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State of Wisconsin
Governor Scott Walker



TO: **W-2 Agencies**
TMJ Contractors, Subcontractors, and Staff
TJ Contractors, Subcontractors, and Staff
Training Staff

FROM: Margaret McMahon, Director
Bureau of Working Families
Division of Family and Economic Security
Department of Children and Families

BWF OPERATIONS MEMO

No: 17-09

DATE: 04/10/2017

W-2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	EA	<input type="checkbox"/>	CF	<input type="checkbox"/>
JAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	RAP	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other EP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *

SUBJECT: *W-2 and Independent Living Services Program Coordination*

CROSS REFERENCE: DSP Numbered Memo Series 2015 - 03
[DSP Informational Memo Series 2014 – 18](#)
[W-2 Manual, 1.2.4 Coordinating with Partner Agencies](#)

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to:

1. Inform Wisconsin Works (W-2) agencies, Transform Milwaukee Jobs (TMJ) Contractors, and Transitional Jobs (TJ) Contractors of the local services available to the foster care population, including individuals who are in a court ordered out-of-home placement as well as those who have aged out of care;
2. Encourage referrals to regional Independent Living Transition Resource Agencies (IL TRAs); and
3. Promote collaboration and communication with regional TRAs to establish partnerships that will improve access to services for the foster population.

BACKGROUND

Foster youth who are in out-of-home care and who have aged out of care at age 18 and older need continued services and support to ensure a successful transition to independent living. Individuals who have been in the Foster Care system are more likely to be unemployed and

without the skills, education, and training needed to compete in the local labor market. Further, foster youth benefit from a comprehensive service approach to address their permanency, health, economic, life skills, and housing needs.

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is encouraging increased collaboration between the employment programs administered by the Bureau of Working Families and supportive programming administered by the Bureau of Youth Services to improve outcomes for youth in the foster care system. This effort will increase access and improve navigation of services available, including co-enrollment in programs, to former foster youth as they transition to independence.

BUREAU OF YOUTH SERVICES PROGRAMMING FOR THE FOSTER POPULATION

INDEPENDENT LIVING

Independent Living services are available to eligible individuals placed in out-of-home care and those that age out of care up to age 21. Additionally, those who achieved guardianship or adoption after the age of 16 are also eligible for services.

DCF has established a regional service delivery model to improve access to services for eligible individuals ages 18-21 no longer in care. Independent Living funding will be shifted from county child welfare agencies to the Transition Resource Agencies. Each Independent Living region has or will create a regional network of service partners including: local human service agencies; educational institutions; tribes; employers; housing authorities and landlords; healthcare facilities; financial institutions; and youth advisory councils, to better serve youth. The enhanced regional model will be fully implemented by January of 2018.

Five agencies in five of the seven DCF IL TRA Regions have been awarded contracts to serve eligible youth. To date, all regions are functional except regions three and four, which will be phased in by January of 2018. Regions three and four will continue to provide services via the county child welfare agencies until this time.

TRAs will assist individuals in reaching their independent living goals, connect individuals to adult service providers, and develop local resources and linkages to improve outcomes. Services may include training and assistance in the following areas:

- Basic living skills (e.g. money management, cooking, decision-making);
- Job seeking, work experience, and employment;
- Obtaining high school diplomas and higher education;
- Obtaining health care;
- Financial self-sufficiency;
- Obtaining safe and affordable housing;
- Social and emotional well-being;
- Permanent connections to supportive adults; and
- Access to and knowledge of local resources.

The [Independent Living – Transition Resource Agency Contact Information](#) page identifies each program's regional boundaries and provides contact information for each location. The [Child Welfare Independent Living Coordinators](#) page may be used to obtain contact information for

Independent Living referrals for counties located in regions three and four until full implementation in January of 2018.

DCF SCHOLARSHIP & EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHER FUNDS

The purpose of the DCF Scholarship Program is to provide financial assistance to help former foster youth obtain the education, training, and skills necessary to compete in the labor market. The DCF Scholarship and Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Funds award funding to youth who are in out-of-home care or who have aged out of care and are entering a degree, license, or certificate program. Eligibility for this opportunity can be extended to individuals up to age 23 under certain circumstances.

Individuals may apply for ETV funds through their local TRA. See the [Independent Living – Transition Resource Agency Contact Information](#) webpage for contact information. Individuals may apply for the DCF Scholarship through the State office, DCF. See the [DCF Scholarship & Education and Training Voucher Funds](#) brochure for additional contact information.

The DCF Scholarship & Education and Training Voucher Funds brochure may be distributed to interested individuals.

OTHER PROGRAMS

BADGER CARE PLUS

Individuals who aged out of foster care may qualify for a special status under BadgerCare Plus. Effective January 2014, Medicaid (MA) coverage for individuals who were in foster care at age 18 may receive full MA benefits until age 26 (see [DSP Informational Memo 2014-08](#)).

The attached BadgerCare Brochure contains additional detail about access to health care after foster placement ends and may be displayed in local offices and distributed to interested individuals.

AGENCY ACTION REQUIRED

W-2 Agencies, TMJ Contractors, and TJ Contractors are encouraged to reach out to their regional TRA to learn more about programming available to the foster population in the local area as well as to determine opportunities for partnerships and collaboration. W-2 Agencies, TMJ Contractors, and TJ Contractors must also discuss availability of Bureau of Youth Services programming with staff and promote referrals of former foster youth to TRAs or other programs as appropriate.

ATTACHMENTS

[Badger Care Brochure](#)

CONTACTS

For W-2 Policy Questions in the Balance of State: Bureau of Regional Operations, W-2 Regional Coordinators.

For W-2 Policy Questions in Milwaukee: Milwaukee Operations Section Regional Administrators. For W-2 CARES Processing Questions: W-2 Help Desk.

For TMJ/TJ Policy Questions: Mikal Wesley, TMJ Contract Manager, (414) 270-4716.

For Bureau of Youth Services Programming and Policy Questions: Bureau of Youth Services Housing and Employment Policy Coordinator, (608) 422-6992.

For DCF Scholarship Programming and Policy Questions: Bureau of Youth Services Prevention and Intervention Policy Coordinator, (608) 422-6991.

DCF/DFES/BWF/LMW