

MFIP-ES POLICY

(WS2015-01)

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DATED REVISED: March 1, 2016

SUBJECT: **Minnesota Subsidized Transitional Employment Demonstration (MSTED)
Referral Process and Program Expectations**

BACKGROUND:

A few subsidized employment models have been rigorously evaluated with mixed results since the 1970's. The Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration (STED) builds on these earlier studies by testing promising and innovative subsidized employment models. The Administration for Children and Families in the U.S department of Health and Human services is sponsoring the evaluation. The Minnesota Department of Human Services is funding the Minnesota STED (MSTED) program in Ramsey County and several other counties. The study is using a random assignment design to test the effectiveness of MSTED. Admissions to the program will be decided using a random, lottery-like process.

PURPOSE:

The subsidized employment demonstration intends to learn whether subsidy work can increase the number of people moving from MFIP into permanent unsubsidized employment. The model is intended to serve job seekers who are unlikely to obtain sustained work on their own and yet not so deeply challenged that sustained work will only be possible after intensive medical, behavioral health or social services.

PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES:

Referring Eligible Participants to MSTED:

1. Counselor reviews participants' eligibility based on the following criteria:

An adult receiving MFIP assistance unless

- they are between 18 and 24 and enrolled in a fulltime education plan or
- are a parent taking the "infant" exemption with a baby younger than one year old.

2. Counselor connect with the participants to assess participant's suitability and schedules immediate face-to-face appointment to explain the MSTED program (Refer to Reference Sheet for MFIP Counselor).

3. If a face-to-face appointment is not possible, a phone call is acceptable, followed by a face-to-face meeting.

4. Counselor are expected to discuss MSTED program with eligible participants on the list. If the participant chooses to decline MSTED services, Counselor will enter a Case Note by selecting category of **Information and Referral**. The **Subject** area should be entered as "**MSTED**" with one of the following reasons on the subject line of the case note

- In Sanction
- FSS
- Not interested
- Child Under One
- Employed
- Education

- Unable to Reach
- Other

Example: Subject: MSTED –Education, which then should be explained in the case note better to understand why the participant did not want to participate. Education in itself is not an explanation.

5. If participant confirms their interest to counselor via phone and meets with counselor. Counselor discusses career pathway and identifies short/long term career goals and career pathways using ONET and ISEEK.
6. When speaking with participants about participation in the MSTED program, counselors are also required to review the following items with participants:
 - Career goals and pathway
 - Employment goals (current and future)
 - Hours available for work
 - Work limitations (doctor note required)
 - Schedule a date and time for the MSTED Orientation
7. Counselor completes the MSTED Referral form and MSTED EC checklist and emails the forms along with other applicable documentations to Planner for review at wsted@co.ramsey.mn.us
8. If the counselor has more than one referral, each referral packet should be emailed separately to wsted mailbox. EC should note on the subject line: the orientation date and name of the client. Ex: 1/15/15, John Adam
9. Counselor opens activity Local Flag (MSTED), select MSTED funding stream for all participants referred to MSTED and case note under MSTED subject on WF1. (See WF1 MSTED Training Guide, pages 4-7)

Planner Review:

10. Planners monitor the MSTED email box and process referral packets daily.
11. Planners review the MSTED referral form and checklist for actuary.
12. If the referral packets are incomplete, the packets will be sent back to the Counselor and cc to MFIP Managers. Counselors will make corrections and resubmit the referral packet.
13. Planners will send completed referral packets to the MSTED agencies for orientation and random assignment selection within 48 hours.

MSTED Agencies/MFIP EC:

14. Upon receipt of the referral packet from the Planners, MSTED agencies will update Employment counselors that packet has been received.
15. MSTED will follow up with participant to confirm scheduled orientation date.
16. Follow up with EC if the participant is a no show for the initial orientation and reschedule a 2nd orientation for the participant. If participant does not attend the 2nd orientation, MSTED will update EC.
17. EC case notes reason for no show under MSTED subject and close out local flag (MSTED) as unsuccessful.
18. Counselor can reassess and refer participant to MSTED again if appropriate. The referral process will start over again after 2 no shows for orientation. This includes opening a new Local Flag (MSTED) activity, submitting a new referral form and checklist.
19. For those participants who attend orientation, MSTED agencies will meet with participants to conduct a group or one-on-one Orientation to explain the program and random assignment process.
20. Participants will be asked to complete consent to participate form and MSTED program background information form.
21. During the Orientation process, the MSTED agencies will conduct an on-line random assignment to determine if participants will be assigned to a Control or Treatment Group.

22. MSTED notifies the EC within 48 hours, the status of the participant, once participant has successfully completed orientation, necessary paperwork and has agreed to informed consent.
23. EC will close Local Flag (MSTED) as successful or not successful and add case assignment of secondary staff for MSTED staff within 48 hours. Up to 2 MSTED workers are allowed to be added as secondary staff. This will allow MSTED staff to enter MSTED work activities and case notes into WF1. (refer to MSTED WF1 Cheat Sheet Enrollment Instructions)

Random Assignment Status:

MSTED Control Group:

- Control Group participants will receive a gift card from the MSTED agency for their participation in the Orientation.
- If participant is assigned to a Control Group, the participants will not be eligible for participation in the MSTED program at any time during this process.
- Control Group participants will be sent back to their MFIP agency for regular MFIP services and cannot be re-referred to the MSTED work program at any time in this process.
- MDRC will provide survey follow-up with control group at a later date. Additional gift card will be provided when the participant completes the survey.

