

Division of Family and Economic Security Administrator's Memo Series

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To: Wisconsin Works (W-2) Agency Directors

From: Connie M. Chesnik
Division Administrator

RE: Announcing Upcoming Wisconsin Works (W-2) ACCESS Application Requirement

Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to:

1. Provide notification to Wisconsin Works (W-2) contracted agencies of an upcoming policy and operational change requiring contractors to use ACCESS for in-person requests for assistance for W-2, Job Access Loan (JAL), and Emergency Assistance (EA); and
2. Require that contracted W-2 agencies provide and maintain access to internet-connected technology.

Background

The Bureau of Working Families (BWF) Strategic Plan gives priority to ensuring equal program access. Therefore, W-2 agencies will be required to use ACCESS applications for all applications, including in-person requests for assistance in February 2027. Uniformly requiring applications through ACCESS will improve program request data, simplify timelines and manual processes that can create inequities for applicants, and increase consistency of the application experience statewide. Before implementation of this requirement, BWF will provide resources to agencies to support applicants in using the ACCESS application.

CARES Worker Web (CWW) request for assistance processes and the manual [Wisconsin Works \(W-2\) and Related Programs Registration \(DCF-F-14880-E\)](#), [JAL Combined Application and Repayment Agreement \(DCF-F-DWSP2482-E\)](#), and [Emergency Assistance Application \(DCF-F-DWSP2010-E\)](#) forms will **not** become obsolete upon implementation of the ACCESS application requirement. There may be circumstances where technology access, internet connectivity, or ACCESS system functioning impede the ability to successfully submit an application in ACCESS. In these instances, it may be appropriate to use manual application processes. Manual application processes may be appropriate in other situations, such as for: refugee applicants,

applicants who speak a language other than English, and Safe at Home participants. Hardship exemptions to the ACCESS application requirement will be defined in the formal guidance released prior to implementation.

Action Items

Agencies must provide and maintain access to internet-connected technology (desktop computers, laptops, kiosks, and/or tablets) for individuals who request assistance at agencies. Staff must be available to assist applicants as needed through the ACCESS application. It is important that agencies maintain technology and staffing capacity which will allow applicants to apply through ACCESS at agencies and ensure there is still capacity to serve on-site participants who are completing online program activities (e.g., job search, virtual trainings, and educational courses).

W-2 agencies are encouraged to adopt using ACCESS as the primary method of application for W-2, JAL, and EA programs in advance of the formal requirement and to assess and implement any technology or staffing needs. Taking steps to increase agency use of ACCESS and provide assistance to applicants in completing the ACCESS application prior to February 2027 implementation will familiarize staff with the process adjustment well before it becomes a formal requirement.