

CHAPTER 256J

MINNESOTA FAMILY INVESTMENT PROGRAM

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256J.01 ESTABLISHING MINNESOTA FAMILY INVESTMENT PROGRAM.

[For text of subds 1 to 5, see M.S.2006]

Subd. 6. Legislative approval to move programs or activities. The commissioner shall not move programs or activities funded with MFIP or TANF maintenance of effort funds to other funding sources without legislative approval.

History: 2007 c 147 art 2 s 22

256J.02 FEDERAL TANF BLOCK GRANT.

Subdivision 1. Commissioner's authority to administer block grant funds. The commissioner of human services is authorized to receive, administer, and expend funds available under the TANF block grant authorized under title I of Public Law 104-193, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, and under Public Law 109-171, the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005.

[For text of subd 2, see M.S.2006]

Subd. 4. Authority to transfer. Subject to limitations of title I of Public Law 104-193, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, as amended, and under Public Law 109-171, the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, the legislature may transfer money from the TANF block grant to the child care fund under chapter 119B, or the Title XX block grant.

[For text of subd 5, see M.S.2006]

Subd. 6. TANF funds appropriated to other entities. Any expenditures from the TANF block grant shall be expended in accordance with the requirements and limitations of part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act, as amended, and any other applicable federal requirement or limitation. Prior to any expenditure of these funds, the commissioner shall ensure that funds are expended in compliance with the requirements and limitations of federal law and that any reporting requirements of federal law are met. It shall be the responsibility of any entity to which these funds are appropriated to implement a memorandum of understanding with the commissioner that provides the necessary assurance of compliance prior to any expenditure of funds. The commissioner shall receipt TANF funds appropriated to other state agencies and coordinate all related interagency accounting transactions necessary to implement these appropriations. Unexpended TANF funds appropriated to any state, local, or nonprofit entity cancel at the end of the state fiscal year unless appropriating or statutory language permits otherwise.

History: 2007 c 147 art 2 s 23,24; art 19 s 17

256J.021 SEPARATE STATE PROGRAM FOR USE OF STATE MONEY.

(a) Families receiving assistance under this section shall comply with all applicable requirements in this chapter.

(b) Beginning October 1, 2006, the commissioner of human services must treat MFIP expenditures made to or on behalf of any minor child under section 256J.02, subdivision 2, clause (1), who is part of a two-parent household, as expenditures under a separately funded state program. These expenditures shall not count toward the state's maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements under the federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program.

(c) Beginning February 1, 2008, the commissioner of human services shall treat MFIP expenditures made to or on behalf of any minor child who is part of a household that meets criteria in section 256J.575, subdivision 3, as expenditures under a separately funded state program under section 256J.575, subdivision 8.

History: 2007 c 147 art 2 s 25

256J.08 DEFINITIONS.

[For text of subds 1 to 64, see M.S.2006]

Subd. 65. **Participant.** (a) "Participant" includes any of the following:

(1) a person who is currently receiving cash assistance or the food portion available through MFIP;

(2) a person who withdraws a cash or food assistance payment by electronic transfer or receives and cashes an MFIP assistance check or food coupons and is subsequently determined to be ineligible for assistance for that period of time is a participant, regardless whether that assistance is repaid;

(3) the caregiver relative and the minor child whose needs are included in the assistance payment;

(4) a person in an assistance unit who does not receive a cash and food assistance payment because the case has been suspended from MFIP;

(5) a person who receives cash payments under the diversionary work program under section 256J.95 is a participant; and

(6) a person who receives cash payments under family stabilization services under section 256J.575.

(b) "Participant" does not include a person who fails to withdraw or access electronically any portion of the person's cash and food assistance payment by the end of the payment month, who makes a written request for closure before the first of a payment month and repays cash and food assistance electronically issued for that payment month within that payment month, or who returns any uncashed assistance check and food coupons and withdraws from the program.

[For text of subds 65a to 90, see M.S.2006]

History: 2007 c 147 art 2 s 26

256J.11 CITIZENSHIP.

Subdivision 1. **General citizenship requirements.** (a) To be eligible for MFIP, a member of the assistance unit must be a citizen of the United States, a qualified noncitizen as defined in section 256J.08, or a noncitizen who is otherwise residing lawfully in the United States.

(b) A qualified noncitizen who entered the United States on or after August 22, 1996, is eligible for MFIP. However, TANF dollars cannot be used to fund the MFIP benefits for an individual under this paragraph for a period of five years after the date of entry unless the qualified noncitizen meets one of the following criteria:

- (1) was admitted to the United States as a refugee under United States Code, title 8, section 1157;
 - (2) was granted asylum under United States Code, title 8, section 1158;
 - (3) was granted withholding of deportation under the United States Code, title 8, section 1253(h);
 - (4) is a veteran of the United States armed forces with an honorable discharge for a reason other than noncitizen status, or is a spouse or unmarried minor dependent child of the same; or
 - (5) is an individual on active duty in the United States armed forces, other than for training, or is a spouse or unmarried minor dependent child of the same.
- (c) A person who is not a qualified noncitizen but who is otherwise residing lawfully in the United States is eligible for MFIP. However, TANF dollars cannot be used to fund the MFIP benefits for an individual under this paragraph.
- (d) For purposes of this subdivision, a nonimmigrant in one or more of the classes listed in United States Code, title 8, section 1101(a)(15), or an undocumented immigrant who resides in the United States without the approval or acquiescence of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, is not eligible for MFIP.

[For text of subd 2, see M.S.2006]

Subd. 3. Benefits funded with state money. Legal adult noncitizens who have resided in the country for four years or more as a lawful permanent resident, whose benefits are funded entirely with state money, and who are under 70 years of age, must, as a condition of eligibility:

- (1) be enrolled in a literacy class, English as a second language class, or a citizen class;
- (2) be applying for admission to a literacy class, English as a second language class, and is on a waiting list;
- (3) be in the process of applying for a waiver from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services of the English language or civics requirements of the citizenship test;
- (4) have submitted an application for citizenship to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services and is waiting for a testing date or a subsequent swearing in ceremony; or
- (5) have been denied citizenship due to a failure to pass the test after two attempts or because of an inability to understand the rights and responsibilities of becoming a United States citizen, as documented by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services or the county.

If the county social service agency determines that a legal noncitizen subject to the requirements of this subdivision will require more than one year of English language training, then the requirements of clause (1) or (2) shall be imposed after the legal noncitizen has resided in the country for three years. Individuals who reside in a facility licensed under chapter 144A, 144D, 245A, or 256I are exempt from the requirements of this subdivision.

History: 2007 c 13 art 1 s 25

256J.20 PROPERTY LIMITATIONS.

[For text of subds 1 and 2, see M.S.2006]

Subd. 3. Other property limitations. To be eligible for MFIP, the equity value of all nonexcluded real and personal property of the assistance unit must not exceed \$2,000 for applicants and \$5,000 for ongoing participants. The value of assets in clauses (1) to (19) must be excluded when determining the equity value of real and personal property:

- (1) a licensed vehicle up to a loan value of less than or equal to \$15,000. If the assistance unit owns more than one licensed vehicle, determine the loan value of all additional vehicles and exclude the combined loan value of less than or equal to \$7,500. The county agency shall

apply any excess loan value as if it were equity value to the asset limit described in this section, excluding: (i) the value of one vehicle per physically disabled person when the vehicle is needed to transport the disabled unit member; this exclusion does not apply to mentally disabled people; (ii) the value of special equipment for a disabled member of the assistance unit; and (iii) any vehicle used for long-distance travel, other than daily commuting, for the employment of a unit member.

