

Hennepin County MFIP/DWP Employment Services

Manual

Version Date 3/25/22

# 01 – Introduction

The table of contents in this manual matches the one found in the [DHS MFIP Employment Services Manual](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=id_016957). To ensure you are following program policy appropriately, always refer to state policy and procedure first. Then, for local interpretations of state policy and county specific guidelines, refer to the information provided in this manual.

This manual is currently under construction. If you need assistance with policy or procedure not outlined in this document, contact your agency’s assigned MFIP/DWP Employment Services Coordinator.

Contact: Rebecca Golden, Hennepin County MFIP Employment Services Coordinator

rebecca.golden@hennepin.us

Tina Dudzinski, Hennepin County MFIP/DWP Employment Services Coordinator

tina.dudzinski@hennepin.us

# 02 – Glossary of Abbreviations

ABE Adult Basic Education

CCAP Childcare Assistance Program

CCP Childcare Assistance Plan

CCW Childcare Worker

DWP Diversionary Work Program

EC Employment Counselor

EDS Electronic Document Storage

EP Employment Plan

ESL English as Second Language

ES OV Employment Services Overview

ESP Employment Services Provider

FSS Family Stabilization Services

HSR Human Services Representative

LEP Limited English Proficiency

MFIP Minnesota Family Investment Program

NIH Needed in the Home

NOITS Notice of Intent to Sanction

TTL Transition Team Leads

UE Unsubsidized Employment

WF1 Workforce One

# 03 – Financial Eligibility

See [Chapter 3 in the MFIP/DWP Employment Services Manual](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=TOC_ESM_0003) for full state policy on the following topics:

* + - * Applying for MFIP/DWP
      * Household Size
      * Income and Asset Limits for MFIP/DWP
      * MFIP Benefit Amounts
      * Budgeting Methods for MFIP Benefits
      * One Time Changes in Income in MFIP
      * Closing an MFIP Case
      * Cost-Effective Health Care

**Financial Eligibility in Hennepin County**

For current information for residents about how to apply for benefits and communicate with Hennepin County Economic Supports, visit:

[Connect to economic supports | Hennepin County](https://www.hennepin.us/residents/human-services/get-connected-economic-supports)

**Applying for Emergency Assistance (EA) in Hennepin County**

Emergency Assistance is funded through the Consolidated Fund and administered at the county level. Counties create their own rules for qualifying for EA. In Hennepin County:

* EA is only available once in a 12-month period. Some of the things that EA can assist with are damage deposits, foreclosures, back rent, and utilities.
* Housing has to be considered affordable for the EA team to assist with the emergency; there needs to be an ongoing source of income. If the EA team determines that an applicant does not have enough income to afford ongoing expenses, they may be required to apply for MFIP as a condition of their application.
* Eligibility is also based on gross income guidelines for the EA program that are based on family size.
* To speed up the application process residents should provide the following things along with their application:
  + identification
  + verification of relationship to children on the application
  + verification of the emergency
  + income verification

If other verifications are needed, the eligibility worker will request them when they interview the resident.

* An interview is required for EA programs. Residents can call the EA team at 612-596-1900 to complete their interview within 24 to 72 hours from completing the online application. When calling, listen to all prompts prior to selecting an option in the phone system.
* When applying for EA, the applicant must comply with Employment Services and cure any current ESP sanction in order to be eligible for Emergency Assistance. If the EA applicant is not currently receiving MFIP, and their case previously closed due to 100% sanction, they will need to cure their sanction prior to approval.
* For questions about Hennepin County Emergency Assistance, contact the team at 612-596-1900 or by emailing [HSPH.EWS.EATeam@hennepin.us](mailto:HSPH.EWS.EATeam@hennepin.us).

**Hennepin County Office of Multicultural Services**

* Hennepin County’s [Office of Multicultural Services](https://www.hennepin.us/residents/human-services/multi-cultural-services) provides interpreter services and assistance with application paperwork. OMS provides virtual services and can be reached at 612-348-2193.
* OMS staff speak more than 20 languages and are available to assist with applications for public assistance benefits, applications, and renewals for a green card, finding employment/clothing/other resources, identifying housing options, applying for Social Security and unemployment benefits, and more.

**Known to Agency/Communication with Hennepin County Eligibility**

Hennepin County staff and ESPs must work together to serve residents effectively. Participants should not be required to provide the same information to multiple areas within the Hennepin County MFIP system. Information that has been communicated to any worker, whether Employment Counselor, HSR, or CCW, is considered “known to the agency” and must be communicated to all other staff who need to know it.

For Hennepin County worker and team contact information, see the [MFIP/DWP ESP website](https://www.hennepin.us/mfipesp).

**Transition Services in Hennepin County**

When MFIP eligibility ends in MAXIS, the participant remains enrolled with their current ESP in the same WF1 Enrollment Sequence for two additional calendar months. During this period, the ESP continues to provide services and supports to the participant. These are called Transition Services.

ESPs must clearly communicate that ongoing services and supports are available, but participating in Transition Services is optional for the participant.

**When MFIP Closes**

Contact the participant to discuss their case status.

* If you expect that the case will be reinstated during the same month after the case is processed, help the participant gather and turn in necessary paperwork. Track case status and resume regular services if MFIP is reopened.
* If you don’t expect that the case will be reinstated, tell the participant that Transition Services are available.
* Send the Transition Services Information sheet to the current address on file by the 15th of the month that MFIP closed. Upload a copy of the document to EDS, this is a required EDS documents in Hennepin County (Document Type: Correspondence; Document Name: Letter)
  + For example, if MFIP closes for January 1st, send the letter by January 15th.
* After sending the required letter, you are required to make at least one more engagement attempt in order discuss what Transition Services are available. Hennepin County recommends you try a different method of contact for the second engagement attempt (for example, by phone or email). ESP agencies may require additional engagement attempts, so follow your agency’s procedures.
* If the participant declines to participate in Transition Services, discontinue outreach attempts.

**Eligibility for MFIP Transition Services**

* Before receiving Transition Services and supports, participants must have completed the Overview and created at least one Employment Plan during their enrollment.
* Participants that did not complete the Overview or make an Employment Plan during the regular enrollment period can get Transition Services and supports, but they must complete both things first.
* During Transition Services, do not ask a participant to update an expired plan, complete overdue assessments, turn in activity logs, or complete other items that would typically be required during regular enrollment. As long as the Overview and initial Employment Plan have been done, no other expired program requirements need to be updated.
* Assessment activity hours are the only type that should be entered during the Transition Services period since no activity logs are required.
* Participants can receive Non-Assistance Support Services during the Transition Services period. Refer to the current Hennepin County MFIP Support Services policy for details.
* ESPs are required to administer the Hennepin County Participant Experience Survey to all participants before their case is exited. Hennepin County recommends doing so in the second month of the transition period.

**Non-Compliance and Transition Services**

* Participation in Transition Services is optional, never send a NOITS during the transition period.
* Participation in Transition Services is not based on compliance during regular enrollment. If a participant is in sanction at the time MFIP closes, they may still receive Transition Services.
* If a case closes for 100% sanction and the participant wants to establish compliance with the program in order to reapply for MFIP, you can work with them to establish compliance before the transition period ends.
  + In these situations, develop a new Employment Plan with the participant that lasts up to 30 days or until the last day of the transition period, whichever is sooner. If they have reapplied for MFIP and their application is pending their compliance, do not require activities for longer than the application will be pending.
  + Once the participant has complied with the updated plan, submit a Status Update to ECF stating that the participant has complied. Document this in WF1 case notes.
  + Establishing compliance after a 100% sanction does not have to happen during the transition period. The participant can choose whether or not to take the steps listed above during their transition. They will eventually need to demonstrate compliance in order to be reapproved for MFIP, but the participant can also work with Employment Services if or when they reapply for MFIP in the future.

**Exiting the Case**

Before performing a program exit, verify MFIP closure date and reason in MAXIS. Confirm that the MFIP program has remained closed for two full calendar months before proceeding.

* Wait until the first day of the third month after MFIP closes before proceeding.
  + For example, if MFIP closed on January 1st, wait until March 1st before proceeding with the exit process.
* The exit date in WF1 should be the first of the month after MFIP Transition Services ends, two months after the MAXIS closure date.
  + For example, if MFIP closes for January 1st in MAXIS, the exit date is March 1st.
  + Exit dates should be the first of the month following the end of the Transition Services period, even if you are performing the exit after the first of the month has passed. See below for a list of exceptions to this.
* The WF1 exit reason is based on the closure reason in MAXIS. Refer to the ESM for more information on exit reasons [24.24 Exit Reasons for MFIP/DWP in WF1 (state.mn.us)](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=ESM_002424).
  + Unsubsidized Employment Exits are considered successful program exits and are connected to contract outcomes for MFIP Employment Services. In order to exit a case as a UE:
    - The Case Closure Reason on the MAXIS tab in WF1 must read “Gross/Net Income” OR
    - If there is another Case Closure Reason listed BUT there is specific information documented in MAXIS case notes or on MFIP eligibility screens indicating that the eligibility worker closed the case due to gross/net income levels AND the ESP staff has added a WF1 case note referencing that specific information in MAXIS. The exit is not considered a UE in situations where ESP staff determine that unverified earnings would put the household over income limits.

