



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

FROM: Patara Horn, Director
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BWF OPERATIONS MEMO							
No:	24-13						
DATE:	08/12/2024						
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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 Administrative Rule Amendments*

CROSS REFERENCE: [Wis. Admin. Code § DCF 120](#)
[EA Manual Section 1.3.1 Application Processing Timeframe](#)
[EA Manual Section 1.3.2 Determining Eligibility](#)
[EA Manual Section 1.3.3 Issuing an Eligibility Notice of Decision](#)
[EA Manual Section 1.3.4 Issuing Payments](#)
[EA Manual Section 4.1.1 Introduction](#)
[EA Manual Section 4.1.4 Verifying Questionable or Inconsistent Information](#)
[EA Manual Section 4.4.2 WWP Entry Requirements](#)
[EA Manual Section 5.4.1 Timeframe for Issuing Payment](#)
[EA Manual Section 5.4.2 Payment Delay due to New Housing Not Yet Obtained](#)
[EA Manual Section 5.4.3 Payment Delay due to Lack of Verification that Eviction or Foreclosure Will Not Proceed](#)
[EA Manual Glossary](#)

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2024

PURPOSE

The purpose of this operations memo is to announce amendments to Wis. Admin. Code § [DCF 120](#), impacting the Emergency Assistance (EA) program policy and procedures.

BACKGROUND

In an effort to continuously improve the EA program, the Bureau of Working Families (BWF) analyzed several factors to better understand potential barriers to approving EA applications for both the Wisconsin Works (W-2) agencies and applicants. BWF determined that the five working

day timeframe to make an eligibility decision presents a challenge for applicants needing to provide supporting documentation or have a schedule that makes it difficult to attend the required meeting with a W-2 agency within the first few days.

BWF amended Wis. Admin. Code § [DCF 120](#) to extend the timeframe for EA application processing from five to ten working days. While still emphasizing the need to act on applications quickly, the goals of this change include:

- Providing more flexibility and time to process applications as needed; and
- Avoiding the need to re-apply if the five-day timeframe is not sufficient.

Additionally, BWF amended Wis. Admin. Code § [DCF 120](#) by removing a sentence that conflicts with federal and state required verification policies.

POLICY

EA policy updates are summarized below. The relevant policy manual sections are attached to this memo and will be incorporated into the EA Manual. Policy that was removed is highlighted light grey, and language that is added is highlighted yellow.

APPLICATION PROCESSING TIMEFRAME

The application processing timeframe has been updated from five to ten working days, with day one being the first working day after the application date. Day ten ends at the close of business on the tenth working day after the application date.

As of October 1, 2024, all applications have ten working days to process EA applications, which includes:

1. Determining eligibility;
2. Entering all EA applications in Wisconsin Work Programs (WWP);
3. Issuing an Eligibility Notice of Decision; and
4. Issuing payments.

This updated policy impacts any applications with an application date of October 1, 2024, or later.

EXAMPLE 1: A W-2 agency receives a new application via ACCESS after-hours on September 30, 2024, with an application date of October 1. The W-2 agency has ten working days to process this application. Day ten ends at the close of business on October 15.

EXAMPLE 2: An EA application with an application date of September 27, 2024, has an “In Progress” status as of October 1. The new policy does not apply to this application as it has an application date prior to October 1. The W-2 agency must make a decision on this application by close of business on day five, or October 4.

References to the application processing timeframe have been updated throughout the EA Manual from five to ten working days.

[See attached EA Manual Sections 1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.3.3, 1.3.4, 4.1.1, 4.1.4, 4.4.2, 5.4.1, 5.4.2, and 5.4.3](#)

TIME-SENSITIVE SITUATIONS

New policy was added to clarify that agencies must maintain a sense of urgency as EA applicants are often dealing with time-sensitive emergencies.

Eligibility

W-2 agencies must make an eligibility decision as quickly as the situation allows. The full ten working day timeframe must only be used in scenarios where the applicant requires additional time to obtain verification or other information necessary to process the application.

EA Comments must document rationale for using the full timeframe. Once all necessary information is obtained by the agency, applications must be processed in a timely fashion.

Payments

Payments must also be issued as quickly as the situation allows. The full ten working day timeframe must only be used in scenarios where the situation required an eligibility decision late in the timeframe. EA Comments must document rationale.

[See attached EA Manual Sections 1.3.1 and 1.3.4](#)

MEETING REQUIREMENTS

To ensure the applicant has sufficient time to obtain all necessary information to complete the application, the required meeting with the EA worker must be scheduled to take place during the first five working days of the ten working day eligibility timeframe.

If the applicant requires a later date due to their availability, the meeting can be scheduled after day five. Rationale must be documented in EA Comments for any initially scheduled meetings after day five.

[See attached EA Manual Section 1.3.2](#)

PAYMENT FOLLOWING PAYMENT DELAY

There are no policy changes, other than updating references to the change from five to ten working days for eligibility decisions in the examples. In the case of a payment delay, the payment must still be made within **FIVE** working days:

1. Of the date the EA Group notifies the W-2 agency that a permanent living arrangement has been obtained; or

2. After verifying that the landlord, bank, or local government agency that issued the notice agrees not to proceed with the eviction or foreclosure if the payment is received.

[See attached EA Manual Sections 5.4.2 and 5.4.3](#)

VERIFICATION

In order to clarify that verification is a required piece of the eligibility determination, the phrase "Verification of eligibility must not delay the provision of assistance." has been removed from Wis. Admin. Code § [DCF 120](#) and EA policy.

As described in the "Time-Sensitive Situations" section above, W-2 agencies must still treat each application with a sense of urgency, processing as quickly as the situation allows.

[See attached EA Manual Section 4.1.1](#)

GLOSSARY

The following glossary items were added/updated to better clarify terminology used when calculating the eligibility timeframe:

- Calendar days (new);
- CARES holidays (formally "Public holidays"); and
- Working days.

[See attached EA Manual Glossary](#)

WWP

As of October 1, 2024, WWP will reflect the updates described in this memo. Any applications with an application date of October 1, 2024, or later will have the updated ten working days timeframe used to calculate the "Status Deadline" in WWP.

ACCESS

Subsequent communication will be sent at a later date regarding minor changes to ACCESS to support updates described in this memo.

REPORTS

Relevant EA reports will reflect updates described in this memo.

TRAINING

The Partner Training Team will update any relevant trainings based on this memo.

AGENCY ACTION

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

ATTACHMENTS

[EA Policy Attachment](#)

CONTACTS

For W-2 Policy Questions: [BWF Policy Question SharePoint](#)

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

DCF/DFES/BWF/AP