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# Survey of Employment Services Providers

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**I**n August 1999, the Office of the Legislative Auditor sent questionnaires to employment services providers throughout Minnesota. These providers contract with counties to help welfare recipients find and retain jobs. We gave providers with offices in multiple locations the option of returning a single, consolidated survey response or having the staff at each site complete a survey. The purpose of our survey was to document providers' perceptions about recent welfare reforms and to obtain information about specific services provided.

Of the 103 providers surveyed, 98 responded to our survey. The results of the survey presented here are not weighted by providers' caseload size.

# WELFARE REFORM IN MINNESOTA

## *Survey of MFIP Employment Services Directors*

**Office of the Legislative Auditor  
Program Evaluation Division  
August 1999**

Provider name: \_\_\_\_\_

Person completing survey: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

*Please answer each question to best reflect your agency's experience with the Minnesota Family Investment Program (and related services). Feel free to consult with other staff in your agency to complete the survey. Unless directed otherwise, please select only ONE response per question. If necessary, you may provide additional or clarifying comments in the margins or on a separate sheet of paper. Please mark "Don't Know" if you and your staff do not have enough information about a question to provide a reasonably informed response.*

N=98 unless otherwise indicated

### SERVICE AVAILABILITY

1. Based on your agency's experience, please indicate the extent to which the following services are available when needed for MFIP participants who are working or in employment services: *(Circle the number of the correct response)*

	Always or Almost Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely or Never	Don't Know or Not Applicable
A. Training in how to conduct a job search or apply for a job	88.8%	10.2%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%
B. Training in how to retain a job	59.2	22.4	16.3	1.0	1.0
C. Training in "career laddering"—that is, helping clients plan for employment that will increase their earnings and promote long-term self-sufficiency	33.0	32.0	29.9	4.1	1.0 (N=97)
D. Transportation assistance (for work, training, or child care)	66.3	20.4	11.2	2.0	0.0
E. Housing subsidies and assistance	20.6	37.1	33.0	6.2	3.1 (N=97)
F. Treatment/counseling for chemical dependency	36.1	30.9	20.6	9.3	3.1 (N=97)
G. Treatment/counseling for mental health problems	36.7	31.6	19.4	8.2	4.1
H. General-purpose English as a Second Language programs	51.0	25.0	10.4	11.5	2.1 (N=96)
I. Programs specifically designed to teach English language skills that clients need for the <u>workplace</u>	29.9	23.7	19.6	19.6	7.2 (N=97)
J. Child care for children with physical or emotional problems	11.3	12.4	35.1	30.9	10.3 (N=97)
K. Child care for children of MFIP caregivers working nights or weekends	13.3	12.2	40.8	29.6	4.1
L. Child care for children with culturally-specific needs (e.g., diet)	12.2	9.2	29.6	27.6	21.4

	Always or Almost Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely or Never	Don't Know or Not Applicable	
M. Child care for MFIP caregivers whose primary activity is social services (e.g., treatment)	18.8%	16.7%	25.0%	27.1%	12.5%	(N=96)
N. Child care for MFIP families without special needs	66.3	24.5	4.1	3.1	2.0	
O. Adult basic education and GED programs	70.1	19.6	6.2	3.1	1.0	(N=97)
P. Short-term education/training programs (three months or less)	45.9	25.5	17.3	9.2	2.0	
Q. Medium-term education/training programs (4 to 12 months)	44.9	21.4	24.5	7.1	2.0	
R. Long-term education/training programs (more than 12 months)	33.0	17.5	32.0	16.5	1.0	(N=97)
S. Sheltered work or subsidized employment	26.5	23.5	38.8	6.1	5.1	
T. Unpaid work experience programs	23.5	17.3	32.7	20.4	6.1	

