

Bulletin

October 31, 2008

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

OF INTEREST TO

County Agencies

- Directors
- Economic Assistance Supervisors & Staff
- Child Care Assistance Supervisors & Staff
- Social Services Supervisors and Staff
- Child Support Supervisors & Staff

Other Interested Parties

- Child Care Resource & Referral Directors
- Employment Services Directors & Providers
- Tribal Representatives

ACTION/DUE DATE

Informational only.

EXPIRATION DATE

October 31, 2010

DHS Issues Final Report of the MFIP Longitudinal Study Series

TOPIC

An analysis of administrative and survey data for the follow-up period in 2003, five years after the baseline. This report, *MFIP Longitudinal Study: Five Years from Baseline and Beyond*, describes the situation of study participants, including family composition, public assistance use, employment, income, housing, transportation, child care, health care, personal and family challenges, and other employment barriers.

PURPOSE

These reports are intended to inform policymakers, agencies, and charitable organizations about current trends in public assistance as they assist Minnesota Family Investment Program participants move toward self-sufficiency.

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SIGNED

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BACKGROUND

To learn what would happen to families served by the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) developed the MFIP Longitudinal Study to follow nearly two thousand MFIP families with one caregiver – usually a parent, sometimes a relative – over five years. Two samples of MFIP participants were selected: new *Applicants* who were in their first month of family cash assistance when selected and ongoing *Recipients* who averaged 44 months of cash assistance prior to being sampled. This distinction was made to compare the experiences of those with a history of cash assistance, many starting with the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program, with primarily new participants. The baseline month was between May and October of 1998, with approximately one-sixth of each sample randomly selected each month. The groups were to be surveyed at baseline, six months, and annually after baseline, plus special reports focusing on the topics of health care access for welfare leavers, teen mothers, and participants approaching the MFIP time limit. Only the *Recipient* sample was surveyed for the last two years. The final survey, five years from the baseline month, focused on a review month between May and October 2003.

PURPOSE OF THE LONGITUDINAL STUDY

The purpose of the study was to collect information on the experiences and outcomes of participants and on the operation of MFIP. The focus was on measuring outcomes of participants in: 1) obtaining employment, 2) retaining employment, 3) increasing earnings, 4) reducing poverty, 5) exiting MFIP, and 6) remaining off MFIP. The study was designed to examine the associations among participant characteristics, program and external influences, and participant outcomes. Data were collected on a variety of possible client resources, including employment services, child care assistance, child support, medical assistance and private insurance, community services, transportation and housing subsidies, as well as employment barriers, for participants while on assistance, during the transition period, and for the duration of the study for those participants who remained off assistance.

The combination of administrative and survey data collected over the five-year period of the study provided a comprehensive database to enable scheduled reports, ad hoc reporting, and in-depth outcome measurement.

THE FIVE YEAR FOLLOW-UP REPORT

Sample Description

This report is the final in a series of reports to be issued as part of the MFIP Longitudinal Study.

It presents follow-up data in month 60 of each participant's involvement in the study (one month between May 2003 and October 2003) for the *Recipient's* sample.

Data Collection

The data for this report, *Five Years from Baseline and Beyond*, came from the 60-month follow-up survey and administrative data, as well as trends across time.

Completion Rate

For the final survey, 562 *Recipients* participated, a response rate of 67 percent.

Findings

At the end of the five-year study, a portion of study participants had successfully made the transition out of poverty and became self-supporting while others were still struggling below the poverty line.

- Three-quarters of sampled *Recipients* were no longer receiving MFIP.
- Sixty-one percent of surveyed *Recipients* were employed in the review month and average earnings of employed *Recipients* were \$1,388.
- Forty-one percent of surveyed *Recipients* had incomes below the Federal Poverty Guideline.

This final report of the MFIP Longitudinal Study starts with economic and welfare use measures and goes beyond to describe the variety of participant experiences.

RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET

You can find the report, *MFIP Longitudinal Study: Five Years from Baseline and Beyond*, on the DHS Public Web Site at <http://www.dhs.state.mn.us>. Once there,

- Click on **Economic Supports** from the menu at the top of the page.
- Click on **MFIP** located in the far left column.
- Click on **Reports** located in the far left column.
- Scroll down to the heading, **MFIP Longitudinal Study Reports (Series)**

You will also find reports and statistical information about welfare reform and evaluation related to the Minnesota Family Investment Program.

ALTERNATIVE FORMAT

Special Needs

This information is available in other forms to people with disabilities by contacting us at (651) 431-3936 or toll free at (800) 366-7895. TDD users can call the Minnesota Relay at 711 or (800) 627-3529. For the Speech-to-Speech Relay, call (877) 627-3848.