

Notes

Policy and Program Operations Workgroup

2/22/2008

12:15 pm to 1:00 pm

45 Minutes

GEF 1 Room H205

Attendance:

Dijana Dzamonja, Margaret McMahon, Heidi Hammes, Jude Morse, John Wilberding, Marilyn Putz, Jennifer De Montmollin, Linda Richardson, Rebecca Brueggeman, Julie Kerksick, Phone: Christina Martin, Bev Belany, Stephanie Bender, Jill Johnson, Sharon Oldenburg, Pamela Nowak, Jose Martinez, Jennifer Brikowski

Policy Lead: Rose Prochazka

Draft Operations Memo Review: Heidi presented a draft Operations Memo regarding tracking activities in CARES that do not count toward the Federal TANF Work Participation rate. Beginning in April there will be the following new CARES activity codes: Ongoing Medical/Personal Care (MPP which will combine the formerly Other Medical (OM) and the Personal Care (PC) codes into one activity code.

A new code, Family Member Treatment/Counseling (FC) will be available to report activity related to appointments for another W-2 group member's health needs.

And beginning in April, there will be a change to the information related to SSI Advocacy (SD) activity is recorded in CARES. Daily, Weekly scheduled hours will no longer be entered, along with other fields that are not relevant to this activity.

There will also be a new definition to Employment Search (ES) which will clarify that travel from home to the first job interview and the return trip home following the last job interview do not count in hours completed.

Heidi asked that agency representatives review the draft with others at their office and provide feedback to her in one week.

180 Day Policy: Margaret explained that the department will not go forward with issuance of the 180 day policy Operations Memo. The 180 policy remains in statute, and in W-2 policy; forms will be updated to explain to customers that today's choices may affect one's eligibility in the future. This policy is not going to be strengthened/clarified at this time because it unclear how it fits with the direction of the new department and its strategic plan.

WP Subsystem: Rebecca stated that DFS staff are looking once again at changing the CARES WP subsystem to a web-based system. There was some discussion about the various previous plans to move to a web system. There was a recommendation to make a complete change-over instead of a phased-in approach.

EA Update: Jude explained that in the last biennial budget the EA allocation increased from \$4.5M to \$6M per year and explained that this increase does not cover the overspending that EA has seen in recent years. In past years unspent previous year TANF funds have been used to cover the EA overspending, but there is no more unspent TANF being carried over, leaving EA in a deficit. Annually \$1.3M of DWD's EA allocation has been allocated to DOA for the LIHEAP program; but this year that program has received additional federal funds and we do not know yet if the \$1.3M will be transferred to DOA's program this year.

The Ad Hoc EA Workgroup has submitted a number of recommendations.

- Set the EA income limit at 115% FPL
- Requires Admin Rule change: require that the child be in the home in the coming month
- Revise the paper EA application
- Require at least one face-to-face meeting with the applicant
- Develop an EA information sheet for applicants
- Allow EA to be used for relocation when the landlord won't stay the eviction or when the family cannot afford the current rent and will be unable to pay the rent next month
- Require a coordination of housing related services to EA applicants
- Enhance the EATS system, put the EA application into the EATS system
- Change the EA payment amount to more closely align with a typical month's housing cost
- Requires a statutory change: allow for overpayment collections when EA is issued in error or when there is fraud with the landlord or vendor

Jude announced that the EA section of the W-2 Manual is being updated and will be ready for publication later this spring.