



children's defense fund minnesota

Dear Members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

The vast majority of Minnesotans (7 in 10 or 59,000) that benefit from the Minnesota Family Investment Program each year are children – half of them under 6, the most critical period of child development. Based on a robust and growing body of research, the National Academies of Science find that even small increases in family income, especially during early childhood years, can have a significant impact on the lifetime trajectory of a child – improving children's academic, health and economic outcomes. This was true before COVID-19 upended our world and is even more so now.

We thank the 2019 Minnesota legislature for increasing the MFIP cash benefit, the first time since 1986, making a wise investment in the children of today and the future of the state.

However, if Minnesota's children are to survive and thrive as their families struggle to maintain stability and social, emotional and academic development amid a dizzying array of COVID changes, they need your help. Please invest a modest \$500 MFIP supplemental payment in the future of these children and all they will contribute to our state.

CDF-MN is committed to ensuring every Minnesota child has a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. Unfortunately, even before the pandemic too many Minnesota children in communities of color, in Greater Minnesota and in low income families faced an opportunity gap that prevented us from achieving this vision for all. Without state support, our state's disparities will only worsen during this crisis, hurting us all.

CDF-MN urges you to join us in supporting Minnesota children with a one-time \$500 commitment of existing MFIP program federal resources. Many of these families are not eligible for Unemployment Insurance: This modest support is less the 25% of the *monthly* boost many families that are UI eligible will receive.

We look forward to working with you to advance policy solutions that lift children out of poverty and ensure a bright future for them and the state of Minnesota.

Bharti Wahi
Executive Director

Debra Fitzpatrick
Policy and Legislative Affairs Director