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TO: Economic Support Supervisors
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W-2 Agencies
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Job Center Leads and Managers

FROM: Janice Peters
Bureau of Wisconsin Works
Division of Workforce Solutions

DWS OPERATIONS MEMO					
No:		06-44			
DATE:		09/26/2006			
FS	<input type="checkbox"/>	MA	<input type="checkbox"/>	SC	<input type="checkbox"/>
CTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	CC	<input type="checkbox"/>	W-2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FSET	<input type="checkbox"/>	EA	<input type="checkbox"/>	CF	<input type="checkbox"/>
JAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	JC	<input type="checkbox"/>	RAP	<input type="checkbox"/>
WIA	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other EP	<input type="checkbox"/>		
PRIORITY: HIGH					

SUBJECT: **Wisconsin Works (W-2) CARES Activities**

CROSS REFERENCE: [Wisconsin CARES Guide, Section 2 – Work Programs, Chapter 06, Version 3 – Posting Statuses and Components](#)
[Wisconsin CARES Guide, Section 2 – Work Programs, Appendix 01, Version 4 – Definitions of Components & Statuses](#)

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2006

PURPOSE

This memo:

1. Provides updates on CARES Activities (also called Components) that can be posted on WPCS for participants in the W-2 program.
2. Reiterates current CARES procedures for entering Activity Phases on WPCS when assigning an activity.

BACKGROUND

As part of the process to bring the W-2 program into compliance with the new Federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Regulations, Wisconsin is making a number of modest changes to policies and procedures. One of the primary areas of focus of this work is W-2 CARES Activities.

W-2 CARES Activities (also referred to as Components), defined in Section 2, Appendix 01 of the Wisconsin CARES Guide, were revised for three purposes: 1) To clarify existing language in some of the definitions; 2) To better align the definitions with the 12 Federal work activity definitions provided in the TANF Regulations; and 3) To enable the Department to accurately report work participation information to the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

The W-2 CARES Activities were designed to be used in CARES to track the activities that participants are engaging in to develop skills and overcome barriers that will help them become gainfully employed. The activities that are posted on WPCS must correlate with the activities assigned to participants on their Employability Plan.

A complete updated list of all of the W-2 CARES Activities and definitions will be released in October.

POLICY

ACTIVITY NO LONGER IN USE

One activity, PL – Parenting/Life Skills, will no longer be available to use in CARES. This activity has been separated into two new activities – one for Parenting Skills and one for Life Skills. These new activities are defined below.

NEW ACTIVITIES

The following activities and their associated CARES codes have been added:

Life Skills - LF: Report this activity for participants who are engaged in activities that teach basic life skills that allow them to succeed in the workforce. Activities may include:

- Balancing Life and Work
- Budgeting
- Household management
- Interpersonal skills
- Decision making skills
- Time management

Parenting Skills - PA: Report this activity for participants who are engaged in activities that teach effective parenting skills. Activities may include:

- Parenting techniques
- Nutrition
- Family planning
- Behavior Modification

Vocational Adult Basic Education - VA: Report this activity for participants who are assigned to an Adult Basic Education (ABE) course that is completed as a part of a job skills training program. The course must be of limited duration and be a necessary or regular part of the job skills training. ABE is instruction designed to focus on the areas of reading, mathematics, communication skills, social studies, physical sciences, health, and career education. ABE consists of 3 levels:

1. Level 1, or Beginning ABE:
Instruction designed for adults whose academic functioning level is comparable to grades 0 – 5.9
2. Level 2, or Intermediate ABE:
Instruction designed for adults whose academic functioning level is comparable to grades 6.0 – 8.9
3. Level 3 or Adult Secondary Education (ASE)
Instruction which delivers competencies, academic or occupational, comparable to that offered in secondary schools (grades 9.0 – 12.9)

Study time that is required for Vocational Adult Basic Education should also be assigned under this activity. Study time must be supervised and tracked for attendance purposes.

Vocational English-as-a-Second-Language - VE: Report this activity for participants who are assigned to an English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) course that is completed as part of a job skills training program. The course must be of limited duration and be a necessary or regular part of the job skills training. ESL is a course of study intended to teach English-speaking skills related to reading, writing, speaking and listening to students whose primary language is not English.

Study time that is required for Vocational English-as-a-Second-Language should also be assigned under this activity. Study time must be supervised and tracked for attendance purposes.

