

1.3.1 Application Processing Timeframe

Within **five ten** working days of the application date, the **W-2** agency must process the **EA** application, which includes:

1. Determining Eligibility (see [1.3.2](#));
2. Entering all EA applications in **WWP** (see [4.4.2](#));
3. Issuing an Eligibility Notice of Decision (see [1.3.3](#)); and
4. Issuing Payments (see [1.3.4](#)).

The application date is used to determine the **five ten** working days timeframe. Day one is the first working day after the application date. Day **five ten** ends at the close of business on the **fifth tenth** working day after the application date. If the agency date stamp is different from the date the applicant signed the application, the date stamp is the date that is used to calculate the **five ten** working days timeframe for processing EA.

EA applicants are often dealing with time-sensitive emergencies; therefore, W-2 agencies must make an eligibility decision as quickly as the situation allows. The full **ten** working days 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.

EXAMPLE 1: 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 29. 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 meeting. Inez met with an EA worker on Thursday, May 31st, when the worker reviewed the EA application and Inez reviewed each assurance statement. The W-2 agency used the date of the agency date stamp (May 29th) to begin the **five ten** working days timeframe for processing the EA application, therefore Tuesday, June 5 12 is day **five ten** of the **five ten** working days timeframe for processing the EA application.

EXAMPLE 2: Jonathan applied in ACCESS the morning of Wednesday, February 23rd. ACCESS processes the application with an application date of that day, 2/23. Jonathan also scheduled a phone meeting in ACCESS for the following day (2/24, day 1) to continue with the application process when he is able to take the call in private, to ensure his attention and confidentiality. The EA worker has until Wednesday, March 2 9 to process the EA application in the **five ten** working days timeframe.

EXAMPLE 3: María Belén submitted an ACCESS application with an application date of Thursday, May 2. She met with her worker on Friday, May 3, where she was

provided the list of documents required to complete her application. She was able to obtain them over the weekend and the worker received them Monday, May 6. The worker approved the application that day and the EA payment was mailed the following day, Tuesday, May 7. While the agency has until Friday, May 17, per policy to process the application, they were able to process in fewer days since María Belén submitted her documentation quickly.

1.3.2 Determining Eligibility

1.3.2.1 Meeting Options

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

1. Have at least one meeting with the applicant or their representative, **scheduled to occur during the first five working days of the ten working days timeframe** (see 1.3.2.1);
2. Determine nonfinancial eligibility (see Chapter 2);
3. Determine financial eligibility (see Chapter 3); and
4. Request and complete all necessary information and verification (see Chapter 4).

1.3.2.1 Meeting Options

The required meeting with the EA worker must be scheduled to take place during the first five working days of the ten working days 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.

Agencies must maintain their client scheduling availability in CWW for at least five working days into the future. The number of appointments available must be consistent with the average number of ACCESS applications. Before submitting an EA application in ACCESS, applicants will be given the option of selecting from available phone appointment times to meet with an EA worker.

The EA worker must meet with the applicant during their scheduled appointment time. If an ACCESS applicant does not schedule an interview appointment, agencies must contact the applicant within one working day of the application date to continue the application process.

In the event an applicant misses their scheduled appointment, agencies must contact the applicant. Contact attempts must be varied, including phone calls, e-mail, text message, etc. over several days. Contact attempts with the applicant must be clearly documented and detailed specifically in EA comments.

The required meeting with an applicant can be conducted in one of three ways below. W-2 agencies must provide the option to meet in whichever acceptable meeting format the applicant prefers.

1. **In-person:** The applicant meets physically in-person with an EA worker.
2. **Video call:** The applicant and EA worker use a video platform to meet where each person can see and hear one another.
3. **Telephonically:** The applicant and EA worker use a telephone to meet.

EA workers must document in EA comments which meeting format was used.

1.3.3 Issuing an Eligibility Notice of Decision

Once eligibility has been determined, the [W-2](#) agency must issue a notice of decision regarding eligibility to all applicants within the **five ten** working days timeframe, including when a payment delay is required or an applicant chooses to withdraw their application. [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, a new notice will generate and send 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. W-2 agency workers must discuss with the applicant their current living situation to determine the appropriate mailing address to use so the applicant can receive notices.

A copy of the notice will automatically be saved in [CWW](#) correspondence history.

1.3.4 Issuing Payments

The final step in processing the [EA](#) application is making the payment. This step must also be completed within **five ten** working days after the EA application is received, unless a Payment Delay applies. (See [5.4.2](#) and [5.4.3](#)) Refer to [Chapter 5](#) for information on determining payment amount and guidelines for issuing payments.

As with eligibility decisions, payments must be issued as quickly as the situation allows. (See 1.3.1) The full ten working days timeframe must only be used in scenarios where the situation required an eligibility decision late in the timeframe. EA Comments must document rationale.

