

Michigan IV-D Child Support Manual
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

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1. Introduction

This manual section provides information about employment programs such as the Gain Employment, Maintain Support (GEMS) program, a collaboration between the Michigan IV-D program, the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO), and Michigan Works!.

GEMS provides employment opportunities for parents who pay child support and have lost employment, are underemployed, or are in need of occupational training to obtain consistent employment. GEMS started as a pilot call Learn, Earn, and Provide (LEAP) through a waiver program approved by the federal Office of Child Support Services (OCSS).

2. Background for Michigan Works! and LEO

Michigan Works! agencies¹ have been contracted by LEO to provide employment assistance and supportive services to Michigan residents who are unemployed or underemployed.

Michigan Works! can directly access hundreds of different programs, services and benefits for job seekers and employers. They regularly support job fairs, skills training workshops, and economic development events. Job seekers who qualify to receive Michigan Works! services are connected to a career coach who will assist them in reaching their education, training, and employment goals.

3. GEMS Program Goals

The main goal of the GEMS program is to assist support payers in retaining full-time employment² for 180 days or more and making at least six months of consistent (i.e., full and on-time) child support payments.³ Additionally, for 180 days after the participant obtains employment:

¹ [Exhibit 2022-013E1](#) shows which Michigan Works! office provides services in each county in Michigan. Contact information for each Michigan Works! regional office and its associated service centers can be found on [The Michigan Works! Network — Michigan Works! Association](#) website.

² Full-time employment consists of working 30 hours or more per week. Ref: [The Internal Revenue Service, "Identifying Full-time Employees."](#)

³ Ref: Subsection 8.2.1 of this manual section for more information on payments.

- The Friend of the Court (FOC) will monitor child support services and support payments; and
- Michigan Works! will provide and monitor supportive employment services.

The GEMS program creates an opportunity to engage with payers by helping them obtain and maintain consistent employment. Payment of support promotes healthier relationships between parents and children, which is another goal of GEMS. The GEMS program also meets the Michigan Child Support Program's Strategic Plan goal to improve the customer experience. It encourages payers' compliance with support orders and increases their positive interactions with the child support program.⁴

4. Eligibility Criteria

4.1 Eligibility

To participate in GEMS, the support payer⁵ must meet all of the following criteria:

- Have an open IV-D case;
- Live in and have an established order in one of the participating counties;⁶ and
- Has a support arrearage or circumstances that may soon lead to the inability to make payments.

Note: If the participant has a child support case in more than one county, only the child support case(s) in the participating counties will be eligible for GEMS.⁷

4.2 Ineligibility

An individual is ineligible to participate in GEMS if (s)he:

- Has a closed child support case, or the case closes while (s)he is enrolled in GEMS;
- Does not live in one of the participating counties or moves from a participating county;

⁴ Ref: [Michigan Child Support Program 2021-2024 Strategic Plan](#).

⁵ "Support payer" and "non-custodial parent (NCP)" are used interchangeably within the GEMS program and this manual section. Michigan Works! is familiar with the term "support payer." Because of limitations with GEMS's funding sources, staff cannot initiate GEMS referrals for custodial parties (CPs).

⁶ If a participant moves out of a participating county, (s)he will no longer be eligible to participate in GEMS.

⁷ If the participant has a child support case in multiple participating GEMS counties, the referring county will be the primary contact for the participant and Michigan Works!.

- Is incarcerated;
- Is awaiting a sentence that may include incarceration for committing a crime;
- Is medically unable to work; and/or
- Has unaddressed mental health or substance abuse issues that prevent participation in training or employment services and obtaining employment.

Note: An individual may participate in GEMS after release from incarceration or after addressing mental health or substance abuse issues.

5. Identifying Participants, Outreach, and Referrals

FOC staff may identify potential participants in their county and refer them to GEMS. The GEMS program is an opportunity for all support payers residing in the participating counties to receive employment assistance if they meet the eligibility requirements.

Michigan Works! staff may identify individuals who voluntarily inquire about the GEMS program as potential GEMS participants. Michigan Works! staff will provide the individual's name and contact information to FOC staff, and FOC staff will determine whether a referral is appropriate.

