

Effective Date: October 30, 2014

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OPERATIONAL DEFINITION: An Evolving Employment Services Philosophy 2014-2018

Ramsey County provides jobs and training services to families on the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) or the Diversionary Work Program (DWP) through Workforce Solutions and contracted agencies. The major points of employment and education needs described below apply to both programs DWP and MFIP.

Diversionary Work Program is a short term job search and employment focused program in which participants are encouraged and expected to work. The major idea is to divert people from long term welfare dependence.

Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) is a comprehensive work-focused program in which participants are encouraged and expected to work.

The goals of MFIP are:

1. To encourage and enable all families to find employment;
2. To help families increase their income and move out of poverty;
3. To prevent long-term dependence on welfare as a primary source of family income.

The Ramsey County objective for MFIP/DWP Employment Services is to provide Ramsey County residents on public assistance employment services through DWP or MFIP that increase their opportunities for improved employment and family stabilization.

The Ramsey County MFIP Program Goals are to:

- a. Increase the number of participants working per month
- b. Increase the number of participant work hours per month toward and beyond 130 hours per month
- c. Increase the number of participants leaving MFIP due to income
- d. Reduce employment racial disparities
- e. Increase participant education and skill certification levels
- f. Provide effective career guidance services
- g. Provide effective MFIP and DWP Employment Services within guidelines of MFIP and DWP rules.

Ramsey County Workforce Solutions will achieve these goals and objectives by helping the participants develop executive skills, strengthen their personal agency and self-determination, as well as choose and pursue the activities that matter in achieving their goals for self-sufficiency rather than doing only those things that are countable in MFIP simply because they are mandated.

Revised and Re-Issued October 30, 2014

Workforce Solutions expects that all of the case management, counseling, coaching and program management activities carried out by employment counselors and leadership be conducted with the guiding principles of:

- Recognition of the participant rights of personal agency and self-determination;
- Use of strength based employment plan development;
- Celebration of cultural diversity;
- Celebration of individual, family, and community resiliency;
- Respect for the whole family (multi-generational approach);
- Identification and recognition of participant dreams and goals;
- Use of motivational interviewing (“MI”);
- Use of coaching techniques
- Development of participant executive functioning (“EF”) skills;
- Expectation that all people regardless of barrier and physical and mental health challenges are able to learn and earn; and
- Discussion about career advancement and retention as strategies from orientation and all throughout the job training and job attainment cycle.

Employment Services include:

- DWP
- MFIP (WPR and FSS) Employment Services
- Career Planning
- Coaching
- Pipeline Services
- Distinct Educational Pathways
- Retention Services
- Workshops for Skill Enhancement
- Community Work Experience for Skill Enhancement
- Culturally Informed Services
- Racial Disparity Reduction Strategies and Services
- Partnership
- Motivational Interviewing

Teaching executive skills to participants, even on the most simple, incremental basis provides benefit and structure to participants; thereby making tangible the dream of education, work, and healthy engagement into community activities, and the possibility of replacing poverty and MFIP with self-sufficiency.

The list of performance measures and outcomes has expanded and should be used as a tool for assessing the health of the services. The emphasis must be on the services. Outcome performance is evidence of a robust service delivery or the need for improvement in the services. All deliverers of the Ramsey County MFIP/DWP Employment services are encouraged to focus on service delivery.

