



Domestic Violence Information

What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence is what someone says or does over and over again to make you feel afraid or to control you. The following are examples of domestic violence:

- Swearing or screaming at you
- Threatening to hurt you or others you care about
- Calling you names
- Not letting you leave your house
- Blaming you for everything that goes wrong
- Forcing you to have sex
- Choking, grabbing, punching or kicking you
- Smashing or breaking things.

What services are available to victims of domestic violence?

Toll-free Hotlines have counselors who provide services, such as:

- Crisis counseling
- Safety planning
- Assistance with finding shelter
- Referrals to other organizations such as Legal Services
- Support groups
- Advocacy with the police.

If you are in danger from domestic violence and need help, call the National Domestic Abuse Hotline at (800) 799-7233, (TTY/TDD: (800) 787-3224) or the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women at (800) 289-6177. The Minnesota Domestic Violence Crisis phone number is: (800) 223-1111.

What are domestic violence waivers?

If you are eligible for public assistance and you experience domestic violence, certain program requirements may be temporarily waived, meaning they may not apply in your situation.

Waivers are available for eligible public assistance applicants who apply for the following programs: Food Support (FS) General Assistance (GA), General Assistance Medical Care (GAMC), Diversionary Work Program (DWP), Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), Medical Assistance (MA) and MinnesotaCare.

Waivers of Food Support Program rules

This brochure must be given to all households that apply for Food Support, whose available assets are less than \$7,000, and whose gross income is less than Food Support Program limits. The value of vehicles/cars is not used when determining your eligibility for Food Support.

Waivers of DWP/MFIP rules

The Diversionary Work Program and the Minnesota Family Investment Program has a Family Violence Waiver for people who are victims of domestic violence. If you or your child is a victim of past or current domestic violence, you may be able to get a Family Violence Waiver. With a DWP waiver you may not need to follow all employment rules. With an MFIP waiver, you will not have to follow these MFIP rules:

- You may not need to follow all employment rules

- You will be exempt from the 60-month welfare time limit while you have this waiver.

To get a Family Violence Waiver you must do three things:

1. Tell your county worker you want an MFIP Family Violence Waiver.
2. Show that the violence occurred by giving your county worker any of these items:
 - Medical records
 - A statement from a battered women's advocate or a sexual assault advocate
 - A statement from a professional, like a doctor, nurse, clergy, counselor, or social worker, who you told about the abuse.
 - A statement from someone, like a neighbor, family member or a co-worker, who knows about the abuse
 - Photos of injuries or damage to your property
 - A police report
 - A copy of a restraining order, order for protection or a harassment order.

If you need help getting any of these items, talk to a domestic violence advocate or your county worker.

3. Develop and follow an employment plan that includes activities to keep you safe.

What is an employment plan?

Your employment plan is developed with a person trained in domestic violence prevention and a job counselor or a county worker. The plan will take your situation into account and include activities to help you become employed.

The plan will:

- Make the safety of you and your children a priority
- Include only work and training activities if they are safe for you and your children.

Be sure you really can meet the goals in your employment plan before you agree to it.

The employment plan does not guarantee your safety. When an abuser chooses to abuse, sometimes you cannot stop the abuse, no matter what you do.

Only you know what you can do. Only you know how dangerous your abuser is. If you need to change the plan or cannot follow it, contact your county worker as soon as possible.

Other important things to know

- If you do not follow your plan, you may be sanctioned. This means your DWP or MFIP grant may be reduced or closed.
- If you have questions about the DWP or MFIP Family Violence Waiver, call the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women at (800) 289-6177 (this is not a crisis number). If you are having a crisis, call (651) 646-0994.
- If you are denied a waiver, or if your waiver is canceled, you can appeal.

You may be able to get legal advice or help with an appeal from your local legal aid office. To contact your local legal aid office call (888) 354-5522.

How do I appeal?

If you do not agree with the action the county takes on your application, tell your county worker. Ask the worker to explain the reasons for the action.

You may see the policy manuals, rules or laws that give the reasons for the action. If you still do not agree, you may appeal. Your county worker will help you ask for an appeal hearing or contact:

Minnesota Department of Human Services
Appeals Office
PO Box 64941

St. Paul, MN 55164-0941

Metro: (651) 431-3600 (Voice)

Outstate: (800) 657-3510

TTY/TDD: (800) 627-35295

Fax: (651) 431-7523

You should bring any facts to the hearing that will help you explain why you do not agree. You may bring a friend or a lawyer. If you want a lawyer, ask your worker for information about free legal services. You may bring people to the hearing to give information about the facts. After you and the county have talked about your case, the Human Services judge will decide the case. You will get the decision in the mail.

If you are still not satisfied, you have 30 days to appeal to the state district court.

Your right to privacy

Most of the time, the facts asked for by the human services office are called "private." This means that you may see facts about yourself, but they are not open to the public. Certain other government agencies may see them too. You have the right to question what you think is wrong in your file.

For more facts about data privacy, ask your county worker or write the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

If you have questions

For questions about the MFIP Domestic Violence Waiver, contact the human services office in your county.

For TTY/TDD service, call the Minnesota Relay at 711 or (800) 627-3529 and ask them to call your county human services office. For the Speech-to-Speech Relay, call (877) 627-3848.

Your right to file a complaint

If you feel the county or the Minnesota Department of Human Services treated you differently in the handling of a public assistance application or payment because of race, color, national origin, political beliefs, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, public assistance status, age or disability (including access to buildings or programs), you may file a complaint with one or more of these agencies:

Minnesota Department of Human Services
Office for Equal Opportunity
PO Box 64997
St. Paul, MN 55164-0997
(651) 431-3040 (Voice)
(651) 431-3041 (TTY/TDD)

Minnesota Department of Human Rights
190 East 5th Street, Suite 700
St. Paul, MN 55101
(800) 657-3704 (Voice)
(651) 296-1283 (TTY/TDD)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Office for Civil Rights, Region V
233 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 240
Chicago, IL 60601
(312) 886-2359 (Voice)
(312) 353-5693 (TTY/TDD)

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Director, Office of Civil Rights
Room 326-W, Whitten Building
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
(202) 720-5964 (Voice or TTY/TDD)

agency

This information is available in other forms to people with disabilities by calling your county worker. For TTY/TDD users, contact your county worker through the Minnesota Relay at 711 or (800) 627-3529. For the Speech-to-Speech Relay, call (877) 627-3848.