In some situations, you will need to exit the case before the Transition Period is over:

* If the participant has reapplied for MFIP and a new MFIP referral is pending. Exit the current Enrollment Sequence and begin one using the new referral.
* If the case has been transferred to another Minnesota county and you see MFIP is open in the new county. The exit date should match the date the case was transferred according to MAXIS case notes or Incoming Status Updates.
* If a SNAP Employment and Training worker contacts you because they are attempting to enroll the case. Exit the case using the date MFIP closed so that the pending SNAP E&T referral can be processed. Do not provide Transition Services to a participant who has exited in order to receive SNAP E&T.
* If the case is closed due to the death of the participant, exit the case using the date MFIP closed.

# 04 – Participants’ Rights

See [Chapter 4 in the MFIP/DWP Employment Services Manual](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=TOC_ESM_0004) for full state policy on the following topics:

* Rights to Appeal
* Data Privacy
* Sharing Information in the Welfare System
* Special Types of Private Data (Family Violence, mental health and chemical dependency treatment information)
* Participants’ Rights to Review Information
* Participants’ Program Rights in MFIP/DWP
* Civil Rights
* Americans with Disabilities Act
* Limited English Skills

**Participants’ Rights in Hennepin County**

**Right to Appeal**  
Refer to Chapter 19, Sanctions and Non-Compliance in this manual for more on Hennepin County’s dispute resolution process.

**Annual Data Privacy Training Series**

Hennepin County requires that anyone with access to private data complete the DHS Handling MN Information Securely training series prior to requesting access to any state or county system. The DHS training is a series of 7 online training modules and assessments that must be completed annually to maintain system access. Instructions to access the training can be found on the county’s [MFIP/DWP ESP website](https://www.hennepin.us/mfipesp) under System Access.

**Authorization to Release Information**

A release of information signed by the participant must be in the Employment Services case file before any information can be released to entities who are not part of the Hennepin welfare system. Do not release participant information to schools, landlords, family members, friends, legal aid, doctors, etc. without a signed authorization on file granting permission to release specific information.

The signed release should indicate at minimum:

* The name of the individual, representative, or provider that the ESP worker has permission to communicate with
* Which information may be discussed or released
* How long the release of information will be valid

**Reminders When Working with Releases of Information**

* Ask participants to sign a release of information for specific purposes and fill out the form fully at the time information is needed. Do not preemptively ask participants to sign a blank release of information for future use.
* Participants have the right to withdraw their authorization to release information at any time.
* ESPs should not use authorization to release information templates which list Hennepin County as the entity receiving the information, such as those found in ECF. The ESP’s name should be listed as the entity receiving the information.
* When communicating with outside entities, always practice the minimum necessary rule. Only request and release the minimum necessary private information required to meet the need.
* ESPs are responsible for putting systems in place that adhere to the contract requirement to safeguard private information, according to direction from their own agency leadership and legal counsel.

**Sharing Information Within HC and the Welfare System:**

ESPs are part of the Hennepin welfare system due to their contract to provide MFIP Employment Services. A signed release of information is not required to share information between staff working within MFIP for Hennepin County. Hennepin County ESPs may share information with other contracted Hennepin ESPs and with Hennepin Human Services Representatives without a signed release of information for the purposes of case management.

**ESP Use of ECF to Obtain Participant Information**:

ESPs are granted access to ECF to support collaborative case management and view documents that participants have submitted to the eligibility department.

Documents in ECF are Hennepin County documents and are not part of the ESP file. The documents are available for the ESP to view in the context of their work, and if the ESP needs documentation from ECF for the ESP case file, a copy may be printed directly from ECF and placed in the ESP case file.

**Participants’ Rights to Review Information**

If a participant is requesting a copy of a document that is not kept in the ESP case file (for example, a copy of a social security card that exists in the Eligibility case file in ECF), the ESP must refer to the participant to the assigned HSR team to ensure information is released to the participant via the appropriate channels. ESPs may not print information from the ECF case file to give directly to participants, doing so goes beyond the scope of accessing documents needed to perform work and manage the case.

**Detection of Data Breach**

Any breach of privacy should be reported to the Hennepin County MFIP Program Manager, Privacy Officer ([hsph.privacy.officer@hennepin.us](mailto:hsph.privacy.officer@hennepin.us)), and the agency’s assigned contract manager within 24 hours of detection.

**Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plans**

ESPs must provide comprehensive services regardless of a participant’s primary language. Refer to Hennepin County’s Limited English Proficiency Plan, available on the MFIP/DWP ESP website for additional guidance on serving participants with limited English proficiency.

Participants have the right to free and timely language assistance services, and under no circumstances may a friend, family member, child, or other unauthorized individual interpret on behalf of the participant.

# 05 – MFIP Employment Services: First Steps

See [Chapter 5 in the MFIP/DWP Employment Services Manual](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=TOC_ESM_0005) for full state policy on the following topics:

* Referrals to employment services.
* Time frames for starting employment services.
* Participant choice of employment services providers.
* Participants moving into or out of a county.
* Employment services overview.
* Participation requirements.
* Parents with a child under 12 months old exemption.

**First Employment Services Steps in Hennepin County**

**MFIP Application to Employment Services Enrollment**

* The resident completes the Combined Application Form or MNBenefits application requesting MFIP cash assistance.
* The HSR conducts the initial interview for cash eligibility and the MFIP Financial Orientation. The applicant receives the ESP Choice Sheet (available in ECF).
* Program eligibility is determined by the HSR.
* When MFIP is approved, the HSR receives a MAXIS pop-up prompting them to generate a referral for Employment Services. The initial MAXIS referral is assigned to the MFIP Coordination Office and received in WF1 by the TTL team.
* The TTL team reviews the WF1 referral and assigns it to an ESP within three calendar days. At the time of referral, the TTL codes the MAXIS STAT/EMPS panel with ESP information. Referrals are based on:
  + Eligibility criteria. Special populations (FSS, Extension, Teen Parents) are assigned to specified programs at Hennepin County, PPL, and MVNA.
  + Current distribution of cases across providers.
  + The top three providers chosen by the participant on the Choice Sheet if it is in ECF at the time the referral is completed.
  + Agency proximity to a resident’s address.
  + For cases that were enrolled at a Hennepin ESP in the last 90 days, the referral will return to the same agency unless the former agency’s caseload is higher than funding allocation.
* ESP staff must accept and enroll new referrals within four calendar days of receiving them. The date that the MFIP Coordination Office transferred the referral to the ESP can be found in the Referral case notes entered by the TTL team. The WF1 referral date will show the original date the referral was generated by the WF1/MAXIS interface and sent to the MFIP Coordination Office.

**Referral Queue Notes**

* ESPs with multiple agency locations can choose to reassign referrals received in their Hennepin MFIP queue as needed to manage caseload sizes.
* Upon enrolling the participant, open the Local Flag activity to indicate that the ES OV needs to be completed.
* **Duplicate Referrals:** If you receive a new referral for a currently enrolled participant, verify the MFIP status in MAXIS.
  + If MFIP closed and the referral is due to reapplication, exit the previous Enrollment Sequence and accept the new referral.
  + If MFIP has been reinstated or eligibility has simply been updated, but no new MFIP application has been processed, decline the new referral using the reason “duplicate referral.”
* **DWP Transition**: If you receive a referral for a case where DWP is open in the current month, you may need to hold the referral until the first of the following month when the transition from DWP to MFIP is complete. Case note the status of the referral and set status to “Holding.”
* **Child Under 12 Months Exemption Cases**: Participants who claim the Child Under 12 Months exemption are referred to ESPs even though they do not need to participate until the exemption ends. Accept the referral and open the “Holding – Child Under 12 Months” activity. Track the case status monthly and invite the participant to attend an ES OV in the month after the exemption coding is removed from STAT/EMPS in MAXIS.
* **Eligible, Not Enrolled:** Because ESPs are expected to accept and enroll referrals within four calendar days, no cases should remain in the “Eligible, Not Enrolled” status for more than four days.
* If you receive a referral that you believe should have been assigned to another agency due to eligibility criteria, do not deny the referral. Contact the TTL team to request the referral be reviewed and transferred to the correct agency. Until the situation can be resolved, set the referral status to “Researching.”
* If you have questions about processing unique referrals, contact your Hennepin County coordinator for assistance.
* If a newly referred participant requests a case transfer at the time of enrollment, complete the enrollment and ES OV prior to approving or denying the transfer request. For more information about case transfers, see Chapter 23.

