



# Diversions Work Program

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## Fast facts

- ▲ Benefits to Diversions Work Program families are based on the number of people in the family, the family's needs and countable income.
- ▲ DWP families are eligible for government-issued supports, including child care assistance, food support and health care.
- ▲ DWP recipients must cooperate with child support enforcement requirements, including locating the non-custodial parent, establishing paternity, and getting and enforcing an order of support.
- ▲ Families who do not cooperate with their employment plans or child support requirements will have their cases closed. They will not be eligible for any other cash programs until their four months of DWP time ends.

## What is the Diversions Work Program?

The Diversions Work Program (DWP) provides short-term benefits and intensive, front-end employment services for families seeking cash assistance. The main goal is to help families go to work immediately rather than go on welfare.

DWP was mandated by the 2003 Legislature and launched statewide on July 1, 2004.

DWP provides help with rent, utilities and housing; a personal needs allowance of up to \$70 per month for each family member; and child care assistance. Adults must seek full-time work immediately if approved for the program.

## Who must participate in the program?

All eligible families who apply for cash assistance must participate in DWP, the family must have children, meet income eligibility tests and have no more than \$2,000 in assets. In addition, they must verify their expenses, including housing, utility and phone costs, and supply Social Security numbers for all family members.

If eligible, all adults in the family must develop and sign an employment plan before they can receive benefits.

Some families are excluded from DWP including:

- All adults over 60 years old.
- Disabled adults or severely disabled children.
- Teen parents who do not have a high school diploma or GED and wish to finish school.
- Some single parents with a child under 12 weeks old.
- One or more caregivers who have been on Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) or DWP in the past 12 months.
- One or more caregivers who have received 60 months of MFIP or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.
- A caregiver who is disqualified from DWP or MFIP due to fraud.
- A caregiver who has been in the United States for less than 13 months.

## How many families participate?

Approximately 560 families apply for DWP each month. Of these, approximately 480 meet with an employment counselor to develop an employment plan. Approximately 47 percent of adults were working at some point during their time on DWP. For the fourth quarter of 2008, the average wage was \$11.33 per hour. Approximately 49 percent of adults who leave DWP after four months are diverted from applying for the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP).

## What is the cost of the program?

In 2008, Hennepin spent \$1.7 million on DWP, which also uses state and federal dollars.