

DWP/MFIP ES POLICY

DATE ISSUED: February 1, 2017
FROM: Public Assistance Employment Services Division Manager
SUBJECT: Network for the Development of Children of African Descent (NdCAD)
BACKGROUND:

The disparity between the financial well-being of Ramsey County residents of color and those that are white has been widening over the last decade. Our County's vision is to have "A vibrant community where all are valued and thrive" and we aim to achieve that through innovative programming, inclusive initiatives, and through connections to education just to name a few.

Our partnership with the Network for the Development of Children of African Descent (NdCAD) provides a unique opportunity for the County to connect our African American families with an organization that exists to strengthen their well-being through cultural resiliency and literacy skills. Furthermore, Workforce Solutions has an interest in providing more Public Assistance Programs services within a family engagement framework where the understanding is that the long-term well-being of both the parent and child are intertwined. Parents that complete NdCAD programming have shown a demonstrable increase in their engagement in employment and education; and children have increased their reading levels and classroom confidence.

Workforce Solutions MFIP/DWP Employment Services **mission** is to maximize resident economic self-sufficiency and family stabilization by:

1. Encouraging and unleashing power in all families to secure employment;
2. Guiding families to increase their income and move out of poverty;
3. Preventing long-term reliance on public assistance as a primary source of family income.

Workforce Solutions MFIP/DWP Employment Services **vision** is to provide residents on public assistance opportunities for improved employment and family stabilization.

PURPOSE: To clarify roles and responsibilities for the NdCAD program

POLICY/GUIDELINES: Enrollment Process

1. Referral Criteria:
 - Self-identified African American families (this means the parent(s) and/or the child(ren) self-identify as African American)
 - Parents must be committed to participating in three 90-minute Parent Power sessions per week for 9 weeks (dinner included)
 - The Sankofa reading program has a priority to serve grade levels Kindergarten through 5th grade
 - Pre-school aged children will be engaged in age appropriate activities while Mom and/or Dad and older siblings are in Parent Power and Sankofa
 - If participants meet any of the following criteria a referral should be strongly considered:
 - Participants who have reached 48 months of MFIP
 - Participants who are in sanction or have been in and out of sanction
 - Unemployed for 6 months or longer
 - Engagement is sporadic and/or the participant is not following through with the activities in their employment plan

- Participants who are in job search for 3 months or longer
- Participant's child(ren) have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
- Participant indicates that child(ren)'s behavior prevents them from following through with activities or retain employment
- Participants who may find it a challenge to articulate their goals

2. Referral Process:

- Referrals should be made by the assigned Employment Counselor and sent by e-mail to the Parent/Family Outreach & Engagement Worker, Sharon Ellis at: sharon.ellis@ndcad.org and cc your agency's NdCAD Specialist as well as the NdCAD Planning and Evaluation Analyst, Michelle Belitz at: michelle.belitz@co.ramsey.mn.us
- Include the following information in your referral e-mail:
 - Name of Parent(s)
 - Name of referring agency
 - Ages and grades of child(ren)
- The Parent/Family Outreach & Engagement Worker will accept referrals on an ongoing basis and assign families to the nearest cohort with openings
- The Parent/Family Outreach & Engagement Worker will respond to e-mail referrals to let ECs know which cohort group and corresponding orientation dates the family has been assigned
- After the first week of Parent Power the Parent/Family Outreach & Engagement Worker will send out a list of parents that have been attending to the NdCAD Specialists and the WFS Planning and Evaluation Analyst

3. Incentive Schedule for Parent Power:

- Adequate transportation support should be provided to ensure families are able to successfully complete Parent Power. If the family utilizes the bus, remember to provide enough support services to the parent to ensure that everyone can get to the NDCAD location.
- Completing Orientation: The EC provides a \$10 Target card for each participating MFIP/DWP parent and transportation support
- After completing two Parent Power sessions: The EC provides a \$20.00 Target card
- After completing six successful weeks of Parent Power (a "successful week" is counted as attending 2 out of the three weekly classes), the EC will provide a \$30.00 Target Card
- Upon graduation, the NdCAD Planning and Evaluation Analyst shall provide an additional \$40.00 Target card to each of the graduating MFIP/DWP parent(s) and a \$20.00 book store card to be used by parent for each child graduating from the Sankofa Reading Program

4. NdCAD Specialist Responsibilities:

- Attend NdCAD Specialist meetings
- Meet with participants as schedule allows to explain the benefits of Parent Power and Sankofa to answer any questions
- Answer questions from colleagues and provide updates
- Provide information to your colleagues to ensure that they are able to explain the benefits of Parent Power and Sankofa and to answer questions
- Ensure that Parent Power and Sankofa flyers get distributed to colleagues
- Discuss Parent Power and Sankofa in team meetings and share progress and success stories of participating parents, tie it to the Ramsey County 4 Es philosophy
- Serve as a liaison between NdCAD and ECs
- Assist in arranging for on-site orientations and ensure that either you or a designated staff member is present to greet the NdCAD staff and referred parents

5. Employment Counselor Responsibilities:

- Recruit don't just refer: ECs should take it upon themselves to learn the benefits of the program and be able to relay that to their participants. Some of the benefits include but are not limited to: receiving activity hours for their MFIP/DWP employment plan, self-advocacy and child-advocacy skills, increased knowledge of culturally specific community resources, engagement in community building, improved academic success for themselves and their child(ren), etc.
- ECs are strongly encouraged to meet the parent(s) and the family at the Parent Power/Sankofa orientation, graduation, etc. (if they are able)
- Stay involved to show your support! The parent(s) and their family should receive multiple reminders from the referring EC about upcoming orientations
- Ensure a signed release form is on file identifying that information related to attendance and program progress will be shared with NdCAD
- Update Employment Plans to reflect participation in Parent Power as a 10 hours per week activity. Do not load up too many other activities while the participant is attending Parent Power if it may jeopardize their success
- Track participation hours in WF1 under either the "other" or "social services" activity. Remember, all recorded hours on the hour tracking panel count as engagement hours and *progressive* engagement is what matters!
- Ensure that participants have adequate bus fare and that they receive their incentives as scheduled
- Record bus fare and/or book store gift card that were provided to parents for the use of the children on the WF1 support services panel under the primary MFIP/DWP parent and then enter a detailed case note describing the family member's participation with NdCAD programming

6. NdCAD Data Specialist Responsibilities:

- After a parent completes one Parent Power sessions, the NdCAD Data Specialist will complete an "enrollment" by opening a Local Flag activity and entering "Nd" with the number of the cohort as the subtype. This subtype is used by WFS for evaluation purposes, not for tracking hours.
- The NdCAD Data Specialist will track all attendance hours including Parent Power, Fihankra, and Nia by entering a case note. The ECs are expected to grab engagement and activity hours from the case notes (the NdCAD data specialist is NOT tracking participation hours on the WF1 activity screen!)
- The NdCAD Data Specialist will close the Local Flag (Nd) activity in WF1 6 months after completing Parent Power
- The NdCAD Data Specialist will maintain a spreadsheet of child reading level gains

7. MFIP Data Specialist Responsibilities:

- Provide quarterly referral lists to ECs based on referral criteria listed in Section 1

EFFECTIVE DATE: February 1, 2017

CONTACT PERSON: Your agency planner