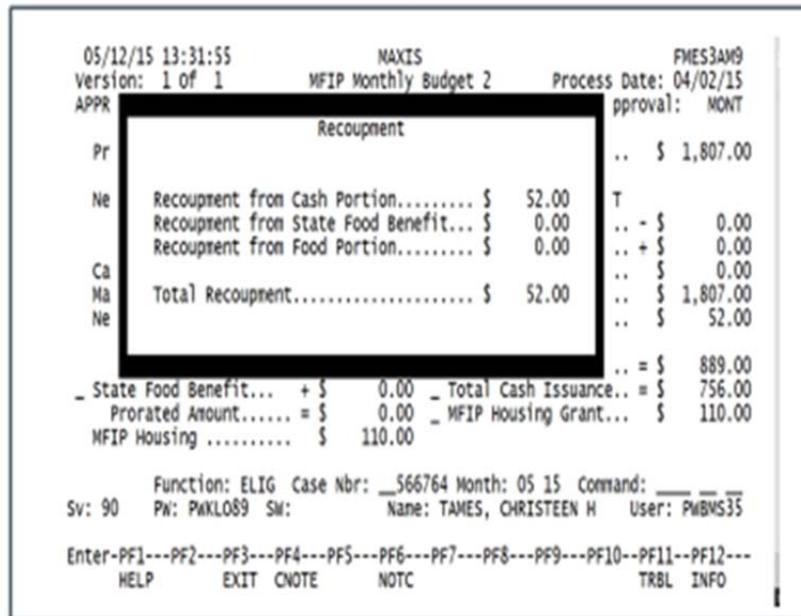


Figure 6 - Sample ELIG Recoupment Pop-up

Q18. What happens when determining supplements and overpayments in the same month?

The MFIP Housing Assistance Grant and MFIP cash portions are to be kept separate when issuing a supplement and when determining an overpayment amount in the same month.

MAXIS allows a supplement and overpayment to be calculated within the same month when the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant is considered. However, the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant or cash supplements cannot be used to off-set or reduce the total MFIP Housing Assistance Grant and/or cash overpayment amount.

Households, in turn, cannot elect to use their supplement to off-set or reduce the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant or cash overpayment amount.

MFIP cash supplements, in a past month, continue to follow policy regarding applying supplements to existing claims. The MFIP Housing Assistance Grant supplement does not follow this policy. If it is determined that the household was eligible for the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant but did not receive it, then the full \$110 Housing Assistance Grant supplement must be issued to the household.

Q19. Is there a way to get the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant for a case opened on DWP instead of MFIP?

DWP eligibility in any month rules out MFIP eligibility in the same month, including the MFIP Housing Grant. If a family is opened on DWP, and then it is later discovered that the caregiver is actually “unlikely to benefit” and that the case has been incorrectly processed as DWP instead of MFIP, there is no policy or system methodology to correct this.

County workers are **strongly encouraged** to have a conversation at intake with family cash applicants about all possible factors that may determine the correct program, and to obtain any needed documentation, such as Medical Opinion forms, that would support the proper program selection. This conversation becomes even more important with the implementation of the new MFIP Housing Assistance Grant.

Q20. Is the \$110 MFIP Housing Assistance Grant available to families who choose to close their cases?

No. If the MFIP case is voluntarily closed, an assistance unit cannot get a separate MFIP Housing Assistance Grant. The case has to be MFIP-eligible before the \$110 MFIP Housing Assistance Grant eligibility kicks in.

Q21. Are there instances when this benefit would be less than or more than the \$110.00 monthly?

No. The MFIP Housing Assistance Grant is never prorated. If an assistance unit is MFIP-eligible and also found eligible for the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant then the full grant of \$110 will be issued monthly.

Q22. What are the reporting requirements for the MFIP Housing Assistance Grant?

The MFIP Housing Assistance Grant reporting requirements follow those currently in place for MFIP (see Combined Manual Chapter 7 and Reporting Responsibilities for MFIP Households brochure--DHS-2647-- for further details). For instance:

- 1) Applicants must report changes that affect their eligibility to the county immediately while their application is pending.
- 2) Specific changes that must be reported which may affect the Housing Assistance Grant include household composition, new or change in rent subsidy, and address changes. Recipients must report changes by **the earliest of these dates**:
 - Within 10 days of the change
 - At recertification
 - By the 8th of the month, monthly reporters who report a change before submitting a Household Report Form (HRF, i.e., DHS-2120) must also report the change on the HRF.