**Agency Policy and Procedure for New Participant Enrollment**

All ESPs must document their agency’s policies and procedure for completing new enrollments. Written policy and procedures may be updated as needed but should always remain readily available to program staff to ensure standard service to Hennepin County residents. Agency procedures must correspond with State and County policy.

At a minimum, agencies should specify the following items in writing:

* Staff roles around referral queue management, enrollment, intake, and overview processes.
* Timeline expectations around first attempts to contact, overview invitations, follow up steps after unsuccessful contact.

**Employment Services Overview**

The ES OV is a crucial step in the intake process. It is the ESP’s first chance to set a positive tone and introduce the participant to the agency and program.

Former participants returning to MFIP Employment Services and participants transferred between Hennepin ESPs do not need to complete a full overview as described in the DHS ESM. For these participants, a Reconnection Overview may be conducted.

Participants must review and sign the MFIP Employment Services Overview Checklist at the end of either type of overview session.

Once the ES OV has been successfully completed:

* Close the Local Flag activity and open Assessment. Once the ES OV has been completed, Assessment should remain open until the case is exited.
* Track overview meeting time as Assessment hours.
* Upload signed Overview forms to EDS:
  + Hennepin County Overview Checklist (Document Type: Consent, Release of Information; Document Name: Overview Document)
  + Rights, Responsibilities, and Consent (Document Type: Consent, Release of Information, Document Name: Rights and Responsibilities)

**Flexible Service Delivery**

Hennepin County’s model for MFIP Employment Services emphasizes the importance of easy access to programming through a variety of meeting options. Residents can choose the format in which they would like to interact with their Employment Counselor. Service delivery options may include:

* In person, at a physical ESP office
* Remotely, via phone and email
* Virtually, using web-based platforms
* At a public place in the participant’s community
* Flexible meeting days and times

The goals of flexible service delivery are to welcome and effectively serve residents with diverse needs and backgrounds; to accommodate the individual circumstances and preferences of participants; and to support equitable distribution of work across the network of providers. ESPs receive referrals based on their current caseload size and the percentage of the total county caseload that they are contracted to serve. Because of this, ESPs will receive referrals for participants who may not live near the agency’s office. Hennepin County expects ESPs to provide participants easy access to multiple service delivery options that can meet their needs through high quality programming, without requiring an office visit.

Assess each participant’s ongoing needs and preferences when providing services. The format of service delivery selected should not hinder the participant’s ability to meet program requirements or receive support. Follow your agency’s policies and procedures when implementing these various methods of service delivery.

When scheduling meetings with participants, offer at least one alternate meeting format option for participation. Document what options you gave the participant when case noting about scheduled meetings.

Hennepin County recommends ESPs:

* Develop internal procedures that define the following for meetings that take place virtually, remotely, or in the community:
  + How to obtain required signatures.
  + How copies of documents will be shared with participants.
  + How to administer support services.
* Identify an approved list of community locations (for example, libraries or community centers) where Employment Counselors can meet participants face to face in their community. When selecting options for community-based meeting, consider ease of access (including public transit and parking), the content of the meeting and potential need for privacy, and the participant’s comfort level. Ensure community-based meetings take place in environments that are safe, comfortable, and welcoming.
* Set up platforms for virtual meeting spaces. Ensure staff can confidently navigate software and provide support to participants as needed.
* If applicable, develop internal policies and procedures around home visits and providing rides to participants.
* Include a list of available service delivery options on marketing materials sent to participants. Incorporate the information into the Overview as a part of the participant’s introduction to the program.

# 06 – Continuous Assessment

See [Chapter 6 in the MFIP/DWP Employment Services Manual](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=TOC_ESM_0006) for full state policy on the following topics:

* Definition and purpose of assessments
* Using the findings from assessments
* When assessments and screenings should happen
* Initial assessment
* The employability measure
* Vocational assessments
* Observational checklist for concerns about behavioral health
* Mental health and chemical health screening and assessments
* Special learning needs screening
* Comprehensive review

**Continuous Assessment in Hennepin County**

**Minimum Engagement Requirements**  
MFIP staff must make a minimum of one individualized attempt to engage each enrolled participant each month. In most cases, the assigned Employment Counselor is responsible for ensuring minimum engagement requirements have been met, but other MFIP program staff may also make a monthly engagement attempt due to reasons like staff coverage and collaborative case management.

While once per month is the minimum engagement expectation, Hennepin County encourages regular, proactive engagement with all participants. Proactive engagement means taking the initiative to engage with residents in a way that effectively supports their goals and success in the program.

All participant engagement should be case noted in WF1 within 3 days after it has happened. Case notes added in a timely fashion are a critical piece of accurately documenting services provided. When documenting participant engagement, include items such as:

* Attempts you have made to engage with a participant. Hennepin County recommends recording which phone number, email address, or address you used in your engagement attempt. As contact information is continuously updated in both MAXIS and WF1, it is helpful to know the details of each engagement attempt.
* The main points that you discussed with the participant during your interaction. Summarize the key points of all conversations relevant to MFIP Employment Services.
* Email conversations. Hennepin County recommends copying text from emails with participants directly into case notes.
* Follow up steps that either you or the participant will take before your next check-in.
* Assessment of the participant’s current status relating to their goals, activities, and barriers that happens during engagement.
* Mass communications sent to the participant (for example, new counselor introduction letters, resource information, and newsletters). It is important to document all communications you send to a participant, but only individualized attempts to engage participants count towards the minimum monthly engagement requirement. Hennepin County recommends uploading a copy of mass mailings to EDS and copying the text from mass emails into case notes.

One individualized monthly contact per participant is the bare minimum expectation for engagement. However, Hennepin County expects to see an increase in attempts to contact and engage the participant if there are overdue items on the case. For example, if a participant needs to complete an Overview or Employability Measure, needs to develop or update an Employment Plan, is not making satisfactory progress with their plan, or is in sanction, additional attempts to engage beyond the monthly minimum are expected.

**Mass Case Notes**

Mass case notes may be used to supplement individualized engagement attempts and can be a great tool to save time if sending out mass communications. However, they are not intended to take the place of regular attempts to engage directly with participants. Mass case notes do not satisfy minimum engagement requirements on their own. Individualized attempts to contact are required, particularly in instances noted above where extra engagement is expected due to overdue items on the case.

**Multiple Methods of Communication**   
Consistent engagement is a critical piece of a participant’s success in the program. Proactive attempts to contact and engage the participant are expected to come in a variety of formats. Employment Counselors should use various methods of communication when trying to engage with participants, particularly if a participant is difficult to reach or a challenge to engage. Methods of communication may include:

* Phone calls
* Text messages
* Emails
* Letters
* Scheduled in person or virtual meetings
* Home visits

Be sure to follow your agency’s policies related authorization for using certain methods of communication, including emailing, texting, and home visits.

When sending letters or making phone calls to unresponsive participants, check MAXIS regularly for updated contact information, including address and phone number(s), to be sure you are using the most current information available.

**Baseline Engagement**

According to Hennepin County’s performance measures for MFIP Employment Services, 80% of all enrolled participants at each agency must have at least 3 activity hours logged each month. The data for this indicator is tracked in two ways. Employment hours are tracked in MAXIS by the HSR and all other activity hours are tracked in WF1 by the ESP. This performance measure emphasizes the importance of engagement in reaching positive outcomes for residents.

**Tracking Assessment Hours**

* In addition to tracking participation hours for the various activities in the participant’s Employment Plan, track Assessment hours for time spent working directly with the participant. Assessment hours are meant to reflect meaningful engagement with the participant.
* Clearly case note what was discussed during the interaction to demonstrate there was meaningful engagement when tracking Assessment hours. Common examples of meaningful engagement through assessment include reviewing the participant’s goals, discussing current needs for support or referrals, offering individualized resources, and checking in on the family’s progress and wellbeing.
* Assessment may happen during formal scheduled meetings (like an Overview or EP update), informal check-ins, or other ongoing engagement with the participant.
* It is possible to have meaningful engagement in person, via phone, through online meetings, or via email, but not all contacts result in meaningful engagement as outlined above. Before tracking Assessment hours, use your professional judgement to determine if your contact with a participant included some evaluation of their progress, needs, goals, strengths, or plans.
* If an email conversation includes multiple exchanges between you and the participant, track the hours when the conversation has come to an end. Email interactions may be counted for a maximum of 1 Assessment hour per day.
* Track all Assessment hours within the week they occur.
* When tracking Assessment hours, round up to the nearest full hour. For example, for a 30-minute phone conversation, round the conversation up to 1 hour. For a 1.5-hour meeting, round up to 2 hours.
* Do not track Assessment hours for unsuccessful attempts to engage participants. Assessment requires two-way communication.
* Do not track Assessment hours for sending mass communications to participants.

