

Children and families: More cash for families in MFIP, expanded tribal initiative, child welfare improvements

Minnesota made critical investments in the 2019 session to address deep and persistent disparities by raising the cash grant for the Minnesota Family Investment Program, expanding the American Indian Child Welfare Initiative, improving training for child welfare professionals, and increasing access to child care and health care.

The long overdue increase in the Minnesota Family Investment Program cash grant will increase stability for families and help them pay their bills. Improvements to the child welfare system will support culturally appropriate services, training so that child welfare staff can better serve families in crisis, and resources to implement federal requirements. Changes to the Child Care Assistance Program include better access for homeless families and more due process rights for providers, bringing Minnesota closer to federal compliance. Automatic Medical Assistance enrollment will ensure health coverage for all children in foster and kinship care.

2019 legislation

MFIP cash grant increase. For the first time since 1986, the cash grant for the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) will increase. The additional \$100 a month will benefit all families in both MFIP and the Diversionary Work Program, starting in February 2020. The higher cash grant, combined with a \$110 monthly housing assistance grant for many families in MFIP, still leaves a family of three with a monthly income of \$742, less than half the federal poverty guidelines. This proposal is financed with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds made available by refinancing the Working Family Credit with general fund dollars. *FY 2020-21: \$44.7 million.*

Child welfare system improvements. The American Indian Child Welfare Initiative will add resources for Leech Lake and the White Earth Nation, tribes already in the initiative, and expand to include the Red Lake Nation and Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. All tribes in Minnesota will benefit from funding to support early intervention services. The establishment of a new Child Welfare Training Academy will drive improvements in training for child protection workers, following a recommendation from the Governor's Task Force on the Protection of Children. The state will also add infrastructure to implement new requirements of the federal Family First Prevention Services Act, including evidence-based mental health and substance abuse prevention and treatment services, in-home parent programs and kinship services. *FY 2020-21: \$21.2 million.*

Child Care Assistance Program, increasing access and federal compliance. An expedited application process will give children in families experiencing homelessness more access to the Child Care Assistance Program. Homeless families will be exempt from activity requirements for three months after they apply. Child care providers will

gain more due process rights when facing adverse licensing actions, and appeal rights will be transferred from families to providers so they can make a case on their own behalf. *FY 2020-21: \$659,000.*

Health care coverage for children in foster care. All children in foster care and kinship care will have automatic eligibility for and enrollment in Medical Assistance. This change removes barriers to coverage, reduces paperwork for foster care and kinship care families, and eases administrative burdens on county workers. Previous application and renewal requirements led to gaps in coverage or loss of coverage. *FY 2020-21: \$363,000.*

Related information

- [DHS 2019 session fact sheets](#)

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