When identifying participants, FOC staff and Michigan Works! staff will work together to determine what procedure best suits their office.

5.1 Identifying Participants

FOC staff may identify potential GEMS participants through some of the methods used during the pilot program identified below. They may also use other methods.

FOC staff will conduct case assessments and review barriers to determine the issues preventing payment of support. If the payer is not paying support because (s)he is underemployed or unemployed, FOC staff may refer⁸ the payer to participate in GEMS. If a referral is not appropriate, FOC staff will determine their next steps, which may include adjusting the support order to reflect the ability to pay.

5.1.1 Show Cause Hearing Schedule

FOC staff can use past show cause hearing schedules to identify GEMS participants. FOC staff may print the show cause schedule from the past three to six months, review the schedule, and review what the support payer reported as income or employment at the show cause hearing. FOC staff should also review the support order to determine if the support payer is complying with the order. If the support payer is not

⁸ Ref: Subsection 5.3.2 of this manual section for information on the referral process.

complying with the order or not making payments, FOC staff may consider the support payer as a candidate for GEMS.

5.1.2 Self-Service Reporting (SSR)⁹

FOC staff may use the SR-015-*GEMS Report*,¹⁰ an SSR¹¹ report developed by the OCS Data, Statistics and Analytics Team, to assist with determining which support payers meet the criteria to become GEMS participants. This report includes information such as the amount of arrearages and the existence of bench warrants. Each participating office should create a procedure to routinely review the SR-015-*GEMS Report* to locate potential participants.

It is recommended that FOC staff review the following items on the *GEMS Report*:

- Support payers with arrears;
- Support payers with a recent unemployment benefit end date or an end date that is approaching soon;
- Support payers with a last payment date that is beyond two to three months in the past;
- Support payers with a combination of an active income withholding notice (IWN), the most recent payment date within the last two to three months, and 80 percent of current support paid;
- Support payers with an inactive IWN; and
- Support payers' contact information to ensure that the most up-to-date information is in the Michigan Child Support Enforcement System (MiCSES).

5.1.3 Contempt Ability to Pay Screening (CAPS) Screen

FOC staff may also use the CAPS screen¹² in MiCSES to identify potential GEMS participants when reviewing support payers' ability to pay support.

5.2 Outreach

Outreach can be performed by FOC staff or Michigan Works! staff or a combination of both agencies. FOC staff or Michigan Works! staff may use the

⁹ SSR is a function in Business Objects that allows users to create and run their own reports.

¹⁰ The report may be found in Business Objects at this path: Corporate categories > CSES reports > FOC reports > SR-015 GEMS Report.

¹¹ Ref: [Quick Start Guide: Self-Service Reporting](#) for more information on using the SSR function.

¹² Ref: [MiCSES Screen Description: CAPS – Contempt Ability to Pay Screening screen](#) for more information on using the CAPS screen.

[GEMS Script](#) (Ref: [Exhibit 6.10E1](#)) as a guide to introduce the program to potential participants.

5.2.1 FOC Staff

After identifying potential participants and determining a referral may be appropriate, FOC staff will contact the support payer and provide the [GEMS Participant Handout](#) (Ref: [Exhibit 6.10E2](#)), which includes information about GEMS and the benefits of the program.

After the support payer is notified and agrees verbally or in writing to participate, FOC staff will send¹³ an individual referral form¹⁴ to the Michigan Works! career coach.¹⁵

5.2.2 Michigan Works!

Michigan Works! hosts seminars and attends conferences where they share information about the GEMS program. If an individual is interested or wants to learn more about the GEMS program, the Michigan Works! career coach will forward the information to the FOC in the county where the individual lives. FOC staff will decide whether a referral is appropriate.

5.3 Referrals

5.3.1 Types of Referrals

All participating FOC county offices will allow voluntary referrals but may also use court-ordered referrals. Voluntary referrals can include situations in which the FOC first attempts to obtain the parent's agreement to participate in the program before requesting the court to order participation. To participate in GEMS, counties cannot use exclusively court-ordered participation if they are not also permitting parents' agreement in advance of the order. Individuals who agree to participate are more engaged in the program which results in better outcomes. As identified in the IV-D Program's Operating Principles, it is best to delegate decision-making opportunities to case participants and win, rather than force, compliance. Finally, LEO and Michigan Works!, as partners in GEMS, have specified that they do not wish to receive exclusively non-voluntary referrals.

