



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

FROM: Patara Horn, Director  
Bureau of Working Families  
Division of Family and Economic Security  
Department of Children and Families

**BWF OPERATIONS MEMO**

No: 21-06

DATE: 02/17/2021

W-2 ☒ EA ☐ CF ☐ JAL ☐

RAP ☐ TMJ ☐ TJ ☐ Other EP ☐

**SUBJECT:** *Offsets in CARES Mainframe and Wisconsin Works Placement Requirement  
in CARES Worker Web*

**CROSS REFERENCE:** [W-2 Policy Manual Section 5.1.1](#)  
[W-2 Policy Manual Section 7.2.3.5.1](#)  
[W-2 Policy Manual Section 10.3.5](#)  
[Benefit Issuance Guide](#)  
[Wis. Stat. s. 49.161](#)

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** March 1, 2021

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this memo is to announce the following changes to CARES Mainframe and CARES Worker Web (CWW):

1. The offset indicator on CARES screen BICS will be disabled; and
2. CWW will require enrollment of a participant in Wisconsin Work Programs (WWP) before an initial Wisconsin Works (W-2) placement can be recorded for that individual on the W-2 Placement page in CWW.

**BACKGROUND**

OFFSETS

When a participant has an established overpayment and has an open case with a Community Service Job or W-2 Transition placement, the overpayment is recouped automatically at a pre-established rate as mandated in [Wis. Stat. s. 49.161](#). For recovery of overpayments for closed

cases or unpaid placements, W-2 agencies and individuals agree on a repayment agreement. In either situation, individuals can make voluntary additional payments at any time.

Per W-2 policy, participants can also elect to pay down an existing overpayment using an offset, which is a systematic way to apply an auxiliary payment (also known as supplemental payment) to a participant's outstanding overpayment balance instead of receiving a payment for money owed.

Due to its lack of use and other ongoing modernization efforts, the Bureau of Working Families (BWF) determined this policy and related CARES Mainframe functionality were no longer necessary since there are alternate methods for making additional payments.

### PLACEMENT

During the application process and prior to placing the individual in a W-2 placement, the W-2 agency must work with the applicant to conduct assessments to determine the most appropriate W-2 placement and develop the Employability Plan. (See W-2 Manual [5.1.1](#)) Assessments are conducted through driver flows in WWP and results of external assessments are recorded in WWP, thus making it necessary to refer and enroll an individual in WWP before determining a W-2 placement.

The change described in this memo, which supports W-2 policy, became necessary due to other ongoing modernization efforts as part of WWP Phase 2.

### **CARES MAINFRAME**

Effective March 1, 2021, Financial and Employment Planners (FEPs) will no longer be able to use the offset indicator on CARES screen BICS to offset an overpayment with an auxiliary payment if an individual has an established overpayment claim.

### **CWW**

Effective March 1, 2021, FEPs will be required to enroll a participant in WWP before they can record an initial placement for that individual on the W-2 Placement page in CWW.

### **POLICY**

W-2 policy updates are summarized below. The relevant policy manual section is attached to this memo and will be incorporated into the W-2 Manual. Policy that was removed is struck through and policy that was added is underlined.

### OFFSETS

#### Current Policy

When an auxiliary payment is used to supplement a W-2 payment made in a past month, the auxiliary payment may be used to offset an overpayment.

## Updated Policy

All references to offsetting an overpayment with an auxiliary payment have been removed from W-2 policy and the Benefit Issuance Guide. If a participant would like to pay anything additional to the automatic recoupment of their W-2 payment, they can continue to do so on a voluntary basis using the currently established repayment methods.

See attached the updated W-2 Manual Sections [7.2.3.5.1](#), [10.3.5](#), [10.3.6](#), and the [Benefit Issuance Guide](#)

## PLACEMENT

There are no policy changes associated with this change to CWW. Existing policy specifies necessary assessments FEPs must conduct prior to initial placement, which requires enrollment in WWP. (See W-2 Manual [5.1.1](#))

## **AGENCY ACTION**

W-2 agencies must familiarize staff with the system and policy changes as described in this memo and update any relevant local agency procedures.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

[7.2.3.5.1 Supplemental Payments](#)  
[10.3.5 Using Auxiliary Payments to Offset Overpayments](#)  
[10.3.6 Recovery of AFDC Overpayments](#)  
[Benefit Issuance Guide](#)

## **CONTACTS**

For W-2 and EA Policy Questions: [DCFW2PolicyQuestions@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DCFW2PolicyQuestions@wisconsin.gov)

For CARES and WWP Functionality Questions: BWF Work Programs Help Desk  
[BWFworkprogramsHD@wisconsin.gov](mailto:BWFworkprogramsHD@wisconsin.gov)

DCF/DFES/BWF/AP