

## W-2 Contractors' Meeting

**Location:** Skype

**Date:** April 28, 2021

**Time:** 10:30a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

### Invitees

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mac Strawder (DCF)                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minette Knotts (DCF) – note taker |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tony Dziedzic (FSC)                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Jennifer Marks (FSC)                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brian Wolfe (FSC)                                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sarah Kaminski (Equus WS)         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kanwen Shao (Equus Workforce Solutions) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deb Leslie (WRI)                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carolyn Frogness (WRI)                             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gina Brown (WCI)                  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vang Lee (AWWI)                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Carlyle Outten (AWWI)                        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nicole Hagen (Ross)                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reno Wright (Ross)                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sandra Salazar-Lozano (UMOS)                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jodi Prout (UMOS)                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dallas Hawkins (UMOS)                              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Xiong Lor (MAXIMUS)               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neng Thor (MAXIMUS)                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Autumn Morgan (MAXIMUS)                      |
|   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stacey Eggen (FSC)                |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Steve Reinhold (Equus WS)                    |
|   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jody Conner (WRI)                 |
|   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shannon Franek (WCI)              |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Latoya Stewart (AWWI)                        |
|   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parker Rios (UMOS)                |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> NaTasha Chevalier (UMOS)                     |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Rachel Zietlow (MAXIMUS)                     |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Randy Endsley (MAXIMUS)                      |

Representatives from Department of Children and Families, Division of Family and Economic Security, Bureau of Analytics and Research, Bureau of Child Support, Bureau of Refugee Programs, and Bureau of Working Families were also in attendance.

### Conference Line

Skype Meeting

**Join by phone: (608) 316-9000, 40843472#**

### Agenda Items

#### 1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

**Owner:** Mac Strawder

**Time Allotted:** 5 minutes

Details: roll call

Discussion:

- Mac led roll call.
- New DCF staff were welcomed:
  - Richard Traner, Human Services Area Coordinator, Milwaukee Operations Section
  - Tom Targos, Refugee Programs Coordinator, Bureau of Refugee Programs
  - Maggie Renno, Director, Bureau of Analytics and Research

#### 2. AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN

**Owner:** Maureen Purcell

**Time Allotted:** 15 minutes

Details: overview

Discussion:

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- On March 31, 2021, the Bureau of Working Families sent a help desk email regarding the American Rescue Plan. This email is posted on the BWF Work Programs Help Desk Home Page located here: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/w2/partners/toolbox/helpdesk>.
- The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, signed into law by President Biden on March 11, 2021, allocates billions of dollars to help those hurt by the COVID-19 pandemic. This national rescue plan extends and expands lifelines to workers and their families during the pandemic through stimulus payments, unemployment insurance benefits, and provides crucial supports in health care, nutrition, and housing.
- An upcoming Operations Memo will address the treatment of unemployment insurance benefits and tax credits.
- The American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act provides for, but is not limited to, the following expansions and allocations of funds which may be relevant to W-2 participants and agencies:
  - Federal pandemic unemployment benefits are extended through September 6, 2021.
    - This includes an additional \$300 in weekly benefits to those receiving Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC).
    - For more information visit: <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/uiben/caresact/>
  - Expanded access to the economic impact stimulus payment of \$1,400 per taxpayer and \$1,400 per dependent, which includes adult dependents unlike previous stimulus payments.
  - The Child Tax Credit is expanded to provide \$3000 per year, per child for families with children ages 6-17, and \$3600 per year for children under age 6 and will be disbursed monthly beginning in July 2021.
  - Increased funding to nutrition programs:
    - Extends the 15% SNAP benefit increase through September 2021;
    - The Pandemic EBT program is extended for the 2020-2021 school year; and
    - Pandemic EBT information can be found at: <https://feedingamericawi.org/ebt/> and <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/forwardhealth-pebt.htm>
  - \$198 million in grants are allocated to support rape crisis centers nationwide and \$248.5 million to support domestic violence and sexual assault survivors and for domestic violence prevention programs.
  - Funding has been increased for housing and emergency assistance programs for low-income families, including:
    - Emergency Rental Assistance Program;
    - Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP);
    - Homelessness Assistance and Supportive Services Fund; and
    - For Wisconsin Emergency Rental Assistance Program information visit: <https://wiscap.org/wera/>

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### 3. NEW POLICY QUESTION PROCESS FOR BWF AND BRP

**Owner:** Morgan Olmsted  
**Time Allotted:** 10 minutes

Details: update and time for questions

Discussion:

- The new SharePoint process for submitting, answering, and tracking policy questions from Bureau of Working Families (BWF) and Bureau of Refugee Programs (BRP) program contractors is now up and running.
- BWF published [Operations Memo 21-08](#) announcing the effective date of May 1, 2021.
- Morgan asked agencies if they have read and understand the memo and if there are any questions.
  - Agencies had no questions.