## 2. In which categories above (A to T) are there the greatest needs for improved services?

A. Greatest need: \_\_\_\_\_ (Choose one from A through T above)

	Valid Percent
A. Training in how to conduct a job search or apply for a job	1.1%
B. Training in how to retain a job	4.3
C. Training in "career ladderding"	5.4
D. Transportation assistance	11.8
E. Housing subsidies and assistance	9.7
F. Treatment/counseling for chemical dependency	1.1
G. Treatment/counseling for mental health problems	4.3
I. Programs designed to teach ESL for the work place	6.5
J. Child care for children with physical or emotional problems	4.3
K. Child care for MFIP caregivers working nights or weekends	25.8
L. Child care for children with culturally-specific needs	6.5
M. Child care for MFIP caregivers whose primary activity is social services	4.3
N. Child care for MFIP families without special needs	2.2
P. Short-term education/training programs	2.2
Q. Medium-term education/training programs	4.3
R. Long-term education/training programs	4.3
S. Sheltered work or subsidized employment	2.2

B. 2<sup>nd</sup> greatest need: \_\_\_\_\_ (Choose one from A through U above)

	Valid Percent
B. Training in how to retain a job	2.2%
C. Training in "career ladderding"	6.5
D. Transportation assistance	8.7
E. Housing subsidies and assistance	3.3
F. Treatment/counseling for chemical dependency	3.3
G. Treatment/counseling for mental health problems.	2.2
H. General purpose ESL programs	1.1
I. Programs designed to teach ESL for work place	2.2
J. Child care for physical or emotional problems	7.6
K. Child care for MFIP caregivers working nights or weekends	20.7
L. Child care for children with culturally-specific needs	7.6
M. Child care for MFIP caregivers whose primary activity is social services	8.7
O. Adult basic education and GED programs	1.1
P. Short-term education/training programs	8.7
Q. Medium-term education/training programs	2.2
R. Long-term education/training programs	5.4
S. Sheltered work or subsidized employment	6.5
T. Unpaid work experience programs	2.2

## ASSESSMENT

**3. During the past three months, have you used a formal screening or testing instrument during clients' initial assessment for the following:**

	Used for all assessed clients	Used only in cases where a problem was suspected	No formal screening or testing instrument was used
A. Reading proficiency	61.5%	25.0%	13.5% (N=96)
B. Math proficiency	53.6	29.9	16.5 (N=97)
C. English language proficiency	17.7	34.4	47.9 (N=96)
D. Learning disabilities	15.5	46.4	38.1 (N=97)
E. Chemical dependency	2.1	35.1	62.9 (N=97)
F. Mental health	1.0	30.9	68.0 (N=97)
G. Attitudes toward work	26.8	21.6	51.5 (N=97)

**4. Do you have sufficient information about each of the following for clients who are unemployed three months after intake with your agency?**

	Always or Almost Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely or Never	Don't Know
A. Reading proficiency	60.8%	25.8%	12.4%	1.0%	0.0% (N=97)
B. Math proficiency	50.5	23.7	21.6	4.1	0.0 (N=97)
C. English language proficiency	36.5	38.5	20.8	3.1	1.0 (N=96)
D. Learning disabilities	13.5	29.2	44.8	10.4	2.1 (N=96)
E. Chemical dependency	5.2	27.8	47.4	18.6	1.0 (N=97)
F. Mental health	5.2	28.1	50.0	15.6	1.0 (N=96)
G. I.Q.	3.1	9.3	20.6	53.6	13.4 (N=97)
H. Work skills	43.3	36.1	20.6	0.0	0.0 (N=97)
I. Previous employment	77.3	21.6	1.0	0.0	0.0 (N=97)
J. Previous time on welfare	76.8	13.7	6.3	2.1	1.1 (N=95)
K. Employment or career interests	60.0	33.7	6.3	0.0	0.0 (N=95)
L. Criminal history	22.9	32.3	36.5	8.3	0.0 (N=96)
M. Attitudes toward work	39.6	39.6	19.8	1.0	0.0 (N=96)

## EMPLOYMENT SERVICES ACTIVITIES

5. About how often does each of the following types of clients typically meet with a professional staff person from your agency?

