Overview of the Family Independence Program (FIP)

House Families, Children and Seniors Committee

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Rick Snyder, Governor
Maura Corrigan, DHS Director

- The goal of FIP is to help families achieve self-sufficiency and to reduce dependence on public assistance.
- FIP assists in covering housing, heat, utilities and food in conjunction with the Food Assistance Program (FAP).
- Jobs, Education and Training (JET) is Michigan's ongoing approach within FIP to provide employment and training services. JET is administered by the Michigan Works! Agencies.

FIP Recipient Characteristics

- As of January 31, 2011
  - There are 85,379 FIP cases*, which equals approximately $34,274,640 in monthly payments.
  - There are 233,374 FIP recipients.*
    - 90,515 are male
    - 142,856 are female
    - 72,176 are adults
    - 161,198 are children

**FIP case represents the whole group/family*
**FIP recipient represents the individual in the case*

FIP Characteristics Continued...

Number of Adult Recipients by Age

- 21-25 years– 17,794
- 26-30 years– 14,789
- 31-40 years– 21,245
- 41-50 years– 10,310
- 51 + years - 1,767

FIP Group Types

- One parent household
- Two parent household
- Ineligible caretaker (Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients, relative placement, foster care placement)
- Groups with no children
  - Pregnant woman and spouse
  - Parent(s) whose child(ren) are placed in Foster Care with a reunification plan expected within 12 months

Benefit Levels

FIP benefit amount standard is determined by the number of eligible recipients in a group.

- Group size of one - $306
- Group size of two - $403
- Group size of three - $492
- Group size of four - $597
- Group size of five - $694
- Group size of six - $828
- Group size of seven - $905

Note: The standard for FIP grants are the payments the group receives without any income in the household.

Example

If an eligible adult and two children receive FIP and FAP, the FIP grant will be $492 a month and the FAP benefit will be $526 a month.

How an Applicant Applies for FIP

- Applicant completes and signs an application for cash assistance.
- Once the application is registered into Bridges eligibility system, the applicant will meet with a caseworker for an interview. The caseworker will request verifications needed to determine eligibility for FIP and notify the applicant of FIP program requirements that apply to that individual.
- If the applicant is required to participate in the JET program, then the client must attend a JET orientation and meet participation requirements before FIP benefits can be approved in Bridges.

How an Applicant Applies for FIP continued...

- The caseworker has up to 45 days to process the application.
- As long as the client continues to meet participation with the JET program and all other eligibility requirements, the client will continue to receive FIP.

Federal Work Participation Requirements

Federal laws require each work eligible individual (WEI) in the FIP group to participate in JET unless temporarily deferred or already engaged in activities at application that meet participation requirements.

WHO IS NOT A WEI?

- A recipient of SSI
- Ineligible caretaker
- Clients that are needed in home to care for disabled child or spouse when all verification requirements are met
- A disqualified alien; all other disqualified individuals are WEIs
- A minor parent that is not the head of the household or the spouse of the head of household

WHAT ARE THE FEDERAL WORK REQUIREMENTS

- A minimum **20 hours** per week in a countable activity for a single parent with a dependent child less than age 6
- A minimum **30 Hours** per week in a countable activity for a single parent with a dependent child age 6 or more
- A minimum **35/55 hours** per week in countable activities for a two parent household with and without active Child Development and Care

JET Participation Exemptions

- A child under the age of 16
- A child age 16 to 19 who is attending elementary or secondary school full time and will graduate before age 20
- A pregnant recipient severely restricted based on medical evidence
- A recipient that has medical documentation of being disabled or indicates an inability to participate in JET for more than 90 days because of a mental or physical condition

JET Exemptions Continued...

- The spouse or parent that provides care for a spouse or child with disabilities living in the home
- A recipient determined disabled by the medical review team
- A recipient aged 65 or older
- A recipient of SSI
- A recipient of Retirement, Survivors and Disability Insurance (RSDI) based on disability or blindness

JET Exemptions Continued...

- A recipient with a mental or physical illness, limitation or incapacity expected to last less than 90 days
- A recipient with a documented claim of threatened or actual domestic violence that can reasonably be expected to interfere with work requirements
- A parent with a child under the age of three months, deferred up to three months
- A recipient that is working 40 hours a week at or above state minimum wage

JET Exemptions Continued...

- The recipient lacks child care that is appropriate, a reasonable distance from the home or work site, a suitable provider or affordable.
- The recipient's child(ren) has been placed in foster care (with an expected reunification date of less than one year) and the services worker requests the parent be exempt from JET participation to comply with the services plan

Penalties and Sanctions

If a recipient fails to comply with participation requirements then the following applies:

- For the first* and second instance of noncompliance, the group is ineligible to receive FIP for not less than three calendar months
- For the third instance of noncompliance and thereafter, the group is ineligible to receive FIP for not less than 12 calendar months

**With the first instance of noncompliance, the client is offered a "first excuse" in which the three month financial sanction may be waived if the client complies with agreed upon requirements.*

48 Month FIP Time Limit

- FIP benefits are limited to 48 months per recipient in a lifetime after September 30, 2007.
- State countable months apply to recipients except months in which the individual:
  - Is deferred from work activities
  - Is a victim of domestic violence
  - Is employed and meeting participation requirements or is active EFIP
  - Lives in a county with an unemployment rate at least 25% higher than the state average unemployment rate
- Each month of a sanction period applies toward the 48 month lifetime limit

As of February 28, 2011, there are 11,602 FIP cases (or 16.81% of FIP cases) that exceed the 60-month federal TANF time limit.

Please direct all FIP related questions to:

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