**Hennepin Requirements for Employability Measure**   
The employability measure is required to be completed in the following instances or intervals:

* Within 3 months of enrolling a new or returning participant
* Within 3 months of enrolling a new or returning participant who is being transferred in from another county, even if the EM was recently completed in the other county
* When a participant reaches 24 months on MFIP
* When a participant reaches 48 months on MFIP
* At any other point in time that the Employment Counselor determines a more comprehensive assessment to determine next steps with a participant is necessary.
  + If the EM is being administered outside of the required intervals, the rationale for completion of an additional EM should be case noted.

The employability measure is **not** required to be completed in the following instances:

* When a case is transferred to another ESP within Hennepin County during the current enrollment sequence, and EMs were completed by the previous ESP as required by policy.
  + The receiving agency is, however, required to complete an EM if the participant is due for either the 24 or 48 month EM assessment.
* Another EM is not required if the participant reaches 24 or 48 months within 60 days of completion of their last EM. Employment counselor should use case notes to indicate if this occurs.

The purpose of the Employability Measure is to fully assess the participant’s current stability in key domains that significantly impact a person’s ability to obtain and retain employability. The EM is intended to assist in the development of an Employment Plan, identifying strengths and highlighting areas of need, providing a starting point to addressing barriers for future success. Wherever possible, the Employment Plan should include activities that assist in resolving some of the areas of deficiency in the EM.

# 07 – Employment Plans

See [Chapter 7 in the MFIP/DWP Employment Services Manual](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=TOC_ESM_0007) for full state policy on the following topics:

* Employment Plans
* Purpose of employment Plan
* Electronic and Paper Plans
* Plan Types
* Time Frames to Initiate/Review Plans
* Hourly Requirements for Plans
* Holidays and Excused Absences
* Reduced Hours Plans
* Goals
* Order of Preferences for activities
* Accommodating Disabilities
* Core & Non-Core Activities

**Employment Plans in Hennepin County**

**Employment Plan Goals and Strengths**

Employment Counselors should complete the Goals and Strengths sections in each Employment Plan they develop with participants. These sections are used to capture the current goals of the participant (both short and long term), and the strengths they possess that may help to achieve those goals. When completing this section of the Employment Plan, it is important to remember:

* Always engage the participant when completing this section. The content you include should always come from the participant, even if you help them to brainstorm. This is an important conversation to build confidence and develop rapport with participants.
* Include goals in the plan that reflect what is important to the participant. This is not a space to indicate due dates for paperwork or the generic programmatic goals of MFIP Employment Services.
* Discuss goals and strengths with the participant every time you update their Employment Plan. Overall goals may remain similar, but it’s important to continue to engage participants in this discussion at each plan update.
* Whenever possible, include steps and activities in the plan that will support the participant in reaching the overall goals they have shared. Discuss the connection between action items and the goals they support.

**Pending Employment Plans**

An Employment Plan is not valid until it has been signed by the participant. Because of the emphasis on flexible service delivery within Employment Services including remote and virtual services, there may be times when it’s necessary to leave the plan you have developed pending until you receive the signature page back from the participant to finalize the plan. While you wait for the signed copy of the Employment Plan:

* Save the Employment Plan as “Pending.” The Employment Plan may not be activated until the participant has signed off on the plan agreeing to the activities within it.
* When the participant’s signature is obtained, activate the plan immediately.
* A plan may be left pending for up to 10 days. During those 10 days, with the participant to obtain the signature, presenting them with a variety of methods to return the signed plan. These methods may include:
  + Using agency approved technology for electronic signatures
  + Signing and returning a plan via mail
  + Visiting a physical ESP office or community location to sign the Employment Plan
  + Using email to send a photo of the signed plan
* If the signed Employment Plan is not received after 10 calendar days, delete the pending plan in WF1. A new Employment Plan is required.
* Save the Employment Plan signature page to the EDS case file.

**Reviewing an Employment Plan**

Employment Plans must be reviewed at least every 3 months for Universal Participation participants and at least every 6 months for FSS participants. An Employment Plan review does not require creating a new plan in WF1, but it does require a conversation with the participant to confirm if the current Employment Plan and its activities continue to be appropriate for the participant. When reviewing an Employment Plan, please note:

* It is only appropriate to review the current Employment Plan if the participant is making satisfactory progress with the activities in the plan. If a participant is not following through with the activities in the current plan, or is not making progress towards their goals, the plan should be rewritten to determine if other activities should be included.
* The Employment Plan review must be completed with the participant. This may occur via phone, in person, remotely, or virtually.
* The case note following the review of the plan must note that the activities remain appropriate, and the participant agrees to continue participation in their current activities for an additional period of time (up to 90 days for UP, up to 180 days if FSS).
* When case noting the review, use the case note category “Employment/Service Plan” so that it’s easy for other Employment Counselors as well as program monitors to determine when the last review of the plan occurred.
* If there are **any** changes to the participant’s activities, create a new EP.

# 08 – Family Violence Waiver

See [Chapter 8 in the MFIP/DWP Employment Services Manual](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=TOC_ESM_0008) for full state policy on the following topics:

* Family Violence Waiver
* Family Violence Waiver Overview
* The Family Violence Waiver Referral Form
* Rights for Non-Citizens
* Requests for a Family Violence Waiver
* Verifying Family Violence
* Time Limits & Family Violence Waiver
* Family Violence Specialists
* Employment Plans & Family Violence Waiver
* Non-Compliance & Family Violence Waiver
* Ending a Family Violence Waiver
* Child Under 12 Months & Family Violence
* Resources for Addressing Family Violence

**Family Violence Waivers in Hennepin County**

This chapter is under construction, more information will be available soon. Please contact your agency’s Hennepin County MFIP Employment Services Coordinator for questions about local policy and procedure.

# 09 – Teen Parents

See [Chapter 9 in the MFIP/DWP Employment Services Manual](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=TOC_ESM_0009) for full state policy on the following topics:

* Policies Specific to Teen Parents
* Education Requirements
* Options for 18- & 19-Year Old Parents
* Roles of Employment & Social Services
* Social Services Assessments
* Online & Distance Education
* Employment Plans Focused on Education
* Documenting/Tracking Education Activities
* Child Under 12 Months & Teen Parents

**Teen Parents in Hennepin County**

This chapter is under construction, more information will be available soon. Please contact your agency’s Hennepin County MFIP Employment Services Coordinator for questions about local policy and procedure.

# 10 – Paid Employment

See [Chapter 10 in the MFIP/DWP Employment Services Manual](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=TOC_ESM_0010) for full state policy on the following topics:

* Paid Employment
* Full-Time & Part-Time Employment
* Loss of Employment
* Paid Employment: Described
* Paid Employment: Documenting/Tracking
* Self-Employment: Described
* Self-Employment: Documenting/Tracking
* Work for Rent Reductions
* On-the-Job-Training: Described
* On-the-Job-Training: Documenting/Tracking
* Paid Work Experience: Described
* Paid Work Experience: Documenting/Tracking
* Grant Diversion

**Paid Employment in Hennepin County**

**Agency Policy and Procedure for Self-Employment**

All ESPs must document their agency’s policy procedure for the approval of Self-Employment Business Plans and completion of Self-Employment Progress Reviews. Written procedures may be updated as needed but should always remain readily available to program staff to ensure standard service to Hennepin County residents.

Agency policy and procedures must correspond with State and County policy.

At a minimum, agencies should specify the following items in writing:

* Which agency staff are designated to approve business plans.
* Which agency staff are designated to complete progress reviews.
* Process for conducting business plan and progress reviews (timelines, expectations, involvement of participant etc.)
* What resources are provided to participants to support business plan development (if different from those listed in DHS ES Manual 10.12)

Refer to the MFIP/DWP ESP website for the following supporting materials:

* **Self-Employment Business Plan Process Map** – Flow chart explaining basic process agencies should follow when a participant requests to include self-employment activities in their Employment Plan.
* **Self-Employment Progress Review** – Required tool used to discuss and document the participant’s self-employment progress (whether towards developing the initial business plan or once the plan is approved), and to determine if self-employment activities will continue to be included in Employment Plan.
* **Self-Employment Business Plan Decision Notice** – Required document used to document and notify the participant of agency’s decision and rationale for approval or denial a self-employment business plan.

ESPs are required to use these documents but may also decide to develop additional forms to support agency procedure around approval of plans.

