

## **Data Request Procedure**

**Bureau of Working Families  
Division of Family and Economic Security  
Department of Children and Families  
July 1, 2008**

The Bureau of Working Families (BWF) provides consultation, data analysis and file creation on a variety of topics related to the Wisconsin Works (W-2) program. Many summary statistics are available at no charge on the Department of Children and Families Web site <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/>. If the information being sought is not offered on this site, BWF can produce summary statistics within the restrictions of state and federal laws, regulations and administrative rules.

### **Confidentiality**

BWF is governed by specific program statutes in addition to the statutory requirements of the Wisconsin Public [Open] Records Law (Sections 19.21 – 19.39, Wis. Stats.), and these statutes place restrictions on the release of records containing personal information. Also, other statutes or laws may apply to the disclosure of information from agency records.

### **Charges**

For data requests involving one-half hour or more of staff time, BWF will charge the requestor a standard Information Technology (IT) rate for all work expended to complete the request. This amount recovers the administrative costs incurred by BWF to execute the data request.

### **What Requestors Should Include in a Data Request**

To ensure that BWF meets a requestor's informational needs, a written description of the data request must be submitted to BWF. The data request should be as specific as possible and, at a minimum, should include the following information:

- The topic area of interest;
- A list of data items and their interrelationships (e.g., number of W-2 participants by payment placement);
- Time period (e.g., January to June, 2008);
- Geographic specifications (e.g., a specific county, Milwaukee County vs. the "balance of state"); and
- Any other selection criteria.

In addition, requestors should indicate the format(s) in which they would prefer to receive the data. (See note at end for details on data formats provided by BWF.)

## **Where to Send Data Requests**

Requests for information should be sent by e-mail ([michael.soref@wisconsin.gov](mailto:michael.soref@wisconsin.gov)) or postal mail to Michael Soref, Research and Statistics Section Chief, Bureau of Working Families, Department of Children and Families, 201 E. Washington Ave., Madison, WI, 53702.

## **How Data Requests Will Be Processed**

Upon receiving a data request, BWF will review the request to determine whether the requested data:

- Are available;
- May be released in accordance with applicable statutes, regulations and rules; and
- Require no further clarification or refinement.

If a request fails to meet any of these conditions, BWF will work with the requestor to modify the request accordingly. If the request meets all these conditions, BWF will estimate the anticipated cost and time required to complete the request. BWF will send a response by e-mail or postal mail within 10 business days.

## **Completing a Data Request**

Before BWF proceeds to fulfill a request, the requestor must agree in writing to the costs, terms and conditions outlined by BWF. This statement should be sent by e-mail or postal mail to Michael Soref.

Estimated completion dates depend upon the availability of resources, particularly staff time, and are based on the date that the requestor authorizes BWF to begin work. BWF will strive to fulfill requests as rapidly as needed by a requestor.

## **Billing**

In most instances, BWF will issue a bill or invoice upon delivery of the requested data. In cases where the request is especially large or complex, however, BWF reserves the right to require full or partial payment before delivery of the requested data. Payment instructions will be included in the invoice.

**Note on data formats:** BWF provides summary statistics in formats that are compatible with the Windows-based operating system. Tabular data typically are provided in a spreadsheet-based format (MS Excel), but upon request, can be provided in a relational format as well (MS Access). BWF staff also can present summary statistics graphically, such as in pie charts, bar graphs, etc., using MS PowerPoint or MS Excel. Wherever applicable, pertinent documentation is provided in a word-processing format (e.g., MS Word, WordPad).