



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

FROM: Patara Horn, Director
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BWF OPERATIONS MEMO					
No:	20-27	(Amended)			
DATE:	12/30/2020				
W-2	<input type="checkbox"/>	EA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CF	<input type="checkbox"/>
JAL	<input type="checkbox"/>				
RAP	<input type="checkbox"/>	TMJ	<input type="checkbox"/>	TJ	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other EP	<input type="checkbox"/>				

SUBJECT: *Emergency Assistance Policy Redevelopment and Eligibility Determination System Modernization*

CROSS REFERENCE:

- [BWF Operations Memo 20-21 "New ACCESS Application Functions and Updated Request for Assistance Features"](#)
- [EA Manual 1.2.3 Reasonable Accommodations for Applicants](#)
- [EA Manual 1.3.3 Issuing an Eligibility Notice of Decision](#)
- [EA Manual 2.3 Social Security Numbers](#)
- [EA Manual 2.6.3.1 Temporary Living Accommodations](#)
- [EA Manual 3.1 Financial Eligibility Overview](#)
- [EA Manual 4.1 – 4.3 Verification Overview](#)
- [EA Manual 4.4.1 Wisconsin Work Programs Overview](#)
- [EA Manual 4.4.2 WWP Entry Requirements](#)
- [EA Manual 4.5 Working with Confidential Information](#)
- [EA Manual 5.4.2 Payment Delay due to New Housing Not Yet Obtained](#)
- [EA Manual 5.4.3 Payment Delay due to Lack of Verification that Eviction or Foreclosure Will Not Proceed](#)
- [EA Manual 6 Dispute Resolution](#)
- [W-2 Manual 12 Dispute Resolution](#)
- [COVID-19 Q&A and Policy Adjustments via W-2 Help Desk](#)
- [Emergency Assistance Application \(Form DCF-F-DWSP2010-1-E\)](#)

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 4, 2021

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to describe changes to Emergency Assistance (EA) policy, application forms, notices, and the eligibility determination system.

BACKGROUND

Since July 2019, the Bureau of Working Families (BWF) has been conducting a full analysis of EA policy and automation. As a result, BWF has updated policies and processes. BWF has also replaced the Emergency Assistance Tracking System (EATS), the legacy EA eligibility determination system, by adding EA eligibility to the web-based Wisconsin Work Programs (WWP) system.

The policy updates will provide Wisconsin residents more access to the program and simplify program administration. The system update aligns with BWF's goal of replacing legacy systems and adds enhancements to fully support EA policy, which will result in more efficient worker process and data collection.

POLICY

In addition to the policy changes specified below, multiple chapters and sections in the EA Manual were reorganized. For a full listing of the updates and the updated version of the EA Manual, the following documents are attached to this memo:

1. Emergency Assistance Manual Release 21-01
2. W-2 Manual Chapter 12
3. Emergency Assistance Application Form (Form DCF-F-DWSP2010-1-E)

ACCOMMODATIONS

Current Policy

None

New Policy

To comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and to ensure the EA program is accessible to all, new policy was added pertaining to reasonable accommodations.

[See EA Manual Section 1.2.3 in the attached EA Manual Release 21-01.](#)

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (SSN), CITIZENSHIP, AND RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

Current Policy

The applicant must be a citizen or qualified alien, have a valid SSN or proof of SSN application, and be a resident of Wisconsin and intend to reside in Wisconsin.

Updated Policy

All EA group members, including dependent children, must be a citizen or qualified non-citizen, have a valid SSN or proof of SSN application, and be a resident of Wisconsin and intend to reside in Wisconsin.

[See EA Manual Section 2.3 in the attached EA Manual Release 21-01.](#)

*DOUBLED-UP HOUSING*Current Policy

An EA Group residing in doubled-up housing meets the homelessness definition when the EA Group meets all of the following criteria:

1. Is not on the lease/mortgage (in cases where the “host” family has a lease/mortgage, the lease would not include the EA Group members);
2. Is using doubled-up housing as a short-term housing solution and would otherwise be homeless; and
3. Has been residing in doubled-up housing for one month (30 days) or less.

