


# Economic Instability in Minnesota

**611,000 Minnesotans**

 (including 189,000 children under age 18) live in households that are **below** the federal **poverty threshold.\***

→ **\*\$20,160 for a family of three in 2016.**

*“There is much poverty and homelessness in rural Minnesota. In the churches, we experience it firsthand, as we are often the first place people turn for help. In our area, we can provide some help, but our limited food shelves and emergency resources aren’t enough.”*

~ Rev. Tony Romaine, Staples

**The Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) helps families meet their basic needs while working toward financial stability.**



**7 of 10 MFIP recipients are children**

→ **50% of those are under age 5** 



## Meeker County

Population: 23,102

Households in Poverty: 10% (up from 6.9% in 2000)

Children Receiving Free/Reduced Lunch: 38.2%

Families Receiving the Working Family Credit: 13%

Average Amount of Credit: \$647

Active MFIP Cases: 41

Pounds of Food Distributed from Reporting Food Shelves: 135,326 (144% increase from 2004)

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.

Proverbs 31: 8-9

Poverty Data from the US Census Bureau (2014)

Free and Reduced Lunch Data from the Minnesota Department of Education (2015-16)

Working Family Credit Data from the Minnesota Department of Revenue (2013)

MFIP Data from the Minnesota Department of Human Services (July 2016, includes those adults in the Diversionary Work Program)

Food Shelf Data from Hunger Solutions Minnesota (2014)

For more information on Minnesota’s children and families, visit the Minnesota KIDS COUNT 2016 County Fact Sheets by Children’s Defense Fund - Minnesota at [cdf-mn.org](http://cdf-mn.org).



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## **2017 Legislative Agenda** **Moving Families Into Economic Stability**

### **Strengthen the Safety Net for Low-Income Families and Children**

The Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) provides work support and temporary cash assistance for children and their parents - often low wage workers between jobs. MFIP cash assistance for a family of three is a maximum of \$532 per month. It has not changed since 1986. We support an increase of \$100 per month for these families.

### **Remove the Marriage Disincentive for Families on MFIP**

Under current law, parents on MFIP often lose their benefits when they marry, based on the addition of the new spouse's income. This loss of benefits creates a disincentive for couples to marry. We know children benefit from stable families with two parents. Under our proposal, families participating in MFIP would be eligible to continue their participation for 18 months after they marry, without regard to the new spouse's income. They would receive no additional funds for marrying.

### **Improve the Working Family Credit and Increase Assets for Working Families**

The Working Family Credit provides a tax credit for working people with lower incomes, helping them meet basic needs and support their families. JRLC supports expansion of the Credit to provide tax relief to these families and to include younger workers.

**The Joint Religious Legislative Coalition is part of the following coalitions:  
Homes For All | Kids Can't Wait | Minnesota Asset Building Coalition | Prosperity for All**

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