

# Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)

## DESCRIPTION

The Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) provides cash, food and employment services for low-income Minnesota families who meet eligibility criteria. Families can also qualify for child care assistance and a small, monthly housing grant. The Family Stabilization Services track of MFIP was created during the 2007 legislative session to provide families with a more flexible set of services so that they could get and keep employment, improve family stability, increase economic stability and remove barriers. Minnesota uses an Employability Measure Assessment, an instrument developed to gauge status and progress in 11 key areas of life functioning that have been shown to be important in getting and keeping a job: child behavior, dependent care, education, financial, health, housing, legal, personal skills, safe living environment, social support and transportation.

## HOW WE ARE DOING

With a program budget of \$13,830,405, there were 8,457 Ramsey County families enrolled in MFIP (for at least one month) in 2017. Of these, 3,651 (43 percent) were placed into employment with an average hourly wage of \$12.10.<sup>1</sup> Participants in the Families Achieving Success Today II (FAST2) program, a MFIP initiative targeting exclusively African American and American Indian participants, were more likely than control group members to be enrolled in employment service activities (such as job seeking, education or training, and social services). FAST2 enrollees were also more likely to gain employment.

## BENCHMARK INDICATOR

Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) Self-Support Index:

The percentage of individuals who are either working in paid employment at least 30 hours per week or are off the cash portion of MFIP and DWP (Diversionary Work Program) three years later. DHS calculates a target individually for each county or tribe to measure success.

## DISPARITIES

While almost 70 percent of all Minnesota MFIP participants have been successful as defined by the Self-Support Index, significantly lower values have been reported for African American and American Indian participants. These disparities have continued to be large over time.<sup>2</sup> In 2014, Ramsey County achieved a Self-Support Index for white MFIP participants of 53.8 percent, 11.5 percentage points higher than that for African American participants (42.3 percent) and 15 percentage points higher than that for American Indian participants (38.8 percent).<sup>3</sup>

## RISK FACTORS

Recent studies have provided empirical support for the concept of historical trauma, the idea that significant past trauma experienced by a group of people may accumulate over generations and interact with everyday stressors to reduce overall health and well-being. Intergenerational poverty can also be a risk factor for long-term MFIP enrollment.

## WHAT RAMSEY COUNTY GOVERNMENT IS DOING

Ramsey County was a selected site for the MFIP Equity Project (funded by the Minnesota (continued on next page)

## Information to note

- More than 26,000 Ramsey County residents participated in MFIP in 2017.
- Intergenerational poverty can be a risk factor for long-term MFIP enrollment.
- The graduation rate for teen parents enrolled in the MFIP Teen Parent Program has increased from 33% in 2003 to 77% in 2017.



## Community voice

*“Social programs, welfare and working.”*

- Black/African American Female, age 20-24

Social services and financial assistance programs were greatly recognized amongst respondents. Many expressed the importance of programs such as MFIP, its positive effects on their household and community health.

<sup>1</sup> Workforce Solutions: 2017 Annual Business Report. Ramsey County. <https://www.ramseycounty.us/businesses/workforce-business-development/workforce-development/2017-annual-business-report/program-report-cash-assistance/2017-minnesota-family-investment-program-mfip>. Accessed October 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Minnesota Family Investment Program: Racial Equity Project. Preliminary findings for a 2014-2016 MFIP Innovation Project. Minnesota Department of Human Services. <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfsrserver/Public/DHS-7629-ENG>. Published September 2017. Accessed October 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Personal communication. Ramsey County Human Services. Citing the draft “MFIP Evaluation Brief, 2-14-2018, FAST2 Racial Equity Grant.” Accessed October 2018.

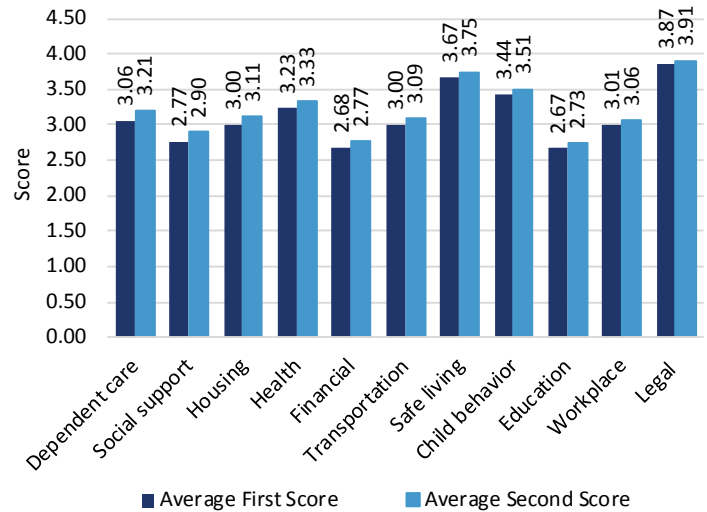
# Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)

