

Bulletin

December 12, 2007

Minnesota Department of Human Services □ P.O. Box 64941 □ St. Paul, MN 55164-0941

OF INTEREST TO

- County Directors
- Social Services Supervisors and Staff
- MFIP Employment Services Providers
- Tribal Representatives
- Child care Assistance Workers

ACTION/DUE DATE

January 1, 2008

EXPIRATION DATE

December 12, 2009

Changes to MFIP and DWP Effective January 1, 2008 and February 1, 2008

TOPIC

MFIP and DWP policy changes with an effective date of January 1, 2008 or February 1, 2008.

PURPOSE

Describe the change in asset policy for DWP and MFIP and the change in eligibility criteria for refugees applying for cash assistance that become effective on January 1, 2008. The bulletin also addresses the February 1, 2008 change to exclude all SSI benefits when determining eligibility for DWP and MFIP.

CONTACT

For questions on income maintenance program policy:
Local Agency Support Policy Center
Minnesota Department of Human Services
PO Box 64951, St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-0951

SIGNED

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I. BACKGROUND

The 2007 legislature passed several changes to statute that will become effective in January or February 2008. This bulletin gives additional information on the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)/ Diversionary Work Program (DWP) policy changes mentioned in bulletin, #07-11-03, issued June 22, 2007.

II. CHANGES EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2008

A. Vehicle Exclusion

Effective January 1, 2008, one licensed vehicle with a loan value equal to or less than \$15,000 is excluded in determining eligibility for MFIP or DWP. Any amount above \$15,000 must be counted toward the MFIP and DWP asset limit. When an assistance unit owns more than one vehicle, the combined loan value of all other vehicles over \$7,500 must also be counted toward the MFIP and DWP asset limit.

Example: An MFIP unit owns three vehicles which are valued at \$16,000, \$4,000 and \$3,500. The system will deduct \$15,000 from the vehicle with the highest value. This leaves a remainder of \$1,000. The system will then add the value of the remaining two vehicles for a total of \$7,500. There is no excess value of the two remaining vehicles and the \$1,000 from the vehicle with the highest value applies toward the asset limit.

MAXIS: The MAXIS system has been programmed to accommodate this change.

B. Recently Arrived Refugees or Approved Asylees

Applications

Beginning January 1, 2008, all applications received for family cash assistance that include a refugee caregiver who arrived in the United States within twelve months of applying for family cash assistance or an asylee caregiver who is approved for asylee status within 12 months of applying for family cash assistance must have eligibility for MFIP determined. Only one-parent in a two-parent family needs to meet the refugee or asylee criteria to be approved for MFIP.

Applications for family cash received in 2007 that include a refugee or asylee meeting the criteria above but not approved until January 2008 should be processed according to policy in effect for the month of application. Example: A family that includes a refugee caregiver applies for cash assistance on December 21, 2007. Eligibility for cash assistance is not determined until January 3, 2008. The family is eligible for DWP because the application date is December.

On-Going DWP Cases

Families that include a refugee or asylee caregiver who arrived in the United States within the past twelve months, who were approved for DWP prior to January 1, 2008, will continue to receive DWP until the end of the family's four month DWP eligibility period. If during the four-month DWP eligibility period it is determined that a participant is unlikely to benefit as defined in the Combined Manual, section 08.06.24, convert the family to MFIP.

MAXIS: Beginning with the footer month of January 2008, workers should use FIAT to deny DWP and make eligible for MFIP families with at least one caregiver who meets the recently arrived refugee policy criteria.

FIAT an ineligible version of DWP for the footer month of January 2008. Use FIAT reason code {04 Policy Change} and fail the MFIP CONVERSION case test. Add a Worker Comment to the DWP closing notice that says: "Your household includes a caregiver who is a refugee or Asylee who has recently arrived in the United States. As of January 2008, MFIP is the correct Family Cash program for your household."

When MFIP is ready to process for January 2008, workers should FIAT the Food Support program closed for January 2008 by failing the MFIP ELIGIBLE test. This assumes that there is time for a 10 day notice to be issued.

FIAT MFIP for the footer month of January 2008, using FIAT reason {03 System Failure}. Workers will need to be very careful when FIATing the January 2008 MFIP eligibility as the system will have provided very limited results in FIAT for MFIP. Each part of MFIP policy will need to be considered off line and reflected in FIAT, including the correct funding source for the household, given their refugee/asylee status and the correct ES status code.

If the January MFIP eligibility approval does NOT offer an auto-referral to WF1, and the caregiver(s) are referable, use the INCF/WF1M manual referral to complete the referral of the caregiver(s). Add comments to the referral indicating that the caregiver is eligible for MFIP due to their recent arrival in the U.S., and provide the arrival date. Employment services (ES) providers will need to be aware that these caregivers will need a specialized ES plan under the Family Stabilization Services policy as of February 2008.

III. CHANGES EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 1, 2008

A. Budgeting Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Effective February 1, 2008, all SSI benefits will be excluded as income when determining eligibility and benefit amounts for DWP and MFIP. Grants issued for the benefit month of February will not include the \$125 SSI as income to the cash assistant unit.

MAXIS: MAXIS will run a job in the beginning of January 2008 to identify MFIP and DWP units that currently have SSI income budgeted toward the MFIP/DWP household and will exclude the income from the grant calculation February 2008 benefits, where possible. For DWP, the change in the grant will often affect the Food Support (FS) budget, so MAXIS will include conditions to address FS budgeting.

B. Family Stabilization Services (FSS)

Information and instructions on FFS are included in bulletin #07-11-07, issued November 16, 2007.

Special Needs

This information is available in other forms to people with disabilities by contacting Aaron Coonce at (651) 431-4049 (voice) or toll free at 1-888-234-1138 or through the Minnesota Relay Service at 1-800- 627-3529 (TDD), 7-1-1 or 1-877-627-3848 (speech-to-speech relay service).