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### 4. CHILD SUPPORT LIAISON UPDATE

**Owner:** Tonja Thompson  
Linda Richardson  
**Time Allotted:** 20 minutes

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Details: update and/or discussion

Discussion:

- Tonja shared that a virtual meeting for child support liaisons (CSL) and CSL supervisors was held at the end of March 2021. The meeting had a robust discussion regarding successes and challenges during the pandemic, and what onboarding looks like for CSL and CSL supervisors.
- It became apparent during the discussion that there is uncertainty who CSLs can work with and refer to get incentive payment.
- Tonja reminded those on the call that you can refer people to be enrolled in TEMP, W-2, FSET, etc. and expect CSLs to establish strong relationships with CSA and within community.
- There is no consistency or format amongst onboarding new CSL or CSL supervisors on FSET.
- Janice stated it appeared that a number of CSLs in order to work with non-custodial parents (NCP), the CP had to be in shares. It isn't a requirement for CSLs to meet with an NCP to assess and determine what services they benefit from and refer and warm handoff to program eligible for.
- Moving forward, there will be more meetings to collaborate, network, learn from each other, and presentations.
- Linda shared requirements for staffing, there is difference with responsibilities of CSL and what is required to earn the incentive.
- Include funding in allocation for cost reimbursement of services and agencies are still required to have a minimum of one full time equivalent CSL (reference page 20 in scope of work for agencies). If there is an occasion where a CSL leaves, agencies are expected to provide coverage for responsibilities in place until someone new is hired.
- Linda's team will be monitoring expenses for CSL and ensure they are reported and if not will follow up with agency.
- Lauren stated that in order to be eligible for incentive, agencies must provide participants proof of enrollment in a government funded program or job readiness programs funded by the government. Once enrollment is verified, take verification that it is valid and send photo with quarterly spreadsheets that are sent to DCF. The pop document outlines some requirements for this incentive as well.
- Attending child support enforcement hearings is a good segue for those needing services and getting connected with agencies.

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## 5. AGENCY DISCUSSION

**Owner:** Mac Strawder  
**Time Allotted:** 35 minutes

Details:

- General updates

Discussion:

- WRI
  - Jody shared that the office currently has 10-11 FEPs but are down three from first of year. WRI has hired two new FEPs and are advertising for a third. Jody hopes by the end of June 2021 they will be fully staffed with FEPs.
  - One staff is part time organizing online career assessment testing.
  - The agency is working through participants' technical issues such as no internet or bandwidth.
  - The agency had 90 W-2 placements at the end of March 2021. The agency is working with staff to correctly assess and obtain formal assessment and finding appropriate services for these participants.
- WCI
  - Gina shared that staffing wise the agency is in a good place and will have one staff member out on extensive leave and are shifting staff to provide coverage.
  - WCI is going through a strategic planning stage and are working on a mission and vision.

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- The agency's caseload has plateaued, and staff are seeing less applications. A number of applications through ACCESS are invalid as applicants are not understanding what they are applying for.
- Gina expressed concern around implications of financial assistance on federal and state level and how it will affect agencies participants. Some participants have significant housing costs and Gina is worried about the implications of this with the Emergency Assistance (EA) program.
- Continuing to format processes, using DocuSign, and providing specified times where participants can meet face to face in the office if preferred.
- U MOS
  - Sandra shared that U MOS has a couple job openings for FEPs, case management, and employment services.
  - U MOS' caseload has dropped to 700s, people have stimulus payment, tax refund, and more FoodShare, which may factor in losing cases. Sandra mentioned the agency will do more outreach.
  - The agency is working with primary employers interested in doing drive thru job fairs in U MOS' parking lot.
  - DocuSign training for FEPs is complete and participants have expressed DocuSign is easier to use.
- Ross
  - Reno reported that 43% of staff are working in the office and 47% are working remotely.
  - The agency has had staff turnover so a few new FEPs are assigned to helping out in other areas while New Worker Training (NWT) is unavailable.
  - In person and virtual activities for participants is happening on a weekly basis and incentives for participants completing activities is being provided by the agency.
  - Ross has seen an overall caseload decrease of 100 cases from October 2019 to current.
  - The agency has been able to get participants from unpaid to paid placements as they are returning to work.
  - Cases closed are due to participant decline of aide, participant receiving stimulus and income from other resources, lack of review, and a few losses of contact.
  - Ross is hosting biweekly virtual employer events and will be hosting another drive thru job fair on July 1, 2021.
  - The agency is working well with community services and is looking forward to positive outcomes moving forward.
- MAXIMUS
  - Xiong reported that a few people are to be hired and that two staff completed resource specialist training and are assisting coverage.
  - The agency has been exploring virtual activities with Milwaukee Library online courses. For participants who do not have technology to engage, they will receive tablets and hotspots to engage in these activities.
  - MAXIMUS continues to conduct a virtual job fair every Tuesday and Thursday.
- FSC
  - Tony shared that FSC is holding steady with staffing, new hires have completed NWT, and two or three W-2 postings are available.
  - Half of staff are in offices that would like to be while maintaining social distancing.
  - The agency is watching, learning, teaching, and training on virtual case management and how it can be effective. FSC is using Career Cruiser, CareerLocker, and conducting new assessment training for staff.
  - Caseload trends plateaued and dropped 200 cases over the last six months.
  - W-2 application traffic spiked and steadied out. Unemployment benefits and stimulus money being extended and placing clients in jobs most likely effected this caseload.
  - Refocused job developer group by having ten staff work with employers and participants focusing on key areas such as job development, hiring, and retention strategies.
  - Job developers are focused on meeting with participants early in process and helping participants get hired once training is completed.

