

**Department of Human Services – Children and Family Services Administration**  
**MFIP Policy Changes**  
**HF 1437 (Rep. Jessica Hanson)**  
**SF 1331 (Sen. John Hoffman)**

Allows applications, interviews, and orientation by telephone/internet telepresence for the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) and Diversionary Work Program (DWP). MFIP and DWP are the only public assistance programs that require a face-to-face application and orientation process.

**This legislation:**

- Requires local agencies that administer MFIP and DWP to accept applications over the phone or through internet telepresence.
- Requires local agencies that administer MFIP and DWP to allow mandatory applicant interviews to be conducted by telephone (already allowed face-to-face or through internet telepresence).
- Allows local agencies to conduct MFIP and DWP orientations by telephone, internet telepresence, video, or other means.
- Is the continuation of parts of flexibility CV.03 put in place at the beginning of the COVID pandemic. The legislature extended these provisions from CV.03 through June 30, 2021. This legislation makes the extension permanent.
- These policy changes will reduce barriers for children and their families applying for MFIP and DWP by allowing applications, interviews, and orientation to take place over the phone/internet.

**Implementation:**

- When an application is completed over the phone or through Internet telepresence (e.g. Zoom), the local agency must mail a copy of the completed application to the applicant and receive a signed application back within 30 days of when the application is completed by telephone/internet in order for assistance payments to be issued.
- Current law requires that assistance payments begin the date a signed application is received by the local agency or the date all eligibility criteria are met, whichever is later.
  - This doesn't change – eligibility would still begin the date the application is completed by telephone/internet; however, applicants would be required to submit a signed application within 30 days in order for assistance payments to be issued.
  - These policy changes reduce barriers to applying for MFIP and DWP for families in crisis, while still ensuring program integrity.

**Equity Considerations:**

- Cash assistance programs reflect Minnesota's racial economic disparities.
  - Poverty rates for African Americans and American Indians in Minnesota are about 4 times higher than the poverty rate for white Minnesotans.
  - Unemployment rates for American Indian, African American, and Latinx workers are 2-3 times higher than white workers.
- People of color and American Indians are 20% of the state's population, but 64% of the MFIP caseload.