State of Wisconsin
Governor Tony Evers

TO: **W-2 Agencies**
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: 20-08
DATE: 04/24/2020
W-2 ☒ **EA** ☒ **CF** ☐ **JAL** ☒
RAP ☐ **TJ** ☐ **TMJ** ☐ **Other EP** ☐

SUBJECT: *New ACCESS Request for Services for Wisconsin Works (W-2), Emergency Assistance (EA), and Job Access Loans (JALs)*

CROSS REFERENCE: W-2 Manual 1.4.1 Where to Apply for W-2
W-2 Manual 1.4.2 Applying for W-2
W-2 Manual 1.4.5 Application Processing Timeframe
W-2 Manual 17.2.2 Eligibility Determination Process
COVID-19 Q&A and Policy Adjustments via W-2 Help Desk
EA Manual 1.5 Five Working Days Timeframe for Processing
EA Applications

EFFECTIVE DATE: April 25, 2020

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to:

1. Announce new simplified program requests in the ACCESS system for Wisconsin Works (W-2), Emergency Assistance (EA), and Job Access Loans (JALs); and
2. Provide guidance on functionality and use of the ACCESS system for program requests.

BACKGROUND

On March 12, 2020, Governor Tony Evers issued Executive Order 72 declaring a health emergency due to COVID-19 and directing all state agencies to assist in the state's response to the public health emergency. On March 24, 2020, the state of Wisconsin was put under a "Safer At Home" order. This order and its extensions direct residents to stay at home and orders all non-essential businesses to close until May 26, 2020.

The Bureau of Working Families (BWF) has been adjusting its program policies that will allow easier access to its programs, including the suspension of in-person signature and meeting requirements. W-2 agencies and BWF staff also expect an increase in the number of applicants as families face economic hardship as a result of COVID-19.

BWF had a long-term project planned for release in October 2020 that would allow for individuals to request and apply for BWF programs in ACCESS. In response to COVID-19, BWF has accelerated the work that will allow individuals to request W-2, EA, and JAL programs in ACCESS. While the long-term project to allow individuals to apply for these programs via ACCESS is still planned for release in October 2020, this short-term project to allow for program requests will assist immediately.

ACCESS

ACCESS is an online tool for applicants and participants to apply for and manage the FoodShare, health care, Family Planning Only, and Child Care programs. BWF currently has some tools in ACCESS for those already receiving W-2, such as managing documents and W-2 program information.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, various ACCESS features for BWF programs were updated and will be available April 25, 2020:

1. Allow applicants to complete the simplified request for W-2, JAL, and EA through the ACCESS self-service portal; and
2. Allow agencies to view the list of new ACCESS program requests in CWW and process them by contacting the applicant by phone.

The purpose of the program request feature in ACCESS is to continue to allow agencies to communicate with applicants when in-person meetings are unsafe and to expedite applicant requests for programs. In addition, this new process can relieve some W-2 agency administrative work by providing flexible self-service to applicants.

W-2 POLICY UPDATES

W-2 policy updates are summarized below. Relevant W-2 Manual sections are attached with all policy updates incorporated. Policy that was deleted is struck through and policy that was added is underlined.

W-2 MANUAL GLOSSARY

Definitions for the ACCESS system and the MyACCESS mobile app can now be found in the W-2 Manual glossary.

See attached updated W-2 Manual glossary

1.4.1: WHERE TO APPLY FOR W-2

Current Policy

W-2 applicants must apply at their local W-2 agencies, with a few exceptions outlined in policy.

Updated Policy

W-2 applicants may now choose to request services in ACCESS or by contacting the W-2 agency.

See attached updated W-2 Manual section 1.4.1

1.4.2: APPLYING FOR W-2

Current Policy

The application process begins on the date when the agency receives the signed W-2 application registration form. The Receptionist then schedules an appointment for the applicant with the Resource Specialist within one working day.

Updated Policy

The application process begins on the date when the agency receives the signed W-2 application registration form or when the agency receives a request for services in ACCESS.

See attached updated W-2 Manual section 1.4.2

1.4.5: APPLICATION PROCESSING TIMEFRAME

Current Policy

The application processing timeline begins when the agency receives the signed application registration form.

Updated Policy

The application processing timeline begins when the agency receives the signed application registration form or when the agency receives the request for services in ACCESS.

