Minnesota’s MFIP Results Initiative

NAWRS 2014
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Low-Cost RCT Goals

Test a question of policy importance

Using administrative data

Embedded in work already planned

Build capacity of our research team
Project Partners

MEF Associates
Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy – Low Cost RCT Competition

University of Minnesota
“What do we want to know?”

Can Minnesota’s welfare-to-work program achieve *equally good or better* employment-related outcomes by focusing on *results* rather than on *process*?
Process and Results

• **Federal Work Participation Rate**
  – Measures participation in limited set of activities
  – Minimum hours requirements
  – Applies only to TANF funded families

• **Minnesota’s Self-Support Index**
  – Created around goals of MFIP
  – Looks at families over time
  – Covers all families receiving cash assistance
Units of Randomization

• Minnesota has 87 counties
  – Two largest (Hennepin and Ramsey) are excluded

• Counties that operate as a consortium need to be combined.
  *(thirteen counties: 4 consortiums)*

\[ n = 76 \]
Control
Continue to operate under Work Participation Rate and its requirements.

Treatment
Operate under results measures, plus improved management reports, management learning community, frontline worker training, and local implementation teams.
Measures

Three-Year Self-Support Index

Employment
- Percent employed
- One year of continuous employment

Earnings
- Average earnings
- Percent with increased earnings
- Average earnings as a percent of FPG

Training
- Percent in training or work experience activities
Implementation Study

How do local partners use their new flexibility to change service delivery?

• Online staff survey
• Qualitative interviews with staff in treatment counties
• On-site survey of program participants
Current Design: \( n = 76 \)

Power = .8

\( \alpha = .05 \)

MDE = .043

Tensions in power analysis

Wanting to keep analysis simple

Having enough power to draw conclusions
# Project Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Planning: Research design and intervention</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Rollout: Treatment counties begin implementation</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Experiment continues</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Data available for final analysis</td>
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