To establish the loan value of vehicles, a county agency must use the N.A.D.A. Official Used Car Guide, Midwest Edition, for newer model cars. When a vehicle is not listed in the guidebook, or when the applicant or participant disputes the loan value listed in the guidebook as unreasonable given the condition of the particular vehicle, the county agency may require the applicant or participant document the loan value by securing a written statement from a motor vehicle dealer licensed under section 168.27, stating the amount that the dealer would pay to purchase the vehicle. The county agency shall reimburse the applicant or participant for the cost of a written statement that documents a lower loan value;

(2) the value of life insurance policies for members of the assistance unit;

(3) one burial plot per member of an assistance unit;

(4) the value of personal property needed to produce earned income, including tools, implements, farm animals, inventory, business loans, business checking and savings accounts used at least annually and used exclusively for the operation of a self-employment business, and any motor vehicles if at least 50 percent of the vehicle's use is to produce income and if the vehicles are essential for the self-employment business;

(5) the value of personal property not otherwise specified which is commonly used by household members in day-to-day living such as clothing, necessary household furniture, equipment, and other basic maintenance items essential for daily living;

(6) the value of real and personal property owned by a recipient of Supplemental Security Income or Minnesota supplemental aid;

(7) the value of corrective payments, but only for the month in which the payment is received and for the following month;

(8) a mobile home or other vehicle used by an applicant or participant as the applicant's or participant's home;

(9) money in a separate escrow account that is needed to pay real estate taxes or insurance and that is used for this purpose;

(10) money held in escrow to cover employee FICA, employee tax withholding, sales tax withholding, employee worker compensation, business insurance, property rental, property taxes, and other costs that are paid at least annually, but less often than monthly;

(11) monthly assistance payments for the current month's or short-term emergency needs under section 256J.626, subdivision 2;

(12) the value of school loans, grants, or scholarships for the period they are intended to cover;

(13) payments listed in section 256J.21, subdivision 2, clause (9), which are held in escrow for a period not to exceed three months to replace or repair personal or real property;

(14) income received in a budget month through the end of the payment month;

(15) savings from earned income of a minor child or a minor parent that are set aside in a separate account designated specifically for future education or employment costs;

(16) the federal earned income credit, Minnesota working family credit, state and federal income tax refunds, state homeowners and renters credits under chapter 290A, property tax rebates and other federal or state tax rebates in the month received and the following month;

(17) payments excluded under federal law as long as those payments are held in a separate account from any nonexcluded funds;

(18) the assets of children ineligible to receive MFIP benefits because foster care or adoption assistance payments are made on their behalf; and

(19) the assets of persons whose income is excluded under section 256J.21, subdivision 2, clause (43).

History: 2007 c 147 art 2 s 27

256J.21 INCOME LIMITATIONS.

[For text of subd 1, see M.S.2006]

Subd. 2. **Income exclusions.** The following must be excluded in determining a family's available income:

(1) payments for basic care, difficulty of care, and clothing allowances received for providing family foster care to children or adults under Minnesota Rules, parts 9555.5050 to 9555.6265, 9560.0521, and 9560.0650 to 9560.0655, and payments received and used for care and maintenance of a third-party beneficiary who is not a household member;

(2) reimbursements for employment training received through the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, United States Code, title 20, chapter 73, section 9201;

(3) reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses incurred while performing volunteer services, jury duty, employment, or informal carpooling arrangements directly related to employment;

(4) all educational assistance, except the county agency must count graduate student teaching assistantships, fellowships, and other similar paid work as earned income and, after allowing deductions for any unmet and necessary educational expenses, shall count scholarships or grants awarded to graduate students that do not require teaching or research as unearned income;

(5) loans, regardless of purpose, from public or private lending institutions, governmental lending institutions, or governmental agencies;

(6) loans from private individuals, regardless of purpose, provided an applicant or participant documents that the lender expects repayment;

(7)(i) state income tax refunds; and

(ii) federal income tax refunds;

(8)(i) federal earned income credits;

(ii) Minnesota working family credits;

(iii) state homeowners and renters credits under chapter 290A; and

(iv) federal or state tax rebates;

(9) funds received for reimbursement, replacement, or rebate of personal or real property when these payments are made by public agencies, awarded by a court, solicited through public appeal, or made as a grant by a federal agency, state or local government, or disaster assistance organizations, subsequent to a presidential declaration of disaster;

(10) the portion of an insurance settlement that is used to pay medical, funeral, and burial expenses, or to repair or replace insured property;

(11) reimbursements for medical expenses that cannot be paid by medical assistance;

(12) payments by a vocational rehabilitation program administered by the state under chapter 268A, except those payments that are for current living expenses;

(13) in-kind income, including any payments directly made by a third party to a provider of goods and services;

(14) assistance payments to correct underpayments, but only for the month in which the payment is received;

(15) payments for short-term emergency needs under section 256J.626, subdivision 2;

(16) funeral and cemetery payments as provided by section 256.935;

(17) nonrecurring cash gifts of \$30 or less, not exceeding \$30 per participant in a calendar month;

(18) any form of energy assistance payment made through Public Law 97-35, Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Act of 1981, payments made directly to energy providers by

other public and private agencies, and any form of credit or rebate payment issued by energy providers;

(19) Supplemental Security Income (SSI), including retroactive SSI payments and other income of an SSI recipient, except as described in section 256J.37, subdivision 3b;

(20) Minnesota supplemental aid, including retroactive payments;

(21) proceeds from the sale of real or personal property;

(22) state adoption assistance payments under section 259.67, and up to an equal amount of county adoption assistance payments;

(23) state-funded family subsidy program payments made under section 252.32 to help families care for children with developmental disabilities, consumer support grant funds under section 256.476, and resources and services for a disabled household member under one of the home and community-based waiver services programs under chapter 256B;

(24) interest payments and dividends from property that is not excluded from and that does not exceed the asset limit;

(25) rent rebates;

(26) income earned by a minor caregiver, minor child through age 6, or a minor child who is at least a half-time student in an approved elementary or secondary education program;

(27) income earned by a caregiver under age 20 who is at least a half-time student in an approved elementary or secondary education program;

(28) MFIP child care payments under section 119B.05;

(29) all other payments made through MFIP to support a caregiver's pursuit of greater economic stability;

(30) income a participant receives related to shared living expenses;

(31) reverse mortgages;

(32) benefits provided by the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, United States Code, title 42, chapter 13A, sections 1771 to 1790;

(33) benefits provided by the women, infants, and children (WIC) nutrition program, United States Code, title 42, chapter 13A, section 1786;

(34) benefits from the National School Lunch Act, United States Code, title 42, chapter 13, sections 1751 to 1769e;

(35) relocation assistance for displaced persons under the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, United States Code, title 42, chapter 61, subchapter II, section 4636, or the National Housing Act, United States Code, title 12, chapter 13, sections 1701 to 1750jj;

(36) benefits from the Trade Act of 1974, United States Code, title 19, chapter 12, part 2, sections 2271 to 2322;

(37) war reparations payments to Japanese Americans and Aleuts under United States Code, title 50, sections 1989 to 1989d;

(38) payments to veterans or their dependents as a result of legal settlements regarding Agent Orange or other chemical exposure under Public Law 101-239, section 10405, paragraph (a)(2)(E);