For requests in ACCESS, there is no change to the requirement that the same day or the following working day after an individual initiates a request, a W-2 agency representative must schedule and hold an appointment between the applicant and a RS.

See attached updated W-2 Manual section 1.4.5

EA POLICY CLARIFICATION

EA applicants may now choose to request EA in ACCESS. The agency must contact the applicant within one working day of receiving the request for services. If the request for services is submitted after 4:30p.m., the agency must contact the applicant to complete the EA application within one working day of the next working day. The five-day EA application processing timeline does not begin when a request for services is received.

The W-2 agency must process the EA Application within five working days after the date the agency receives the completed EA Application. (See EA Manual 1.5)

There are no updates to the EA manual at this time.

JAL POLICY UPDATES

17.2.2: ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION PROCESS

Current Policy

The applicant must meet with a FEP to complete an interactive application.

Updated Policy

The applicant may choose to request JAL services in ACCESS. The FEP must still meet with the applicant to complete an interactive application.

There are no changes to the eligibility determination timeline for JALs.

See attached updated W-2 Manual section 17.2.2

ACCESS UPDATES

Updates to ACCESS include the following additional features and pages:

APPLY FOR BENEFITS OVERVIEW

Applicants will be able to request services from W-2, JAL and or EA programs using ACCESS. The new functionality restricts applicants from applying for any Income Maintenance (IM) program at the same time. An alert will inform the applicant if they attempt to combine a request for W-2, JAL and EA with another IM program, including FoodShare, Health Care, Child Care and Family Planning Only. The restriction is a result of IM programs already having an application for their programs supported in ACCESS, and W-2, JAL and EA initially only support the program request.

ACCESS Systems

Before you go to the next page:

⚠ ACCESS works best with Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, and the latest version of Microsoft Edge. You may experience problems if you use Internet Explorer, Safari, or older versions of Microsoft Edge.

Apply For Benefits Overview

Welcome! Please tell us what you would like to do.

☐ **Start a new application for FoodShare, Health Care, Family Planning Only Services, and/or Child Care, or start a new request for assistance for Wisconsin Works (W-2), Job Access Loan (JAL), and/or Emergency Assistance (EA).**

○ **Keep working on an application that you have started online.**

← Back   Next →

ACCESS Systems

2% Complete

Your tracking number: **5702116658**

Attention:

⚠ You have told us that you would like to apply for FoodShare, Health Care, and/or Child Care along with Wisconsin Works (W-2), Job Access Loan (JAL), and/or Emergency Assistance. However, you cannot apply for these programs together, so you must submit a separate request for assistance for Wisconsin Works (W-2), Job Access Loan (JAL), and/or Emergency Assistance (EA).

Start

People

Other Benefits

Liquid Assets

Other Assets

Job Income

Other Income

Housing Bills

Other Bills

Health Insurance

Submit

Which Benefits Would You Like to Apply For?

The first step is to tell us which benefits you would like to get. Please check the box for each benefit you would like to apply for. Then click the "Next" button at the bottom of the page.

☐ **FoodShare.** This is Wisconsin's version of the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). FoodShare benefits come on a plastic card, called the Wisconsin QUEST Card, which you can use to buy food at most food stores.

☐ **Health Care benefits through BadgerCare Plus and/or Medicaid.** This program provides low-or no-cost health care benefits.

☐ **Family Planning Only Services.** This program provides confidential, no-cost family planning services and supplies.

☐ **Child Care.** This program provides help with paying for child care for children under 13 years old (up to 19 if special needs).

☐ **Wisconsin Works (W-2).** This program provides employment preparation services, case management, and cash assistance to eligible families. Low-income parents and pregnant women may participate in W-2. Eligibility is determined by your W-2 agency.

☐ **Job Access Loan (JAL).** This program provides short-term, no interest loans designed to assist low-income families to meet emergency needs that support employment. The applicant must have either a job or a good faith job offer to be eligible for a Job Access Loan. Eligibility is determined by your W-2 agency.

☐ **Emergency Assistance (EA).** This program provides a one time payment that can help low-income parents pay an emergency housing or utility-related expense. Eligibility is determined by your W-2 agency.

Back **Save & Exit** **Next**

GETTING STARTED

This page allows applicants to provide basic personal information. The applicant is required to provide a phone number and best time to call. This information should be used to assist the agency to contact the applicant to complete the W-2, JAL or EA application.

