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DMS, DECE, and DFES Operations Memo 18-J8

To: Income Maintenance Supervisors  
Income Maintenance Lead Workers  
Income Maintenance Staff  
Workforce Development Boards  
W-2 Agencies  
Training Staff  
Child Care Eligibility and Authorization  
Supervisors and Workers  
FSET Agencies  
Job Center Leads and Managers

From: Rebecca McAtee, Bureau Director  
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**Affected Programs:**

- BadgerCare Plus
- Caretaker Supplement
- Children First
- Emergency Assistance
- FoodShare
- FoodShare Employment and Training
- Job Access Loan
- Job Center Programs
- Medicaid
- Other Employment Programs
- Refugee Assistance Program
- SeniorCare
- Wisconsin Shares Child Care
- Wisconsin Works
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

**Processing Applications and Cases for Safe at Home Participants**

**CROSS REFERENCE**

- Process Help, [Chapter 77 Safe at Home](#)
- [Department of Justice Safe at Home Webpage](#)

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

Immediately

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this operations memo is to introduce the Safe at Home program to income maintenance (IM), Wisconsin Works (W-2), FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET), and Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy program workers, including any agency staff that may complete the client registration process.

## **BACKGROUND**

Safe at Home is a statewide address confidentiality program administered by the Department of Justice that provides victims of actual or threatened abuse, child abuse, sexual abuse, stalking, trafficking, or those who simply fear for their physical safety with a legal substitute address to be used for both public and private purposes. The intent is to allow those who fear for their safety or the safety of their child(ren) to maintain private and confidential home, work, and school addresses. Safe at Home participants use an assigned substitute address instead of their actual address. The mail is then forwarded to the participant's actual address free of charge. Information about the program is available on the Safe at Home page on the Wisconsin Department of Justice website at [www.doj.state.wi.us/ocvs/safe-home](http://www.doj.state.wi.us/ocvs/safe-home).

The protection and confidentiality of the Safe at Home participant's location is vital to the participant and any family members living with them. State law prohibits workers from requiring the participant to provide their actual address and prohibits the use or sharing of the participant's home, work, or school address, or any portion thereof. Workers may not divulge information about the participant or his or her family members for any purpose not connected with the direct administration of a benefit program.

The Safe at Home program provides its participants with an authorization card with the participant's substitute address. Workers will use the authorization card to verify the applicant's or member's participation in Safe at Home.

## **POLICY**

There are no policy changes associated with this memo. Safe at Home participants are eligible for all programs under current policy with additional safeguards in place to protect member confidentiality.

## **PROCESS**

The following is a high-level overview of how IM, FSET, and Wisconsin Shares workers are to handle applications and cases for Safe at Home participants. Full instructions for processing applications and entering the Safe at Home participant's information in CARES Worker Web (CWW) are available in [Process Help, Chapter 77 Safe at Home](#). Instructions for W-2 Financial and Employment Planners (FEPs) are also included in Process Help.

To minimize the number of IM workers who will access a Safe at Home participant's case, each county must appoint one person, as well as a supervisor as backup, to process all confidential Safe at Home cases in their agency. The worker for Safe at Home cases should be familiar with all categories of assistance, including completing Wisconsin Shares authorizations, when possible. If the Safe at Home participant requests W-2 or FSET services, the IM worker must work closely with the FEP or FSET worker to maintain confidentiality. The Safe at Home participant is to be given the assigned IM, FSET, and FEP worker's direct contact information to allow them to easily report changes and receive needed information.

In order to assist the Safe at Home participant, it may be necessary to talk directly with Safe at Home staff. Workers must obtain permission from the participant in order to talk with Safe at Home on the participant's behalf. Permission must be granted using the:

- [Release of Confidential Information Authorization for Wisconsin Medicaid, BadgerCare Plus, FoodShare, Family Planning Only Services, SeniorCare, and Caretaker Supplement form, F-02340](#), for IM programs.
- [Confidential Information Release Authorization form, DCF-F-369](#), for Wisconsin Shares.
- [Authorization for Disclosure of Confidential Information form, DCF-F-DWSP10779](#), for W-2.

Workers must have the participant's signature in writing on any and all forms needed for the program(s) in which he or she is applying for or is enrolled in prior to talking with Safe at Home on the participant's behalf.

Applications from a Safe at Home participant may be received in any way acceptable by the program he or she is applying for, including ACCESS, mail, phone, or in person. All applications or cases for a Safe at Home participant requesting an IM program must be assigned to the appointed Safe at Home IM worker. The case must be transferred to the appointed Safe at Home worker and made confidential by the end of the day it was processed. The worker processing the application must contact the applicant and inform him or her that their case is being made confidential and identify the personal identifier with the applicant for security purposes. The worker processing the application must also inform the applicant that confidential cases cannot be viewed using ACCESS. Workers must ask for this identifier when information is being provided or updated for the Safe at Home participant's case. See [Process Help, Section 77.2.1 Application Process](#), for instructions to locate the personal identifier.

## **CONTACTS**

BEPS CARES Information and Problem Resolution Center

For Wisconsin Shares Child Care policy questions outside of Milwaukee County, contact your Bureau of Regional Operations (BRO) Child Care Coordinators at [broccpolicyhelpdesk@wisconsin.gov](mailto:broccpolicyhelpdesk@wisconsin.gov).

For Child Care CARES/CWW and CSAW processing questions statewide and policy questions in Milwaukee County, contact the Child Care Subsidy and Technical Assistance line at [childcare@wisconsin.gov](mailto:childcare@wisconsin.gov) or 608-422-7200.

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

DHS/DMS/BEPS/JT  
DCF/DECE/BELP  
DCF/DFES/BWF