



# children's defense fund minnesota

Dear Members of the House Human Services Finance and Policy Committee:

As you continue your consideration of the Governor's budget proposals related to Economic Assistance included in HF2127, we appreciate the opportunity to share our support for several aspects.

**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.

***For these reasons we are very supportive of the proposals to provide \$750 Emergency Payments for Families Accessing MFIP, to add a Cost of Living increase to the MFIP Program and improve administration of Economic Assistance Programs through uniformity elements (including 6 month reporting and prospective income calculations).***

The economic and health impacts of COVID-19 have not fallen evenly across our population. Households with children, particularly low-income ones, are facing a disproportionate share of the negative effects with a two-generation, long-term consequence for the state. Many MFIP families and their children have been unable to access other public (state and federal) economic supports: **\$750 now and ongoing cost of living increases would be a vital support for children on the program.**

CDF-MN has partnered with state agencies and legislators to make our public programs more efficient for families and agencies. For this reason, **we are excited to see the proposals to simplify income support program administration and reduce mandatory monthly paper-based reports for families participating in MFIP (based on standard procedures in all other states).** We believe this proposal, if adopted, would help propel more of our most over-burdened and under-resourced families to economic security and improve economic and home stability for the thousands of children served by the program each year.

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. We look forward to working with you to advance a budget that lifts children out of poverty and ensures a bright future for them and the state of Minnesota.

Bharti Wahi  
Executive Director

Debra Fitzpatrick  
Policy and Legislative Affairs Director