ACCESS Systems

3% Complete

Your tracking number: **8702121689**

Start

People

Submit

Getting Started

Let's get started on the request for assistance! First, please give us some basic information about you.

Information About You

* First Name :   Middle Initial :   * Last Name :

Patty   Jones

Gender :   ○ Male   ● Female

Date of Birth :   01/01/1985   Ex: mm/dd/yyyy

What is the primary language spoken in your home?   English ▼

* What county do you live in?   Milwaukee ▼

People who live on tribal land may be able to apply through a tribal agency, if one is available. If you would rather apply with your tribal agency than with your county, click the box to see if the tribe is on the list. We've only listed the tribes with agencies that accept applications for these kinds of benefits. If the tribe where you live isn't on the list, or you would rather apply through the county, leave this question blank.

< click here to choose > ▼

Where You Live

If you are staying in a shelter or living with a friend or family member, you can give us that agency or person's address. Be sure to put the name of the person or agency on the second line, and write c/o in front of the name.

If you have an apartment number, you should put it on Address Line 2.

* Address Line 1:   123 Test Avenue

Address Line 2:

* City: Milwaukee

* State: Wisconsin ▼

* Zip Code: 53211

Your Mailing Address

If your mailing address is the same as the address above, you can leave this section blank.

If you want to use the address of a friend, family member or shelter put c/o and then the name of the friend, family member or shelter in Address Line 2.

If you don't want us to send any mail about your benefits to the address you gave above, please give us a mailing address.

If you have an apartment number, you should put it on Address Line 2.

Address Line 1:

Address Line 2:

City:

State: Wisconsin ▼

Zip Code:

Homeless Information

Are you homeless right now?   ○ Yes   ○ No

By homeless, we mean you are staying at a shelter or don't have a place to stay at night. To read more about what we mean by homeless, click the Help button.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

The following pages collect additional personal information for all members of the household, including their relationships.

ACCESS Systems

24% Complete

Your tracking number: **9702120497**

Start

People

Submit

Attention:
⚠ Please provide additional information at the bottom of this page about pregnancy in your household.

Personal Information

If this person has the same first name as someone else in your home, click here .

* First Name :   Middle Initial :   * Last Name :

Patty   Jones

* Gender :   ○ Male   ◉ Female

* Date of Birth :   01/01/1985   Ex: mm/dd/yyyy

* What is this person's marital status?   Married   ▼

What language does this person prefer to use?   English   ▼

Social Security Number: ☐ - ☐ - ☐

Where does this person live?   In This Home   ▼

Personal Information   **Delete**

If this person has the same first name as someone else in your home, click here .

* First Name :   Middle Initial :   * Last Name :

Tony   Jones

* Gender :   ○ Male   ◉ Female

* Date of Birth :   01/01/1985   Ex: mm/dd/yyyy

* What is this person's marital status?   Married   ▼

What language does this person prefer to use?   English   ▼

Social Security Number: ☐ - ☐ - ☐

Where does this person live?   In This Home   ▼

Personal Information   **Delete**

If this person has the same first name as someone else in your home, click here .

* First Name :   Middle Initial :   * Last Name :

Alexa   Jones

* Gender :   ○ Male   ◉ Female

* Date of Birth :   01/01/1985   Ex: mm/dd/yyyy

* What is this person's marital status?   Married   ▼

What language does this person prefer to use?   English   ▼

Social Security Number: ☐ - ☐ - ☐

Where does this person live?   In This Home   ▼

*Pregnancy

Please check the box for any female in your home who is pregnant.

☐ No one

☐

Patty

Back   **Save & Exit**   **Next**

PROGRAM REQUEST FAILURE

The Program Request Failure page displays if the information provided on the previous screens determine the applicant is likely not eligible for the program(s) they requested. It provides additional information to contact the W-2 agency directly for further assistance.

ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE

The applicant must sign the program request electronically on this page for the request to be completed and submitted to the W-2 agency.

ACCESS Systems

100% Complete

Your tracking number: **5702116658**

Signing Your Request

You are just a few minutes away from submitting your request for assistance. To do so, you need to:
- Read the Rights and Responsibilities and other information listed below.
- Check the signature box and type your name to sign your request for assistance.

Start

People

Submit

Wisconsin Works (W-2), Job Access Loan (JAL), and Emergency Assistance Rights and Responsibilities

Please read the following information carefully. You can print a copy of your request for assistance on the next page if you want a copy of this information.

