W-2 Manual Updates

1.2.4 COORDINATING WITH PARTNER AGENCIES

W-2 applicants and participants are often connected to other services within their community. The W-2 Agency is responsible for ensuring that those services are coordinated with the W-2 services. To do this, the W-2 Agency must establish and maintain effective relationships with the following partner agencies serving families in common:

1. Public Workforce System;
2. Wisconsin Job Centers;
3. Public and Community Based Supportive Services;~~ and~~
4. Child Welfare~~.~~; and
5. Income Maintenance (IM)

1.4.1 WHERE TO APPLY

Any individual may apply for ~~begin the~~ *W-2* ~~application process~~ by contacting their local W-2 agency or by applying online in *ACCESS.* ~~or by contacting their local W-2 agency by submitting a request for services.~~ If an applicant is unable to complete an application in ACCESS, they may contact their local W-2 agency to complete the application process. All applicants must complete the W-2 application for W-2 services. Applicants must apply with the W-2 agency that serves the geographical area in which they reside. The following exceptions apply:

No change to remainder of 1.4.3

1.4.1.2 USING AN AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE

There are times when an applicant may not be able to complete the application forms personally. *W-2* agencies must accept all forms including the Application Registration form and online ACCESS application from an applicant's legally responsible relative or guardian. For example:

- A spouse can submit the Application Registration form or ACCESS application for his or her wife or husband.
- A parent can submit the Application Registration form or ACCESS application for his or her dependent child.

- A legal guardian can submit an Application Registration form or ACCESS application for his or her ward.
- When the applicant is incompetent or incapacitated, someone acting responsibly for an applicant can submit the Application Registration form or ACCESS application on that individual's behalf. This person would be considered the applicant's authorized representative.

When an applicant chooses to use an authorized representative, both the applicant and the authorized representative must sign the form *Authorization of Participant Representative (2375)*. The agency must not refuse an authorized representative unless the authorization itself appears to be fraudulent. The authorized representative is responsible for submitting the signed Application Registration form or ACCESS application, and any required documents.

1.4.2 APPLYING FOR W-2

An applicant may request a *W-2* application by contacting their local W-2 agency~~ or by submitting a request for W-2 services in~~ or by submitting a W-2 application in *ACCESS*

The W-2 application process begins on the date the applicant gives the agency the signed Application Registration form* generated from the *CWW* **Print Application Registration** page, or when the applicant submits an online application ~~a request for W-2 services~~ in ACCESS. Once the Receptionist begins the application process for applications that are not submitted in ACCESS, the agency must schedule an appointment for the applicant with the *RS* for the same day or the following working day using Client Scheduling in CWW. See section 1.2.2 for more detail on the role of the RS.

Applicants who submit an ACCESS application do not need to meet with an RS and may schedule the appointment with a FEP in ACCESS. Agencies must maintain their client scheduling availability in CWW for at least 10 working days into the future. Before submitting a W-2 application in ACCESS, applicants will be given the option of selecting from available appointment times to meet with a FEP over the next 5 working days. working days. The FEP must meet with the applicant during their scheduled appointment time. If an applicant does not schedule an appointment in ACCESS, it is the applicant's responsibility to contact their local W-2 agency to schedule an appointment. Agencies may contact an applicant to schedule interview appointments if the applicant does not schedule an appointment in ACCESS or does not attend their appointment scheduled in ACCESS.

Applicants applying in ACCESS are responsible for scheduling an interview appointment with a FEP in ACCESS or by contacting their local W-2 agency. If an applicant does not schedule an appointment in ACCESS or does not attend their appointment scheduled in ACCESS, the W-2 agency may contact the applicant to schedule an appointment. If an applicant does not schedule an appointment in ACCESS or contact their local W-2 agency, the W-2 agency may deny the application after 30 days

The W-2 agency must create an RFA in CWW for all application types, including applications through ACCESS. For ACCESS applications, the application date is the date the ACCESS application was submitted.

1.4.3 COMPLETING THE W-2 APPLICATION

No later than five working days after the applicant submits the signed Application Registration form or an online ACCESS application, the *FEP* must hold the intake interview with the applicant.

All applicants requesting *W-2* services, including *JAL*s*, must sign the Application Summary at the end of the interview. All adults in the *W-2 Group* must sign the Application Summary.

An application for W-2 is complete when both of the following have occurred:

- The FEP conducted the intake interview during which the FEP entered all eligibility information into *CWW*; and
- The FEP collected the applicant's signature on the CWW Application Summary that prints from the CWW **Generate Summary** page.