(39) income that is otherwise specifically excluded from MFIP consideration in federal law, state law, or federal regulation;

(40) security and utility deposit refunds;

(41) American Indian tribal land settlements excluded under Public Laws 98-123, 98-124, and 99-377 to the Mississippi Band Chippewa Indians of White Earth, Leech Lake, and Mille Lacs reservations and payments to members of the White Earth Band, under United States Code, title 25, chapter 9, section 331, and chapter 16, section 1407;

(42) all income of the minor parent's parents and stepparents when determining the grant for the minor parent in households that include a minor parent living with parents or stepparents on MFIP with other children;

(43) income of the minor parent's parents and stepparents equal to 200 percent of the federal poverty guideline for a family size not including the minor parent and the minor parent's child in households that include a minor parent living with parents or stepparents not on MFIP when determining the grant for the minor parent. The remainder of income is deemed as specified in section 256J.37, subdivision 1b;

(44) payments made to children eligible for relative custody assistance under section 257.85;

(45) vendor payments for goods and services made on behalf of a client unless the client has the option of receiving the payment in cash;

(46) the principal portion of a contract for deed payment; and

(47) cash payments to individuals enrolled for full-time service as a volunteer under AmeriCorps programs including AmeriCorps VISTA, AmeriCorps State, AmeriCorps National, and AmeriCorps NCCC.

[For text of subds 3 to 5, see M.S.2006]

History: 2007 c 147 art 2 s 28

256J.29 [Repealed, 2007 c 147 art 2 s 63]

256J.32 DOCUMENTING, VERIFYING, AND RECERTIFYING ELIGIBILITY.

[For text of subds 1 to 5a, see M.S.2006]

Subd. 6. **Recertification.** The county agency shall recertify eligibility in an annual face-to-face interview with the participant and verify the following:

- (1) presence of the minor child in the home, if questionable;
- (2) income, unless excluded, including self-employment expenses used as a deduction or deposits or withdrawals from business accounts;
- (3) assets when the value is within \$200 of the asset limit;
- (4) information to establish an exception under section 256J.24, subdivision 9, if questionable;
- (5) inconsistent information, if related to eligibility; and
- (6) whether a single caregiver household meets requirements in section 256J.575, subdivision 3.

Subd. 7. **Notice to undocumented persons; release of private data.** County agencies in consultation with the commissioner of human services shall provide notification to undocumented persons regarding the release of personal data to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services and develop protocol regarding the release or sharing of data about undocumented persons with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services as required under sections 404, 434, and 411A of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996.

Subd. 7a. **Requirement to report to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services.** The commissioner shall comply with the reporting requirements under United States Code, title 42, section 611a, and any federal regulation or guidance adopted under that law.

[For text of subd 8, see M.S.2006]

History: 2007 c 13 art 1 s 25; 2007 c 147 art 2 s 29

256J.42 60-MONTH TIME LIMIT; EXEMPTIONS.

Subdivision 1. **Time limit.** (a) Except as otherwise provided for in this section, an assistance unit in which any adult caregiver has received 60 months of cash assistance funded in whole or in part by the TANF block grant in this or any other state or United States territory,

or from a tribal TANF program, MFIP, the AFDC program formerly codified in sections 256.72 to 256.87, or the family general assistance program formerly codified in sections 256D.01 to 256D.23, funded in whole or in part by state appropriations, is ineligible to receive MFIP. Any cash assistance funded with TANF dollars in this or any other state or United States territory, or from a tribal TANF program, or MFIP assistance funded in whole or in part by state appropriations, that was received by the unit on or after the date TANF was implemented, including any assistance received in states or United States territories of prior residence, counts toward the 60-month limitation. Months during which any cash assistance is received by an assistance unit with a mandatory member who is disqualified for wrongfully obtaining public assistance under section 256.98, subdivision 8, counts toward the time limit for the disqualified member. The 60-month limit applies to a minor caregiver except under subdivision 5. The 60-month time period does not need to be consecutive months for this provision to apply.

(b) The months before July 1998 in which individuals received assistance as part of the field trials as an MFIP, MFIP-R, or MFIP or MFIP-R comparison group family are not included in the 60-month time limit.

[For text of subds 3 to 6, see M.S.2006]

History: 2007 c 147 art 2 s 30

256J.46 SANCTIONS.

[For text of subds 1 to 2a, see M.S.2006]

Subd. 3. Restrictions on sanctions. A participant shall not be sanctioned for failure to meet the agreed upon hours in a participant's employment plan under section 256J.521, subdivision 2, when the participant fails to meet the agreed upon hours of participation in paid employment because the participant is not eligible for holiday pay and the participant's place of employment is closed for a holiday.

History: 2007 c 147 art 2 s 31

256J.49 EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES; DEFINITIONS.

[For text of subds 1 to 12a, see M.S.2006]

Subd. 13. Work activity. "Work activity" means any activity in a participant's approved employment plan that leads to employment. For purposes of the MFIP program, this includes activities that meet the definition of work activity under the participation requirements of TANF. Work activity includes:

(1) unsubsidized employment, including work study and paid apprenticeships or internships;

(2) subsidized private sector or public sector employment, including grant diversion as specified in section 256J.69, on-the-job training as specified in section 256J.66, the self-employment investment demonstration program (SEID) as specified in section 256J.65, paid work experience, and supported work when a wage subsidy is provided;

(3) unpaid work experience, including community service, volunteer work, the community work experience program as specified in section 256J.67, unpaid apprenticeships or internships, and supported work when a wage subsidy is not provided. Unpaid work experience is only an option if the participant has been unable to obtain or maintain paid employment in the competitive labor market, and no paid work experience programs are available to the participant. Unless a participant consents to participating in unpaid work experience, the participant's employment plan may only include unpaid work experience if including the unpaid work experience in the plan will meet the following criteria:

(i) the unpaid work experience will provide the participant specific skills or experience that cannot be obtained through other work activity options where the participant resides or is willing to reside; and

(ii) the skills or experience gained through the unpaid work experience will result in higher wages for the participant than the participant could earn without the unpaid work experience;

(4) job search including job readiness assistance, job clubs, job placement, job-related counseling, and job retention services;

(5) job readiness education, including English as a second language (ESL) or functional work literacy classes as limited by the provisions of section 256J.531, subdivision 2, general educational development (GED) course work, high school completion, and adult basic education as limited by the provisions of section 256J.531, subdivision 1;

(6) job skills training directly related to employment, including education and training that can reasonably be expected to lead to employment, as limited by the provisions of section 256J.53;

(7) providing child care services to a participant who is working in a community service program;

(8) activities included in the employment plan that is developed under section 256J.521, subdivision 3; and

(9) preemployment activities including chemical and mental health assessments, treatment, and services; learning disabilities services; child protective services; family stabilization services; or other programs designed to enhance employability.

History: 2007 c 147 art 2 s 32

256J.521 ASSESSMENT; EMPLOYMENT PLANS.

Subdivision 1. Assessments. (a) For purposes of MFIP employment services, assessment is a continuing process of gathering information related to employability for the purpose of identifying both participant's strengths and strategies for coping with issues that interfere with employment. The job counselor must use information from the assessment process to develop and update the employment plan under subdivision 2 or 3, as appropriate, to determine whether the participant qualifies for a family violence waiver including an employment plan under subdivision 3, and to determine whether the participant should be referred to family stabilization services under section 256J.575.