¹³ The FOC must encrypt any confidential information emailed to Michigan Works!, including names of potential participants. Ref: [Section 1.10, "Confidentiality/Security," of the Michigan IV-D Child Support Manual](#) for more information. The password for the encrypted email must be sent separately.

¹⁴ Ref: Subsection 5.3.2 of this manual section for more information on the referral form.

¹⁵ The Michigan Works! career coach is a staff person at Michigan Works! who is assigned to assist GEMS participants.

A. Voluntary Referrals

Support payers may voluntarily agree to participate in GEMS to acquire more employment skills. FOC offices will provide opportunities for voluntary enrollment.

If a support payer requests referral and (s)he meets the eligibility criteria mentioned in Subsection 4.1 above, FOCs in participating counties will make the referral. If there is a good reason not to initiate the referral despite the support payer's request, the FOC will document the reasons in the *Notes Processor* (NOTE) screen.

B. Judge/Referee Court-Ordered Referrals

FOC staff may educate judges and referees regarding GEMS and its benefits. A judge or a referee may order unemployed or underemployed support payers who attend show cause hearings for nonpayment of support to participate in GEMS as part of a court order. When a judge or referee orders a support payer to participate in GEMS, FOC staff will begin the referral process.

FOC offices may inform Michigan Works! representatives of virtual and in-person show cause hearings for eligible support payers, and Michigan Works! staff may appear at the FOC office after these hearings. Support payers can meet virtually or in-person with Michigan Works! staff to learn about the GEMS orientation process.

Note: FOC staff do not have to wait for a show cause hearing to refer support payers to GEMS.

5.3.2 Referral Process

Once a participant is identified and contacted through the court or volunteers to participate, FOC staff will prepare the [GEMS Referral Form](#) (Ref: [Exhibit 6.10E3](#)) and forward it to Michigan Works!. The GEMS Referral Form will provide Michigan Works! staff with information about the participant, including but not limited to:

- Name;
- Address;
- Phone number;
- IV-D member ID; and
- IV-D case number.

When completing the form, FOC staff may need to ask the participant for information that is not available in MiCSES (e.g., veteran status).

FOC staff can select employment services on the GEMS Referral Form based on their understanding of the participant's interests and needs. However, Michigan Works! staff will conduct a thorough assessment and make the final decision regarding employment services they will offer to the GEMS participant.¹⁶

If FOC staff determine that a potential GEMS participant has experienced family violence, they will note it on the GEMS Referral Form in the field labeled *Please enter any significant problems or concerns that the participant may have*. This will ensure Michigan Works! staff are aware that there may be a family violence issue, and they will need to ask questions regarding the child support case to ensure there are safeguards in place for all participants.¹⁷

After completing the GEMS Referral Form, FOC staff will enter information on the *Grant and Pilot Program Management (GAPM)* screen¹⁸ in MiCSES and send the form in an encrypted email¹⁹ to the designated Michigan Works! staff member for the county. Michigan Works! will provide contact information for the designated Michigan Works! staff members.

6. Registration, Orientation, and Enrollment

6.1 Registration

GEMS registration begins when Michigan Works! receives the referral from the FOC. Michigan Works! staff will enter the participant's information from the GEMS Referral Form into the One Stop Management Information System (OSMIS). Michigan Works! staff will contact the potential participant by text message or phone call²⁰ and request any information necessary from the participant to complete the registration process.

Once the support payer has been formally registered with Michigan Works!, Michigan Works! policies, procedures and protocols will apply to its communication and service to the support payer; for example, Michigan Works!

¹⁶ Ref: Subsection 7.3.1 of this manual section for information on the employment services Michigan Works! offers.

¹⁷ Michigan Works! staff screen for domestic violence as part of their normal intake process and take suitable precautions when necessary. FOC staff will provide this information on the referral form to assist Michigan Works! staff.

