
Best Practice Fact Sheet – Addressing Major Barriers

MINNESOTA’S PARTNERSHIPS FOR FAMILY SUCCESS (PFS) -

Anoka County

Program

Description: In-depth, in-home screening followed by one year of intensive, family-based case management, weekly home visits, support groups and SSI facilitation.

Target Population: Low-income families with multiple barriers who are served by more than one department within Anoka County Human Services with income less than 200% FPL and failing to progress

Goals: Prepare parents for employment, help them get and keep competitive jobs and meet the demands of other human services departments in which they are involved (e.g., child welfare) or transition to SSI

Caseload Data: As of March 2007, 229 families were in the PFS caseload and the initiative had served about 420 households of which approximately 85 percent were TANF clients.

Experienced case manager’s caseload is 12-15 clients with at least weekly home visits, with intervening telephone calls and life skills training. Staff are available during non-standard work hours for family events and weekly for a multidisciplinary case staffing.

Cost: Current budget is approximately \$700,000/annual for staff salaries.

Evidence: Mathematica briefs – descriptive output studies and the Urban Institute Study, Minnesota’s Integrated Services Project multicomponent study employing a range of research strategies and data sources.

Assessment: A designated intake worker completes a one-hour psychosocial assessment in the client’s home.

Description of Services:

- The Partnerships for Family Success (PFS) program is designed to improve service coordination and communication for families served by multiple departments within the Anoka County Human Services.
- The PFS program began in 2003, was part of Minnesota’s Integrated Services Project and continues to this day. Minnesota is a State-supervised, County-administered TANF program.
- PFS is comprised of a team of workers that represent each of the different departments within Anoka County Human Services, including Corrections, Community Health and Environmental Health Services Community Social Services and Mental Health, Income Maintenance (which provides TANF) and the Workforce Center (which operates the Vocational Rehabilitation program and provides employment and training services to TANF and WIA job seekers).
- Agency representatives/TANF case managers make the initial program referral to the PFS program, after which the client goes through a formal intake process and psychosocial assessment to determine if they are appropriate for the program.
- A designated intake worker completes a psychosocial assessment during a one-hour home visit. They use a series of standardized measures and screening tools (covering work history, educational background, social supports, employment barriers, strengths and weaknesses and learning disabilities), direct observations of the client’s home and parenting skills and interactions with the children in the home. The intake worker then probes about more

sensitive personal and family challenges such as mental health conditions, chemical dependency, child protection services involvement and family violence. The client signs any necessary releases granting the intake worker the ability to contact providers, services, or other agencies and obtain necessary collateral information.

- Assessment results and additional collateral verification are compiled into a written report (process typically takes 5 weeks) and reviewed with a clinical supervisor and senior case manager to determine whether to accept the client into the program. If accepted, the report is used to match the client to an intensive case manager based on the client's service needs.
- Intensive case managers specialize in specific areas including juvenile and criminal justice, chemical dependency, employment and vocational rehabilitation, public health, child protection, mental health, chemical dependency, housing and for those pursuing SSI, disability advocates.
- The intensive case manager provides, on average, one year of intensive, family-based case management via weekly home visits to help the client balance work and family responsibilities, although there is no limit for how long services might continue. Contacts and supports decrease as the client becomes more self-reliant. The intensive case manager is the designated staff person to:
 - Help the client access work supports (child care and transportation), meet their basic needs (housing and food), get to doctor or counseling appointments.
 - Teach life skills (e.g., problem-solving and organizational skills), basic work habits and addresses the medical and educational needs of the children.
 - Coordinate the services and requirements for each Anoka County department involved with the client.
- The intensive case manager is co-located with other intensive case managers from each of the departments involved with the collaboration. The PFS team is led by a clinical supervisor from adult mental health. The PFS team meets weekly for two hours to share resources, make recommendations for specific families and discuss ways to integrate policies and procedures and strengthen service delivery.
- Client support groups are available every two weeks with guest speakers who discuss parenting and work-related topics.
- Job-ready clients with transportation and child care are referred to a vocational rehabilitation counselor (co-located in the One-Stop Center) for job placement. After the client gets a job, his or her intensive case manager continues to provide support to address his or her work-related needs.

Eligibility:

Financial eligibility consists of household income of less than 200% FPL, including TANF clients, served by more than one department within Anoka County Human Services; acceptance is based on the results of a one-hour, in-home psychosocial assessment.

TANF Client Findings:

- Increased SSI receipt
- Increased quality of life (child behavior, dependent care, education, health, housing, financial, personal skills, social support and transportation)
- Most household successfully exit the program within 12 months, with the majority of issues resolved.

Implications for Policymakers and Program Developers to Consider:

- Critical success factors include a team approach that brings together experts via weekly two-hour team meetings and co-location of staff.
- Assessments identify clients who need specialized services to progress, may reduce sanctions for failure to participate (since noncompliance may be based on the inability, rather than the refusal, to comply), identify unknown treatment needs and provide detailed information to guide employment planning and decision-making.
- Key case management elements include (1) initial and ongoing assessments to identify needed supports; (2) use of skilled and specialized staff; (3) intensive services approach with small caseloads; (4) efforts to blend supports with work; (5) access to physical and mental health treatment; and (6) supports that strengthen families.

- Psychosocial assessments help put clients' disabilities into context, identifying how the disability affects important areas of their lives and result in a comprehensive service plan to address treatment, service and employment needs.

Resources:

Minnesota's Partnerships for Family Success program was recommended by Doctor Donna Pavetti of the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities. Information was also provided by Jeff McDonald, Supervisor: Partnerships for Success Anoka County (763-717-7858) [/jeff.mcdonald@co.anoka.mn.us](mailto:jeff.mcdonald@co.anoka.mn.us)

["Conducting In-Depth Assessments"](#) Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (February 2008)

["Providing Specialized Personal and Work Support"](#) Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (February 2008)

["Assisting TANF Recipients Living with Disabilities to Obtain and Maintain Employment: Final Report"](#) Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (February 2008)

["The Minnesota Integrated Services Project: Final Report on an Initiative to Improve Outcomes for Hard to Employ Welfare Recipients"](#) The Urban Institute, January 2009

The Urban Institute's Minnesota Integrated Services Project

The Integrated Services Project evaluation sponsored by DHS and funded by the McKnight Foundation and DHS, is a multicomponent study employing a range of research strategies and data sources. The evaluation includes an implementation study and a study of participants' employment, welfare, and family related outcomes based on administrative data and information collected through the Employability Measure.

This report focuses on describes the longer-run economic outcomes for program participants. The report examines the outcomes of individuals who enrolled in the program after its inception in April 2005 through June 2006. This results in 987 participants across all the sites distributed as follows: Anoka County, 306 participants; Chisago County, 82; Crow Wing County, 86; Hennepin County, 93; Ramsey County, 123; Red Lake, 46; St. Louis County, 156; and Washington County, 95. The following data sources are used in the study: baseline demographic data, self-screening, screening tools, SSI, unemployment insurance and TANF data, field research, case file reviews and focus groups.