Participant Rights and Responsibilities

Everyone who applies for Wisconsin Works (W-2) or a Job Access Loan (JAL) has the following rights:

- To be treated with respect by agency staff.
- To have your civil rights upheld.
- To have your private information treated confidentially
- To have someone help you contact the agency and complete the forms.

Your Interview

You must complete an interview with a W-2 agency worker to determine eligibility for Wisconsin Works (W-2), Job Access Loan (JAL), and/or Emergency Assistance. These interviews must be done over a voice or video phone call. Your W-2 agency will contact you and provide more information about how to complete your interview.

Electronic Signature Acknowledgement

If you have a legal guardian or a power of attorney, he or she should sign this request for assistance. If you appointed an authorized representative, either you or your authorized representative may sign this request for assistance. If anyone else is helping you fill out the request for assistance, you should sign the request for assistance yourself.

I have agreed to submit this request for assistance by electronic means. By signing this request for assistance electronically, I certify under penalty of perjury and false swearing that my answers are correct and complete to the best of my knowledge, including information provided about the citizenship or immigration status for each household member requesting assistance. I also certify that:

All Applications

- I understand the questions and statements on this request for assistance
- I have read and understand my rights and responsibilities in the box above.
- I understand the penalties for giving false information or breaking the rules.
- I understand that the agency may contact other people or organizations to obtain needed proof of my eligibility and level of benefits.

Additional Rules for Wisconsin Works (W-2), Job Access Loan (JAL), and/or Emergency Assistance (EA) Requests for Assistance

I understand that I must have an interview with an agency worker within a business day. The agency will attempt to contact you in the timeframe you indicated on this request for assistance. If you need to talk to someone from the agency immediately, please call you local W-2 agency. Click here to locate your local W-2 agency.

* ☐ By checking this box and typing my name below, I am electronically signing my request for assistance. I understand that an electronic signature has the same legal effect and can be enforced in the same way as a written signature.

| * First Name:	Middle Initial:	* Last Name:

Back **Submit**

THANK YOU PAGE

The Thank You page displays after the program request is submitted for applicants in the Balance of State and for those applicants within Milwaukee County where there is only one agency serving the zip code of the applicants' residence. This page confirms the applicant has successfully submitted the request for services.
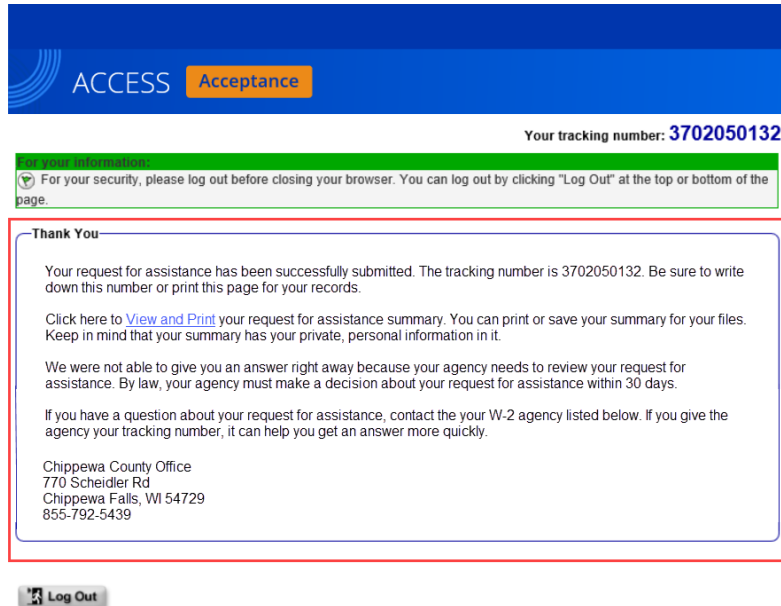
If the address of the applicant has a zip code that is served by more than one Milwaukee W-2 agency, then the thank you message displays identifying all the agencies that provide service within that zip code. Contact information for all agencies who serve that area is displayed, and a link to the Milwaukee W-2 agency map provides additional information on which agency serves that address.
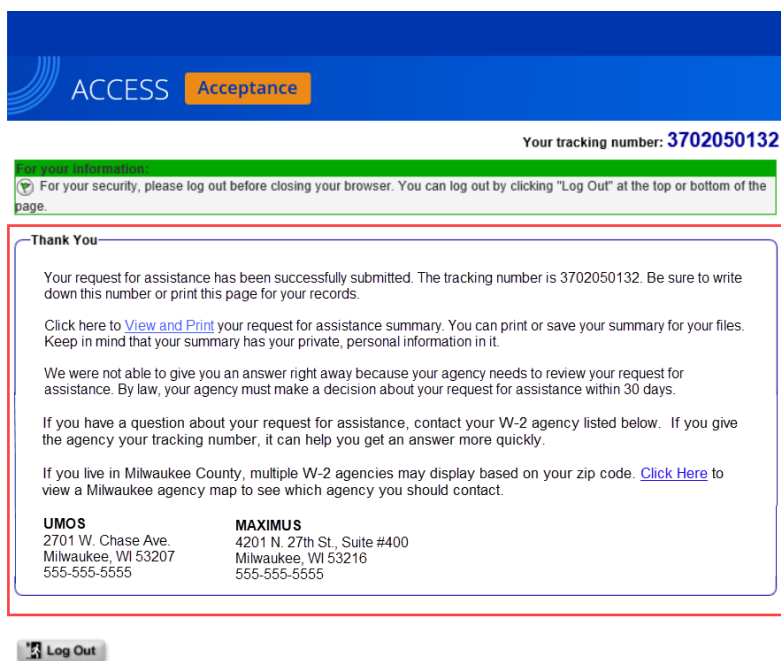
PDF SUMMARY