¹⁸ Ref: Subsection 7.2.1(A) of this manual section for more information on the GAPM screen.

¹⁹ Ref: Section 1.10 of the *Michigan IV-D Child Support Manual* regarding the confidentiality of IV-D information and the need to safeguard it.

²⁰ Potential participants seem to be more receptive to text messages than to letters sent through the U.S. Postal Service. During the pilot, some FOC offices attempted to reach out through letters sent in the mail. OCSS confirmed that this is one of the least effective means of recruitment.

communications are governed by its own security and confidentiality requirements – not by Title IV-D requirements.

6.2 Orientation

Participants must successfully complete orientation before they are considered enrolled in the GEMS program. The participant must complete orientation within 14 days after Michigan Works! receives the referral.

GEMS participants will attend orientation in-person. Each Michigan Works! region may conduct in-person orientation on one or multiple days per week. If a participant is unable to attend an orientation session, the Michigan Works! career coach will determine on a case-by-case basis if an alternate method or day is appropriate.

Orientation consists of GEMS participants completing and/or providing the following:

- [GEMS Participant Agreement](#) (Ref: [Exhibit 6.10E4](#));
- An individual service strategy providing Michigan Works! with the participant's employment history;
- A Michigan Works! Agreement; and
- Any additional information to allow Michigan Works! to provide employment services, such as the participant's education level, certifications, and any information that will guide Michigan Works! staff in finding training and/or employment.

Note: Once orientation is complete, the career coach must forward the GEMS Participant Agreement to the FOC.

If orientation is not completed within 14 days after Michigan Works! has received the GEMS Referral Form, or if the participant does not engage after orientation, Michigan Works! staff will contact the participant via telephone, mail, email, and/or text message and make appropriate notes in OSMIS for FOC awareness.²¹ The 14-day timeframe may be extended on a case-by-case basis upon agreement between Michigan Works! and the FOC.²² Michigan Works! staff will share their communication efforts through OSMIS notes and during periodic telephone calls with FOC staff.

6.3 Enrollment

After a GEMS participant completes orientation, (s)he will be enrolled in the GEMS program. Michigan Works! will conduct a comprehensive assessment to

²¹ Ref: Subsection 7.2.1(B) for information on FOC access to OSMIS.

²² The extension must be requested prior to the 14 days elapsing. OSMIS does not allow an extension after the 14 days have elapsed.

identify the participant's barriers, strengths, and skill levels. Michigan Works! will use this assessment for career planning and job development. The Michigan Works! career coach will provide the comprehensive assessment to the FOC upon request. GEMS participants will begin working with the career coach to start resume writing, job searches, job training, and other occupational or employment assistance. Michigan Works! will tailor its services based on the participant's barriers to employment.

FOC and Michigan Works! staff will monitor the enrolled participant for adherence to the guidelines in the GEMS Participant Agreement.

7. Program Responsibilities

Both FOC staff and Michigan Works! staff will use the [GEMS Talking Points](#) (Ref: [Exhibit 6.10E5](#)) to educate themselves about the GEMS process. This document provides a brief summary of eligibility, offered services, and the responsibilities for each organization.

When a new Michigan Works! region participates in GEMS, OCS trainers will give Michigan Works! staff an overview of the child support program. OCS will also provide answers to some of the frequently asked questions related to child support.

Once a participant finds employment and/or reports employment, both FOC staff and Michigan Works! staff must report the employment to the other within 24 hours of learning of the employment.

7.1 GEMS Partner Communication Plan

FOC staff and Michigan Works! staff will schedule, at a minimum, regular bi-weekly calls during which they will discuss participants' progress.²³

FOC staff may call Michigan Works! staff any time outside of the regular meeting time with questions about an individual participant's progress.

7.2 FOC Staff Responsibilities

7.2.1 Tracking GEMS Participation

A. *Grant and Pilot Program Management (GAPM) Screen*²⁴

²³ The counties piloting the program found the greatest success when FOC and Michigan Works! staff established a regular day and time for a teleconference. Calls were scheduled weekly during the pilot.

