

Minnesota Family Investment Program Time Limit Exemptions and Extensions

The federal welfare reform law imposes a 60-month lifetime limit on the receipt of assistance funded by Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The state's welfare program, Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), includes this 60-month limit, but has some exemptions and extensions.

MFIP time limit exemptions

For people in the following categories, months of assistance received do not count toward the 60-month time limit ([Minn. Stat. § 256J.42](#)):

- ▶ victims of domestic violence
- ▶ caregivers who are 60 years or older
- ▶ 18- and 19-year-olds who are engaged in education activities
- ▶ minor caregivers who are complying with living arrangement and education plan requirements for minor caregivers

Under federal law, all states must disregard the following when calculating the 60-month time limit:

- ▶ months when a family receives assistance while living in Indian country (as defined by federal law 18 U.S.C. § 1151) where at least 50 percent of the adults are not employed
- ▶ months when a pregnant minor or minor parent receives assistance when he or she is *not* the head of household or married to the head of household
- ▶ months when the only assistance received is noncash assistance
- ▶ months when eligible for short-term Emergency Assistance or the Diversionary Work Program

MFIP hardship extension categories

Families who reach the 60-month time limit on MFIP and who meet the following criteria are eligible for an extension.

Ill or incapacitated. This category includes participants who:

- ▶ are ill or incapacitated;
- ▶ are needed in the home to care for a household member who is ill or incapacitated; or
- ▶ have a household member who meets certain disability or medical criteria.

Hard-to-employ. This category includes participants who:

- ▶ are diagnosed as having mental retardation or mental illness, if that condition prevents the person from obtaining or retaining unsubsidized

- employment;
- ▶ have an IQ below 80 and are considered unemployable;
- ▶ have a learning disability that limits their employability; or
- ▶ are victims of family violence, have been granted a family violence waiver and are complying with an employment plan, alternative employment plan, or safety plan.

Employed participants. This category includes:

- ▶ a one-parent family, if the parent is participating in work activities for at least 30 hours per week, of which an average of at least 25 hours per week are spent in employment;
- ▶ a two-parent family if the parents are participating in work activities for at least 55 hours per week, of which an average of at least 45 hours per week are spent in employment; or
- ▶ a family in which a participant is working fewer than the number of hours required above if the participant submits verification that the number of hours that the participant may work is limited due to an illness or disability.

To qualify for this extension, the parent in a one-parent family or both parents in a two-parent family must not have been sanctioned for at least ten out of the 12 months the participant received MFIP before reaching the 60-month time limit, including the 60th month.

Accrued months. Some families are eligible for an extension equal to the number of months that they met certain criteria during their first 60 months on MFIP.

- ▶ If a participant was exempt from the employment and training requirements during the first 60 months because the person was needed in the home to care for a household member who meets specified medical or disability criteria, the participant is eligible for an extension equal to the number of months the participant was exempt for this reason. No new exemptions may be granted under this category after June 30, 2004.
- ▶ If a participant was exempt from the state time limit during the first 60 months, but the months were counted toward the federal 60-month limit, the participant is eligible for an extension equal to the number of months the participant was exempt from the state time limit.

Services for families who reach the time limit

In addition to MFIP extensions, there are a number of programs (e.g., Food Stamps, MinnesotaCare) that may be available to MFIP families that reach the 60-month limit. Eligibility requirements of each program vary.

For more information: Contact legislative analyst Danyell Punelli at 651-296-5058. Also see the House Research publication [*The 60-Month Time Limit on TANF Assistance*](#), January 2002.

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