

**COVID-19 UPDATES**

COVID-19 continues to impact many families throughout Wisconsin, including those served by the Department of Children and Families through our programs. These impacts come in the form of illness, missed work caused by illness and economic disruptions, lack of childcare due to center closures, K-12 school and early learning closures, and reduced activity opportunities due to worksite closures. During this uncertain and challenging time, we view the COVID-19 pandemic as an event outside of the control of our participants and therefore access to our programs is critical to the COVID-19 emergency response. For that reason, BWF is making temporary adjustments listed below to encourage social distancing and mitigate the spread of the virus while supporting those we serve. Agencies must inform staff of adjustments and alter case management procedures accordingly.

CATEGORY	TOPIC	W-2 AND RELATED PROGRAMS ADJUSTMENT	PROGRAMS			ANNOUNCEMENT DATE	EXPIRATION DATE
			W-2	JAL	RCA		
Policy Adjustments without automation changes	Application & Case Processing	<p><b>Requesting Verification from Applicants and Participants</b></p> <p>Due to COVID-19 and many businesses and external entities closing or operating under reduced capacity, individuals may be unable to furnish needed verification documents and W-2 agency staff may not have the ability to assist. While BWF is not yet making changes to current verification requirements, this is a reminder that there is significant flexibility currently in policy to accommodate challenges likely to be experienced during the public health emergency. FEPs are encouraged to exercise this discretion to ensure individuals can access our program and resources without unnecessary delay.</p> <p>As a reminder, applicant and participants have seven working days to provide needed verification. The verification due date may be extended up to 30 days if extenuating circumstances exist and the agency is required to assist individuals unable to produce verification. If the agency is unable to assist, the agency must use the available information to process the case. The FEP must not deny an application or close a case based on the information that could not be obtained.</p> <p>BWF, along with its partners in the Division of Early Care and Education and Department of Health Services, is exploring</p>	X	X	X	3/23/2020	

		additional verification changes. Future changes will be communicated in a similar manner.					
Policy Adjustments without automation changes	Application & Case Processing	<p><b>Suspension of In-Person Signature and Meeting Requirements</b></p> <p>Existing policy requires in-person signatures and meetings at application and various points throughout ongoing case management.</p> <p>BWF is suspending the requirement for in-person signatures and meetings. W-2 agencies may conduct all appointments, typically held in-person, by telephone as necessary to reduce risk of COVID-19 exposure. W-2 agencies are to use the Contact Center Anywhere (CCA) software currently in use for CMF, CMF+, and CMU W-2 Eligibility Reviews to collect all required signatures from W-2 applicants and participants.</p> <p>CWW will provide an option for collecting a telephonic signature for eligibility reviews for all placement types. It will not provide the option for collecting a telephonic signature for any other type of meeting, however. Therefore, for telephonic signatures for anything other than an eligibility review, FEPs will have to read whatever document is being telephonically signed, e.g., W-2 application, W-2 Participation Agreement, Employability Plan, etc., in order to record the agreement being made between the FEP and the participant, the FEP will need to read the language that is in the telephonic signature display in CCA. CCA will then provide the FEP with the interaction id number that the FEP should record in case comments.</p> <p>Information on how to navigate the CCA software is available on the Partner Training Team (PTT) Learning Center in the <a href="#">Contact Center Anywhere Reference Guide</a> for W-2 desk aid. Additional information on use of CCA can be found in Operations Memo <a href="#">18-09: Telephonic Signatures for CMF, CMF+, and CMU W-2 Eligibility Reviews</a>. Information on requesting CCA is included in this</p>	X	X	X	3/23/2020	

		<p>Operations Memo. BWF will also be setting up CCA access for supervisors to oversee work remotely. Information is forthcoming.</p> <p><b><u>RCA</u></b>  BWF is also suspending the requirement for in-person signatures and meetings for RCA; W-2 agencies may work with resettlement agency staff to obtain the necessary signatures.</p>					
Policy Adjustments with automation changes	Activity Assignment	<p><b>New Social Distancing Activity Code</b></p> <p>A new Activity Code has been created to report hours previously assigned to activities affected by the COVID-19 outbreak and community sequester. Use CX – Social Distancing Activities for individuals who are unable to participate in activities that entail face-to-face contact or group activity due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The activity code will be available in CARES on Tuesday, March 24, 2020.</p> <p>Agencies must evaluate activity assignments, determine which activities cannot be done in compliance with COVID-19 Social Distancing requirements, close out those activities using component Completion Code B - Unsuccessfully Completed/Interrupted, and report the aggregate hours using the CX Activity Code. The social distancing activity can be closed using component Completion Code A - Successfully Completed, when a new EP is created after the public health emergency is over.</p> <p>Agencies are encouraged to continue activities that could be done from home, for example:  CD – Caring for Disabled Child  CE – Career Planning &amp; Counseling  CF – Caring for Other Family Member  LF – Life Skills  MO – Job Readiness/Motivation  MP – Ongoing Medical/Personal Care  PA – Parenting Skills  PD – Personal Development</p>	X		X	3/23/2020	