# 11 – Unpaid Work

See [Chapter 11 in the MFIP/DWP Employment Services Manual](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=TOC_ESM_0011) for full state policy on the following topics:

* Unpaid Work: Definition and Limits
* Requirements for Unpaid Work Placements
* Unpaid Work: Documenting/Tracking
* Community Service: Documenting/Tracking
* Providing Child Care/Community Service
* Providing Child Care: Documenting/Tracking
* Fair Labor Standards
* Injury Protection Program

Other Helpful Chapters in the MFIP/DWP Employment Services Manual Regarding Unpaid Work:

* [23.27 Non-Displacement](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=ESM_002327)
* [23.30 Criteria for Unpaid Work](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=ESM_002330) (including union and public employers)

**Unpaid Work in Hennepin County**

Unpaid work activities should contribute to the participant’s skills development and support them in reaching their long-term employment and training goals. The decision to include unpaid work activities in a participant’s plan should be based on collaborative conversation with the individual. Unpaid work is not an automatically required activity once the participant has exhausted their annual job search hours.

Unpaid work experiences may be a valuable option if the participant is unable to get or keep a job, is not progressing through the goals of their Employment Plan, or requires a specific skill set in order to be successful in the desired workforce.

Before offering or placing a participant in unpaid work or community service, review applicable chapters in the MFIP/DWP Employment Services Manual carefully to ensure that all required elements for host sites have been met and sites are set up appropriately.

**Community Service, AmeriCorps, Reading and Math Corps**

These specialized types of community service programs offer stipends, but do not count as earned income on MFIP unless they are at, or above the minimum wage.

However, if the stipend puts the participant’s earnings above minimum wage, the income is counted against the grant, and those hours are tracked in MAXIS. To prevent duplicate tracking for an activity in these instances, it is important that the Employment Counselor verifies if the hours have already been tracked in MAXIS by the HSR for the stipend received. If the hours exist in MAXIS, add a case note indicating that hours have been tracked via MAXIS for the month. Do not track additional hours for this activity in WF1 for that month.

# 12 – Job Search

See [Chapter 12 in the MFIP/DWP Employment Services Manual](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=TOC_ESM_0012) for full state policy on the following topics:

* Job Search: Description and Activities
* Job Search Requirements
* Job Search: Documenting/Tracking

**Job Search in Hennepin County**

**Tracking and Reviewing for Progress**

* Round up to the next full hour when a participant submits a Job Search Log where the total hours add up to a number with a half hour increment.
* Review logs for the participant’s overall progress in their job search activity, not just completion of required hours. If a participant is lacking hours but appears to be getting positive results and making progress towards the goal, acknowledge the success, and continue supportive conversations with the participant.
* If it is unclear whether the participant is making progress on their job search related goals based on submitted logs, follow up with frequent attempts to check in, get more information, and offer additional support and resources when needed.
* If a participant consistently does not meet their job search activity requirements, discuss the reason(s), and consider alternate activities. If the participant agrees that Job Search is no longer the most appropriate activity for them, update the Employment Plan.

# 13 – Education and Training

See [Chapter 13 in the MFIP/DWP Employment Services Manual](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=TOC_ESM_0013) for full state policy on the following topics:

* Education and Training Overview
* English Language Learning
* English Language Learning: Documenting/Tracking
* Adult Education
* Adult Education: Documenting/Tracking
* Job Skills Training Related to Employment
* Job Skills Training: Documenting/Tracking
* Post-Secondary Training and Education
* Post-Secondary Ed: Documenting/Tracking
* Online Education and Training
* Online Learning: Documenting and Tracking

**Education and Training in Hennepin County**

**Education and Training Activities Performance Metrics**

Hennepin County MFIP Employment Services contracts include two performance metrics related to participant education and training.

**Education/Training Activities**

The Education/Training Activities metric requires agencies to report quarterly on the percentage of all enrolled participants who are engaged in an education or training activity. This output measure reflects participation in activities that provide a foundation for career planning. Participation in education and training activities includes:

* High school, adult diploma, GED classes, or other equivalent programs
* Adult Basic Education
* English Language Learning (including ESL and Functional Work Literacy)
* Post-secondary education programs
* Career pathway programming or other short term training programs
* Job Skills Training Related to Employment

**Education Skill Gain**

The Education Skill Gain metric requires agencies to report quarterly on the percentage of all enrolled participants who have successfully completed a designated education or training activity. This outcome measure reflects successful educational achievements that support improved career prospects and progress towards economic self-sufficiency. Education Skill Gains may be captured for the following achievements:

* Attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, including a high school diploma, GED, or adult diploma.
* Achievement of ESL Level 6.
* Completion of a post-secondary degree, diploma, or certificate.
* Completion of a short-term training program resulting in a credential.

**Tracking Education Activities and Skill Gains**

ESP Program Managers use WF1 reports to obtain data for education performance metrics. The data included in these reports is based directly upon information tracked by Employment Counselors in WF1 activities. When opening and closing education activities in WF1:

* Open education/training activities to match the current Employment Plan. If an education or training activity is not opened in WF1, the participant will not be included in the report used to track performance metrics.
* Participants may obtain multiple credentials within one education/training program. To track multiple credential attainment, it might be necessary to open more than one education/training activity.
* When closing an education/training activity, only select “Successful” under the “Completion Results” tab if the participant has finished their education or training, AND earned the final credential, certificate, diploma, highest level of language proficiency, etc.
* Select “Unsuccessful” under the “Completion Results” tab if the participant has disengaged from the education or training program before achieving the program’s end goal. It is possible for a participant to have been successful in their coursework prior to disengaging from the education or training activity, or for participants to leave the program for a positive reason (for example, obtaining employment). However, unless the participant achieves the end goal of the education or training program, the activity exit is tracked as unsuccessful.
* When a participant has achieved ESL Level 6, close the education activity in Workforce One on the date the level achievement was verified and select “Successful” as the outcome. This will allow the outcome to be counted during WF1 reporting.
  + If the participant plans to continue attending ESL after reaching level 6, after you close the original ESL activity, open a new ESL Activity in order to continue tracking participation hours.
  + While it is possible that a student may continue to participate in ESL after achieving a Level 6, review the participants goals to determine if the activity continues to add value for the participant, or if new activities and goals can be set for the Employment Plan.
  + Once the ESL Level 6 achievement has been captured as a successful outcome, all future exits from ESL activities must be counted as “Unsuccessful” to prevent double counting the individual’s achievement.
    - For example, if a participant verifies achievement of ESL Level 6 on 01/01/2022, close the activity on 01/01/2022, and indicate that it was completed successfully. Then, if the participant plans to continue attending ESL, open a new ESL activity on 01/01/2022 for future tracking.

**Documentation of Education Skill Gain**

When closing an education or training activity as a success counted as an Education Skill Gain:

* Verify completion of the education or training program. Acceptable forms of verification include:
  + a copy of the diploma or certificate
  + final course grades verifying that the participant has passed the course
  + passing test results from a licensing exam
  + a statement from the program’s instructor indicating successful completion
  + verification of successful completion obtained from an online student portal
  + ESL proficiency test results or other supporting documentation verifying ESL level
* Upload the verification used to EDS, saved under the (Document Type: Education and Training; Select appropriate Document Name according to verification received.)
* Add a case note that indicates the outcome the participant has achieved in their education or training program. For example, “The participant has completed their Certified Nursing Assistant training and passed all testing standards to earn the credential.”

Verification must be received prior to capturing the successful outcome in WF1 for a participant’s Education Skill Gain. If you are unable to obtain verification at the time the Employment Plan is updated and the activity is closed, you must select “Unsuccessful” when closing the activity. If verification is received on a later date, the activity exit information may be edited to capture the successful outcome.

# 14 – Social Services and Other Activities

See [Chapter 14 in the MFIP/DWP Employment Services Manual](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=TOC_ESM_0014) for full state policy on the following topics:

* Role of social services activities in Employment Plans.
* Activity types and Employment Plan sections used for different social services activities.
* Documenting and tracking requirements for Social Services and other activities.
* Treatment and Rehabilitation Services.
* Documentation and tracking requirements for Treatment and Rehabilitation Services.

# 15 – Holding

See [Chapter 15 in the MFIP/DWP Employment Services Manual](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=TOC_ESM_0015) for full state policy on the following topics:

* When to Use Holding as an MFIP Activity
* Holding: Documenting/Tracking

# 16 – Child Care

See [Chapter 16 in the MFIP/DWP Employment Services Manual](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=TOC_ESM_0016) for full state policy on the following topics:

* Child Care Assistance Sub-Programs
* Roles and Responsibilities
* Policies & Requirements
* MFIP/DWP Child Care Assistance
* Determining Hours of Authorized Child Care
* Eligibility Periods & Required Reporting
* School Breaks
* Types of Child Care Settings
* Two-Parent Families
* Sanctions & Child Care Assistance
* Inability to Obtain Child Care
* Services to Help Families Find Child Care
* Medical Restrictions & Child Care
* Payment Policies
* Overpayments in Child Care Assistance
* Transition Year Child Care

**Child Care Assistance in Hennepin County**

The Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) is available as a support service to MFIP/DWP participants engaged in authorized activities with Employment Services. It’s important that Employment Counselors assess participants’ need for CCAP because they are the primary point of contact for initiating the childcare application. Regularly assessing childcare needs ensures the participant will have the supports necessary to make progress on the goals and activities in the Employment Plan.