Updated Policy

An EA Group living in doubled-up housing for 180 days or less will be considered a temporary living arrangement and the EA group would be potentially eligible for the EA program if all other existing doubled-up housing criteria are met.

[See EA Manual Section 2.6.3.1 in the attached EA Manual Release 21-01.](#)

*FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY*Current Policy

If the EA applicant is eligible for any W-2 placement except CMF at the time he or she applies for EA, financial eligibility for EA is considered to have been met.

Updated Policy

Due to the differences in the financial eligibility calculation between W-2 and EA, financial eligibility must be determined for all EA applicants, regardless of financial eligibility for W-2 and Income Maintenance programs.

[See EA Manual Chapter 3.1.1 in the attached EA Manual Release 21-01.](#)

VERIFICATION

Current Policy

Within five working days after receipt of the completed EA Application, EA workers must attempt to verify:

1. EA Group information;
2. That the EA applicant has not received EA in the past 12 months;
3. A qualifying emergency;
4. Financial eligibility; and
5. A financial crisis that is beyond the control of the applicant for energy crisis and impending homelessness EA applications.

Additionally, depending upon whether the EA group is staying in their current housing or moving to new permanent housing, prior to issuing an EA payment, the W-2 agency must verify that the:

1. Landlord, bank, or local government agency agrees to waive any right to proceed with an eviction or foreclosure when the EA Group is staying in their current housing; or
2. EA Group has secured housing with the new landlord when the EA Group is moving to new permanent housing.

Updated Policy

New policy clarifies what must be verified and the suggested sources of verification documentation.

Verification documents date stamped as received within the five working days timeframe but discovered after a decision was made must be used to determine if a change in the initial eligibility decision is needed. If an eligibility change is needed based on the verification documents, WWP must be updated to reflect this change.

[See EA Manual Sections 4.1 – 4.3 in the attached EA Manual Release 21-01.](#)

EA DOCUMENTATION

Current Policy

The Emergency Assistance Tracking System is the internet-based tracking system for use by W-2 agencies to search and verify that each caretaker relative's history of any EA applications are beyond the 12 month EA limit, track data for all approved and denied EA applications, provide reports on approved EA payment amounts and denied EA applications, and reconcile EA payment amounts in EATS with the agency's accounting system/check register.

The data agencies enter in EATS comes from the EA Application and verification documentation, and the agency's fiscal records. Entering information into EATS is mandatory.

New Policy

W-2 agencies must use WWP to enter all EA application information and perform all EA documentation previously done with EATS.

[See EA Manual Sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 in the attached EA Manual Release 21-01.](#)

CONFIDENTIALITY

Current Policy

None

New Policy

New policy was added to protect EA applicant and recipient information. EA applications must be kept as confidential when an applicant identifies domestic abuse. This section references W-2 Manual 4.2.2.1. for a complete list of confidential information.

[See EA Manual Section 4.5 in the attached EA Manual Release 21-01.](#)

NOTICES

Current Policy

Once eligibility has been determined, the W-2 agency must, within the five working days timeframe, issue a notice of decision regarding eligibility to all EA applicants using the manual state Notice of Decision forms ([Negative Notice](#) (16001) and the [Positive Notice](#) (16015)).

When the EA Application is approved, but a Payment Delay Exception applies because the EA applicant does not have new housing at the time of application, the Positive Notice must inform the EA applicant of specific information about the payment delay, and send a Negative Notice if housing is not found within the 30-day delay or 30-day extension period.

Updated Policy

Once eligibility has been determined, the W-2 agency must issue a notice of decision regarding eligibility to all applicants within the five working days timeframe, including when a payment delay is required. WWP will automatically generate and send notices at the close of business when an application is submitted. The notice type depends on the status selected when submitting the application. If there is a status change, WWP will generate a new notice and send it to the applicant. Multiple status changes on the same business day will only result in one notice according to the application status at close of business. Notices will be sent to the applicant's mailing address in WWP and stored in CWW Correspondence History.

[See EA Manual Sections 1.3.3, **4.4.3**, 5.4.2, and 5.4.3 in the attached EA Manual Release 21-01.](#)

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Current Policy

The EA Manual refers to the W-2 Manual for details.