4.1.1 Introduction

As part of determining eligibility for [EA](#), the [W-2](#) agency must attempt to verify, within five **ten** working days after receipt of the application date, the following items:

1. The [EA Group](#) information (see [2.4](#));
2. That the applicant has not received EA in the past 12 months (see [2.5](#));
3. The qualifying emergency (see [2.6](#));
4. Financial eligibility (see [Chapter 3](#));
5. For energy crisis and impending homelessness/financial crisis only: That there is a financial crisis beyond the control of the applicant (see 2.6.4.4 and 2.6.5.3).

Additionally, the W-2 agency must verify housing when the EA Group is experiencing impending homelessness due to financial crisis and notice to terminate tenancy and plans to remain in its current housing (see 5.3.2).

For information on the timeframes for issuing payments, see 5.4.

W-2 agencies may not impose stricter verification requirements or require applicants to verify items outside the eligibility and housing items listed in sections 4.2 and 4.3.

The W-2 agency must request any required verification from the applicant as soon as possible in order to allow the applicant sufficient time to obtain and provide the verification, while still allowing the agency to determine eligibility within the five working days timeframe. (See [1.3.1](#))

If information that would typically be required for verification cannot be provided by the applicant or cannot be obtained with the assistance of the W-2 agency (see [4.1.3](#)) within the five working days timeframe, an eligibility determination must be made based upon available information. Verification of eligibility must not delay the provision of assistance.

Verification documents date stamped as received within the five **ten** 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. Applications changing to an “Approved” status must make a payment as soon as possible, but no later than within 5 working days of the discovery of the document.

Comments regarding verification must be entered in EA comments in WWP within 24 hours after the action or contact with the applicant.

4.1.4 Verifying Questionable or Inconsistent Information

In some cases, information provided by an applicant may appear questionable or inconsistent, such as:

- The applicant or a member of the [EA](#) Group is a relative of the landlord;
- The applicant lists a child as a dependent child, but the child is also listed on another application;
- An applicant with more than one child does not list all of the children on the application;
- Documents received for verification appear to have been altered; or
- Other inconsistencies in or between the application, information given by the applicant, or verification documents.

When verification documents or other information appear questionable or inconsistent, the [W-2](#) agency must attempt to verify the authenticity of the documents and information with the issuing entity and document in EA comments in [WWP](#) the actions that were taken. If the W-2 agency has attempted to verify the questionable or inconsistent information but has been unable to do so within the **five ten** working days timeline, the W-2 agency must deny the application and inform the applicant that he or she may apply again at any time.

4.4.2 WWP Entry Requirements

The data agencies enter in [WWP](#) comes from the [EA](#) application, verification documents, and the agency's fiscal records. Entering information into WWP is mandatory. [W-2](#) agencies must:

1. Complete searches for caretaker relatives to prevent issuance of EA payments to caretaker relatives who have received EA in the previous 12-month period.
2. Enter information in all fields required by WWP.
3. Enter information within **five ten** working days of the application date for an EA denial, including using the most appropriate denial reason.
4. Enter information within **five ten** working days of the application date for EA approvals. Information must be entered in WWP prior to issuing an EA payment. The Voucher/Check Date must be within **five ten** working days of the EA application date, unless extended when a Payment Delay applies.
(See [5.4.2](#) and [5.4.3](#))

5. Record application information in EA comments.
6. In the case of a Payment Delay, all information on the EA application except the payment information must be entered into WWP upon making the eligibility decision, within **five ten** working days.
 - a. Information supporting the rationale for Payment Delay must be recorded in EA comments. The application must be in “Pending” status in WWP. Once the application can be approved and payment issued, the application status must be changed to “Approved” and payment information must be entered into WWP. If the application cannot be approved, an update must be made in WWP to change the application status to “Denied” and EA comments must be added to explain the situation.
7. A voucher/check number must be entered, along with the Voucher/Check Date and the Voucher/Check Amount for the respective EA payment. Information must be entered within 10 calendar days of the Voucher/Check Date.
 - a. In addition to the required WWP fields, W-2 agencies are strongly encouraged to utilize optional WWP fields. These fields facilitate reconciliation of EA Voucher/Check Amounts in WWP with the agency’s accounting records. If an application is approved but the payment is returned for any reason, an update must be made in the EA Payments section to zero out the payment amount. The application status must also be updated to “Withdrawn” with a “EA payment returned to agency” withdrawal reason, and the Approved Payment Amount must be updated to zero. EA comments must be added to explain the situation.
8. Monitor EA payment information reported in WWP to ensure accuracy and completeness.
9. On a monthly basis, reconcile EA payments in WWP with EA payment amounts submitted to DCF in SPARC. (See [4.6.1](#))

5.4.1 Timeframe for Issuing Payment

The payment must be made within **5 ten** working days after the application date unless a payment delay is necessary in the following situations:

1. The [EA](#) Group is moving to new permanent housing but has not yet obtained new housing. (See [5.4.2](#))
2. The EA Group plans to remain in its current housing, but the [W-2](#) agency has not yet verified that the landlord, bank, or local government agency agrees not to proceed with the eviction or foreclosure if the payment is received. ([5.4.3](#))

Information regarding the rationale for a payment delay must be recorded in EA comments in [WWP](#). (See [4.4.2](#))

5.4.2 Payment Delay due to New Housing Not Yet Obtained

When an [EA](#) Group qualifies for a payment delay because the group is moving to new permanent housing but has not yet obtained new housing, the group has 60 calendar days from the date the W-2 agency determines the group is eligible for a payment delay to find new housing.