²⁴ Ref: [MiCSES Screen Description: GAPM – Grant and Pilot Program Management](#) for more information on the GAPM screen.

IV-D staff must use the MiCSES GAPM screen to manage enrollment in pilot programs, grant-funded programs, behavioral interventions, and other special programs.²⁵

FOC staff will include the county name when creating the GEMS program for their county on the GAPM screen. This will help other counties that run and view the reports and use the “filter by county” option. FOC staff will create a program on the GAPM screen and name it “GEMS – <County Name>” (e.g., GEMS – Kalamazoo). They will also include “NCP Employment Program” as the program description.

FOC staff will track GEMS participant information on the GAPM screen by:

- Entering GEMS participants into their county’s GEMS program upon referral;
- Entering the end-date of a GEMS participant’s participation upon termination or successful completion of the program and including a reason in the *Member Note* on the GAPM screen.

FOC staff will continue to enter notes about enforcement and/or review and modification on the MiCSES NOTE screen using “GEMS” as a keyword.

B. OSMIS

FOC staff in participating counties will have “read-only” access to OSMIS. FOC staff will check OSMIS as needed to view the participants’ progress with employment service activities. FOC staff must update MiCSES with docket-level or member-level notes that pertain to the referral process, and any information from OSMIS that may pertain to the child support case.

FOC staff will have access to OSMIS only to obtain information about IV-D case participants who are registered or enrolled GEMS participants. FOC staff must not use OSMIS for any other purpose.

FOC staff will complete the *IV-D Program Request for Computer Access* (DHS-393) or the *IV-D Program Request for Changing Computer Access* (DHS-395) to request access to OSMIS. FOC staff will complete the *IV-D Program Request to Delete Computer Access* (DHS-392) to remove access to OSMIS.

²⁵ FOC staff began using the GAPM screen to track pilot participants in January 2022.

7.2.2 Review of the Child Support Order

One of the goals of GEMS is to ensure that child support order amounts are based on the participant's current ability to pay. Upon or shortly after a participant's enrollment into GEMS, FOC staff will consider whether his/her child support order requires review and modification.²⁶ There are many factors FOC staff can consider when making this determination. These factors include but are not limited to whether:

- There has been a substantial change in circumstances since the last review;
- An unemployed participant can reasonably expect to find new employment quickly and at the same level as prior employment; and
- An unemployed participant may need to spend time in a training²⁷ program before seeking new employment.

The review and modification process can take up to 180 days to complete. While some GEMS participants may find new employment quickly after receiving resume assistance and refining their interviewing skills, other participants may need more intensive services and additional time to find employment. This will affect whether FOC staff choose to review and, if appropriate, modify a participant's order.

7.2.3 Exemption From Certain Enforcement Activities

FOC staff are encouraged to exempt participants from the discretionary enforcement activities discussed below while they are participating in GEMS. When exempting a participant from an enforcement activity, FOC staff will enter a note on the MiCSES NOTE screen. The note must describe the enforcement activity being exempted and include the words "GEMS exemption." This will allow evaluators to easily identify which enforcement activities the FOC has exempted for participants.

A. License Suspension

GEMS participants will likely require transportation to travel to meetings with Michigan Works!, to job interviews, and ultimately, to a job. If Michigan Works! staff indicate that license suspension is a barrier and a support payer is actively participating²⁸ in GEMS, FOC staff will reinstate a GEMS participant's driver's license or

²⁶ Ref: [Section 3.45, "Review and Modification," of the Michigan IV-D Child Support Manual](#) for more information.

²⁷ Training to obtain employment will last no more than 12 weeks, unless both FOC and Michigan Works! staff approve a request for an extension.

²⁸ "Actively participating" means that a person is communicating with Michigan Works! staff and participating in required activities.

occupational license if it has been suspended due to non-payment of support.

If FOC staff decide not to reinstate a participant's license, FOC staff must identify the criteria for reinstating the license and share them with Michigan Works! and the GEMS participant.

B. Bench Warrants

FOC staff may request the recall of bench warrants previously issued by the GEMS county due to non-payment of child support.

C. Passports

FOC staff will reinstate a passport²⁹ if it is necessary for employment.

