



The MFIP Family Violence Waiver

For domestic abuse victims

What is a family violence waiver?

A family violence waiver is for people on the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) who are the victims of domestic abuse. If you or your child are a victim of past or current domestic violence, you may be able to get a family violence waiver. With this waiver, you will not have to follow some of the 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.

You can get the waiver as long as you follow your employment plan.

What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence is what someone says or does to make you feel afraid or to control you. These are some 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.

How do you get a family violence waiver?

To get a family violence waiver you must first do three things:

- Tell your county worker you want an MFIP Family Violence Waiver.
- 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 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 harassment order).

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

You do not have to get an order for protection or attend counseling to get a family violence waiver.

- Develop 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:

- Ensure that you and your children are safe
- 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 MFIP grant may be reduced or closed.
- If you have questions about the 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 can see the policy manuals, rules or laws that give the reasons for the action. If you still do not agree, you can appeal. Your county worker will help you ask for an appeal hearing or you can 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

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 appeals referee 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 can see facts about yourself, but they are not open to the public. Some other government agencies may also be allowed to see them. 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 Family 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.