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State of Wisconsin
Governor Tony Evers



TO: **W-2 Agencies
Training Staff**

FROM: Janice Peters, Deputy Administrator
Bureau of Working Families
Division of Family and Economic Security
Department of Children and Families

BWF OPERATIONS MEMO					
No:	20-23				
DATE:	11/13/2020				
W-2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	EA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CF	<input type="checkbox"/>
JAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
RAP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	TMJ	<input type="checkbox"/>	TJ	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other EP	<input type="checkbox"/>				

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Expanded Unemployment Insurance Benefits – Lost Wages Assistance

CROSS REFERENCE: [BWF Operations Memo 20-19](#)
[Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act of 2020](#)
[Presidential Memorandum authorizing Lost Wages Assistance \(LWA\)](#)

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to:

1. Communicate information on the Lost Wages Assistance (LWA) program; and
2. Provide detail on how to treat the LWA payments when determining financial eligibility for Wisconsin Works (W-2), Emergency Assistance (EA), Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA), and Job Access Loans (JAL).

BACKGROUND

COVID-19 has contributed to a sharp rise in unemployment, and legislation enacted at both the state and federal levels is intended to temporarily expand unemployment insurance benefit programs in addition to providing more robust benefits. In addition, on August 8, 2020, a [Presidential Memorandum](#) was issued authorizing the Other Needs Assistance (ONA) Program for Major Disaster Declarations Related to Coronavirus Disease 2019. Though the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the ONA funds the LWA program to provide a supplemental payment on top of UI paid by the state.

See [BWF Operations Memo 20-09: COVID-19 Expanded Unemployment Insurance Benefits - Amended 6/22/2020](#) for information on the three temporary federally funded unemployment compensation (UC) programs created to provide financial relief to individuals whose employment has been adversely impacted by the pandemic. BWF Operations Memo 20-09 also includes information on changes that the State of Wisconsin has made to our unemployment insurance programs to expedite benefit access.

LOST WAGES ASSISTANCE

The LWA program is a FEMA program that provides an additional \$300 per week to eligible claimants who certify that they are unemployed or partially unemployed due to disruptions caused by COVID-19. FEMA approved Wisconsin for the LWA program on September 1, 2020.

This new LWA payment is in addition to regular Unemployment Insurance (UI), Pandemic Unemployment Assistance ([PUA](#)), or Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation ([PEUC](#)) or [Work-Share](#) benefits currently available to unemployed Wisconsin workers.

LWA payments will be made retroactively to eligible people for up to six weeks: the weeks ending August 1, August 8, August 15, August 22, August 29, and September 5, 2020. FEMA will not fund any weeks after September 5, 2020.

A person does not need to file a separate application to receive LWA. Additional information on the LWA, including responses to Frequently Asked Questions, can be found on the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) [LWA web page](#). DWD will update this page with information on the LWA benefit when it becomes available.

COVID-19 POLICY CHANGES

For all programs, including W-2, JAL, RCA, and EA, workers must disregard the LWA benefits as income.

OTHER PROGRAMS

The LWA benefit is also disregarded as income for BadgerCare Plus, EBD Medicaid, FoodShare, Wisconsin Shares, and Caretaker Supplement.

CARES WORKER WEB (CWW) CHANGES

Worker actions are not needed to disregard the LWA payments as these payments are not auto populated on the Unearned Income page through a data exchange. However, LWA payment information is displayed in the Transaction Information section on the Unemployment Insurance Benefits Details page.

The \$300 LWA payment is type M and the remark is FPUC/LWA PAYMENT. These payments are viewable beginning October 15, 2020. The type M payment on the Unemployment Insurance Benefits Details page is either a LWA payment or a retroactive FPUC payment. Neither payment is countable as income for W-2.

For more information on the unemployment insurance data exchange, see *Process Help 44.3.4 Unemployment Insurance*.

CONTACTS

For W-2 Policy Questions: DCFw2PolicyQuestions@wisconsin.gov

For W-2, CARES and WWP Functionality Questions: BWF Work Programs Help Desk
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DCF/DFES/BWF/LW/GS