	Weekly	Monthly	Every 90 days	Less often than every 90 days
A. Participants in full-time job search	78.4%	18.6%	2.1%	1.0% (N=97)
B. Participants who are in part-time job search <u>plus</u> part-time basic education, ESL, or post-secondary education	45.8	47.9	5.2	1.0 (N=96)
C. Participants who are in part-time employment <u>plus</u> part-time basic education, ESL, or post-secondary education	14.6	71.9	11.5	2.1 (N=96)
D. Teen parents subject to an education requirement	22.2	59.7	9.7	8.3
E. Participants in a full-time post-secondary education program	2.1	66.0	28.9	3.1 (N=97)
F. Participants who are working full-time (and are therefore exempt) but who continue to receive post-employment follow-up services	1.0	45.8	33.3	19.8 (N=96)

6. Among your clients who are beginning job search, how many are expected to attend a job search workshop? (Check one.)

Percent	N=97
12.4%	A. 0-25 percent
5.2	B. 26-50 percent
14.4	C. 51-75 percent
68.0	D. 76-100 percent
0.0	E. Don't know

7. What is the total length of the job search workshop? (For example, a workshop that lasts four hours a day over a four-day period would have a total length of 16 hours.)

20 hours (median) N=91

8. Among your clients who are in job search, how many are expected to attend "job club" meetings (or similar activities, such as "employer of the day" meetings)? (Check one.)

Percent	N=96
6.3%	A. None - no job club meetings are offered.
12.5	B. 1-25 percent
7.3	C. 26-50 percent
14.6	D. 51-75 percent
59.4	E. 76-100 percent
0.0	F. Don't know

9. During a typical four-week period, how many total hours does your typical job club participant spend in job clubs (or similar activities)?

12 hours (median) N=90

**10. What percentage of MFIP clients who have reading or math scores below eighth grade level have you encouraged to enroll in an adult basic education or GED course as part of their preparation for employment? (Check one.)**

Percent	N=97
8.2%	A. 0-25 percent
16.5	B. 26-50 percent
19.6	C. 51-75 percent
52.6	D. 76-100 percent
3.1	E. Don't know

	Yes	No	Don't Know
<b>11. Has your agency paid anything for the following client transportation expenses during the past three months?</b>			
A. Bus cards or bus passes for clients in job search	94.9%	5.1%	0.0%
B. Bus cards or bus passes for clients who have been working less than two months	92.8	7.2	0.0 (N=97)
C. Bus cards or bus passes for clients who have been working more than six months	45.8	47.9	6.2 (N=96)
D. Mileage reimbursement for clients in job search	87.6	12.4	0.0 (N=97)
E. Mileage reimbursement for clients who have been working less than two months	83.5	16.5	0.0 (N=97)
F. Mileage reimbursement for clients who have been working more than six months	35.8	58.9	5.3 (N=95)
G. Car repairs	92.8	7.1	0.0 (N=97)
H. Car purchase	28.9	71.1	0.0 (N=97)
I. Car insurance costs	74.5	23.7	1.0 (N=97)
J. Parking fees	48.5	47.4	4.1 (N=97)
K. Drivers license fees	78.1	19.8	2.1 (N=96)
<b>12. During the past three months, have staff from your agency:</b>			
A. Publicized a job fair to MFIP clients	75.3	22.7	2.1 (N=97)
B. Sponsored a job fair	47.4	51.6	1.1 (N=95)
C. Transported clients to a job fair	53.1	44.8	2.1 (N=96)
D. Sponsored a meeting (other than a job fair) attended by your staff and representatives of <u>four</u> or more employers	39.6	58.3	2.1 (N=96)
E. Informed at least <u>four</u> employers about individual MFIP clients who might meet the employers' needs	83.5	10.3	6.2 (N=97)
F. Gone with a client to a job interview	44.3	53.6	2.1 (N=97)
G. Helped develop or sponsor a course that trains MFIP clients for a specialized field	58.8	40.2	1.0 (N=97)
H. Provided clients with a 24-hour helpline or staff pager numbers in case they experience job difficulties	15.5	82.5	2.1 (N=97)

13. Of the activities listed below, please mark (X) those activities ( UP TO THREE) that you think your agency has least adequately provided in the past year.