New Policy

Dispute Resolution policy (including Fact Finding and Departmental Reviews) specific to EA and all other EA references were removed from the W-2 Manual Chapter 12. This policy is now identified in EA Manual Chapter 6 and includes references to the W-2 Manual when there is shared policy.

Additionally, the following reasons an applicant or recipient can request a Fact Finding Review were updated to align with Wisconsin State Statute and Administrative Rule:

- The agency did not act upon the EA Application within five working days after receiving the completed application;
- The EA application was denied;
- The EA Payment amount was modified or canceled; and
- The EA Payment amount was calculated incorrectly.

[See EA Manual Chapter 6 in the attached EA Manual Release 21-01.](#)

[See the attached W-2 Manual Chapter 12.](#)

COVID-19

Agencies have been granted temporary flexibility in the EA application process due to the COVID-19 pandemic. BWF suspended the requirement for in-person signatures and meetings. W-2 agencies may conduct all appointments, typically held in-person, by telephone as necessary to reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure. This temporary adjustment is in effect at the time of the publishing of this Operations Memo. However, it is not a permanent policy change, and therefore not included in the EA Policy Manual.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE APPLICATION FORMS

The following updates were made to the *Emergency Assistance Application – Part 1* (Form DCF-F-DWSP2010-1-E) to improve flow and clarity:

- Language changes to clarify and simplify questions;
- Reorganization of the questions to place the selection of the emergency type at the top, and subsequent questions below for specific emergencies;
- Relocated application instructions directly in the applicable section;
- Examples to the income and assets sections; and
- An assurance regarding refusing to accept employment or training without good cause.

[See the attached Emergency Assistance Application \(Form DCF-F-DWSP2010-1-E\).](#)

The updated application will be available for use on the [DCF Forms Repository](#) as of the effective date of this Operations Memo.

With the modernized eligibility system, the *Emergency Assistance Application – Part 2* ([Form DCF-F-DWSP2010-2-E](#)) is now obsolete and will be removed from the forms repository as of the effective date of this Operations Memo.

WWP EA MODERNIZATION

EATS

EATS will be obsolete and no longer accessible after 7:00 p.m. on December 31, 2020. After this date, all EA applications that have not been completed in EATS will need to be completed in WWP. See the conversion details below.

CONVERSION FROM EATS TO WWP

BWF will convert the following from EATS to WWP:

- Adults in EA assistance groups with application dates on or after January 1, 2020 including payment details; and
- All Intentional Program Violation (IPV) history.

Converted applications will display as follows:

EATS Status	WWP EA Status
On Hold	In Progress
Approved with Payment Delay and no payment issued	Pending
Approved with no Payment Delay	Approved
Approved with Payment Delay and payment issued	Approved
Denied	Denied

Any applications that are not completed by close of business (COB) on December 31, 2020 will lose the following data during conversion:

- Demographics;
- Dependent children;
- Emergency type;
- Household financials; and
- Financial need.

To avoid having to reenter data, agencies should consider holding applications that cannot be completely processed by COB December 31, 2020 and process them in WWP rather than starting them in EATS.

For example, an agency receives an application on December 29. The EA worker requests all needed verification but does not receive it in time to process, make an eligibility decision, and issue a payment before COB on December 31. The EA worker can process the application in WWP as late as January 5, 2021, and still meet the five-day processing requirement.

All converted applications can be edited.

Complete EATS application history, including comments, will be available in Webl reports.

EA ELIGIBILITY PROCESSING CHANGES

Details regarding how to process EA applications in the new WWP EA eligibility system can be found in the recorded webinar and in the Entering Emergency Assistance in WWP Reference Guide available in the [Learning Center](#).

Below are highlights of enhancements from EATS to WWP.

Functionality	Enhancement
Notices	Will be automated.
Status of application in a payment delay	New status of Pending created in WWP with an automated notice explaining application's pending status.
Adding group members	In addition to finding group members from previous EA requests, WWP will also find group members from W-2 and FoodShare assistance groups.
Financial eligibility determination and payment amount calculation	Financial eligibility determination and payment amount calculation automated.
Support of EA policy	Multiple enhancements to support policy including functionality to require SSNs, SSN application dates, or exemption status for all group members.
SSN data exchange	As part of the clearance process in WWP, the applicant's SSN is submitted through a data exchange with the Social Security Administration in an overnight batch process. If an SSN record returns with a discrepancy, the BWF Work Programs Help Desk will contact the W-2 agency.

