



# Evaluation of the Minnesota Family Investment Program

In order to measure the state's progress in welfare reform, the Minnesota Department of Human Services is conducting a five-year study of participants in the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP). The study findings to date are published in three reports in the Minnesota Family Investment Program Longitudinal Study series, the *Baseline Report*, *Report on Recipient Sample Six Months After Baseline*, and *Report on Applicant Sample Six Months After Baseline*.

The study follows two samples of MFIP participants. At the time of the initial survey, members of the Recipient group had been receiving MFIP (and most had also received AFDC), while members of the Applicant group were in their first month on MFIP and had not received AFDC or MFIP in the preceding five years.

Study participants are heads of single-caregiver families, and the same participants are followed over time. The initial survey was done between May and October 1998 and the six-month follow-up between November 1998 and April 1999. The reports are available at [www.dhs.state.mn.us/ecs/welfare/default.htm](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/ecs/welfare/default.htm). Some major findings are summarized below:

Applicants	Recipients
<b>Time Limits</b>	
89% of Applicants knew about the TANF time limit. When asked how many months they had used toward their time limit, only 21% knew exactly, and an additional 21% were incorrect by over six months.	94% of Recipients knew about the TANF time limit. When asked how many months they had used toward their limit, only 7% knew exactly and 45% were incorrect by over six months.
<b>Employment</b>	
25% of Applicants were working at the time of the initial survey, and 47% were employed six months later.	44% of Recipients were working at the time of the initial survey, 53% were employed six months later.
<p>At the six month follow-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employed Applicants worked an average of 33 hours per week. The median hourly wage was \$7.64.</li> <li>• 52% of employed Applicants had service jobs and 30% were employed in clerical or sales positions.</li> <li>• 61% of employed Applicants had no paid vacation, paid sick leave, health insurance, or any other benefits provided by their employer.</li> </ul>	<p>At the six month follow-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employed Recipients worked an average of 33 hours per week. The median hourly wage was \$7.50.</li> <li>• 51% of employed Recipients had service jobs and 30% were employed in clerical or sales positions.</li> <li>• 61% of employed Recipients had no paid vacation, paid sick leave, health insurance, or any other benefits provided by their employer.</li> </ul>

Applicants	Recipients
<b>Economic Well-Being</b>	
Applicants' average total income was \$1,146 at the six month follow-up, a 90% increase.	Recipients' average total income was \$1,260 at the six month follow-up, a 13% increase.
The proportion of Applicants' total income coming from earnings increased from 36% to 59% by the sixth month.	The proportion of Recipients' total income coming from earnings increased from 41% to 54% by the sixth month.
66% of Applicants paid one-third or more of their total incomes for housing at the time of the initial survey, compared to 37% who did six months later.	35% of Recipients paid one-third or more of their total incomes for housing costs at the time of the initial survey, compared to 34% who did six months later.
20% of Applicants who needed child care received subsidized child care during the initial month of the survey, compared to 33% six months later.	43% of Recipients who needed child care received subsidized child care during the time of the initial survey, in comparison to 38% six months later.
<b>Life After Welfare</b>	
27% of Applicants had left MFIP by the sixth month.	24% of Recipients had left MFIP by the sixth month.
62% of Applicants said that increased household income was their main reason for leaving MFIP.	58% of Recipients said increased household income was the main reason for leaving MFIP.
57% of Applicants who left MFIP said that their lives were better since leaving MFIP, while 9% responded that their lives were worse.	64% of Recipients left MFIP said that their lives were better since leaving MFIP, while 20% responded that their lives were worse.
12% of Applicants who left MFIP had no health care coverage.	18% of Recipients who left MFIP had no had health care coverage.