

Connecting Refugees to TANF Services in Minnesota and Utah Webinar

Questions and Answers

Question: Do non-TANF clients have access to these services, are they eligible for a shorter period of time than those on TANF?

Answer (Minnesota): Non-TANF clients who are refugees are not eligible for TANF cash assistance and employment services. They (non-TANF) receive employment services from Refugee employment services which are funded by the ORR Social Services formula or Targeted Assistance grant. They are eligible for up to 5 years after arriving to the US.

Question: Do all refugees go to the Family Stabilization program before going on MFIP (TANF)? Is there any data to indicate whether Family Stabilization program participants do better at getting jobs than those who did not participate in Family Stabilization before going on TANF?

Answer (Minnesota): Family Stabilization Services are a service track under the state's family cash assistance program, MFIP. Assistance to these families is paid with state nonMOE funds. To be eligible for FSS, participants must meet specific criteria. One category of eligibility is "a participant who is a noncitizen who has been in the United States for 12 or fewer months." However, refugees may also qualify in other ways. For example they would qualify even if they had been in the country for more than 12 months if they were over 60, are ill or incapacitated, or are needed in the home to care for someone who is ill or incapacitated. Refugees who meet the FSS criteria participate in FSS in lieu of the regular MFIP employment services. Evaluation data that would indicate whether individuals do better in obtaining jobs because of FSS are not currently available. Minnesota is in the process of evaluating the effects of FSS.

Question: What is the case load for each case manager?

Answer (Minnesota): The caseload size of MFIP (TANF) job counselor ranges greatly from county to county and by type of caseload but tends to be significantly higher than the refugee caseload. The average caseload size of refugee job counselor is about 40-50 per counselor.

Question: IL and MN have similar caseloads and employment outcomes when looking at FY12 numbers, Are you aware of core differences between the populations we serve? What does arrival flow look like in MN; what population makes up the majority of your new arrivals?

Answer (Minnesota): In FY12, the top five countries of origin were Burma, Somalia, Bhutan, Iraq and Ethiopia. 1663 of the 1777 individuals who came to Minnesota in FY12 were from these countries (from WRAPS). In addition, based on ORR's report, Minnesota had 1835 in-migration and 168 out-migration.

Question: Are Case Managers clients only refugees or do they help others?

Answer (Minnesota): MFIP (TANF) job counselors serve all individuals who are eligible for employment services. The job counselors who are funded under ORR grants only serve refugees who are within 5 years of arrival.

Question: Gus, Do you track GPRA outcomes separately for TANF and non-TANF cases? What is the difference?

Answer (Minnesota): We collect and report separate outcomes for TANF and non-TANF cases. TANF cases are those who are jointly served by MFIP job counselors and ORR funded job counselors. Non-TANF cases are those who are not eligible for TANF but are served by ORR funded job counselors.

Question: MN: do TANF funds cover rent expenses? If not, if Refugees focus on English instead of work how do they pay their rent, is there another housing program to cover any gap? If so, how is this funded?

Answer (Minnesota): The cash assistance received by our MFIP participants is meant to cover basic needs, including rent and utilities. In reality, housing costs have increased but our cash grants have not. Refugees and other MFIP participants frequently need help to pay their rent. Some end up in public housing or are able to get on Section 8.

Question: Q to Jane: Is the subsidy of \$110 for housing for refugees only or for all eligible individuals?

Answer (Minnesota): The housing subsidy will be for all eligible families.

Question: What were arrivals in UT in FY2012?

Answer (Utah): About 1050.

Question: Are family stabilization services linked to TANF and SNAP benefits. If they don't participate, are they sanctioned?

Answer (Minnesota): We have a waiver from the Food and Nutrition Service to combine our family cash assistance program and Supplemental Nutrition Program benefits into one program, the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP). Since Family Stabilization Services (FSS) are part of MFIP, benefits are combined, with one set of rules. An FSS case can be sanctioned for noncompliance with an FSS plan but only if a behavioral or mental health professional confirms that the participant in all ways had the ability to comply with the plan.

Question: How were you able to secure the ORR funding to develop the special track and exclude the refugees for the first year from the core/non-core hourly requirements?

Answer (Minnesota): We use state funds, not ORR for the FSS.

Question: How many Secondary migrants did MN receive within the last year or two since you mentioned you received large numbers of SM?

Answer (Minnesota): In FY 2012, ORR reported that 1835 individuals in-migrated to Minnesota out of the 11,875 individuals who moved. In other words, about 15% of the total “movers” came to Minnesota. That is almost equivalent to the number of refugees proposed by affiliates in FY 2013. In FY 2011, 1999 (18%) of 11,143 moved to Minnesota from other states.

Question: MN how much in state funding goes to support MFIP?

Answer (Minnesota): In state fiscal year 2012, Minnesota spent about \$96 million in state funds for the Minnesota Family Investment Programs (MFIP), including the Diversionary Work Program and the Work Benefit Program. Of the \$96 million, approximately \$45 million was spent on families in MFIP Family Stabilization Services.