An applicant must sign the Application Summary electronically, telephonically, or in person. ~~the presence of a W-2 agency representative, even if an authorized representative is signing.~~ If the applicant signs with a mark, two witnesses' signatures are required for signing in person. Witnesses are not required for electronic or telephonic signatures. The second adult in a W-2 Group does not need to sign in the presence of a W-2 agency representative. W-2 applicants applying in ACCESS will sign the application summary electronically.

If the applicant has an authorized representative, the representative must also sign the Application Summary electronically, telephonically, or in person during the applicant's appointment with a FEP.

In order to secure an applicant's signature on either the Application Registration form or the Application Summary, the FEP may conduct a home visit as a reasonable accommodation. (See 1.3.2) When a home visit is required, the FEP must document the date of the home visit in case comments.

If CWW is unavailable for the intake interview, the applicant must complete and sign the *Wisconsin Works (W-2) and Related Application (2471)*. Signing this form is the equivalent of signing the Signature page of the Application Summary.

By signing the Application Summary, the applicant:

· Attests that all information provided in the application is correct and complete; and

· Attests to understanding and agreeing to some basic policies of the W-2 program, such as authorizing the W-2 agency to request and receive information from other sources and understanding the fraud rules.

If hardware issues make it impossible for the FEP to print the Application Summary, the FEP may choose the **Mail Summary** option on the CWW, **Generate Summary** page. Under this rare circumstance the FEP must have the applicant sign the *Back-up Applicant/Participant Signature (11154)* form while in the office for the intake interview. The FEP must attach this signed form to the signed Application Summary Signature page when the participant returns the mailed Signature page.

The agency must scan the signed copy of the Application Summary's Signature page into *ECF*. If the agency used the *Wisconsin Works (W-2) and Related Application (2471)* because CWW was unavailable, then the agency must scan the entire form into ECF.

*Job Access Loan applicants must also complete the *Job Access Loan Application (2482)*.

1.4.5 APPLICATION PROCESSING TIMEFRAME

Below are the application processing time frames that all *W-2* agencies must adhere to:

1. The same day or the following working day after an individual applies for W-2 by submitting the signed Application Registration form, (see 1.4.2), ~~or a request for services in,~~ a W-2 agency representative must schedule and hold an appointment between the applicant and a *RS*. If this initial meeting is with a *FEP*, then no later than seven working days after this meeting, the FEP must determine W-2 eligibility and make the most appropriate W-2 placement for the applicant.
2. No later than five working days after an individual applies for W-2 by submitting the signed Application Registration form or completing the application in ACCESS, the W-2 agency must ~~schedule and~~ hold an interview between the FEP and the applicant. If the applicant applies using the signed Application Registration form, the agency must schedule this interview. If the applicant applies in ACCESS, the applicant must either schedule this interview in ACCESS or by contacting their local W-2 agency. Agencies may contact applicants to schedule interview appointments. W-2 agencies must provide availability in ACCESS for appointment scheduling within five days of the application being submitted. Agencies must maintain available intake appointments in CWW Client Scheduling for a minimum of the next 10 working days to avoid delays in appointment scheduling and application processing.
3. No later than seven working days after the first meeting with the FEP, the FEP must determine W-2 eligibility and make the most appropriate W-2 placement for the applicant.

The W-2 agency representative must schedule all appointments through Client Scheduling in *CWW*. If the agency extends the application timeframe, agency staff must document the reason in case comments. The agency may extend the application timeframe for up to 30 calendar days from the application date for the following:

- The applicant asks to reschedule the RS or FEP appointment; or
- The applicant asks for more time to submit verification; or
- The applicant applies in ACCESS but does not schedule an appointment in ACCESS or by contacting the agency.

No change to remainder of 1.4.5

1.4.6 REQUIRED W-2 FORMS AND PUBLICATIONS DURING THE APPLICATION PROCESS

What to Bring With You (2372-P)
The What to Bring With You publication describes the types of documentation an applicant may need to provide in order to verify specific information needed to determine W-2 eligibility. This publication must be given to the applicant at the time he or she inquires about the W-2 program. Similar information is provided in ACCESS for online applicants. This publication is also used for various Medicaid/BadgerCare Plus programs as well as the *FS*, Child Care, and *CTS* programs.

Domestic Violence Brochure (2614-P)
W-2 agencies are required to provide a copy of the Domestic Violence Brochure at the appointment with the RS or when an applicant who submitted an ACCESS application interviews with the FEP. If the appointment with the FEP is telephonic, the FEP must provide an electronic copy of the brochure during the intake appointment. For safety reasons, it is important that W-2 agency staff point out the brochure so that the applicant can decide if it is safe to keep. Including the brochure in a stack of other papers may put the applicant or participant at risk if he or is unaware of its presence.

