



June 30, 2015

Contact: Karen Smigielski
Communications
651-431-2190
Karen.Smigielski@state.mn.us

Low-income families get a boost from new investments

Changes effective July 1 help make housing, child care more affordable

Beginning Wednesday, new state investments will help thousands of struggling families pay for housing and child care, making a significant difference in the lives of Minnesota's neediest children.

"Too many children are living in poverty without proper housing and other basics," said DHS Assistant Commissioner Jim Koppel, Family and Children Services. "These investments will help families trying to stretch their monthly budgets to care for their children and provide them healthier, more successful lives."

A new housing grant will give many families in the [Minnesota Family Investment Program](#) an additional \$110 a month to help offset housing costs. Approximately 19,500 families a month are expected to receive the housing assistance, which was enacted by the 2013 Legislature. These grants will go to families who do not live in public housing or receive rental assistance.

An additional 300 families and more than 600 children will receive help with more affordable child care through the [Basic Sliding Fee assistance program](#). The program helps low-income families who work or attend school with child care assistance. The 2015 Legislature provided an additional \$10 million over the coming 2016-17 state biennium to reduce the program waiting list. Approximately 4,500 families are currently on the waiting list.

In addition, a change effective Oct. 1 will provide families who receive [child support](#) up to an additional \$100 per month for one child and \$200 for families with two or more children. An estimated 6,000 families a month who qualify for MFIP are expected to benefit from the provision.

Other recent investments to help make children's lives better include crucial reforms and investments in the child protection system and additional funding for homeless and sexually exploited youth. More information on these and other legislation is on the [DHS website](#).

Overall Minnesota has a strong record for child well-being, but not all share this experience. An estimated 325,000 children live below the federal poverty level (\$24,250 for a family of four or \$15,930 for a family of two.) An estimated 70,000 live in deep poverty, with incomes half of

those amounts. Poor children are less likely to be ready for kindergarten, and more likely to experience involvement with the criminal justice system and have more health risks.

“Stable housing and strong early childhood experiences are two of the best ways to ensure these children have a bright future,” Koppel said.

-30-