(b) The scope of assessment must cover at least the following areas:

(1) basic information about the participant's ability to obtain and retain employment, including: a review of the participant's education level; interests, skills, and abilities; prior employment or work experience; transferable work skills; child care and transportation needs;

(2) identification of personal and family circumstances that impact the participant's ability to obtain and retain employment, including: any special needs of the children, the level of English proficiency, family violence issues, and any involvement with social services or the legal system;

(3) the results of a mental and chemical health screening tool designed by the commissioner and results of the brief screening tool for special learning needs. Screening tools for mental and chemical health and special learning needs must be approved by the commissioner and may only be administered by job counselors or county staff trained in using such screening tools. The commissioner shall work with county agencies to develop protocols for referrals and follow-up actions after screens are administered to participants, including guidance on how employment plans may be modified based upon outcomes of certain screens. Participants must be told of the purpose of the screens and how the information will be used to assist the participant in identifying and overcoming barriers to employment. Screening for mental and chemical health and special learning needs must be completed by participants who are unable to find suitable employment after six weeks of job search under subdivision 2, paragraph (b), and participants who are determined to have barriers to employment under subdivision 2, paragraph (d). Failure to complete the screens will result in sanction under section 256J.46; and

(4) a comprehensive review of participation and progress for participants who have received MFIP assistance and have not worked in unsubsidized employment during the past 12 months. The purpose of the review is to determine the need for additional services and supports, including placement in subsidized employment or unpaid work experience under section 256J.49, subdivision 13, or referral to family stabilization services under section 256J.575.

(c) Information gathered during a caregiver's participation in the diversionary work program under section 256J.95 must be incorporated into the assessment process.

(d) The job counselor may require the participant to complete a professional chemical use assessment to be performed according to the rules adopted under section 254A.03, subdivision 3, including provisions in the administrative rules which recognize the cultural background of the participant, or a professional psychological assessment as a component of the assessment process; when the job counselor has a reasonable belief, based on objective evidence, that a participant's ability to obtain and retain suitable employment is impaired by a medical condition. The job counselor may assist the participant with arranging services, including child care assistance and transportation, necessary to meet needs identified by the assessment. Data gathered as part of a professional assessment must be classified and disclosed according to the provisions in section 13.46.

Subd. 2. Employment plan; contents. (a) Based on the assessment under subdivision 1, the job counselor and the participant must develop an employment plan that includes participation in activities and hours that meet the requirements of section 256J.55, subdivision 1. The purpose of the employment plan is to identify for each participant the most direct path to unsubsidized employment and any subsequent steps that support long-term economic stability. The employment plan should be developed using the highest level of activity appropriate for the participant. Activities must be chosen from clauses (1) to (6), which are listed in order of preference. Notwithstanding this order of preference for activities, priority must be given for activities related to a family violence waiver when developing the employment plan. The employment plan must also list the specific steps the participant will take to obtain employment, including steps necessary for the participant to progress from one level of activity to another, and a timetable for completion of each step. Levels of activity include:

- (1) unsubsidized employment;
- (2) job search;
- (3) subsidized employment or unpaid work experience;
- (4) unsubsidized employment and job readiness education or job skills training;
- (5) unsubsidized employment or unpaid work experience and activities related to a family violence waiver or preemployment needs; and
- (6) activities related to a family violence waiver or preemployment needs.

(b) Participants who are determined to possess sufficient skills such that the participant is likely to succeed in obtaining unsubsidized employment must job search at least 30 hours per week for up to six weeks and accept any offer of suitable employment. The remaining hours necessary to meet the requirements of section 256J.55, subdivision 1, may be met through participation in other work activities under section 256J.49, subdivision 13. The participant's employment plan must specify, at a minimum: (1) whether the job search is supervised or unsupervised; (2) support services that will be provided; and (3) how frequently the participant must report to the job counselor. Participants who are unable to find suitable employment after six weeks must meet with the job counselor to determine whether other activities in paragraph (a) should be incorporated into the employment plan. Job search activities which are continued after six weeks must be structured and supervised.

(c) Beginning July 1, 2004, activities and hourly requirements in the employment plan may be adjusted as necessary to accommodate the personal and family circumstances of participants identified under section 256J.561, subdivision 2, paragraph (d). Participants who no longer meet the provisions of section 256J.561, subdivision 2, paragraph (d), must meet with the job counselor within ten days of the determination to revise the employment plan.

(d) Participants who are determined to have barriers to obtaining or retaining employment that will not be overcome during six weeks of job search under paragraph (b) must work with the job counselor to develop an employment plan that addresses those barriers by incorporating appropriate activities from paragraph (a), clauses (1) to (6). The employment plan must include enough hours to meet the participation requirements in section 256J.55, subdivision 1, unless a compelling reason to require fewer hours is noted in the participant's file.

(e) The job counselor and the participant must sign the employment plan to indicate agreement on the contents.

(f) Except as provided under paragraph (g), failure to develop or comply with activities in the plan, or voluntarily quitting suitable employment without good cause, will result in the imposition of a sanction under section 256J.46.

(g) When a participant fails to meet the agreed upon hours of participation in paid employment because the participant is not eligible for holiday pay and the participant's place of employment is closed for a holiday, the job counselor shall not impose a sanction or increase the hours of participation in any other activity, including paid employment, to offset the hours that were missed due to the holiday.

(h) Employment plans must be reviewed at least every three months to determine whether activities and hourly requirements should be revised. The job counselor is encouraged to allow participants who are participating in at least 20 hours of work activities to also participate in education and training activities in order to meet the federal hourly participation rates.

[For text of subds 3 to 6, see M.S.2006]

History: 2007 c 147 art 2 s 33,34

256J.53 POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION AS APPROVED WORK ACTIVITY.

[For text of subd 1, see M.S.2006]

Subd. 2. Approval of postsecondary education or training. (a) In order for a postsecondary education or training program to be an approved activity in an employment plan, the plan must include additional work activities if the education and training activities do not meet the minimum hours required to meet the federal work participation rate under Code of Federal Regulations, title 45, sections 261.31 and 261.35.

(b) Participants seeking approval of a postsecondary education or training plan must provide documentation that:

- (1) the employment goal can only be met with the additional education or training;
- (2) there are suitable employment opportunities that require the specific education or training in the area in which the participant resides or is willing to reside;
- (3) the education or training will result in significantly higher wages for the participant than the participant could earn without the education or training;
- (4) the participant can meet the requirements for admission into the program; and
- (5) there is a reasonable expectation that the participant will complete the training program based on such factors as the participant's MFIP assessment, previous education, training, and work history; current motivation; and changes in previous circumstances.

[For text of subds 3 and 5, see M.S.2006]

History: 2007 c 147 art 2 s 35

256J.55 PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS, RIGHTS, AND EXPECTATIONS.

Subdivision 1. Participation requirements. (a) All caregivers must participate in employment services under sections 256J.515 to 256J.57 concurrent with receipt of MFIP assistance.

(b) Until July 1, 2004, participants who meet the requirements of section 256J.56 are exempt from participation requirements.

(c) Participants under paragraph (a) must develop and comply with an employment plan under section 256J.521 or section 256J.54 in the case of a participant under the age of 20 who has not obtained a high school diploma or its equivalent.

(d) With the exception of participants under the age of 20 who must meet the education requirements of section 256J.54, all participants must meet the hourly participation requirements of TANF or the hourly requirements listed in clauses (1) to (3), whichever is higher.