D. Liens and Financial Institution Data Match (FIDM) Liens

Unless FOC staff have a concern that the participant will sell property while in the GEMS program, FOC staff will not lien houses, cars, or work equipment while the support payer is actively participating in GEMS. FOC staff may exclude support payers from FIDM due to participation in GEMS.

FOC staff can set the FIDM exclusion indicator³⁰ to "yes" to exclude the participant from FIDM prior to OCS Central Operations proceeding with a lien. Also, FOC staff can set the FIDM reason code to "NF" (no further action can be taken at this time) on the MiCSES *Enforcement Processor* (ENFP) screen and include a note on the NOTE screen with the exclusion reason as "NCP is participating in the GEMS employment program and FIDM is not being enforced at this time."

E. Arrears Management

FOC staff will use arrears management strategies to incentivize participation for GEMS participants who owe qualifying state arrears if the participants:

- Are successfully progressing in GEMS; and
- Meet the criteria in Subsection 4.2 of [Section 6.51, "Arrears Management," of the Michigan IV-D Child Support Manual.](#)

²⁹ Ref: [Section 6.24, "Passport Denial/Restriction," of the Michigan IV-D Child Support Manual.](#)

³⁰ Ref: [MiCSES Customer Information Guide: Tax Offset Process](#) for more information about manually setting MiCSES exclusions.

FOC staff will provide the [Request to Discharge State-Owed Debt \(DHS-681\)](#) to participants and may assist them in completing relevant sections of the form.

7.2.4 Reinstating or Continuing Enforcement Activities

If GEMS participants fail to comply with the program guidelines,³¹ FOC staff may reinstate any enforcement activity that was exempted during participation in GEMS. FOC staff may also take additional enforcement activities if a participant is non-compliant.

For a participant who also has a child support case in a county that is not participating in GEMS, enforcement activities in the non-participating county will continue.

Mandatory enforcement activities will continue while payers are participating in GEMS. These enforcement activities are:

- Credit reporting;
- State Tax Refund Offset (STRO)/Federal Tax Refund Offset (FTRO); and
- Income withholding.

7.2.5 Communication With Child Support Recipients

FOC staff are not required to notify a recipient of support when a support payer is participating in GEMS. However, it is possible that a support recipient will learn about the payer's participation and may have questions about the payer's exemption from various enforcement activities. If this occurs, FOC staff are encouraged to explain the GEMS program to the support recipient, emphasizing the program's expected positive outcomes, including the payer's increased ability to make consistent child support payments.

7.3 Michigan Works! Staff Responsibilities

7.3.1 Employment Services

Michigan Works! staff will be responsible for:

- Assessing participants for their individual needs;
- Conducting orientation, training,³² and employment services;
- Monitoring participants and following up throughout the program; and

³¹ The GEMS guidelines are explained in the GEMS Participant Agreement.

³² Training will last a maximum of 12 weeks, with the possibility of requesting more time if needed.

- Providing all services that are tailored to each individual participant.

The services provided by Michigan Works! may include but will not be limited to:

- Resume writing;
- Essential work skills;
- Job training; and
- Community service for occupational skills.

Michigan Works! will also help participants obtain GED training/ completion,³³ state IDs or driver's licenses, interview attire, work attire, and much more if participants do not have the resources to obtain these items on their own.

7.3.2 Supportive Services

Michigan Works! will determine appropriate supportive services on a case-by-case basis. Michigan Works! will provide each participant limited supportive services to obtain employment and may provide additional supportive services when a participant makes a child support payment within the first 30 days of employment. The Michigan Works! office will contact LEO when a participant needs additional services that require LEO approval.

Depending on the participant's needs and level of participation, Michigan Works! may provide the following supportive services³⁴ to remove barriers to employment:

- Transportation (such as bus passes, mileage reimbursement, or a vehicle purchase);
- Rent expenses (including first month's rent, deposits, and back payments);
- Utilities expenses (including back payments and assistance with shut-off notices);
- Fees associated with cell phone payments (including monthly, late and reactivation fees);
- A down payment for childcare expenses not covered by MDHHS; and/or
- "Ready for work" packs (planner, pens, clock, etc.).