Percent

7.1%	A.	Initial assessment
7.1	B.	Secondary assessment
6.1	C.	Helping clients arrange for transportation
6.1	D.	Helping clients arrange for child care services
33.7	E.	Helping clients arrange for stable, affordable housing
2.0	F.	Helping clients arrange for GED, adult basic education, or ESL classes
4.1	G.	Helping clients arrange for vocational training prior to (or during) job search
30.6	H.	Helping clients arrange for vocational training after they become employed
7.1	I.	Helping clients arrange for social services
6.1	J.	Helping clients with job search
21.4	K.	Helping clients with job retention
24.5	L.	Helping clients plan for career advancement (i.e., how to find jobs that will help them be self-sufficient over the long-term)
26.5	M.	Establishing relationships with potential employers of your unemployed clients
39.8	N.	Making regular contacts with current employers of your working clients
0.0	O.	Reviewing client job logs and education/training attendance
29.6	P.	Trying to bring sanctioned clients back into compliance
8.2	Q.	Other (specify): _____
1.0	R.	Other (specify): _____
1.0	S.	Other (specify): _____

14. Approximately what percentage of your job counselors' time in the past month was spent in face-to-face meetings with clients?

50.0 percent (median)

15. Approximately what percentage of all face-to-face meetings that your job counselors scheduled with clients during the past three months were missed by clients without a reasonable excuse?

30.0 percent (median)

16. Approximately what percentage of all job search logs that were due from clients for April to June 19 99 were never turned in?

30.0 percent (median)

17. Approximately what percentage of all job search logs that were due in the past three months from clients were turned in late?

30.0 percent (median)

18. Approximately what percentage of all your present MFIP clients (including any sanctioned clients and persons who have not shown up for employment services overviews with your agency) are not seriously interested in finding work?

25.0 percent (median)

19. For each of the following, please indicate (X) if you have at least one employee whose primary responsibility is: (Please check all that apply)

## Percent

- 34.7% A. Job retention  
 39.8 B. Job development  
 61.2 C. Facilitating workshops or providing training to clients  
 11.2 D. Transporting workers to activities or jobs  
 17.3 E. Addressing clients' child care issues  
 49.0 F. Working with the "hardest-to-employ" of your agency's clients

## MISCELLANEOUS

	Always or Almost Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely or Never	Not Applicable or Don't Know
20. The 60-month lifetime limit on MFIP benefits has been an important motivator for persons who have been on MFIP (or AFDC) for:					
A. Less than six months	7.1%	13.3%	31.6%	45.9%	2.0%
B. Six months to two years	3.2	22.1	41.1	32.6	1.1 (N=95)
C. More than two years	4.2	18.9	45.3	30.5	1.1 (N=95)
21. Job counselors have adequate levels of education and training.	57.7	32.0	10.3	0.0	0.0 (N=97)
22. Job counselors have devoted sufficient time to <u>job retention</u> activities to meet client needs.	14.3	35.7	35.7	12.2	2.0
23. The jobs that our agency's MFIP participants have found will likely be stepping stones to better jobs in the near future.	10.3	39.2	45.4	4.1	1.0 (N=97)
24. MFIP participants understand the impact that increased earnings will have on the benefits they receive.	18.4	46.9	31.6	3.1	0.0
25. In the past six months, single MFIP parents with <u>one or two children</u> who were seriously looking for full-time work have found jobs that:					
A. Paid enough for them to exit MFIP.	4.2	39.6	44.8	10.4	1.0 (N=96)
B. Raised their incomes above the poverty level.	7.3	33.3	49.0	9.4	1.0 (N=96)
26. In the past six months, single MFIP parents with <u>three or more children</u> who were seriously looking for full-time work have found jobs that:					
A. Paid enough for them to exit MFIP.	0.0	4.2	38.5	56.3	1.0 (N=96)
B. Raised their incomes above the poverty level.	2.1	6.2	39.2	50.5	2.0 (N=97)