(1) In single-parent families with no children under six years of age, the job counselor and the caregiver must develop an employment plan that includes 130 hours per month of work activities.

(2) In single-parent families with a child under six years of age, the job counselor and the caregiver must develop an employment plan that includes 87 hours per month of work activities.

(3) In two-parent families, the job counselor and the caregivers must develop employment plans which result in a combined total of at least 55 hours per week of work activities.

(e) Failure to participate in employment services, including the requirement to develop and comply with an employment plan, including hourly requirements, without good cause under section 256J.57, shall result in the imposition of a sanction under section 256J.46.

[For text of subds 2 to 4, see M.S.2006]

History: 2007 c 147 art 2 s 36

256J.561 UNIVERSAL PARTICIPATION REQUIRED.

Subdivision 1. [Repealed, 2007 c 147 art 11 s 27]

[For text of subds 2 and 3, see M.S.2006]

256J.575 FAMILY STABILIZATION SERVICES.

Subdivision 1. **Purpose.** (a) The family stabilization services serve families who are not making significant progress within the Minnesota family investment program (MFIP) due to a variety of barriers to employment.

(b) The goal of the services is to stabilize and improve the lives of families at risk of long-term welfare dependency or family instability due to employment barriers such as physical disability, mental disability, age, or providing care for a disabled household member. These services promote and support families to achieve the greatest possible degree of self-sufficiency.

Subd. 2. **Definitions.** The terms used in this section have the meanings given them in paragraphs (a) to (d).

(a) "Case manager" means the county-designated staff person or employment services counselor.

(b) "Case management" means the services provided by or through the county agency or through the employment services agency to participating families, including assessment, information, referrals, and assistance in the preparation and implementation of a family stabilization plan under subdivision 5.

(c) "Family stabilization plan" means a plan developed by a case manager and the participant, which identifies the participant's most appropriate path to unsubsidized employment, family stability, and barrier reduction, taking into account the family's circumstances.

(d) "Family stabilization services" means programs, activities, and services in this section that provide participants and their family members with assistance regarding, but not limited to:

- (1) obtaining and retaining unsubsidized employment;
- (2) family stability;
- (3) economic stability; and

(4) barrier reduction.

The goal of the services is to achieve the greatest degree of economic self-sufficiency and family well-being possible for the family under the circumstances.

Subd. 3. Eligibility. (a) The following MFIP or diversionary work program (DWP) participants are eligible for the services under this section:

(1) a participant who meets the requirements for or has been granted a hardship extension under section 256J.425, subdivision 2 or 3, except that it is not necessary for the participant to have reached or be approaching 60 months of eligibility for this section to apply;

(2) a participant who is applying for Supplemental Security Income or Social Security disability insurance; and

(3) a participant who is a noncitizen who has been in the United States for 12 or fewer months.

(b) Families must meet all other eligibility requirements for MFIP established in this chapter. Families are eligible for financial assistance to the same extent as if they were participating in MFIP.

(c) A participant under paragraph (a), clause (3), must be provided with English as a second language opportunities and skills training for up to 12 months. After 12 months, the case manager and participant must determine whether the participant should continue with English as a second language classes or skills training, or both, and continue to receive family stabilization services.

Subd. 4. Universal participation. All caregivers must participate in family stabilization services as defined in subdivision 2.

Subd. 5. Case management; family stabilization plans; coordinated services. (a) The county agency or employment services provider shall provide family stabilization services to families through a case management model. A case manager shall be assigned to each participating family within 30 days after the family is determined to be eligible for family stabilization services. The case manager, with the full involvement of the participant, shall recommend, and the county agency shall establish and modify as necessary, a family stabilization plan for each participating family. If a participant is already assigned to a county case manager or a county-designated case manager in social services, disability services, or housing services that case manager already assigned may be the case manager for purposes of these services.

(b) The family stabilization plan must include:

(1) each participant's plan for long-term self-sufficiency, including an employment goal where applicable;

(2) an assessment of each participant's strengths and barriers, and any special circumstances of the participant's family that impact, or are likely to impact, the participant's progress towards the goals in the plan; and

(3) an identification of the services, supports, education, training, and accommodations needed to reduce or overcome any barriers to enable the family to achieve self-sufficiency and to fulfill each caregiver's personal and family responsibilities.

(c) The case manager and the participant shall meet within 30 days of the family's referral to the case manager. The initial family stabilization plan must be completed within 30 days of the first meeting with the case manager. The case manager shall establish a schedule for periodic review of the family stabilization plan that includes personal contact with the participant at least once per month. In addition, the case manager shall review and, if necessary, modify the plan under the following circumstances:

(1) there is a lack of satisfactory progress in achieving the goals of the plan;

(2) the participant has lost unsubsidized or subsidized employment;

(3) a family member has failed or is unable to comply with a family stabilization plan requirement;

(4) services, supports, or other activities required by the plan are unavailable;

(5) changes to the plan are needed to promote the well-being of the children; or

(6) the participant and case manager determine that the plan is no longer appropriate for any other reason.

Subd. 6. Cooperation with services requirements. (a) To be eligible, a participant shall comply with paragraphs (b) to (d).

(b) Participants shall engage in family stabilization plan services for the appropriate number of hours per week that the activities are scheduled and available, unless good cause exists for not doing so, as defined in section 256J.57, subdivision 1. The appropriate number of hours must be based on the participant's plan.

(c) The case manager shall review the participant's progress toward the goals in the family stabilization plan every six months to determine whether conditions have changed, including whether revisions to the plan are needed.

(d) A participant's requirement to comply with any or all family stabilization plan requirements under this subdivision is excused when the case management services, training and educational services, or family support services identified in the participant's family stabilization plan are unavailable for reasons beyond the control of the participant, including when money appropriated is not sufficient to provide the services.

Subd. 7. Sanctions. (a) The financial assistance grant of a participating family is reduced according to section 256J.46, if a participating adult fails without good cause to comply or continue to comply with the family stabilization plan requirements in this subdivision, unless compliance has been excused under subdivision 6, paragraph (d).

(b) Given the purpose of the family stabilization services in this section and the nature of the underlying family circumstances that act as barriers to both employment and full compliance with program requirements, there must be a review by the county agency prior to imposing a sanction to determine whether the plan was appropriated to the needs of the participant and family, and that the participant in all ways had the ability to comply with the plan, as confirmed by a behavioral health or medical professional.

(c) Prior to the imposition of a sanction, the county agency or employment services provider shall review the participant's case to determine if the family stabilization plan is still appropriate and meet with the participant face-to-face. The participant may bring an advocate to the face-to-face meeting.

During the face-to-face meeting, the county agency shall:

(1) determine whether the continued noncompliance can be explained and mitigated by providing a needed family stabilization service, as defined in subdivision 2, paragraph (d);

(2) determine whether the participant qualifies for a good cause exception under section 256J.57, or if the sanction is for noncooperation with child support requirements, determine if the participant qualifies for a good cause exemption under section 256.741, subdivision 10;

(3) determine whether activities in the family stabilization plan are appropriate based on the family's circumstances;

(4) explain the consequences of continuing noncompliance;

(5) identify other resources that may be available to the participant to meet the needs of the family; and

(6) inform the participant of the right to appeal under section 256J.40.

If the lack of an identified activity or service can explain the noncompliance, the county shall work with the participant to provide the identified activity.

