

Get Ready Guide for Workforce One Connect App



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Contents

Get Ready Guide for Workforce One Connect App	1
Contents	2
Glossary of Terms.....	4
Purpose of this Guide.....	5
Project Background.....	5
WF1 Connect App Features	5
How the App Works.....	6
Statewide Staggered Rollout of the WF1 App	6
Soft Launch.....	6
Statewide Staggered Rollout of the App.....	6
Information and Resources for WF1 Connect App	6
WF1 Connect Learning Network Meetings	6
WF1 Sprint Meetings	7
WF1 Connect User Acceptance Testing	7
WF1 Connect Tools and Communication Strategies.....	7
DEED WF1 Connect Tools for Counties, Tribes, Financial, Child Care and Employment Services Workers	7
Staff Tools	7
Participant Tools	8
Public Awareness	8
Trainings for Financial, Child care and Employment Services Workers.....	8
Training Timeline and Training Content.....	8
WF1 Navigation Training for Financial and Child Care Workers	9
WF1 Connect App training for employment services workers	9
Training for Financial Workers, Employment Services and Child care Workers who are not Trainers or Champions...	9
WF1 Connect Training for Trainers/Train-the-trainers.....	9
WF1 Connect Training for Across-Agency Champions.....	9
Customer Support.....	10

Get Ready: What County, Tribal and Employment Service Providers Need to Do Now to Prepare for the App	11
Worker Message Notifications.....	11
Counties Tribes and Employment Services:.....	11
Create Processes to Ensure Participant Messages and Documents are Addressed	11
Questions to Consider:.....	11
Decisions about Case Banking.....	12
Introduction of the App to Participants	12
Assisting the Participant with Troubleshooting Issues with the App	12
Child Care	12
Ongoing App Maintenance and Enhancements	13
Reports Available In WF1	13
Contact Information.....	13
DHS WF1 App Lead Team Members	13
DEED WF1 App Lead Team.....	13

Glossary of Terms

WF1	Workforce One, DEED workforce programs system
Providers	County, Tribal, Employment Services, and child care staff
Assigned Staff	County, Tribal, Employment Services, and child care workers who are the assigned workers for the case
Caseworkers/workers/case managers	County, Tribal, Employment Services, and child care workers who are the assigned workers for the case
Trainers/Train-the-trainers	Staff chosen by leadership in counties, tribes and employment services providers. Trainers will include financial workers, child care workers and employment services workers who will attend a virtual training with DEED and then train the staff at their agency. They will also help with customer support at their agency.
Across-Agency Champions	Staff chosen by leadership in some counties, tribes and employment services who will attend a virtual training with DEED. Not all counties, tribes, employment service, or child care assistance program providers will have an across- agency champion. These will most likely be WF1 security administrators. These trained champions will help with customer support across agencies.

Purpose of this Guide

This guide is for directors, managers, supervisors and frontline staff of county, tribal, child care assistance, and employment services agencies to help plan and prepare for the statewide rollout of the app. This guide will address some of the processes and procedures that agencies will need to think about and prepare for at their respective agencies. The guide will help prepare financial, child care, and employment services staff who serve MFIP, DWP and SNAP Employment and Training participants. Before reading this guide, it is very helpful to read the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document located on the DHS County Link Website [WF1 Connect app resources for Providers \(state.mn.us\)](#) and on [SIR](#) (county staff) under WF1 Connect App section.

Project Background

In 2016, The Minnesota Department of Human Services worked in partnership with the Future Services Institute (FSI) to develop and implement a communication app for MFIP participants, called MFIP Connect. DHS and FSI piloted the app in several counties across the state from 2016 - 2021. DHS planned to expand the pilot app and build a statewide app at the completion of the pilot project. Beginning in 2019, DHS began a partnership with DEED to build an updated mobile app for customers receiving both DHS and DEED programs focused on career services modeled after MFIP Connect.

WF1 Connect App Features

This new app, known as WF1 Connect, will be available to all participants accessing DEED career services programs and includes participants who are eligible for MFIP, DWP, and SNAP Employment and Training. The participants who choose to use the app can message their assigned financial, child care and employment services workers through the app. The app will improve communication allowing for an easy and convenient way for assigned staff and participants to send and receive important case information and documents, avoiding loss of services to participants.

The app will allow participants to:

- Communicate with their assigned financial assistance, employment services, and child care workers
- Securely submit and receive required documents to their workers and
- Access a directory of local resources.

The app will allow staff to:

- Receive and respond to messages in the WF1 case management system
- Download documents and upload them into WF1's electronic document storage or other county and tribal electronic systems
- Copy message content to case notes

Future enhancements of the app will include:

- The app in Somali, Hmong and Spanish language (note that this doesn't mean the app will translate text written by participants into other languages)
- Electronic signature capability
- Integration with current system modernization projects.