No change to remainder of 1.4.6

GLOSSARY

Contract Area: Multiple geographical areas served by the same W-2 Contract Agency.

No change to remainder of Glossary

17.2.2 (JAL) ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION PROCESS

JAL applicants may request JAL services ~~in~~ ~~*ACCESS*~~ ~~or~~ by contacting the W-2 agency. JAL applicants may also apply in ACCESS. ~~If an applicant requests JAL services in ACCESS, the agency must contact the applicant within one working day to continue the JAL application process.~~ JAL applicants may schedule an interview with a FEP in ACCESS. W-2 agencies must provide availability in ACCESS for appointment scheduling within five days of the application being submitted. Agencies must maintain available intake appointments in CWW Client Scheduling for a minimum of the next 10 working days to avoid delays in appointment scheduling and application processing.

ACCESS applicants are responsible for scheduling an appointment with a FEP either online through ACCESS or by calling their local W-2 agency. Agencies may contact applicants to schedule interview appointments if an applicant does not schedule an appointment in ACCESS or does not attend their appointment scheduled in ACCESS.

All JAL applicants must meet with a *FEP* to complete the interactive application process and to sign the *JAL Combined Application and Repayment Agreement (2482)*. If the appointment is telephonic, the form must be signed electronically. This form documents the JAL application date and loan amount requested. The second section of the form acknowledges receipt of the loan and serves as a loan repayment agreement. Loan recipients must sign the lower half of the form to document receipt of the loan check at the time the check is provided to the loan recipient. The form must be scanned into *ECF*.

No change to remainder of 17.2.2

EA Manual Updates

1.2 COMPLETION OF AN EA APPLICATION

The *W-2* agency must provide an ~~Emergency Assistance (EA) Application form (2010)~~ opportunity to complete an Emergency Assistance (EA) application to all persons who request *EA*. If EA is requested in person or over the phone, the W-2 agency must provide applicants the opportunity to complete and sign the EA Application form in the presence of a W-2 agency staff person on the same day as the request or inquiry. If requested via ACCESS, the agency must contact the applicant within one working day of receiving the request for assistance to allow completion of the EA application. If the request for assistance in ACCESS is submitted after 4:30 p.m. or on a non-working day, the agency must contact the applicant to complete the EA application within two working days.

Applicants can submit an EA application by submitting a completed *Emergency Assistance (EA) Application form (2010, Revised 2020)* to the W-2 agency or by submitting the application in the ACCESS web portal, when available. The W-2 agency must date-stamp the completed EA application form on the date it is received by the agency, which is used as the application date. For applications received via ACCESS, the application date is determined based on the time and date of application submittal. The applicant signature will be obtained via an electronic signature as part of the application process.

An EA Application is considered complete when it has:

1. A legible name;
2. An address, if available;
3. A reason for the emergency;
4. A signature by the applicant or his or her representative, and
5. Been completed to the best of the applicant's ability.

Note: A request for assistance in ACCESS is not considered an EA application.

The applicant, or that person's representative, must complete the ~~Part I, Pages 1 and 2~~ *Emergency Assistance (EA) Application form (2010, Revised 2020)* to*)* or the online ACCESS application to the best of his or her ability. A W-2 agency staff person must complete any missing information from the EA application ~~form~~ with information provided by the applicant.

A W-2 agency staff person must review each of the assurance statements on ~~Part I, Page 3 of~~ the *Emergency Assistance (EA) Application form (2010, Revised 2020)* with the EA applicant to ensure that the applicant has an opportunity to ask for clarification of each item. The EA applicant must initial each statement in the presence of the W-2 agency staff person to verify that he or she understands each statement and must sign the form. If the EA applicant already initialed the statements, then the EA applicant must initial each statement again. Applicants using ACCESS to complete an EA application must review the assurance statements and sign them using an electronic signature on the online application. The W-2 agency staff person must review these assurance statements with the applicant during the application process to ensure that the applicant has the opportunity to ask for clarification.

The W-2 agency staff person must sign and date the form if submitted via the *Emergency Assistance (EA) Application form (2010, revised 2020)*. If the agency date stamp is different from the date the EA applicant or the W-2 staff person signed the application form, the agency date stamp is the date that is used to calculate the five working days timeframe for processing EA. The date that the EA application is submitted via ACCESS starts the five working days timeframe. (See 1.5)

EXAMPLE: Inez inquired about EA on Tuesday, May 29th. She completed an EA application on the same day and the W-2 agency date stamped the completed EA application as received on May 29th. Inez had to pick up her children from school, so she was unable to wait to meet with an EA worker that day to complete the face to face meeting. An appointment was set for Inez to meet with an EA worker on Thursday, May 31st. On May 31st Inez met with an EA worker. The EA worker reviewed ~~Part 1, Page 3 of~~ the EA application and Inez initialed each assurance statement. The EA worker signed and dated the EA application on May 31st. The W-2 agency used the date of the agency date stamp (May 29th) to begin the five working days timeframe for processing the EA application.

