



# MACSSA

Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators

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February 20, 2023

Chair Dave Pinto  
Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee  
Minnesota House of Representatives

**RE: HF466 (Noor) Income reporting requirements modified for Minnesota family investment program.**

Dear Chair Pinto and Committee members,

**The Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA) offers support for the modifications to the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) proposed in the amended HF466.** Counties support removing systemic and structural barriers for families with earned income by moving to six-month reporting periods for MFIP cash assistance, in alignment with federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) food benefits. Cash programs in Minnesota have antiquated procedural requirements that are not uniform with other public assistance programs. Counties support updating budget methodology across public assistance programs so that families in crisis have fewer negative impacts. MACSSA supports incorporating the diversionary Work program (DWP) into MFIP, resulting in one cash assistance program for families (MFIP) that provides the same employment service supports and consistent benefit amounts to stabilize households. **This bill will simplify and modernize the reporting requirements, align budgeting methods with nationwide best practice, encourage earned income and employment, and create equity across the program.**

HF466, as amended, includes important changes to calculating benefits under the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) which will **help address the benefits cliff that hinders working parents from fully entering the workforce.** Disjointed public assistance policies cause instability in the lives of many Minnesotans who want to work. This bill would create a stable base income for families to move beyond crisis and gather momentum to secure more steady earned income, incentivize having earned income, and reduce county administrative time. As we face challenges across our state with workforce capacity, now is the time for these small changes that can make a big difference for those interested in returning to the workforce.

**Serving all families through MFIP will simplify family cash assistance processes for both applicants and counties.** Having one cash assistance program will eliminate multiple applications, interviews, and economic support orientations - saving both applicants and county time and resources. This proposal simplifies and streamlines the business process for county staff, making the program more efficient. It aligns with the Department of Human Services' (DHS) multi-year effort to create more uniformity across public assistance programs.

MACSSA's Self-Sufficiency Committee created a county workgroup last year to explore the benefits and challenges related to DWP. This workgroup had a diverse membership from large and small counties across the state. The group gathered data from DHS and discussed the program through many lenses. The groups **consensus was that DWP was not showing effectiveness that met the original program goal** of households reaching self-sufficiency from cash assistance in the 4 month time frame. It also was creating artificial barriers to addressing households needs. Without evidence that shows the DWP program is creating better comes, it is not worth the complexities it creates for households and counties.

Counties thank Chair Noor for bringing forward this important bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matt Freeman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Matt Freeman  
Executive Director  
Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators

Cc: Chair Mohamud Noor