Communication regarding childcare needs, authorized activities, and changes in the amount of service required comes from the Employment Counselor based on their ongoing work with participant.

**Supporting Participants Applying for Child Care**

* Provide the CCAP application and assist participants to fill it out and gather necessary verifications. Participants can apply online or by submitting application materials to Hennepin County.
  + Participants are encouraged to apply online via [MNBenefits](https://mnbenefits.mn.gov/). Supporting documents can be uploaded while completing the online application.
  + ESPs can get a supply of printed Child Care Assistance application packets by emailing [HSPH.Brookdale.OS@Hennepin.us.](mailto:HSPH.Brookdale.OS@Hennepin.us) Include the name of the agency, contact person, address, and number of packets needed in the email.
* Assist participants who need help finding a CCAP provider. [Parent Aware](https://www.parentaware.org/) is a useful resource for choosing the best provider to meet the family’s needs.
* Complete a Child Care Plan (CCP) on behalf of the participant to communicate the number of hours childcare is needed for each authorized activity and details about the childcare provider. The CCP is available on the [MFIP/DWP ESP Website](https://www.hennepin.us/mfipesp).
  + The best practice is to submit the CCP with the application, whether by mail or by uploading it to MNBenefits at the time of application. By submitting the CCP with the application, Hennepin County staff will be able to quickly assign the incoming application to the ESP’s assigned CCW. If the participant fills out the childcare application on their own before you have created a CCP, contact your agency’s CCW to notify them of the pending application and submit a CCP for your participant immediately.
  + If you need help determining the proper number of hours for travel time between activities, contact your agency’s CCW.
  + The amount of childcare requested on the CCP is a recommendation, not a guarantee. The final approval will come from the CCAP team.
* Before submitting the application, use the [ESP Checklist](https://formcatalog.hennepin.us//content/xfaforms/profiles/noToolbar.html?contentRoot=crx:///content/dam/formsanddocuments/HSPH_Forms_N_3B/1.0/Forms&template=N10370_h_1-0.xdp) to gather all required forms and verifications. Participants may need to submit additional verifications separately but providing all necessary documentation at the time of application greatly reduces processing time.
* Submit the completed application:
  + Mail paper applications and supporting documents to:

Hennepin County  
HSPHD Child Care Assistance – MC 718   
300 South Sixth Street   
Minneapolis, MN 55487-0718

* Submit digitally via the ECF drop box at [hhsews@Hennepin.us](mailto:hhsews@Hennepin.us).

**Checking CCAP Case Status**

Use MEC2 and ECF access to confirm case status and details. MEC2 can be used to check Child Care application status, ongoing CCAP status, whether a childcare provider is registered in Hennepin County, current co-pays, amount of service authorized, and current activities. ECF can be used to determine what information has been requested by the CCW and if requested paperwork has been received.

Childcare staff use MEC2 and ECF to:

* Case note communication with the participant and actions taken on the CCAP case.
* Review income and eligibility for CCAP.
* Request missing documentation from the participant.
* Authorize service based on approved activities in the CCP.
* Determine the participant’s sliding fee based on income, household size, and possible childcare provider charges.

If you have questions about the information you see in MEC2 and ECF, contact your agency’s assigned CCW.

**Special Circumstances**

• Child Care is not available for foster children.

* Participants who provide in-home childcare cannot receive childcare assistance to care for their own children.
* While claiming the Child Under 12 Months exemption, participants cannot receive CCAP unless there are verified medical circumstances.

# 17 – Family Stabilization Services

See [Chapter 17 in the MFIP/DWP Employment Services Manual](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=TOC_ESM_0017) for full state policy on the following topics:

* Family Stabilization Services Overview
* Eligibility Criteria
* Illness, Injury and Incapacity
* Needed in the Home to Care for an Ill or Incapacitated Member
* Special Medical Criteria
* Developmental Disability
* Mental Illness
* IQ Below 80
* Learning Disability
* Family Violence Waiver
* In the Country for 12 Months or Less
* Applying for SSI or RSDI
* Age 60 or Older
* Unemployable
* Qualified Professionals
* Documenting Conditions
* Enrolling in Family Stabilization Services
* The Employment Plan
* Referrals to SSI & Disability Services
* Sanctions
* Returning Participants to Regular MFIP

**Family Stabilization Services in Hennepin County**

This chapter is under construction, more information will be available soon. Please contact your agency’s Hennepin County MFIP Employment Services Coordinator for questions about local policy and procedure.

# 18 – Time Limits and Extensions

See [Chapter 18 in the MFIP/DWP Employment Services Manual](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=TOC_ESM_0018) for full state policy on the following topics:

* The 60-Month Time Limit Policy
* Agency Responsibilities
* Transition Period in MFIP
* Extension Decisions
* Sanctions & Extensions
* Extension Categories
* Employed
* Ill/Injured or Incapacitated
* Illness, Injury/Incapacity: Participant
* Needed in the Home
* Special Medical Criteria
* Hard to Employ Extensions
* Developmental Disability
* Mental Illness
* Learning Disability
* IQ Below 80
* Unemployable
* Family Violence Waiver
* Two-Parent Families & Extensions

**Time Limits and Extensions in Hennepin County**

This chapter is under construction, more information will be available soon. Please contact your agency’s Hennepin County MFIP Employment Services Coordinator for questions about local policy and procedure.

# 19 – Sanctions and Non-Compliance

See [Chapter 19 in the MFIP/DWP Employment Services Manual](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=TOC_ESM_0019) for full state policy on the following topics:

* Non-compliance
* When not to sanction someone
* Good cause
* Sanction Types
* Vendoring Benefits
* Steps Before Imposing Sanction
* Notices of Intent to Sanction
* How Participants Can Prevent Sanctions
* Pre-60 Month Sanctions
* Closing Cases for 100% Sanction
* Face-to-Face Meetings for 100% Sanction
* Sanction Reviews and Outreach
* Post-60 Month Sanctions
* Dispute Resolution
* Two-Parent Families Post-60 Months
* Ending & Correcting Sanctions
* Dispute Resolution
* Conciliation Conference
* Fair Hearing (Appeal)
* Child Support Sanctions
* Dual Sanctions
* Drug Felon Sanctions

**Sanctions and Non-Compliance in Hennepin County**

**Use of NOITS and Sanction in Hennepin County**

Hennepin County has emphasized a shift from transactional services to proactive, participant led service delivery. As a result, only use the NOITS and sanction processes when all other opportunities to engage the participant have been exhausted. The NOITS is not considered an engagement tool.

**Engagement Prior to the NOITS and Sanction**

You are required to make multiple attempts to engage the participant, using varying methods of communication, prior to sending a NOITS and requesting a sanction be imposed. These attempts must include efforts to engage **individually** with the participant. The minimum engagement requirement for MFIP Employment Services is once per month, however, you are expected to increase your engagement attempts in the months prior to initiating the sanction process by sending a NOITS. Continue to support the participant and proactively seek ways to avoid reducing a family’s benefits.

* A NOITS does not count as an attempt to engage the participant to avoid sanction.
* Mass communications are not considered individualized attempts to engage the participant to avoid sanction.

Attempt to engage the participant using all available methods to ensure they have received all of the necessary information about requirements; have had an opportunity to discuss whether the current Employment Plan’s activities remain appropriate; are well informed of the consequences of non-compliance; clearly understand steps required to avoid sanction; and have had an opportunity to disclose good cause reasons for failure to comply. Varying methods of communication may include:

* Phone calls
* Text messages
* Emails
* Letters
* Scheduled in person or virtual meetings
* Home visits

If one form of communication is unsuccessful, attempt to reach the participant using another method of communication prior to the start of the NOITS and sanction process. Follow your agency’s policies related to authorizations when using certain methods of communication, including emailing, texting, and home visits.

**Assessment Prior to the NOITS and Sanction Process**

In addition to increasing your engagement efforts, always conduct a full assessment of the case when determining if a NOITS and subsequent sanction are appropriate. A full assessment of the participant’s case includes:

* Review all recent case notes to determine if the participant has disclosed information that meets the definition of good cause, or if the participant is potentially FSS eligible. For those not in the FSS track, but for whom information indicates possible eligibility, the FSS sanction policy applies.
* Review case notes and other relevant information in MAXIS to determine if critical information has been disclosed to the eligibility team that impacts whether a NOITS or sanction is appropriate.
  + For example, case notes or MAXIS coding indicating homelessness, the recent birth of a child, or work hours indicating the participant is meeting the minimum hour requirements through employment.
* Review information obtained during assessments such as the Employability Measure, MFIP Self Screen, Brief Screening Tool for Special Learning Needs, and/or Observational Checklist to determine if anything suggests the individual may have good cause or is possibly FSS eligible.