After the program request is submitted, a PDF summary of the program request is created for the applicant and the W-2 agency.

ACCESS

Keep in mind that you do not need to mail this print-out to your local agency.

Thank you for using ACCESS to apply for benefits!

Patty Jones, your request for assistance was submitted on March 24, 2020 at 1:38 PM. The following W-2 agency will review your request for assistance and/or manage your case.

Physical Address
Dane County Job Center
1819 Aberg Ave.
Madison WI 53704

Phone: 1-888-794-5556
Fax: 1-855-293-1822

Mailing Address
Centralized Document Processing Unit
PO Box 5234
Janesville WI 53547-5234

Your application tracking number is 1702119912.

In your request for assistance, you have asked for these benefits:
- Wisconsin Works (W-2)

You did not ask for these benefits:
- Job Access Loan (JAL)
- Emergency Assistance

If you decide later that you want to apply for these benefits, or for benefits that were not part of ACCESS, contact the agency listed above.

By law, your agency must make a decision about your benefits within 30 days of getting your application.

In most cases, your agency will get your online request for assistance on the date you sign and submit it. If you submit your request for assistance after 4:30 p.m. or on a weekend or holiday, your agency will get it on the next business day.

Next Steps
Wisconsin Works (W-2), Job Access Loan (JAL), and/or Emergency Assistance
You must complete an interview with a worker from your W-2 agency in order to get W-2, JAL, or Emergency Assistance. You will get details about your W-2 interview from your W-2 agency.

Filing Date

In most cases, your filing date is the day you sign and submit your request for assistance.

For Wisconsin Works (W-2), Job Access Loan (JAL), and Emergency Assistance (EA), if you submit your request for assistance after 4:30 p.m. or on a weekend or holiday, your filing date is the next business day.

Request for Assistance Summary

Here is a summary of what you told us, as well as important information about your rights and responsibilities. If you see N/A in this summary, it means the question was Not Applicable. We did not ask the question and it is not required for your request for assistance.

Basic Information

Your Name	Date of Birth	Gender	Language	County or Tribe
submit app	01/03/1976	Male	English	Dane

Where You Live		Mailing Address	
123 main street madison, WI, 53503			
Homeless?		No	
Contact Information			
Home Phone			
Work Phone			
Cell Phone			
Message Phone			
Best way to get in touch with you			
Phone Type (if Deaf or Hard of Hearing)			
Best time to get in touch with you			

Email Information

Person	Email Address	Get Email from Health Care Partners?	Get Letters Online?
submit app		Not Asked	No

People In Your Home

Person	Date of Birth	Gender	Marital Status	Language
Patty Age: 35	01/01/1985	Female	Married	English
	Programs Requested			
	Wisconsin Works (W-2)			
	SSN			
	547-68-7467			