How the App Works

Participants download the app on their phones via the App Store or the Play Store, depending on the type of smartphone. Before they are able to use the app, the employment counselor must give the participant access to the app, which happens in the Workforce One (WF1) system. Once the worker gives the participant access to the app and the participant has agreed to the consent for using the app, they are able to use the app to communicate with MFIP, DWP, child care, and SNAP E&T staff assigned to the case. Participants are able to send and receive messages and documents in the app to their assigned workers.

The financial, child care and employment services workers access messages and documents sent by the participants in WF1. There is an option to receive notifications each time a participant sends a message to an assigned staff. DHS is requiring that all workers receive the notifications for the first six months of statewide launch. After the first six months of statewide app launch, a county, tribe or employment service provider may opt into the message notifications feature in WF1. Workers can also regularly log in and check their messages on the WF1 dashboard. Workers will login to WF1 using a username they receive from DEED/MNIT. When they login to WF1 the first time, they set their password. They navigate to the messages link from their dashboard. The new messages show in bold, much like regular email.

Statewide Staggered Rollout of the WF1 App

Soft Launch

Although User Acceptance Testing (UAT) for WF1 Connect was completed and the new functionality in WF1, the best way to verify that an app works is to try it. The app will roll out with a small group of our providers first – a group of about 15 of the 200 providers served by DEED. Counties, tribes and employment service providers have volunteered and DEED and DHS evaluated the program, size and geography mix to determine the soft launch providers.

DEED will train the soft launch providers first, beginning the last week of April. The training is a “train-the-trainer” approach, meaning the people who attend this training will train others at their agency. The soft launch will begin May 20, 2021 or after, as the providers are ready to begin.

Statewide Staggered Rollout of the App

The staggered statewide rollout of WF1 Connect will begin in late June 2021. A timeline and information about the statewide staggered rollout is coming soon. DEED/DHS will conduct trainings for train-the-trainers from counties, tribes and employment services providers approximately one month before they are scheduled to begin using the app. You will receive more information about the training as we get closer to the staggered rollout dates.

Information and Resources for WF1 Connect App

WF1 Connect Learning Network Meetings

The Learning Network planning workgroup has met since 2019. DHS and DEED host this 90-minute monthly meeting via Web-ex. Staff from all counties, tribes and employment services agencies are invited to attend. The meetings include staff from DHS, DEED, and SNAP E&T from county, tribal and partner agencies. Please contact Ma Yang (ma.yang@state.mn.us) if you would like to attend.

The Learning Network Meetings include:

- New updates and progress on the app
- Demonstrations on app features and how to navigate in WF1
- Demonstration of mobile app (demonstration of participant user experience)
- Decisions made about the app and rollout and how to prepare/implement at your agency
- Opportunities for feedback, input, questions and participation during the build of the app.

WF1 Sprint Meetings

DEED hosts monthly Sprint meetings to provide an overview of the work completed during their 20 day “Sprints” (the timeframe of work). These meetings include WF1 system updates and enhancements as well as updates and demonstrations of the WF1 Connect app. There is also a time for questions and answers. Attendees are the users/partners on the Sprint review email list, which includes those who attend Learning Network meetings. A WebEx recording is sent to the Sprint review email list after the meeting, but can also be accessed by going to www.mnworkforceone.com. If you would like to participate in the Sprint meetings, e-mail Annie Tietema (annie.tietema@state.mn.us).

WF1 Connect User Acceptance Testing

DEED held the WF1 Connect app user acceptance testing (UAT) from February 26 through March 8, 2020. DHS and DEED solicited volunteers for the testing from around the state. Staff from county, tribal and employment services agencies helped to recruit participant volunteers to test the app as well. Many staff and participants completed the testing. The testing did not reveal any major barriers, and the app timeline moved ahead on schedule.

WF1 Connect Tools and Communication Strategies

DHS and DEED will produce training materials and guides to facilitate the marketing and the use of the app by participants and staff. Training materials are both written and recorded formats and available on the DHS County Link site [WF1 Connect app resources for Providers \(state.mn.us\)](http://www.mnworkforceone.com) as well as the DEED website [Workforce One \(WF1\) / Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development \(mn.gov\)](http://www.deed.mn.gov) and on [SIR](#) (for county staff) in WF1 Connect App section.

DEED WF1 Connect Tools for Counties, Tribes, Financial, Child Care and Employment Services Workers

DEED and DHS created the following tools to assist participants and staff. See links above to access these documents.