(d) If the participant fails to come to the face-to-face meeting, the case manager or a designee shall attempt at least one home visit. If a face-to-face meeting is not conducted, the county agency shall send the participant a written notice that includes the information under paragraph (c).

(e) After the requirements of paragraphs (c) and (d) are met and prior to imposition of a sanction, the county agency shall provide a notice of intent to sanction under section 256J.57, subdivision 2, and, when applicable, a notice of adverse action under section 256J.31.

(f) Section 256J.57 applies to this section except to the extent that it is modified by this subdivision.

Subd. 8. Funding. (a) The commissioner of human services shall treat MFIP expenditures made to or on behalf of any minor child under this section, who is part of a household that meets criteria in subdivision 3, as expenditures under a separately funded state program. These expenditures shall not count toward the state's maintenance of effort requirements under the federal TANF program.

(b) A family is no longer part of a separately funded program under this section if the caregiver no longer meets the criteria for family stabilization services in subdivision 3, or if it is determined at recertification that a caregiver with a child under the age of six is working at least 87 hours per month in paid or unpaid employment, or a caregiver without a child under the age of six is working at least 130 hours per month in paid or unpaid employment, whichever occurs sooner.

History: 2007 c 147 art 2 s 37

NOTE: This section as added by Laws 2007, chapter 147, article 2, section 37, is effective February 1, 2008. Laws 2007, chapter 147, article 2, section 37, the effective date.

256J.62 UNIVERSAL PARTICIPATION IN EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

Subd. 9. [Repealed, 2007 c 147 art 11 s 27]

256J.621 WORK PARTICIPATION BONUS.

(a) Upon exiting the diversionary work program (DWP) or upon terminating MFIP cash assistance with earnings, a participant who is employed may be eligible for transitional assistance of \$75 per month to assist in meeting the family's basic needs as the participant continues to move toward self-sufficiency.

(b) To be eligible for a transitional assistance payment, the participant shall not receive MFIP cash assistance or diversionary work program assistance during the month and the participant or participants must meet the following work requirements:

- (1) if the participant is a single caregiver and has a child under six years of age, the participant must be employed at least 87 hours per month;
- (2) if the participant is a single caregiver and does not have a child under six years of age, the participant must be employed at least 130 hours per month; or
- (3) if the household is a two-parent family, at least one of the parents must be employed an average of at least 130 hours per month.

Whenever a participant exits the diversionary work program or is terminated from MFIP cash assistance and meets the other criteria in this section, transitional assistance is available for up to 24 consecutive months.

(c) Expenditures on the program are maintenance of effort state funds for participants under paragraph (b), clauses (1) and (2). Expenditures for participants under paragraph (b), clause (3), are nonmaintenance of effort funds. Months in which a participant receives transitional assistance under this section do not count toward the participant's MFIP 60-month time limit.

History: 2007 c 147 art 2 s 38

NOTE: This section as added by Laws 2007, chapter 147, article 2, section 38, is effective February 1, 2009. Laws 2007, chapter 147, article 2, section 38, the effective date.

256J.626 MFIP CONSOLIDATED FUND.

Subdivision 1. Consolidated fund. The consolidated fund is established to support counties and tribes in meeting their duties under this chapter. Counties and tribes must use funds from the consolidated fund to develop programs and services that are designed to improve participant outcomes as measured in section 256J.751, subdivision 2. Counties may use the funds for any allowable expenditures under subdivision 2, including case manage-

ment. Tribes may use the funds for any allowable expenditures under subdivision 2, including case management, except those in subdivision 2, paragraph (a), clauses (1) and (6).

Subd. 2. Allowable expenditures. (a) The commissioner must restrict expenditures under the consolidated fund to benefits and services allowed under title IV–A of the federal Social Security Act. Allowable expenditures under the consolidated fund may include, but are not limited to:

(1) short-term, nonrecurring shelter and utility needs that are excluded from the definition of assistance under Code of Federal Regulations, title 45, section 260.31, for families who meet the residency requirement in section 256J.12, subdivisions 1 and 1a. Payments under this subdivision are not considered TANF cash assistance and are not counted towards the 60-month time limit;

(2) transportation needed to obtain or retain employment or to participate in other approved work activities or activities under a family stabilization plan;

(3) direct and administrative costs of staff to deliver employment services for MFIP, the diversionary work program, or family stabilization services; to administer financial assistance; and to provide specialized services intended to assist hard-to-employ participants to transition to work or transition from family stabilization services to MFIP;

(4) costs of education and training including functional work literacy and English as a second language;

(5) cost of work supports including tools, clothing, boots, telephone service, and other work-related expenses;

(6) county administrative expenses as defined in Code of Federal Regulations, title 45, section 260(b);

(7) services to parenting and pregnant teens;

(8) supported work;

(9) wage subsidies;

(10) child care needed for MFIP, the diversionary work program, or family stabilization services participants to participate in social services;

(11) child care to ensure that families leaving MFIP or diversionary work program will continue to receive child care assistance from the time the family no longer qualifies for transition year child care until an opening occurs under the basic sliding fee child care program;

(12) services to help noncustodial parents who live in Minnesota and have minor children receiving MFIP or DWP assistance, but do not live in the same household as the child, obtain or retain employment; and

(13) services to help families participating in family stabilization services achieve the greatest possible degree of self-sufficiency.

(b) Administrative costs that are not matched with county funds as provided in subdivision 8 may not exceed 7.5 percent of a county's or 15 percent of a tribe's allocation under this section. The commissioner shall define administrative costs for purposes of this subdivision.

(c) The commissioner may waive the cap on administrative costs for a county or tribe that elects to provide an approved supported employment, unpaid work, or community work experience program for a major segment of the county's or tribe's MFIP population. The county or tribe must apply for the waiver on forms provided by the commissioner. In no case shall total administrative costs exceed the TANF limits.

Subd. 3. Eligibility for services. Families with a minor child, a pregnant woman, or a noncustodial parent of a minor child receiving assistance, with incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty guideline for a family of the applicable size, are eligible for services funded under the consolidated fund. Counties and tribes must give priority to families currently receiving MFIP, the diversionary work program, or family stabilization services, and families at risk of receiving MFIP or diversionary work program.

Subd. 4. County and tribal biennial service agreements. (a) Effective January 1, 2004, and each two-year period thereafter, each county and tribe must have in place an ap-

proved biennial service agreement related to the services and programs in this chapter. In counties with a city of the first class with a population over 300,000, the county must consider a service agreement that includes a jointly developed plan for the delivery of employment services with the city. Counties may collaborate to develop multicounty, multitribal, or regional service agreements.

(b) The service agreements will be completed in a form prescribed by the commissioner. The agreement must include:

(1) a statement of the needs of the service population and strengths and resources in the community;

(2) numerical goals for participant outcomes measures to be accomplished during the biennial period. The commissioner may identify outcomes from section 256J.751, subdivision 2, as core outcomes for all counties and tribes;

(3) strategies the county or tribe will pursue to achieve the outcome targets. Strategies must include specification of how funds under this section will be used and may include community partnerships that will be established or strengthened;

(4) strategies the county or tribe will pursue under family stabilization services; and

(5) other items prescribed by the commissioner in consultation with counties and tribes.

(c) The commissioner shall provide each county and tribe with information needed to complete an agreement, including: (1) information on MFIP cases in the county or tribe; (2) comparisons with the rest of the state; (3) baseline performance on outcome measures; and (4) promising program practices.