Person	Date of Birth	Gender	Marital Status	Language
Tony Age: 40	01/01/1980	Male	Married	English
	Programs Requested			
	Wisconsin Works (W-2)			
	SSN			
	547-68-7467			

Person	Date of Birth	Gender	Marital Status	Language
Alexa Age: 8	01/01/2012	Female	Never Married	English
	Programs Requested			
	Wisconsin Works (W-2)			
	SSN			
	547-68-7467			

Relationship Information

Person	Relationships	Do they buy food and eat meals together?
Patty Age: 35	is the mother of Alexa	N/A

Person	Relationships	Do they buy food and eat meals together?
Tony Age: 40	is the husband of Patty	N/A
	is the father of Alexa	N/A

Your Interview

You must complete an interview with a W-2 agency worker to determine eligibility for Wisconsin Works (W-2), Job Access Loan (JAL), and/or Emergency Assistance. These interviews must be done over a voice or video phone call. You W-2 agency will contact you and provide more information about how to complete your interview.

Electronic Signature Acknowledgement

I wish to submit this request for assistance by electronic means. By signing this request for assistance electronically, I certify, under penalty of perjury and false swearing, that my answers are correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I also certify that:

- I understand the questions and statements on this request for assistance.
- I have read and understand my Rights and Responsibilities.
- I understand the penalities for giving false information or breaking the rules.
- I understand the agency may contact other persons or organizations to obtain needed proof of my eligibility and level of benefits and I authorize third parties to provide this proof.

Additional Rules for Wisconsin Works (W-2), Job Access Loan (JAL), and Emergency Assistance Requests for Assistance

I understand that I must have an interview with an agency worker within a business day. The agency will attempt to contact you in the time frame that you indicated on this request for assistance. If you need to talk to someone from the agency immediately please call your local W-2 agency. Click here to locate your local W-2 agency.

I understand that an electronic signature has the same legal effect and can be enforced in the same way as a written signature.

✓ By checking this box and typing my name below, I am electronically signing my request for assistance.

CARES WORKER WEB (CWW) UPDATES

A new CWW page has been added to allow the W-2 agency to identify and track all program requests that have been assigned to their agency. In the case of a request that is residing in a zip code served by multiple Milwaukee W-2 agencies, the agency name is blank and there is a drop down that will allow the assignment to the correct agency. On the upper right bar, there is a link to the Geo Locator to assist agencies with identifying to which W-2 agency the request should be assigned. The agency can enter an Agency Worker ID in order to assign the request item. By clicking on the "View" button, workers can view the summary PDF's attached to each request.

Once a worker has processed the request, the "Processed" box can be checked to notify other workers in the agency that it has been taken care of. As soon as the check mark is added, and the page is saved all processed requests are removed from the list. If a worker wants to see all processed and unprocessed requests the worker can click on the "Show/Hide" button. Once a request is marked as "Processed," the agency can no longer update any fields on that line.

The worker can sort the CWW page listing by any of the underlined column headings.

This new page restricts updates to only FEP Supervisor and FEP Security Profiles.

> ➤ **Note**: CWW will display up to 500 unprocessed requests. If there are more than 500 unprocessed requests in the queue, an attention message appears that says, "The agency has more than 500 applications to process and only 500 applications are displayed. The latest records are available for processing when the listed applications

are processed." Once the worker processes the requests displayed in CWW, additional requests appear in the queue.

AGENCY ACTION

W-2 agencies must discuss the policy updates and clarifications with staff. W-2 agencies must also update any relevant local agency procedures to respond to all W-2, EA, and JAL program requests in the timeframes specified.

TRAINING

The DCF W-2 Partner Training Team created the Processing Simplified ACCESS Program Requests in CWW Desk Aid to assist W-2 agency workers. The desk aid is available in the PTT Learning Center.

ATTACHMENTS

Updated W-2 Manual sections:
1.4.2: Applying for W-2
1.4.1: Where to Apply for W-2
1.4.2.1 How to Initiate a W-2 Request
17.2.2 Eligibility Determination Process

CONTACTS

POLICY QUESTIONS

For W-2, EA, and JAL Policy Questions: DCFW2PolicyQuestions@wisconsin.gov

SYSTEMS FUNCTIONALITY

For W-2 WWP and CWW Functionality Questions: BWF Work Programs Help Desk
BWFworkprogramsHD@wisconsin.gov

DCF/DFES/BWF/SC