MSTED Treatment Control Group:

- Participants in the Treatment Group will be scheduled during Orientation to begin the job placement process into a Structured Paid Work Experience or Wage Subsidy.
- MSTED enrollment occurs at Orientation when the participant is assigned to the Treatment Group and agrees to participate.
- MSTED agencies will notify Counselor and MFIP manager the names of the Treatment Group participants by email and case note on WF1 once the counselor adds a case assignment of secondary staff for MSTED staff.
- Upon enrollment into MSTED, MFIP counselors will be required to meet with the participants immediately to update the Employment Plan, complete the Childcare Transmittal and authorize support services to meet the needs of the MSTED work activity.

Structured Paid Work Experience and Wage Subsidy Program Assignments:

Participants will be assigned to one of the following MSTED work programs after the Job Developer assesses workplace competencies and skills. The State anticipates that most participants will be referred to the Wage Subsidy program without first going through the Structured Paid Work Experience. Occasionally, participants may experience issues on the job, if this occurs the participant will be referred back to their MFIP agency for additional assistance. MSTED services will be suspended until the issues are addressed and resolved with the MFIP counselors. MSTED service may resume after the counselor speaks with the agency and documents (case notes) the return to work agreement.

Structured Paid Work Experience

- Designed for participants who are not ready for a permanent assignment work with a private sector or public sector employer, but are work ready. These individuals generally need additional supports to enhance their workplace competencies and develop new skills.
- Provides an 8 week work assignment up to \$9.00 an hour for a 24 hour per week work assignment at a MSTED non-profit or public sector employer.
- MSTED agencies will identify workplace competencies and skills to ensure that the structured paid work experience assignment will assist the participant in mastering workplace competencies and new skills.

- At the end of the work experience assignment, the MSTED agency will verify the mastering of workplace competencies and new skills.
- Upon successful completion of work experience assignment, participants will be ready for a UE job placement or transition to the MSTED Wage Subsidy program.
- MSTED Job Developers will assist participants with the UE transition and update MFIP counselors.

Wage Subsidy Program:

- Participants best suited for placement into a Wages Subsidy program are motivated, work ready, have mastered workplace competencies through a prior work experience, have obtained training or certifications in a specific occupational area or can demonstrate skill attainment that meets the specifications of an employer.
- A wage subsidy up to \$15.00 an hour is paid to a non-profit and private sector employer to off-set the cost of hiring a MSTED participant for an 8 week work assignment.
- If the participant performs well during the initial 8 weeks, a second 8 week assignment is available with the expectation that the job will result in a UE placement.
- During the second 8 week the wage subsidy is reduced to 50% and the employer is required to hire the participant as a UE placement.

MFIP Counselor Expectations:

- Each counselor sends a minimum of 5 referrals per month.
- Discuss MSTED program to eligible participants and case note reason of decline of MSTED services on WF1 (as explained under #5).
- Verify participant for suitability before referring to MSTED.
- Ensure that all MSTED referral packets and MSTED EC checklist are complete.
- Open and close Local flag (MSTED) activity and case note for referred participants (as explained under #10).
- Update Employment Plan and Childcare transmittal within 1 week of enrollment into the Treatment Group or as soon as possible, prior to enrollment if applicable.
- Provide timely support services and childcare to meet the work activity throughout the duration of the MSTED placement.
- Will not be responsible for monthly contact with participants, case note or tracking pre-placement activity attendance. MSTED agencies will report attendance of pre-placement activity to counselor.
- Responsible to track hours of participation in pre-placement activity once received attendance reports from MSTED agencies.
- Review case and read case notes to ensure that counselor is up to date with activities of the participant.
- Record MFIP Support Services into WF1 monthly as necessary.
- Monitor WF1 for MSTED case notes and speak with the MSTED agency about their participant when appropriate.
- Encourage and support participants during the MSTED work experience.
- Notify MSTED agency of individuals needing an interpreter as soon as possible.
- Provide payments for the interpreter services using MFIP Support Service funds.

MSTED Expectations:

- Follow-up with MFIP participants to remind them of their orientation date.
- Responsible for WF1 coding (opening and closing activities stated on page 9 of WF1 MSTED Training Guide) once participant is in the program.
- Responsible for at minimum monthly contact with participants, WF1 data entry, coding and hours of pre-placement activity attendance to counselor during the MSTED work experience.

- Enter minimum monthly case notes in WF1 to inform counselors of their participants' progress and as often as needed.
- Case note more often if workplace issues occurs and work with the participant to address issues.
- Assess participant skills before and during worksite placements.
- Determine placement into Structured Work Experience or Wage Subsidy Program.
- Monitor timesheet and issue payroll checks and submit work verifications to MFIP counselors.
- Provide 90 days of follow-up and retentions support once participant exit MSTED program.
- Serve individuals with limited English proficiency speaking skills and provide interpreter services as needed.

Placement Credit: When a MSTED enrollment/placement or UE placement occurs both MFIP and MSTED will receive credit for the activity.

NOTE:

*MFIP Employment Counselors and MSTED staff should follow the **WF1 MSTED Training Guide** when entering information in WF1.

*Any questions related to data entered in WF1 should be directed to the WFS Planner: Hua Moua or WFS MIS Staff: Alan Wanless or Laurie Doheny.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2015 – Kate Probert Fagundes, MFIP/DWP ES Division Manager

CONTACT PERSON: Agency Lead Planner