Staff Tools
<p>Get Ready Guide</p> <p>For directors, managers, supervisors and frontline staff of county, tribal, child care assistance, and employment services agencies to help plan and prepare for the statewide rollout of the app.</p>
<p>WF1 Connect App Timeline for Statewide Staggered Rollout (coming soon)</p> <p>Shows timeline lists counties and tribes statewide staggered rollout plan.</p>
<p>Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)</p>

Staff Tools
The WF1 Connect App Stands in the GAP (staff benefits)
Making the Workforce One (WF1) Connect App Work for You (staff how-to document)
Signage for Careerforce locations (coming soon) Posters that can be displayed in county, tribe and employment services offices.
Staff User Guides User guides for staff for navigation in WF1 and accessing messages and documents participants send through the app. DEED will share with trainers and will be available in WF1.
YouTube Videos for Staff (coming soon) YouTube video showing how workers will use the app.
Participant Tools
How to use the WF1 Connect App (WF1 Connect: Customer How-To Guide)
WF1 Connect App Customer One-Pager
YouTube Video for Customers (coming soon) YouTube video showing how participants will use the app.

Public Awareness

To create public awareness, DEED and DHS are planning press releases at full launch.

Trainings for Financial, Child care and Employment Services Workers

Training Timeline and Training Content

DEED will hold virtual trainings for the trainers/train-the-trainers and the across-agency champions beginning in late April for the soft launch providers. The trainers/train-the-trainers and across-agency champions will then train the workers at their agency. DEED will record the virtual trainings and they will be available to trainers and champions to use when they train their agency staff.

There are two trainings: One training for financial workers and child care workers who have not used WF1 and one training for employment services workers. The training will be approximately two hours.

WF1 Navigation Training for Financial and Child Care Workers

This training will focus on what workers new to WF1 will need to know to incorporate the App into their work. Training and demonstrations will include:

- App features
- How to log in and navigate in WF1
- How to access messages and documents in WF1 sent by participants
- How to respond to messages from participants in WF1
- How to download documents from WF1 to be uploaded into the workers EDMS.

WF1 Connect App training for employment services workers

Training and demonstrations will include:

- Features in WF1 for the app
- Navigation and use of the App features
- How to get messages and documents sent by participants
- How to respond to messages from participants
- How to save case notes from messages
- How to upload documents sent by participants to WF1 EDS.

Training for Financial Workers, Employment Services and Child care Workers who are not Trainers or Champions

Most workers will be trained by the trainers/train-the-trainers at their agency. The training is similar to the DEED training, and DEED will provide the trainers with training materials.

WF1 Connect Training for Trainers/Train-the-trainers

Counties, tribes and employment services providers will designate staff for trainers/train-the-trainers sessions. These staff should include, if possible, at least one financial, child care, and employment services worker from each county/tribe. Each county, tribe and employment service provider will decide, based on their needs, how many trainers/train-the-trainers they will designate for their agency. Ideally, the trainers are trainers or lead workers who are comfortable with technology. The trainers/train-the-trainers will attend an approximately two-hour virtual training hosted by DEED. DEED will provide training guides to the trainers. Trainers will be connected to the network of trainers/train-the-trainers as well as to the across-agency champions as part of a support network for customer service.

The main duties of the trainers/train-the-trainers will be to:

- Provide training to the staff at their agency
- Problem solve participant issues with the app when the assigned case worker is not able to resolve for the participant
- Contact the across agency champion when unable to resolve the issue.

WF1 Connect Training for Across-Agency Champions

Across Agency Champions are selected by the county, tribe, employment services, or child care agency. Not all counties, tribes, employment services or child care agencies will have an across-agency champion. DEED will solicit volunteers

from across the state to serve in this role. The ideal person is tech savvy, possibly a WF1 security administrator or agency system manager, and most likely work for our employment services providers. Champions will attend both virtual trainings held by DEED and then will provide customer support across worker roles in your agency and other agencies as needed. Champions will be connected to the network of trainers/train-the-trainers as well as to the across-agency champions as part of a support network for customer service.

The main duties of the across-agency champions will be to:

- Help problem solve participant issues with the app when the assigned case worker and the trainer/super user is not able to resolve for the participant
- Contact WF1 staff when unable to resolve the issue

Customer Support

The WF1 Connect support pyramid shows how users will receive the highest level of support to resolve any issue. Workers take the following steps to resolve a participant issue with the app:

1. The customer contacts employment services worker. The worker helps the participant with their question if they can.
2. If the worker is unable to help the participant, they contact the agency trainer/super user for assistance.
3. If the trainer is unable to resolve the issue with the app, they contact the across agency champion for assistance.
4. If the across-agency champion is unable to resolve the issue, they contact the WF1 Connect app team.



Get Ready: What County, Tribal and Employment Service Providers Need to Do Now to Prepare for the App

Worker Message Notifications

For the first six months of the app, WF1 will send workers an email notification to let them know when a participant has sent them a message in the app. This is to ensure that all messages are addressed as workers learn to incorporate the app procedures into their daily work. After the initial six months of automatic message notifications to workers, each county, tribe and employment services provider can choose to opt out of this functionality. The options are either all workers receive notifications or no workers receive messages notifications for your agency.