*Note for Questions 25 and 26: According to 1999 guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the poverty threshold is \$11,060 for a family of two persons, \$13,880 for a family of three, and \$16,700 for a family of four.*

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know or Not Applicable
<b>27. State policy should place more emphasis than it does now on ensuring that MFIP participants have appropriate skills and education before they are expected to look for work.</b>	35.7%	26.5%	17.3%	17.3%	2.0%	1.0%
<b>28. State policy should place more emphasis than it does now on upgrading the skills of MFIP caregivers who are working.</b>	37.8	48.0	10.2	4.1	0.0	0.0
<b>29. Our agency has had a difficult time retaining job counselors.</b>	11.6	13.7	17.9	36.8	16.8	3.2 (N=95)
<b>30. Child care issues consume too much of our employment services staff's time.</b>	16.3	29.6	17.3	28.6	5.1	3.1
<b>31. Employment services providers should have direct access to the state's MAXIS computer system.</b>	66.3	24.5	5.1	1.0	2.0	1.0
<b>32. Statewide, there should be more uniformity in:</b>						
A. Client assessment practices	31.6	32.7	15.3	16.3	2.0	2.0
B. Client sanctioning practices	33.7	41.8	12.2	8.2	1.0	3.1
C. Policies about which client services can be paid for with MFIP or TANF funds	21.1	35.8	25.3	10.5	3.2	4.2 (N=95)
<b>33. Families in sanction for more than two months should receive home visits by:</b>						
A. County income maintenance staff	15.6	19.8	26.0	24.0	11.5	3.1 (N=96)
B. County child welfare staff	25.0	41.7	15.6	11.5	4.2	2.1 (N=96)
C. Employment services staff	8.2	23.7	19.6	33.0	13.4	2.1 (N=97)
D. Professionals who work outside the welfare system, such as public health nurses	28.9	33.0	19.6	11.3	1.0	6.2 (N=97)

**34. Currently, counties may sanction MFIP participants for as much as 30 percent of the payment standard for failing to comply with program requirements. In your opinion, what (if any) change in the maximum available sanction should be implemented for:**

- A. One-parent MFIP households \_\_\_\_\_ (select one of the options listed below)  
 B. Two-parent MFIP households \_\_\_\_\_ (select one of the options listed below)

<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	
0.0%	0.0%	1. Decrease to zero—no sanctions should be allowed under MFIP
5.1	2.1	2. Decrease to 10 percent;
46.9	30.9	3. Remain at 30 percent;
28.6	34.0	4. Increase to 50 percent;
5.1	12.4	5. Increase to 75 percent;
11.2	18.6	6. Increase to 100 percent;
3.1	2.1	8. Don't know

**35. In general, a client with extremely limited English skills should be allowed to take ESL classes:** (Please choose one)

Percent

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 4.1% | A. For as long as the client wishes.  |
| 23.5 | B. For as long as the job counselor thinks is necessary.  |
| 10.2 | C. For a limited number of months (which should be specified in state policy).                                    |
| 46.9 | D. Until the client has achieved a certain English proficiency level (which should be specified in state policy). |
| 14.3 | E. Other: _____   |
| 1.0  | F. Don't know.  |

**36. Please feel free to use the space below to list up to three specific suggestions for ways to improve the MFIP program - for example, changes in policies, practices, training, etc.**

**Thank you for your cooperation.**

Please return as soon as possible to:

**Program Evaluation Division, Office of the Legislative Auditor  
 658 Cedar Street, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor South, St. Paul, Minnesota 55155**