Tuesday May 29: Date the completed application was received and date stamped by the W-2 agency.
Wednesday May 30: Day one of the five working days (~~1st~~ first working day after the date the application was date stamped).
Thursday May 31: Date Inez and W-2 worker completed the EA application "Assurances" page.
Tuesday June 5 at close of business: Day five of the five working days timeframe for processing EA application.

The EA application must be completed in the geographical area where the EA applicant resides. If the EA applicant is homeless, the applicant may apply wherever he or she is residing at the time of application and in the absence of other verification, a statement from the applicant may be used to verify residence in the area. If the EA applicant is moving to a residence in another geographical area, the EA applicant may apply in that geographical area. The W-2 agency that takes the EA Application must determine eligibility and issue any EA payment.

The W-2 agency must verify that the EA Application has been submitted either in the calendar month of the emergency or in the next calendar month after the emergency. The month of the emergency is the calendar month in which the family experienced the emergency, i.e. impending homelessness, homelessness, energy crisis, fire, flood or natural disaster. When the emergency is caused by a financial crisis, the financial crisis and the emergency do not have to occur in the same month. However, the emergency must be a result of the financial crisis.

The W-2 agency must scan and store all pages of the EA Application in *ECF* if available or place a copy in the paper file if an Emergency Assistance (EA) Application form (2010, revised 2020) is submitted. (See 7.2)

1.5 FIVE WORKING DAYS TIMEFRAME FOR PROCESSING EA APPLICATIONS

The *W-2* agency must process the *EA* application within five working days of the application date ~~after the date the agency receives the completed EA Application~~ (See 1.2). Day one is the first working day after the ~~completed application is received~~ application date. Day five ends at the close of business on the ~~5th~~ fifth working day after the ~~completed EA Application is received~~ application date. ~~Because the agency must date stamp the paper application when it is received, this date is used to determine the five working days timeline~~.

There are two steps to take during the five working days timeframe when processing EA applications. The first step is the eligibility determination and the second step is issuing the payment.

EXAMPLE: The W-2 agency received a completed EA application on Tuesday, November 25th in a week that included a legal holiday on Thursday, November 27th. The first day of the five working days timeframe would be Wednesday, November 26th, the day after the EA application was received. The legal holiday on Thursday, November 27th would not be counted, and the five working days timeframe would end at the close of business on Wednesday, December 3rd.

1.5.1 DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY – OVERVIEW

The first step in processing the EA application is determining eligibility. To determine eligibility within the five working days timeframe, the W-2 agency must:

1. Have at least one face-to-face contact with the EA applicant or his or her representative to go through the application and the assurance statements ~~on Part 1, Page 3~~ of the EA application (see 1.2);
2. Determine financial eligibility and complete Part 2, Page 1 of the EA Application (see 3.1);
3. Determine non-financial eligibility (see 4.1);
4. Request and complete all necessary information and verification (see 2.1);
5. For energy crisis only, assist the EA Group in obtaining payment from other funding sources for utility expenses (see 4.9.1);
6. Issue a written Notice of Decision to approved and denied EA applicants (see 1.5.2);

7. Determine if a Payment Delay Exception applies (see 5.4.1); and
8. Enter all approved and denied EA applications in *EATS* (see 7.1).

No change to the remainder of 1.5

7.2 EA DOCUMENTATION IN CARES AND ELECTRONIC CASE FILE (ECF)

For *EA* applicants that are already in *CARES*, application and verification information must be scanned and stored in *ECF*. For all other applicants, all documents must be retained in a paper file. The *W-2* agency must not create a Request for Assistance (RFA) in *CWW* for the purpose of storing EA Application materials in ECF.

Documents must be scanned into ECF according to policy in W-2 Manual 4.4.2. Information received as verification for an EA Application is considered a part of the EA Application and should be attached to and scanned with the application in the ECF with the Document Code APP (Applications-non CAF).” EA eligibility notices should be scanned separately under NOD (Notice of Decision”).

If the EA application is completed in ACCESS, it is automatically saved in ECF under the ACCESS tracking number. W-2 agencies will still be responsible for scanning and storing remaining application documents and notices as described in this section.

In cases where an EA applicant also has an open case in CARES for another type of assistance, in addition to what must be entered into *EATS*, the W-2 agency may also enter information regarding the EA Application and payment into case comments in CWW or on the Supportive Services screen in CARES.