Counties Tribes and Employment Services:

- **Begin meeting with your employment services provider’s managers and supervisors** to collaborate and plan for the rollout of the app in your county.
- **Decide who will be your trainers/train-the-trainers** and attend the DEED training. These people will then train and provide support for the app to workers (financial, child care or employment services workers) at your agency. Counties and tribes should select at least one financial worker, one child care worker and one employment services staff to attend DEED’s training if possible (see the Trainers/Train-the-trainers section on pages 9 and 10).
- **Decide who will be your across-agency champion**, if you have someone who wants to serve in this role, and attend the DEED training. **Not all agencies will have an across-agency champion.** These people will provide support to all workers with customer support for all child care, financial and employment services workers at their agencies and other agencies as needed (see the Across-Agency Champions section on pages 9 and 10).
- **Create a timeline and procedures** to ensure all staff are trained in your county/tribe and employment services provider agencies.

Create Processes to Ensure Participant Messages and Documents are Addressed

Each county, tribe and provider will need to look at their current workflow process for how information and documents are processed.

Questions to Consider:

- What might need to change in the workers’ processes and procedures to assure that workers are acting on the participant information sent via the app in a timely manner?
- What is the county, tribe, or contracted agencies’ expectation for how often workers pick up messages in WF1 to assure timely responses and actions?
- How will workers share documents if a participant sends a document to the wrong worker? How do you currently share information known to the agency? Will you need to change your current process?

For example: A participant selects only the employment counselor when sending a message with the Household Report Form and pay information attached via the app.

What will be the expected next steps to make sure these documents get to the correct worker?

- What is the coverage process you will use when a worker is out?

Note: A worker from your agency can review documents and messages sent by participants as long as the conversation isn't marked private by the assigned worker and the cases is not designated as private.

- For the first six months after statewide launch, workers will get a message notification email when a participant sends a message via the app. After the initial six-month rollout, agencies may choose to turn off e-mail notifications for all workers at the agency. If the agency chooses to opt out of notification messages, what will be the county, tribe, or contracted agencies' expectation for how often workers pick up messages in WF1 to assure timely responses and actions?

Decisions about Case Banking

- For counties who use case banking teams, how will you instruct workers to check messages in WF1? Will your current processes/procedures be adjusted?

Introduction of the App to Participants

- How and when do you plan to introduce the app to participants?
 - Will you introduce this at financial orientation process, as part of the employment services overview, in the CCAP application packet or by another method?
 - Will all staff introduce and provide information or will this be done only by employment services staff?
- How will you use the marketing materials to introduce the App to participants?
 - Marketing materials will be available on the DHS County Link site [WF1 Connect app resources for Providers \(state.mn.us\)](#), DEED WF1 website [Workforce One \(WF1\)/Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development \(mn.gov\)](#), and on [SIR](#) (for eligibility staff) in WF1 Connect App section.
- Will you provide printed copies of DEED's how-to guides for participants?
- How will participants know whom to contact if they decide to use the app?

Assisting the Participant with Troubleshooting Issues with the App

- If the worker needs to consult the trainers for help with troubleshooting, what will be the agency's process for that?

Child Care

In 2020, 7,308 families were on MFIP/DWP child care assistance program (CCAP). The WF1 Connect app is currently only available to participants accessing DEED career services, including those eligible for MFIP and DWP, meaning the app will be available to about 7,308 child care assistance families across the State of Minnesota.

If you are in a child care assistance subcontracted agency (ACCAP, MAHUBE-OTWA, Lakes and Prairies, Think Small), we encourage you to reach out to your county agency to establish who the trainers and champions are for your area. You also have the option to designate a worker from your agency to be trained as a trainer for your agency.

Information and resources about the app will be stored on SIR. If you are a subcontracted agency and do not have access to SIR, or your access is limited, contact Angela Carlson at angela.r.carlson@state.mn.us for this information.

Ongoing App Maintenance and Enhancements

Upon completion of the App development, the WF1 team will support and maintain the App functionality using the annual WF1 maintenance budget. The DEED WF1 team will be responsible for the regular maintenance and enhancements to the App.

Reports Available In WF1

All staff who have access to WF1 will have access to app reports. The following are the reports that staff can access for the WF1 Connect app:

- Connect Messages Unread Detail-displays messages that have not been ready by staff
- Connect User Current Detail-list of persons who have mobile user accounts with active case assignments
- Connect User Demographic Summary-counts of inactive/active mobile users with open cases by age, gender, veteran status and race
- Connect User Usage Summary-counts of mobile users, conversations, and messages based on person with case assignment within report parameters
- Connect User View Detail-shows information that is displayed in WF1 Connect for a person, displays the contact and resources details viewable by the person.

Contact Information

DHS WF1 App Lead Team Members

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