- FSC has been using Transition to Success and have trained sixteen cohorts and continue to use this framework and learn to improve moving forward.
- Equus Workforce Solutions
  - Equus is adding Attendance Trackers at each location (3) to match the increase caseload levels (980 – 1000) and corresponding increase with documents.
  - Two TDS replacement positions are available.
  - The agency's ability to find qualified staff has been increasingly challenging during the past six months. However, the agency anticipates being at full capacity by early end of May 2021.
  - Equus W-2 project staff remain focused on providing full services with the working remotely status.
  - The agency shifts staff to work on additional project deliverables as needed. Balance and Kenosha staff shifted to assist with Racine deliverables.
  - The agency seamlessly moves through daily, weekly meetings using WebEx, Microsoft Teams on one on one, small unit, and project level meetings.
  - Equus is in contact with our county building / job center administrators regarding return to work timeline
  - In March and April 2021, 94 clients enrolled in Dress for Success online WEX activities.
  - Tie into referrals to FSET, WIOA, TEMP, Unsubsidized employment, JS / VOC training, GED/HSED activities.
  - EA levels are trending lower compared to JAN 2021 (WRAP 2.0 funds, tax returns, Federal stimulus funds) and W-2 applications are trending lower compared to JAN 2021, decrease approx. 50% - 55%.
  - Caseload Trends: W-2 Project (Monday 4/26/21 – 982 total cases, -14 cases): SC: 645 cases (-41 cases), UC: 337 cases (+27 cases). Currently at a plateau (980 – 1020) cases in 2021. Subsidized cases are up 108% since April 2020. 3/30/20 CSJ + W-2T: 293, 4/26/21 CSJ + W-2T: 602.
  - Placement composition is slowly shifting to more employed clients
  - Equus Online Job Club 2.0 launch occurs Monday, May 3, 2021, evolving this offering based on the increase in hiring and shifting caseload trends.
    - Focus on more employable W-2 clients (CMJ, recently separated CMF / CM+, higher functioning CSJ)
    - Increased usage of LinkedIn Learning online modules and increased activity hours.
    - 10 hours weekly assigned activities: (4 hours online job club, 1-hour career counseling meeting with BSC, 5 hours Linked In Learning assignment).
    - Using Zoom Pro for multiple break out rooms for discussions and W-2 client interaction
- America Works of Wisconsin (AWWI)
  - Carlyle mentioned AWWI has hired multiple clerical staff and will hire additional staff that will turn into case management staff when NWT is available again.
  - Caseload trends are going up and AWWI expects them to continue to go up.
  - Carlyle shared that the agency is doing many things around office and is working to reduce caseload size of 60 per case management staff.
  - The agency has revamped trainings and are providing tablets and classes to participants.
  - AWWI brought on Salesforce and will have someone oversee activities and hours that will be reported to Quality Assurance.
  - Carlyle shared that the Milwaukee office is going under renovation next week, but this will not affect agency operations.
  - Vang added that the caseload trend in Milwaukee has an increase in CMC and CMP. AWWI used to have one staff handling CMC and CMP cases and now have two staff supporting due to increase in cases.
    - Mac asked if AWWI is tracking number of participants using homeless address and if this is impacting number of intakes and caseload.
      - Vang reported 103 participants are currently in caseload that lists homeless address.

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## 6. WALK-ONS/CLOSING

**Owner:** Mac Strawder  
**Time Allotted:** 5 minutes

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Details: Walk-ons and/or discussion if needed.

Discussion:

- Please submit agenda items to Minette Knotts and Mac Strawder.
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## Next Meeting:

Wednesday, May 26, 2021  
10:30AM-12:00PM  
Skype