SECURITY

As stated previously, EATS will be obsoleted and no longer accessible at the end of the working day on December 31, 2020. The *Web Access Request for EATS and W-2 Plans* (Form DCF-F-2903-E) will no longer be used to request access to EATS and will only be used to request access to W-2 Plans. The form has been renamed *Web Access Request for W-2 Plans*.

To request access to the WWP system or to add access to the EA application, complete the [WWP Application – User Setup Form \(DCF-F-5212-E\)](#). Completed forms must be submitted to DCF Security (DCFSecurity@wisconsin.gov) by the agency's or contractor's security officer.

The chart below provides details on the two security profiles available to W-2 agencies.

	EA Worker	EA Supervisor
Edit all application fields and add/edit their own comments when application is in In Progress status	✓	✓
Add/edit comments when application is in Pending, Approved, Denied, or Withdrawn status	✓	✓
Add/edit fields except Application Date when application is in Pending, Approved, Denied, or Withdrawn status		✓
Change Application Status from Pending to Approved, Denied or Withdrawn	✓	✓
Change Application Status Reason when Application Status is Pending	✓	✓
Change Approved Payment Amount when Application Status is Pending	✓	✓
Add an EA IPV		✓
Edit an EA IPV if IPV status is Pending or Active		✓
Add/edit the EA payment amount	✓	✓

State staff can request one of the following security profiles:

- BWF Work Programs Help Desk
- DCF Staff – Monitoring
- DCF Staff – General
- DCF Staff – IT

Access to view confidential PINs is restricted as follows:

- EA supervisors, BWF Work Programs Help Desk, and DCF monitoring staff can request elevated access; and
- EA workers can request elevated access if the worker's agency matches the agency of the PIN's most recent EA application or most recent W-2 agency.

REPORTS

The following existing Emergency Assistance WebI Reports will be updated to use the new EA system for the source data:

- EA Report 01: Emergency Assistance Details
- EA Report 10: Emergency Assistance Monthly Timely Processing Details
- EA Report 11: Emergency Assistance Monthly Untimely Processing Details
- EA Report 12: Emergency Assistance Details by Payment Date
- EA Report 13: Emergency Assistance Applicant Count
- EA Report 14: Emergency Assistance Applications by Month

Two new reports will be created:

- EA Report 15: EA Application Status History
- EA Report 16: Applications Pending or In Progress Beyond 5 Days

EA Report 15 provides information on an applicant's previous EA applications, the dates of these applications, and the types of emergencies. EA Report 16 provides information on applications that are beyond the five-day timeframe. It enables the agency to have an updated list every day of which applications are past the five-day timeframe. The new reports will be available in the same folder location at DCF / WISDOM / Employment Programs / Emergency Assistance as the existing reports.

Additionally, reports previously found in EATS have been recreated and are available in the following folder directory in WEBI:

DCF / WISDOM / Employment Programs / Emergency Assistance / EATS Legacy Reports

The old reports for the financial accounting of Emergency Assistance Performance Outcome Payment (POP) amounts for entry into SPARC are being discontinued as per the pending 2021 contract change to remove EA POP. The application timeliness policy requirement can be tracked using the timely processing reports, EA Report 10 and EA Report 11.

TRAINING

The Partner Training Team will be offering Emergency Assistance webinars in December. The Webcast: Emergency Assistance in WWP will be available in the Learning Center by the end of December. This webcast is a recording of one of the webinar sessions. The Entering Emergency Assistance in WWP Reference Guide will be available in the Learning Center by December 23, 2020. The Intentional Program Violation (IPV) for Emergency Assistance - Desk Aid will be updated and available in the Learning Center by go live on January 4, 2021.

AGENCY ACTION

W-2 agencies must become familiar with the program and policy updates described in this memo and update any relevant local agency procedures.

ATTACHMENTS

[Emergency Assistance Manual Release 21-01](#)

[Emergency Assistance Application \(Form DCF-F-DWSP2010-1-E\)](#)

[W-2 Manual Chapter 12](#)

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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