(d) The service agreement must be submitted to the commissioner by October 15, 2003, and October 15 of each second year thereafter. The county or tribe must allow a period of not less than 30 days prior to the submission of the agreement to solicit comments from the public on the contents of the agreement.

(e) The commissioner must, within 60 days of receiving each county or tribal service agreement, inform the county or tribe if the service agreement is approved. If the service agreement is not approved, the commissioner must inform the county or tribe of any revisions needed prior to approval.

(f) The service agreement in this subdivision supersedes the plan requirements of section 116L.88.

Subd. 5. Innovation projects. Beginning January 1, 2005, no more than \$3,000,000 of the funds annually appropriated to the commissioner for use in the consolidated fund shall be available to the commissioner for projects testing innovative approaches to improving outcomes for MFIP participants, family stabilization services participants, and persons at risk of receiving MFIP as detailed in subdivision 3. Projects shall be targeted to geographic areas with poor outcomes as specified in section 256J.751, subdivision 5, or to subgroups within the MFIP case load who are experiencing poor outcomes.

Subd. 6. Base allocation to counties and tribes; definitions. (a) For purposes of this section, the following terms have the meanings given.

(1) "2002 historic spending base" means the commissioner's determination of the sum of the reimbursement related to fiscal year 2002 of county or tribal agency expenditures for the base programs listed in clause (6), items (i) through (iv), and earnings related to calendar year 2002 in the base program listed in clause (6), item (v), and the amount of spending in fiscal year 2002 in the base program listed in clause (6), item (vi), issued to or on behalf of persons residing in the county or tribal service delivery area.

(2) "Adjusted caseload factor" means a factor weighted:

(i) 47 percent on the MFIP cases in each county at four points in time in the most recent 12-month period for which data is available multiplied by the county's caseload difficulty factor; and

(ii) 53 percent on the count of adults on MFIP in each county and tribe at four points in time in the most recent 12-month period for which data is available multiplied by the county or tribe's caseload difficulty factor.

(3) "Caseload difficulty factor" means a factor determined by the commissioner for each county and tribe based upon the self-support index described in section 256J.751, subdivision 2, clause (6).

(4) "Initial allocation" means the amount potentially available to each county or tribe based on the formula in paragraphs (b) through (d).

(5) "Final allocation" means the amount available to each county or tribe based on the formula in paragraphs (b) through (d), after adjustment by subdivision 7.

(6) "Base programs" means the:

(i) MFIP employment and training services under Minnesota Statutes 2002, section 256J.62, subdivision 1, in effect June 30, 2002;

(ii) bilingual employment and training services to refugees under Minnesota Statutes 2002, section 256J.62, subdivision 6, in effect June 30, 2002;

(iii) work literacy language programs under Minnesota Statutes 2002, section 256J.62, subdivision 7, in effect June 30, 2002;

(iv) supported work program authorized in Laws 2001, First Special Session chapter 9, article 17, section 2, in effect June 30, 2002;

(v) administrative aid program under section 256J.76 in effect December 31, 2002; and

(vi) emergency assistance program under Minnesota Statutes 2002, section 256J.48, in effect June 30, 2002.

(b) The commissioner shall:

(1) beginning July 1, 2003, determine the initial allocation of funds available under this section according to clause (2);

(2) allocate all of the funds available for the period beginning July 1, 2003, and ending December 31, 2004, to each county or tribe in proportion to the county's or tribe's share of the statewide 2002 historic spending base;

(3) determine for calendar year 2005 the initial allocation of funds to be made available under this section in proportion to the county or tribe's initial allocation for the period of July 1, 2003, to December 31, 2004;

(4) determine for calendar year 2006 the initial allocation of funds to be made available under this section based 90 percent on the proportion of the county or tribe's share of the statewide 2002 historic spending base and ten percent on the proportion of the county or tribe's share of the adjusted caseload factor;

(5) determine for calendar year 2007 the initial allocation of funds to be made available under this section based 70 percent on the proportion of the county or tribe's share of the statewide 2002 historic spending base and 30 percent on the proportion of the county or tribe's share of the adjusted caseload factor; and

(6) determine for calendar year 2008 and subsequent years the initial allocation of funds to be made available under this section based 50 percent on the proportion of the county or tribe's share of the statewide 2002 historic spending base and 50 percent on the proportion of the county or tribe's share of the adjusted caseload factor.

(c) With the commencement of a new or expanded tribal TANF program or an agreement under section 256.01, subdivision 2, paragraph (g), in which some or all of the responsibilities of particular counties under this section are transferred to a tribe, the commissioner shall:

(1) in the case where all responsibilities under this section are transferred to a tribal program, determine the percentage of the county's current caseload that is transferring to a tribal program and adjust the affected county's allocation accordingly; and

(2) in the case where a portion of the responsibilities under this section are transferred to a tribal program, the commissioner shall consult with the affected county or counties to determine an appropriate adjustment to the allocation.

(d) Effective January 1, 2005, counties and tribes will have their final allocations adjusted based on the performance provisions of subdivision 7.

Subd. 7. Performance base funds. (a) Beginning calendar year 2008, each county and tribe will be allocated 95 percent of their initial calendar year allocation. Counties and tribes will be allocated additional funds based on performance as follows:

(1) for calendar year 2008 and yearly thereafter, a county or tribe that achieves a 50 percent MFIP participation rate or a five percentage point improvement over the previous year's MFIP participation rate under section 256J.751, subdivision 2, clause (7), as averaged across the four quarterly measurements for the most recent year for which the measurements are available, will receive an additional allocation equal to 2.5 percent of its initial allocation; and

(2) for calendar years 2005 and thereafter, a county or tribe that performs above the top of its annualized range of expected performance on the three-year self-support index under section 256J.751, subdivision 2, clause (6), will receive an additional allocation equal to five percent of its initial allocation; and

(3) for calendar years 2005 and thereafter, a county or tribe that performs within its range of expected performance on the annualized three-year self-support index under section 256J.751, subdivision 2, clause (6), will receive an additional allocation equal to 2.5 percent of its initial allocation; and

(4) for calendar years 2008 and thereafter, a county or tribe that does not achieve a 50 percent MFIP participation rate or a five percentage point improvement over the previous year's MFIP participation rate under section 256J.751, subdivision 2, clause (7), as averaged across the four quarterly measurements for the most recent year for which the measurements are available, will not receive an additional 2.5 percent of its initial allocation until after negotiating a multiyear improvement plan with the commissioner; or

(5) for calendar years 2008 and thereafter, a county or tribe that does not perform within its range of expected performance on the annualized three-year self-support index under section 256J.751, subdivision 2, clause (6), will not receive an additional allocation equal to 2.5 percent of its initial allocation until after negotiating a multiyear improvement plan with the commissioner.

