



## Diversionsary Work Program (DWP)

Almost all new applicants eligible for the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) go into the Diversionsary Work Program (DWP) for 4 months before they get regular MFIP.

### What's good about DWP?

- You may get more benefits if you start a job while you are on DWP.
- Your months on DWP don't count on your time limit for MFIP.
- You get a job counselor and Employment Plan faster than on MFIP.
- You get day care faster.



### What benefits do I get on DWP?

DWP benefits include:

- vendor payments for housing costs- like rent, mortgage and utilities
- \$35 for phone services
- food benefits – make sure you check the box to apply for SNAP at the same time
- day care benefits

The amount that is vendor paid will not be more than an MFIP cash grant for the same size household. If there is money left after your housing costs and utilities are vendor paid from your DWP grant, each person in the family can get up to \$70 for personal needs.

### How do I start?

Go to your county welfare office and fill out an application.

The county must give you an intake meeting within 5 working days after it gets your application. If you have gotten MFIP or DWP benefits in the last 12 months, counties must offer you the option of a phone interview. If you need child care, the county has to help you apply for child care at the intake meeting.

You should be referred for child care once you get a job counselor. You should get a job counselor within 1 day after the county decides that you can get DWP.

You should meet with your job counselor within 10 working days to make an Employment Plan (EP). **You will not get cash benefits until your Employment Plan is approved.**

It's a good idea to write everything down– keep track of it. Start a DWP/MFIP notebook. Keep all of the papers you get.

## Does everyone have to do DWP?

Some people don't go into DWP. You go right into MFIP if you:

- are applying for a child only grant
- are 19 or 19 years old and want to finish high school or get your GED
- are 17 years old or less and haven't finished high school or gotten your GED
- are a single parent and have a child under 12 months old. You can only use this once in your life.
- had 4 months of DWP in the last 12 months
- had MFIP within the past 12 months
- have received 60 or more months of MFIP

You can also skip or switch out of DWP and get MFIP when you show that you:

- can't work because you have an illness or injury that will last more than 30 days
- are needed at home to care for an ill or injured household member.
- have a doctor's letter that you are pregnant and can't work
- have applied for SSI or RSDI
- have a child or adult in your household who is eligible for special medical services
- are a victim of domestic violence
- have a learning disability or low IQ and this condition limits your ability to work
- are age 60 or older, or
- have been in the United States fewer than 12 full months after the month of entry

## How many hours do I have to spend working or on job activities?

- 1 parent households must spend 130 hours a month (30.23 hours a week)  
(if you have a child under 6 you must spend 87 hours a month or 20.23 hours a week)
- 2 parent households must spend at least 55 hours per week total  
(add the 2 people's hours together)

## What is an Employment Plan (EP)?

It is a written plan that states the things you will do to:

- get ready for work,
- find a job,
- and keep it.



You have rights about what goes into your EP.

## What do I put in my EP?

- Job search- applying for jobs
- GED, finishing high school, Adult Basic Education, or ESL classes
- Training or college classes
- Other things needed to get ready for work
  - bus cards
  - child care
  - counseling

### **Can I skip job activities?**

- You have the right to get your GED instead of working. You also have the right to combine education activities with other work activities.
- You can get up to 12 months off after the birth of a child. These months can be split between parents and births, but can't total more than 12 months in your lifetime.

### **Does everyone have to do an EP?**

All parents on DWP **MUST** do an EP. **This is called universal participation.** But you may have the right to a modified Employment Plan. A modified EP can have:

- Less work or work search hours
- Special things to do because you or your child are disabled, or a victim of family violence.

### **Can I Get A Modified EP?**

Only some people can get a modified EP. For example, if you are a victim of family violence you have a right to a modified plan that includes a family violence waiver. You should meet with a family violence advocate and your job counselor to:

- Apply for a waiver, and
- Make an Employment Plan with a safety plan.

If you are disabled or live with someone with a disability who you need to take care of, you can get a modified Employment Plan and help from your workers to “accommodate” the disability. This means they help you make a modified Employment Plan and help you to get the services you need to be able to follow the plan.

### **When your EP is done:**

- You should get vendored benefits in 2 working days.
- You will also get food stamps and child care.

### **You have the right to change your EP as your life changes.**

Call your Job Counselor about:

- personal and family things that make it hard for you to get and keep a job
- trouble speaking or understanding English
- family violence issues
- involvement in social service programs
- involvement in the legal system

If your worker won't change your Employment Plan, you can appeal.



**Remember:**

If you start a job during the 4 month DWP, you will still get the same vendor payments. The money you earn from a job any time during those 4 months doesn't lower your grant.

**What if I don't follow my EP?**

If you have a good reason for not following your Employment Plan, tell your job counselor right away. If you don't follow your EP, and don't talk to your worker about problems and changes, you will be disqualified. **This means you will get NO cash benefits.** You can make changes to your EP or show your worker you have "good cause" and avoid disqualification.

"Good cause" can be:

- Lack of child care or transportation
- No jobs available
- Illness
- Family violence
- An emergency

If your worker doesn't agree, appeal.

**What if I get turned down or disqualified?**

You can appeal a decision by the county or your job counselor if you don't agree with it.

For more information on how to appeal, see our fact sheet, [Welfare Appeals to DHS](#).

**What happens when the 4 months are up?**

When the 4 month DWP is done, you can ask to get regular MFIP benefits. It doesn't matter if you have a job or not. On regular MFIP you can get:

- The money sent right to you as a cash grant
- Food support – now called SNAP
- Child care

Find more fact sheets at [www.lawhelpmn.org/LASMfactsheets](http://www.lawhelpmn.org/LASMfactsheets)

Find your local legal aid office at [www.lawhelpmn.org/resource/legal-aid-offices](http://www.lawhelpmn.org/resource/legal-aid-offices)

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