When the applicant notifies the W-2 agency that he or she has found new permanent housing after qualifying for a payment delay, the W-2 agency must update the application status in [WWP](#) to “Approved” and include the amount of the approved payment amount. The agency must issue a payment within 5 working days of the date the EA Group notifies the W-2 agency that a permanent living arrangement has been obtained.

If the group is not able to find housing within the 60 calendar days timeframe, the group can receive an additional 60 calendar days to find housing. If the applicant has not already contacted the W-2 agency to request additional time, the agency must contact the applicant before the initial 60-day deadline to:

1. Discuss if they are still looking for new permanent housing and need the additional 60 days to continue searching; and
2. Offer resources and discuss possible referrals the W-2 agency deems appropriate to assist the applicant in their search for housing.

If the applicant requires an additional 60-day payment delay, the W-2 agency must update the application status reason in [WWP](#) to generate a new notice with the new payment delay timeframe.

If the W-2 agency is unable to reach the applicant prior to the status deadline after varied contact attempts including phone calls, e-mail, text message, etc. over several days, the worker must still update the application status reason in [WWP](#) to provide the additional 60 days to continue searching for housing. Contact attempts with the applicant must be clearly documented and detailed specifically in PIN comments.

If the applicant did not find housing within either the 60 calendar day timeframe or the additional 60 calendar days, the W-2 agency must update the application status to “Denied”.

EXAMPLE 1: Harriet applied for EA on November 5th. Within five ten working days of her application, the W-2 agency verified nonfinancial and financial eligibility criteria and determined that Harriet was eligible for EA due to impending homelessness. At the time of application, Harriet informed the W-2 agency that she had not yet found new permanent housing. Harriet qualifies for a payment delay and has 60 days to find housing and inform the agency. On November 20th, Harriet contacted the W-2 agency to notify them of her new housing. The W-2 agency issued a payment on November 22nd.

EXAMPLE 2: James applied for EA on May 15th. Within five ten working days of his application, the W-2 agency verified nonfinancial and financial eligibility and James was found eligible for EA due to homelessness. When James applied for EA, he already had new permanent housing pending assistance from EA. As James already had housing at the time of application, a payment delay does not apply. The W-2 agency issued a check was sent to the landlord on May 22nd, within five ten working days of the application date.

No change to the remainder of 5.4.2

5.4.3 Payment Delay due to Lack of Verification that Eviction or Foreclosure Will Not Proceed

An **EA** Group qualifies for a payment delay when the group:

1. Is facing impending homelessness due to a financial crisis and has received a notice to terminate tenancy; and
2. The agency has not verified that the landlord, bank, or local government that issued the notice agrees not to proceed with the eviction or foreclosure if the payment is received.

Within five working days 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, the **W-2** agency must issue the payment and update the application status to “Approved” in **WWP**. The W-2 agency may receive the confirmation verbally or in writing. (See [4.3.1](#))

If the landlord, bank, or local government is unresponsive or unwilling to stop the eviction or foreclosure process, the W-2 agency must inform the applicant of the option

to move to new permanent housing. If the applicant chooses to pursue new housing, then a new payment delay to search for permanent housing would apply. (See [5.4.2](#))

EXAMPLE 1: Mary applied for EA on October 8th as she had received an eviction notice from her landlord for non-payment of rent. Within five ten working days of her application, the W-2 agency verified nonfinancial and financial eligibility and Mary was found eligible for EA due to impending homelessness. The W-2 agency requested that Mary inform her landlord that a payment was available if the landlord agreed not to proceed with the eviction. Mary's landlord called the W-2 agency and verbally confirmed that he would not proceed with the eviction. The W-2 agency then issued the payment to Mary's landlord. The W-2 agency mailed a cover letter to Mary's landlord to confirm that upon receipt of the payment, the landlord would not proceed with evicting Mary.

EXAMPLE 2: Joe applied for EA on January 20th after receiving an eviction notice from his landlord for non-payment of rent. Within five ten working days of his application, the W-2 agency found him eligible for EA due to impending homelessness but was unable to confirm with his landlord that they agree not to proceed with the eviction. The EA worker submitted his application in "Pending – No Confirmation from Current Landlord" status. After multiple attempts of contacting an unresponsive landlord, the EA worker advised Joe of his option to move to new permanent housing, which he agreed he was going to proceed with. The EA worker changed the application status to "Pending – No New Housing Initial 60 days" to generate a new notice and start the 60-day timeframe for Joe to search for new housing.

Glossary

Calendar days: Any day of the week, including weekends and holidays.

Public CARES holidays: A holiday authorized by law and limiting work or official business: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. A CARES holiday can be observed on an alternate day, depending on the day of the week it occurs; see the CARES Online Availability Calendar.

Working days: Any day of the week except Saturday, Sunday and public CARES holidays.