(b) Performance-based funds for a federally approved tribal TANF program in which the state and tribe have in place a contract under section 256.01, addressing consolidated funding, will be allocated as follows:

(1) for calendar year 2006 and yearly thereafter, a tribe that achieves the participation rate approved in its federal TANF plan using the average of four quarterly measurements for the most recent year for which the measurements are available, will receive an additional allocation equal to 2.5 percent of its initial allocation; and

(2) for calendar years 2006 and thereafter, a tribe that performs above the top of its annualized range of expected performance on the three-year self-support index under section 256J.751, subdivision 2, clause (6), will receive an additional allocation equal to five percent of its initial allocation; or

(3) for calendar years 2006 and thereafter, a tribe that performs within its range of expected performance on the annualized three-year self-support index under section 256J.751, subdivision 2, clause (6), will receive an additional allocation equal to 2.5 percent of its initial allocation; or

(4) for calendar year 2008 and yearly thereafter, a tribe that does not achieve the participation rate approved in its federal TANF plan using the average of four quarterly measurements for the most recent year for which the measurements are available, will not receive an additional allocation equal to 2.5 percent of its initial allocation until after negotiating a multiyear improvement plan with the commissioner; or

(5) for calendar year 2008 and yearly thereafter, a tribe that does not perform within its range of expected performance on the annualized three-year self-support index under section 256J.751, subdivision 2, clause (6), will not receive an additional allocation equal to 2.5 percent until after negotiating a multiyear improvement plan with the commissioner.

(c) Funds remaining unallocated after the performance-based allocations in paragraph (a) are available to the commissioner for innovation projects under subdivision 5.

(d)(1) If available funds are insufficient to meet county and tribal allocations under paragraph (a), the commissioner may make available for allocation funds that are unobligated and available from the innovation projects through the end of the current biennium.

(2) If after the application of clause (1) funds remain insufficient to meet county and tribal allocations under paragraph (a), the commissioner must proportionally reduce the allocation of each county and tribe with respect to their maximum allocation available under paragraph (a).

[For text of subd 8, see M.S.2006]

Subd. 9. [Repealed, 2007 c 147 art 2 s 63]

History: 2007 c 147 art 2 s 39–45

256J.65 [Repealed, 2007 c 147 art 11 s 27]

256J.68 INJURY PROTECTION FOR WORK EXPERIENCE PARTICIPANTS.

Subdivision 1. Applicability. (a) This section must be used to determine payment of any claims resulting from an alleged injury or death of a person participating in a county or a tribal community work experience program that is approved by the commissioner and is operated by:

(i) the county agency;

(ii) the tribe;

(iii) a department of the state; or

(iv) a community-based organization under contract, prior to April 1, 1997, with a county agency to provide a community work experience program or a food stamp community work experience program, provided the organization has not experienced any individual injury loss or claim greater than \$1,000.

(b) This determination method is available to the community-based organization under paragraph (a), clause (iv), only for claims incurred by participants in the community work experience program or the food stamp community work experience program.

(c) This determination method applies to work experience programs authorized by the commissioner for persons applying for or receiving cash assistance and food stamps, and to the Minnesota parent's fair share program, in a county with an approved community investment program for obligors.

[For text of subs 2 to 8, see M.S.2006]

History: 2007 c 13 art 3 s 15

256J.751 COUNTY PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT.

[For text of subd 1, see M.S.2006]

Subd. 2. Quarterly comparison report. The commissioner shall report quarterly to all counties on each county's performance on the following measures:

(1) percent of MFIP caseload working in paid employment;

(2) percent of MFIP caseload receiving only the food portion of assistance;

(3) number of MFIP cases that have left assistance;

(4) median placement wage rate;

(5) caseload by months of TANF assistance;

(6) percent of MFIP and diversionary work program (DWP) cases off cash assistance or working 30 or more hours per week at one-year, two-year, and three-year follow-up points from a baseline quarter. This measure is called the self-support index. The commissioner

shall report quarterly an expected range of performance for each county, county grouping, and tribe on the self-support index. The expected range shall be derived by a statistical methodology developed by the commissioner in consultation with the counties and tribes. The statistical methodology shall control differences across counties in economic conditions and demographics of the MFIP and DWP case load; and

(7) the TANF work participation rate, defined as the participation requirements specified under Public Law 109–171, the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005.

Subd. 5. Failure to meet federal performance standards. (a) If sanctions occur for failure to meet the performance standards specified in title 1 of Public Law 104–193 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996, and under Public Law 109–171, the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, the state shall pay 88 percent of the sanction. The remaining 12 percent of the sanction will be paid by the counties. The county portion of the sanction will be distributed across all counties in proportion to each county's percentage of the MFIP average monthly caseload during the period for which the sanction was applied.

(b) If a county fails to meet the performance standards specified in title 1 of Public Law 104–193 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996, and Public Law 109–171, the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, for any year, the commissioner shall work with counties to organize a joint state–county technical assistance team to work with the county. The commissioner shall coordinate any technical assistance with other departments and agencies including the Departments of Employment and Economic Development and Education as necessary to achieve the purpose of this paragraph.

(c) For state performance measures, a low-performing county is one that:

(1) performs below the bottom of their expected range for the measure in subdivision 2, clause (6), in an annualized measurement reported in October of each year; or

(2) performs below 40 percent for the measure in subdivision 2, clause (7), as averaged across the four quarterly measurements for the year, or the ten counties with the lowest rates if more than ten are below 40 percent.

(d) Low-performing counties under paragraph (c) must engage in corrective action planning as defined by the commissioner. The commissioner may coordinate technical assistance as specified in paragraph (b) for low-performing counties under paragraph (c).

History: 2007 c 147 art 2 s 46,47

256J.77 AGING OF CASH BENEFITS.

Cash benefits under chapters 256D, 256J, and 256K, except food stamp benefits under chapter 256D, by warrants or electronic benefit transfer that have not been accessed within 90 days of issuance shall be canceled. Cash benefits may be replaced after they are canceled, for up to one year after the date of issuance, if failure to do so would place the client or family at risk. For purposes of this section, “accessed” means cashing a warrant or making at least one withdrawal from benefits deposited in an electronic benefit account.

History: 2007 c 147 art 19 s 18

256J.95 DIVERSIONARY WORK PROGRAM.

[For text of subds 1 and 2, see M.S.2006]

Subd. 3. Eligibility for diversionary work program. (a) Except for the categories of family units listed below, all family units who apply for cash benefits and who meet MFIP eligibility as required in sections 256J.11 to 256J.15 are eligible and must participate in the diversionary work program. Family units that are not eligible for the diversionary work program include:

(1) child only cases;

(2) a single-parent family unit that includes a child under 12 weeks of age. A parent is eligible for this exception once in a parent's lifetime and is not eligible if the parent has al-

ready used the previously allowed child under age one exemption from MFIP employment services;

- (3) a minor parent without a high school diploma or its equivalent;
 - (4) an 18- or 19-year-old caregiver without a high school diploma or its equivalent who chooses to have an employment plan with an education option;
 - (5) a caregiver age 60 or over;
 - (6) family units with a caregiver who received DWP benefits in the 12 months prior to the month the family applied for DWP, except as provided in paragraph (c);
 - (7) family units with a caregiver who received MFIP within the 12 months prior to the month the family unit applied for DWP;
 - (8) a family unit with a caregiver who received 60 or more months of TANF assistance;
 - (9) a family unit with a caregiver who is disqualified from DWP or MFIP due to fraud; and
 - (10) refugees as defined in Code of Federal Regulations, title 45, chapter IV, section 444.43, who arrived in the United States in the 12 months prior to the date of application for family cash assistance.
- (b) A two-parent family must participate in DWP unless both caregivers meet the criteria for an exception under paragraph (a), clauses (1) through (5), or the family unit includes a parent who meets the criteria in paragraph (a), clause (6), (7), (8), or (9).
- (c) Once DWP eligibility is determined, the four months run consecutively. If a participant leaves the program for any reason and reapplies during the four-month period, the county must redetermine eligibility for DWP.

[For text of subs 4 to 19, see M.S.2006]

History: 2007 c 147 art 2 s 48