³³ GED or General Educational Development is a test or program that a person successfully completes to earn the equivalent of a high school education.

³⁴ LEO will provide funding for the supportive services.

7.3.3 Michigan Works! Workshops and Programs³⁵

Michigan Works! may provide workshops for GEMS participants interested in learning about networking skills, interview preparation, career interests, teamwork, and other employability skills. The workshops will measure how well GEMS participants understand the work skills that employers value most. Michigan Works! will provide a certificate upon completion of a GEMS workshop.

Currently, Michigan Works! does not have workshops to encourage effective parental behavior and relationship building, or to discuss parenting challenges. However, Michigan Works! staff will identify GEMS participants in need of these services and refer them to available community resources.

7.3.4 Incentives

Michigan Works! may provide monetary incentives to participants for their achievements in GEMS.

A. Obtaining Employment

Participants must submit a copy of their first paystub to Michigan Works!. Michigan Works! will determine if participants qualify for the incentive for obtaining employment and will make the determination on a case-by-case-basis.

B. Retaining Employment

To receive the incentive for retaining employment, participants must:

- Provide a copy of their paystub every 30 days to Michigan Works!; and
- Make a child support payment within the first 30 days of employment.

C. Training

Participants will receive an incentive for completion of a training program, obtaining a license needed for employment, and

³⁵ Ref: [IV-D Memorandum 2022-013, Michigan Works! Programs and Services Available to Assist Non-Custodial Parents \(NCPs\)](#) for information on the programs Michigan Works! provides. IV-D staff sharing information about NCPs with Michigan Works! staff is governed by Section 1.10 of the *Michigan IV-D Child Support Manual*. If IV-D staff wish to contact Michigan Works! on the NCP's behalf and/or ask Michigan Works! to initiate contact with the NCP, they need to first obtain and document verbal or written permission from the NCP.

successfully completing GED training. Participants must provide proof of the license or the training completion.

Note: IV-D staff may view the [GEMS resources on mi-support](#) or contact their local Michigan Works! career coach to find information on various incentives in their region.

LEO will provide funding for these incentives using Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds. Participants will be encouraged to use the monetary incentive or a portion of it to make a child support payment but will not be required to do so.

7.3.5 GEMS Subsidized/Transitional Employment

GEMS subsidized/transitional employment³⁶ is an opportunity for GEMS participants to gain on-the-job occupational skills while the employer receives reimbursement for a portion of the wages paid to GEMS participants.³⁷ Employers will either work with participants who match the skills necessary for the employment opportunity or train GEMS participants for the specific skills that are necessary. Michigan Works! staff will work with employers to provide subsidized/transitional employment opportunities for GEMS participants.

GEMS participants will enter into a subsidized/transitional employment contract with an employer and Michigan Works! for a set timeframe. The employer will have the option to extend the contract for the GEMS participant upon the request of Michigan Works!. When the contract with the employer and the GEMS participant ends, the GEMS participant will be expected to continue the employment as unsubsidized employment.

Note: Subsidized/Transitional employment is currently available in some but not all Michigan Works! regions.

7.3.6 Follow-Up

Michigan Works! staff will use multiple methods to attempt to re-engage participants who miss appointments or services. Those methods include an email and/or a phone call after each of the first two missed appointments. If participants do not respond, Michigan Works! will contact the FOC to discuss follow-up for each participant on a case-by-case basis. If there is no response from additional attempts to re-engage, Michigan Works! will consult with FOC staff to determine if the participant will remain in the program.

³⁶ Ref: the GEMS resource page on mi-support for more information.

³⁷ LEO will use multiple funding streams, including but not limited to TANF funds, to pay the subsidy provided to employers for GEMS participants.

Michigan Works! staff will enter case notes in OSMIS regarding a participant's progress in the program, including any attempt to re-engage the participant.

8. Retention, Completion, and Termination

8.1 Retention

FOC staff and Michigan Works! staff will remain engaged with a participant while the participant is in GEMS and following GEMS guidelines. FOC staff and Michigan Works! staff may continue their involvement after the participant has retained employment for 180 days and made six months of continuous support payments.