		<p>PR – Physical Rehabilitation</p> <p>The following forms are required for CD, CF, MP, and PR. These forms will be considered valid through the duration of the public health emergency.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Need to Care for Disabled Family Member <a href="#">DCF-F-DWSP10786</a></li> <li>2. Medical Examination &amp; Capacity <a href="#">DCF-F-DWSP2012</a></li> <li>3. Mental Health Report <a href="#">DCF-F-126</a></li> </ol>					
Policy Adjustments with automation changes	Eligibility Reviews	<p><b>Three-month Extension for Eligibility Reviews</b></p> <p>W-2 agencies are required to conduct a W-2 eligibility review at least every six (6) months. The due dates for W-2 eligibility reviews originally scheduled for months March through August have been extended for a period of 3 months.</p> <p><b>March Eligibility Reviews:</b> As noted above, March eligibility review due dates were extended to June 30, 2020. However, when the date was changed in CWW, there were some cases that were already in “Pending” status. BWF is asking that the W-2 agencies review these cases to ensure that they are not incorrectly closed for failing to provide verification related to a review, since reviews have been extended. A list of pending cases by agency has been attached to this email.</p> <p><b>April Eligibility Reviews:</b> BWF is issuing a one-time letter the week of March 23, 2020, notifying 778 W-2 participants who have received a 45-day notice that they had eligibility reviews in April that their review date has been extended three months. BWF will work with Wisconsin’s Department of Health Services determine future communications for May and June.</p>	X		X	3/23/2020	
Policy Adjustments with	Sanctions	<p><b>New Good Cause Reason Code</b></p> <p>A Good Cause Reason Code: <b>CX</b> has been created for W-2 activities that cannot be completed due to the COVID-19 outbreak and</p>	X		X	3/23/2020	

automation changes		community sequester. Individuals who are unable to participate in assigned activities due to the public health emergency must be provided Good Cause for non-participation. The CX reason code is now available in CARES.					
Policy Adjustments without automation changes	Sanctions	<p><b>Rectifying 20% Payment Reduction Policy</b></p> <p>Individuals who have received a 20% payment reduction notice have 7 working days to provide written verification of good cause, if necessary. Under existing policy, the verification due date cannot be extended from 7 working days to 30 days.</p> <p>Due to COVID-19, FEPs should extend the due date on written verification for good cause to 30 days or more for participants who have received a 20% reduction letter.</p> <p>Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, it is highly likely that participants will not be able to obtain written verification of good cause within the 7 working day timeframe and attempts to do so could put them at risk of contracting or further spreading the virus.</p>	X			3/23/2020	
Policy Adjustments without automation changes	Case Closure	<p><b>Case Closure for Loss of Contact</b></p> <p>Under existing policy, FEPs are required to close a case for noncooperation if they have not been able to contact a participant for 30 days or more after repeated attempts.</p> <p>Due to COVID-19, FEPs may keep cases open even if they have been unable to contact the participant for 30 days or more.</p> <p>Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, it is very possible that participants may be in quarantine or in the hospital for long periods of time, and therefore unable to have any in-person contact with the FEP at the agency, a worksite, or even their own home. Additionally, if participants lose their jobs due to COVID-19 related closures and are unable to pay a phone or internet bill as a result, there would be no way to contact them.</p>	X			3/23/2020	

CATEGORY	TOPIC	EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE ADJUSTMENT	ANNOUNCEMENT DATE	EXPIRATION DATE
Policy Adjustments without automation changes	Application & Case Processing	<p><b>Suspension of In-Person Signature and Meeting Requirements</b></p> <p>Under existing policy, the EA application form must be completed and signed in the presence of a W-2 agency staff person, and the worker must have at least one face-to-face contact with the EA applicant to go through the application and assurances on the application prior to determining eligibility.</p> <p>Due to COVID-19, W-2 agencies may conduct all appointments, typically held in-person, by telephone as necessary to reduce risk of COVID-19 exposure. W-2 agencies are to use the Contact Center Anywhere (CCA) software currently in use for CMF, CMF+, and CMU W-2 Eligibility Reviews to collect all required signatures from EA applicants. See similar guidance above.</p>	March 23, 2020	
Policy Adjustments without automation changes	Financial Eligibility	<p><b>Prospective Income Determination</b></p> <p>Under existing policy, the combined total earned and unearned income of the EA Group must be at or below 115% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) in the 30 days prior to and including the EA Application date.</p> <p>Due to COVID-19, when determining the combined total earned and unearned income of the EA Group to be at or below 115% of the FPL, workers may use either:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The prior 30 days prior to and including the EA Application date; or</li> <li>2. Prospective budgeting using a best estimate of what income will be received in the next 30 days.</li> </ol>	March 23, 2020	