If you determine that good cause may be present, or other information exists that makes the participant possibly eligible for FSS, do not initiate the sanction.

**Notice of Intent to Sanction (NOITS)**

* Hennepin County encourages ESPs to utilize WF1 to create a NOITS. The NOITS within WF1 does not need to uploaded into EDS since it is already saved within the system.
* A NOITS must allow participants at least 10 calendar days to comply. Do not send a status update to impose the sanction before the 11th day in order to provide the participant the full 10 days to satisfy the actions steps identified in the NOITS.
* It is acceptable to write a NOITS that allows the participant more than 10 days to comply with the actions outlined.
* Do not sanction participants if their current level of participation meets the minimum program requirements for hours, even if their Employment Plan is written for more.
  + For example: A participant with a child under 6 has an Employment Plan that is written for 30 hours per week of job search activities. They have not submitted any documentation of job search activities for the month, however, MAXIS confirms the participant worked 100 hours in the previous month. Sanction may not be imposed.

**Sanction Cut-Off Dates**

10 Day Cut Off: The last day that HSRs can impose a sanction in the MAXIS system for the following month. This deadline is determined by DHS and allows adequate time for HSRs to send the required notice of adverse action before the case is impacted.

Sanction Cure Date: The last day for a participant to come into compliance with an ESP to have their sanction cured for the following month. Sanctions can be cured on or before 10 days prior to the effective date of the sanction.

Certain instances of consecutive sanction may be cured up to the day before the effective date of the sanction. See ESM 19.27 for guidance related to these instances. [19.27 Pre-60 Month Sanctions (state.mn.us)](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=ESM_001927)

**100% Sanctions and Face to Face Meetings**

Before a case can be closed for sanction limit, a face-to-face meeting with the participant is required. Please see the Employment Services Manual, 19.33 for information required to be provided prior to case closure. [19.33 Face-to-Face Meetings for 100% Sanctions (state.mn.us)](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=ESM_001933)

**Using ECF For Sanction Requests**

When uploading or inserting a document into ECF, you must also launch a workflow for that document. This step notifies the Sanction Expert team that there is a work item that needs to be completed. If the workflow is not launched, there is no guarantee that your request will be processed.

Hennepin County recommends that Employment Counselors do not wait until the 10 Day Cut Off to make sanction requests. Sanction requests sent on or near the cut-off date are not guaranteed to be imposed for the following month.

**Engaging Participants in Sanction**

After an Employment Services sanction has been requested, Hennepin County expects that attempts to engage beyond the minimum engagement requirement of once per month continue. Provide support and opportunities to resolve the sanction and restore full benefits for the family. Hennepin County requires continued contact using varying methods of communication until you are able to contact the participant and resolve the sanction.

**Case Closure for Sanction Limit**

When an MFIP case is closed for sanction limit, ESPs should refer all participants interested in curing their sanction to the HSR team to begin the reapplication process.

When reapplying for MFIP after reaching the sanction limit, the application will be pended in MAXIS, and a manual referral will be made to the most recently assigned ESP so that the participant may reestablish compliance with Employment Services. If the participant is currently enrolled when the new referral is sent, the ESP should close the current MFIP sequence, and accept and enroll the new referral once received.

When a case is referred to the ESP to cure a 100% sanction, the TTLs will make a referral note indicating that the case is a 7th month sanction referral and indicate the date of the MFIP application for the ESP’s reference.

**Establishing Compliance after 100% Sanction**

For participants that are still enrolled with your agency, you may begin working towards establishing compliance prior to receiving the new referral. Monitor the case to ensure that the participant is taking the necessary steps towards reapplication. Once the new referral is received, the close the current MFIP sequence, and accept/enroll the new referral.

For participants that have already been exited from their last MFIP Enrollment Sequence, wait to receive a new MFIP referral prior to beginning work towards establishing compliance. If a previous participant is no longer enrolled with your agency, and contacts you directly requesting to take steps to cure the sanction, direct them to reapply for MFIP so that a new referral can be made. Once the participant is enrolled, work towards curing the sanction can begin. If the participant has reapplied but no referral was sent, contact the eligibility team to request a referral be generated.

If the participant has not come into compliance within 30 days of the application date, the HSR will deny the pending MFIP application. In these instances, do not wait two months to exit the case in WF1. It is okay to close it immediately. If the participant chooses to apply again, another referral will be created.

After reaching the sanction limit, the case is disqualified for one full month before benefits can be reapproved. The participant can reapply at any time during the disqualification period and work towards establishing compliance with Employment Services. The Employment Counselor may cure the sanction during the disqualification period, but unless good cause has been established the benefits will not be approved until the disqualification has ended.

Hennepin County recommends two weeks as a reasonable compliance period to cure a 100% sanction. If according to your professional discretion and specific case details you choose to require compliance for more than two weeks, document your rationale in case notes.

In cases where the 100% sanction occurred in the past and the sanction reason is no longer relevant, it may be appropriate to cure the sanction immediately after the participant completes an ES OV and/or develops a new Employment Plan. Refer to the MFIP/DWP Employment Services Manual Chapter 19.45 for examples of these instances.

When the participant has come into compliance and the sanction is ready to be cured, submit a Status Update to the Sanction Expert team via ECF to let them know the client has complied and the MFIP application can be approved.

**Hennepin County Dispute Resolution Process**

There are two levels of the dispute resolution process. A participant may go forward with either one, or both, but each ESP must designate someone within the agency, other than the assigned Employment Counselor, as the person to whom participants can bring complaints against actions taken or decisions made regarding their case. The person who supervises the Employment Counselor would be a logical designee in many instances.

**Conciliation**

This is a voluntary and informal meeting for the Employment Counselor, participant, and potentially a supervisor, to discuss the disagreement around actions taken or decisions made on the case. This step allows an opportunity to resolve the issue within the agency. If a resolution is not achieved, and the participant wishes to pursue the complaint, they may request to appeal. The conciliation is not a mandatory piece of the appeal process, and a participant may move forward with their request to appeal without completing a conciliation with their Employment Counselor.

**Request to Appeals and Fair Hearing**

Participants may submit their request to appeal directly to DHS, to their Employment Counselor, or to the county. Requests to appeal must be made in writing and within 30 days after receiving the notice of adverse action or NOITS.

Participants may submit their request directly to DHS at the following address:

DHS, Appeals Division, Human Services Bldg.  
444 Lafayette Road  
St. Paul, MN 55155-3818.

Participants may also submit the request to appeal to their Employment Counselor. If an Employment Counselor receives a written request for appeal from a participant, the request should be uploaded to ECF, and an email should be sent to [HSPH.EWS.Appeals@hennepin.](mailto:HSPH.EWS.Appeals@hennepin.us)us to alert the team regarding the participant’s request.

**Appeals**

The appeal hearing is scheduled with the State of Minnesota and handled through the Hennepin County Appeals Unit. The Employment Counselor will be notified by the Appeal Unit when an appeal is requested. The Employment Counselor is then required to prepare the information for the appeal and attend the hearing.

Direct correspondence to: [HSPH.EWS.Appeals@hennepin.us](mailto:HSPH.EWS.Appeals@hennepin.us). The phone number is 612-348-2550.

A completed appeal packet must include the following:

* DHS-33 or the participant’s written request to appeal
* DHS-35 State Appeal Summary
* Copies of the Employment Plan
* Copies of relevant case notes and correspondence
* Copies of manual references and DHS bulletins supporting the rationale for steps taken on the case
* Medical or psychological reports if relevant
* Make four copies of the packet, one each for the case file, the participant, DHS, and the HC Appeals Unit.

# 20 – Diversionary Work Program

See [Chapter 20 in the MFIP/DWP Employment Services Manual](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=TOC_ESM_0020) for full state policy on the following topics:

* Description
* Eligibility Rules
* Cash Benefits
* Enrollment Process
* Structured/Intensive Job Search
* DWP Employment Plan
* Allowed Work Activities
* Reduced Hours Employment Plans
* Family Violence Waiver & DWP
* Non-Compliance
* Two-Parent Families
* What Happens at the End of Four Months

**DWP in Hennepin County**

This chapter is under construction, more information will be available soon. Please contact your agency’s Hennepin County MFIP Employment Services Coordinator for questions about local policy and procedure.