FOC staff and Michigan Works! staff should encourage participants to remain engaged with:

- FOC staff regarding child support needs; and
- Michigan Works! staff regarding employment needs.

8.2 Successful Completion

Successful completion of GEMS consists of the following:

- Six consecutive months of full-time employment;
- Six consecutive months of full and on-time monthly payments for the current support obligation; and
- Six months of full arrearage payments and/or compliance with an arrearage management plan, if applicable.³⁸

FOC staff will update the GAPM screen and may provide GEMS participants with the Certificate of Completion upon successful completion of the program. At that time, if the participant's child support order has not been reviewed and adjusted to reflect the participant's current ability to pay, FOC staff will adjust the child support order accordingly.

Note: After successful completion of GEMS, and at the discretion of the FOC and Michigan Works!, a participant who requires additional employment services may repeat the program.

³⁸ If the Consumer Credit Protection Act (CCPA) limitations on income withholding prevent full payment of an expected arrearage amount, the participant will be considered successful with any payment on arrears during the six-month period.

8.2.1 Full and On-Time Monthly Payments

To meet the requirement for six consecutive months of full, on-time payments for the current child support obligation and/or arrearage, a GEMS participant may need to remain in GEMS after maintaining six consecutive months of employment.³⁹ FOC and Michigan Works! staff will discuss the situation to determine whether the participant has unrealized earning potential and should work toward a better-paying job, or whether the child support order should be reviewed and modified to reflect the participant's ability to earn.

When a GEMS participant has orders in multiple counties, payments on the order in the GEMS county may be considered full payments even if the support payer does not pay the full amount ordered. If the support payer cannot pay the support ordered in a GEMS county because the order amount in a non-participating county is too high, the GEMS county should reach out to the non-participating county to:

- Inform the county that the support payer is a GEMS participant; and
- Request that FOC staff conduct a review based on the support payer's new employment.

If the county that is not participating in GEMS does not review and adjust the support amount, "consistent payments" meet the requirement of "full payments."

8.2.2 Health Care Coverage

Participants can successfully complete GEMS even if they are not providing health care coverage as ordered.

8.3 Termination

Michigan Works! has identified the reasons a participant may be terminated from GEMS. Termination reasons include:

- Participant only attended orientation;
- Staff are unable to locate the participant;
- Participant refuses employment;
- Participant moves outside of the participating county;
- Participant becomes incarcerated while participating;
- Participant fails to attend scheduled occupational training or employment activities;

³⁹ Participants remaining in GEMS to fulfill the child support payment requirement will continue to receive employment services at the discretion of FOC and Michigan Works! staff.

- Participant displays patterns of tardiness;
- Participant fails to notify employer, Michigan Works! or FOC staff of the inability to participate in activities;
- Participant falsifies documentation related to employment;
- Participant displays misconduct, including threatening, physically abusing, or behaving disruptively toward anyone conducting or participating in employment-related activities; and
- Participant is fired or quits.

If a GEMS participant is subject to termination for any of the reasons mentioned above, Michigan Works! will consult with FOC staff to determine if the participant will remain in GEMS. If FOC staff and Michigan Works! staff disagree on a participant remaining in the program, they must contact designees from OCS and LEO to make the final decision. FOC staff will selectively reinstate enforcement activities (e.g., bench warrants, etc.) to encourage the participant to re-engage with GEMS activities.

When FOC staff and Michigan Works! staff agree to terminate a participant from GEMS, Michigan Works! staff will record the termination reason in OSMIS. FOC staff will update the GAPM screen and may resume the use of enforcement activities. Enforcement remedies that were exempted for a participant during GEMS may be reactivated after successful completion or termination.

After a participant is terminated from GEMS, the participant can be referred to GEMS again at the discretion of FOC and Michigan Works! staff. The participant will start the GEMS process from the beginning: complete orientation, sign a new GEMS Participant Agreement, and follow the necessary steps thereafter.

SUPPORTING REFERENCES: Federal
None

State
None

REVISION HISTORY: [IV-D Memorandum 2024-004](#)