Department of Human Services from 2014 through 2016) to provide culturally specific employment services and bolster employment outcomes for African-American and American Indian MFIP participants. As a result, customized employment plans, intensive case management, the state's employability measure, and required data collection were included in implementation of the county's Families Achieving Success Today (FAST) model.

Ramsey County Workforce Solution's Extension Services, in partnership with a range of community organizations, expanded on its FAST2 model to assist randomly assigned African American and American Indian participants who have used more than 60 months of MFIP and received an extension to the MFIP federal time limit. The co-location of staff from employment, children's mental health, and adult physical and mental health services allowed staff to work with families to improve continuity of care, and to have needs addressed in a single stop.

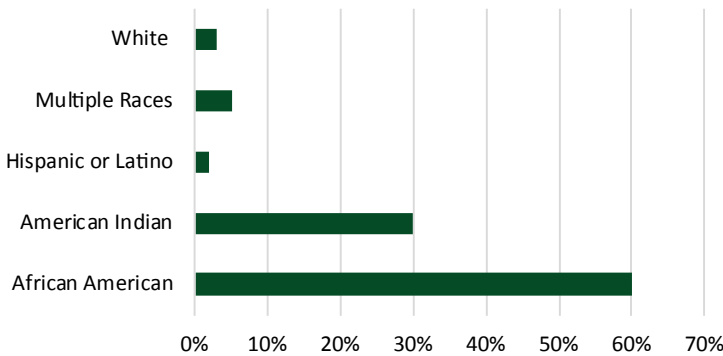
In addition, Workforce Solutions, Ramsey County Financial Services, and Saint Paul-Ramsey County Public Health have partnered since 2013 to develop and maintain streamlined MFIP application, financial assistance, child care approval, and living arrangement processes to reduce barriers to high school graduation, enhance birth outcomes, and promote positive parent-child interaction and infant/toddler development for teen parents and their children. Since its inception, the graduation rate for teen parents enrolled in the MFIP Teen Parent Program has continued to increase, from 33 percent in 2013 to 77 percent in 2017.

Employability Measure Assessment Among MFIP Equity Participants\* 2014-2016



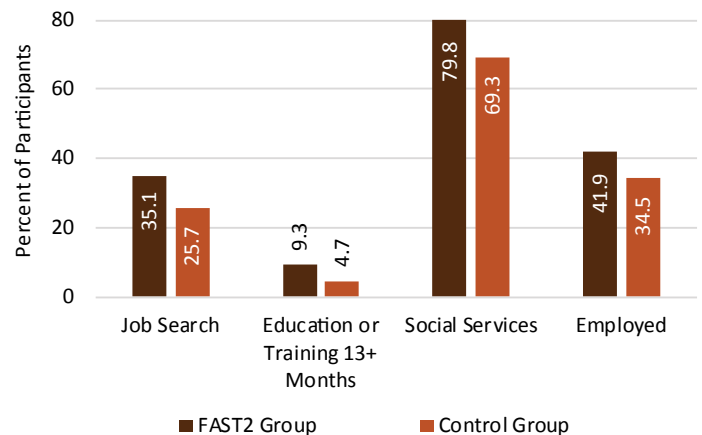
\*The Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) Equity Project included projects carried out by six grantees: Anoka County, Hennepin County, Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, Ramsey County, St. Louis County, and Red Lake Nation. Source: Minnesota Department of Human Services.<sup>4</sup>

MFIP Equity Project Participants\* by Race/Ethnicity, 2014-2016



\*The Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) Equity Project included projects carried out by six grantees: Anoka County, Hennepin County, Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, Ramsey County, St. Louis County, and Red Lake Nation. Source: Minnesota Department of Human Services.<sup>4</sup>

FAST2 Program Outcomes, Ramsey County, 2015



Source: Workforce One (WFI) Personal communication with Ramsey County Human Services.

<sup>4</sup> Minnesota Family Investment Program: Racial Equity Project, Preliminary findings for a 2014-2016 MFIP Innovation Project, September 2017. <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfsrserver/Public/DHS-7629-ENG>