# 21 – Refugee Services

See [Chapter 21 in the MFIP/DWP Employment Services Manual](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=TOC_ESM_0021) for full state policy on the following topics:

* Voluntary Nature of Refugee Services
* Who Is Eligible
* Minnesota Agencies Providing Refugee Services
* Descriptions of Refugee Services
* Collaborating With Refugee Services
* Links to Additional Information

# 22 – Fraud and EBT Misuse

See [Chapter 22 in the MFIP/DWP Employment Services Manual](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=TOC_ESM_0022) for full state policy on the following topics:

* Fraud
* EBT Misuse
* Participation During Disqualification

**Fraud in Hennepin County**

Hennepin County’s Fraud Unit investigates reported program violations to prevent ongoing fraudulent activities. If potential fraud is detected, Employment Counselors should contact Hennepin County’s Fraud Unit at:

* Phone: 612-348-9040
* Email: [hsph.FAA.service.fraud@hennepin.us](mailto:hsph.FAA.service.fraud@hennepin.us)
* Fraud tip line: 612-348-4952

Examples of what an Employment Counselor should report cases where:

* a participant has unreported income that has not been counted in benefit calculations.
* a participant won the lottery or received an inheritance.
* a participant isn't living at the address reported to Hennepin County.
* a participant’s children are no longer living in the household.
* the second parent is in the home but has not been reported as a member of the unit.

MAXIS case notes may include information about active fraud investigations. Employment Services staff must never inform the participant if they are under investigation. Information related to fraud investigations should never be copied into WF1 case notes.

# 23 – Manager’s Chapter

See [Chapter 23 in the MFIP/DWP Employment Services Manual](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=TOC_ESM_0023) for full state policy on the following topics:

* County and Tribal Duties
* Tribes and MFIP and TANF
* MFIP Data Supporting Systems
* Workforce One
* Family Violence
* Duties to Coordinate Employment Services
* Employment Services Agencies
* A Choice of Providers
* Non-Displacement
* Criteria for Unpaid Work
* Limited English Proficiency Plan
* Qualified Professionals
* MFIP Consolidated Fund
* Medical Assistance and TANF Funding
* Biennial Service Agreements
* Local Extension Request
* Performance Measures
* Quarterly Reports
* Grant Diversion Programs

**Managing Employment Services in Hennepin County**

**Case Transfers Between ESPs**

There may be times when transferring a case to another ESP is appropriate in order to best serve the participant. Most often, the participant should be the one to initiate the process by requesting a case transfer. However, in some situations, it is appropriate for the ESP to initiate a discussion with the participant about the option to transfer their case.

These situations include:

* The participant wants to receive in person services onsite at an ESP office due to difficulty accessing other service delivery options (such as virtual or in the community) and because of current barriers they cannot reasonably travel to the current ESP’s office location.
* The participant is working closely with another provider to access additional programs or training opportunities. For example, a participant who is completing a Career Pathways training program with another provider may be interested in also receiving MFIP Employment Services from the same agency.
* The participant works with their current Employment Counselor via an interpreter, however, there continues to be a gap in their understanding of program expectations and how their assigned Employment Counselor can support them. The ESP must document what steps have been taken to effectively serve the resident, including which language services have been made available, and what progress has been made.

Before initiating a conversation about transferring the case, the ESP Program Manager must first contact their assigned Hennepin County MFIP Employment Service Coordinator to discuss the situation, review what actions have been taken, and decide if a transfer to another agency would support better outcomes for the individual.

If a newly referred participant requests a case transfer at the time of enrollment, complete the enrollment and ES OV prior to approving or denying the transfer request. Do not initiate transfers due to language needs without prior approval from your Hennepin County Coordinator.

It is ***not*** appropriate for the ESP to automatically initiate a discussion with the participant regarding a transfer:

* Because the participant has limited English proficiency, and another agency is known to serve the specific population. ESPs are required to provide free and timely interpreter services that accommodate residents’ language needs. Proactive efforts to serve the LEP participant should be made and documented in WF1 prior to discussing a transfer.
* Because their home address is closer to another ESP’s office. Hennepin County is emphasizing a flexible service delivery model in which ESPs are expected to provide various service delivery options. Refer to Hennepin guidelines around Flexible Service Delivery for details. MFIP referrals are not based on agency proximity to the participant’s home. Agencies should be prepared to serve participants who live outside of the ESP’s immediate community. If a participant requests a case transfer due to location, be sure that they know the full range of service delivery options available to them through their current ESP before proceeding.
* Because a participant has been challenging to serve, has displayed resistance towards their assigned employment counselor, or refused to follow program requirements. If the assigned counselor struggles to develop positive rapport with a participant, the ESP Program Manager may consider a transfer to another employment counselor within their own agency.

**Reviewing Transfer Requests**

While participants do have the right to change ESPs, all case transfers must be approved by the ESP Program Manager or the agency’s designated Case Transfer Contact. The Case Transfer Contact for each agency is listed on the ESP Staff Directory. An Employment Counselor may not determine on their own that a participant would be better served elsewhere. Also, they may not independently choose to deny a participant’s request to transfer.

It is critical for Program Managers to carefully evaluate transfer requests prior to approval. Ensure participants are receiving high quality services and the support they need from their assigned Employment Counselor. Confirm that they understand the range of service delivery options available, and that the request for transfer is not based on miscommunication or misunderstanding.

Reasons to decline a transfer request include:

* The participant has requested a change in ESP because of an unresolved conflict between the provider and the participant. In this instance, before making a decision on the transfer request, hold a conciliation conference with the participant, counselor, and Program Manager in order to resolve the conflict (see [19 - Sanctions and Non-Compliance (state.mn.us)](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=TOC_ESM_0019) for more).
* The case has a pending NOITS or is in sanction. These actions must be resolved prior to a case transfer can be approved.
* The current agency’s Program Manager does not agree that the reason for the transfer request is valid. The participant may appeal the denial of their transfer request.
* The participant’s case has been transferred within the last 6 months.

Important things to remember:

* A case transfer must always include a discussion with the participant. Case note all discussions about case transfer requests.
* Two parent families must be transferred together.
* Overviews do not need to be conducted after a transfer, as long as they were completed by the sending agency.
* ESPs may refuse to accept a transfer if they identify that the request contradicts the guidance provided above.
* ESP Program Managers should contact their Hennepin Coordinator at with any questions or concerns related to a transfer request.

**Completing the Transfer**

If you are the Case Transfer Contactat the sending ESP:

* Reach out to the Case Transfer Contact at the receiving ESP to discuss the transfer and confirm they will accept the case.
* Case note the reason for the transfer and who approved it at the receiving ESP.
* Work with the current Employer Counselor to confirm the case is ready for transfer:
  + Record all recently issued support services in WF1
  + Upload all required documents to EDS
  + If Childcare Assistance is active on the case, upload a copy of the most recent Childcare Assistance Plan to EDS
  + Create a final case note that summarizes key information for the next counselor (for example, if Overview has been completed, CCAP status, service delivery preferences, specific needs)
* Using the WF1 Case Assignment tab, assign the case to the Case Transfer Contact at the receiving agency. Leave all current activities open when completing the transfer.

If you are the Case Transfer Contact at the receiving ESP:

* Accept the case transfer in WF1 and reassign the case as appropriate to the new counselor. Case note the date the case is received.
* Email the TTL team at [HSPH.ES.TEAM.TTL@hennepin.us](mailto:HSPH.ES.TEAM.TTL@hennepin.us) to tell them that the case has been transferred to your agency. This email will prompt the TTLs to update ESP assignment information in MAXIS on STAT/EMPS.
* If Childcare Assistance is active on the case, work with the newly assigned counselor to submit an updated Childcare Plan to your agency’s assigned childcare worker within 30 days of the transfer. Submitting the updated CCP will prompt the CCAP case to be reassigned to the CCW assigned to your agency.

**Conflict of Interest**

MFIP participants may not receive services from an agency that employs a relative or someone with other close personal relationship to the participant. If a relationship has not been disclosed by the participant, it is the ethical responsibility of the employee to report any enrollment which may be considered a conflict of interest. If a potential conflict of interest exists, agencies will follow the transfer process outlined above to refer the participant to an alternate agency.

If the potential conflict of interest is identified at the time of referral, deny the referral and notify the TTL team so that the case can be reassigned to another ESP.

**Security Transfers**

In some situations, a counselor may feel unsafe serving a resident. This may occur for a variety of reasons, but counselors should always notify their supervisor right away if they perceive a risk to their safety. ESP Program Managers should reach out to their Hennepin Coordinator to discuss a possible security transfer to Hennepin County WERC.

# 24 – Tools

See [Chapter 24 in the MFIP/DWP Employment Services Manual](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=TOC_ESM_0024) for full state policy on the following topics:

* MFIP Initial Eligibility Threshold Guide
* Amount of Earnings Needed to Exit MFIP
* Links MFIP Benefit Levels
* What Is Needed in Employment Services Case File
* List of Forms Useful to Workers
* DHS Optional Forms
* Helpful and Frequently Used Links
* Exit Reasons for MFIP/DWP in WF1
* Disability Criteria for SSI Benefits