Vocational Literacy Skills - VL: Report this activity for participants who are assigned to a Literacy Skills course that is completed as part of a job skills training program. The course must be of limited duration and be a necessary or regular part of the job skills training. Vocational Literacy Skills is a course of study aimed at teaching reading, writing, math and communication skills necessary to prepare a participant to participate in job skills training. Instruction may be provided in a formal educational institution, through a literacy council or through another provider.

Study time that is required for the Vocational Literacy Skills course should also be assigned under this activity if the study time is supervised and tracked for attendance purposes.

CHANGES TO DEFINITIONS FOR EXISTING ACTIVITIES

Some or all of the language in the following Activity definitions have changed.

Job Skills Training - JS: (New Definition) Report this activity for participants who are engaged in training for vocational skills required by an employer. The training will provide skills to help the participant obtain employment or to advance or adapt to the changing demands of the workplace. Training may include customized skills training to meet the needs of a specific employer or it can be general training that prepares an individual for a specific occupation within a particular employment sector. The training activity must be specific to the participant's immediate employment goal.

The entire training must consist of a minimum of 40 hours of class room instruction to count as job skills training. Study time that is required for training should also be assigned under this activity. Study time must be supervised and tracked for attendance purposes.

Examples of job skills training include:

- Welding
- Hospitality
- Data Entry
- Medical Assistants
- Legal Assistants

Employment Search - ES: (New Definition) Report this activity for participants who are engaged in employment search that is tailored to the needs of the individual and includes some or all of the following activities:

- Time used to research prospective employers;
- Making contact with prospective employers whether by phone, in person or via internet to learn of job openings;
- Completing applications for vacancies;
- Preparing for job interviews;
- Interviewing for jobs.

Activity may be completed independently or in a group setting. Scheduled time may include time allotted for transportation to and from potential employer's place of business.

Up-front Employment Search - UE: (New Definition) Report this activity for applicants and participants who are engaged in up-front employment search that is tailored to the needs of the individual and includes some or all of the following activities:

- Time used to research prospective employers;
- Making contact with prospective employers whether by phone, in person or via internet to learn of job openings;
- Completing applications for vacancies;
- Preparing for job interviews;
- Interviewing for jobs.

Activity may be completed independently or in a group setting. Scheduled time may include time allotted for transportation to and from potential employer's place of business.

Job Readiness/Motivation - MO: (New Definition) Report this activity for applicants and participants who are engaged in classes/activities specifically designed to prepare them for work. Activities are geared at learning general workplace expectations, work behavior and job retention skills necessary to compete successfully in the labor market.

A high-quality job readiness program uses various techniques and approaches to build self-esteem and increase self-confidence. Attendance at scheduled sessions must last one hour or more in length. Examples of job readiness/motivation sessions include:

- Workshops on effective job seeking and interviewing skills;
- Instruction in workplace expectations (including instruction on appropriate attire);
- Workshops on self-esteem, goal setting, etc.; and
- Courses on basic computer skills and use of internet.

Activity may be completed independently or in a group setting.

Up-front Job Readiness/Motivation - UR: (New Definition) Report this activity for applicants and participants who are engaged in up-front classes/activities specifically designed to prepare them for work. Activities are geared at learning general workplace expectations, work behavior and job retention skills necessary to compete successfully in the labor market.

A high-quality job readiness program uses various techniques and approaches to build self-esteem and increase self-confidence. Attendance at scheduled sessions must last one hour or more in length. Examples of job readiness/motivation sessions include:

- Workshops on effective job seeking and interviewing skills;
- Instruction in workplace expectations (including instruction on appropriate attire);
- Workshops on self-esteem, goal setting, etc; and
- Courses on basic computer skills and use of internet.

Activity may be completed independently or in a group setting.

Physical Rehabilitation - PR: (New Definition) Report this activity for participants who are engaged in an activity that meets the following criterion:

1. Determined to be medically necessary;
2. Anticipated to last six months or less; and
3. Geared towards helping the individual recover from a medical condition so that s/he may enter or re-enter the workforce.

The determination that the activity is medically necessary and the expectation that the rehabilitation activity will last six months or less must be certified by a qualified medical or mental health professional.

This activity should not be assigned when a participant is in the process of applying for SSI or SSDI and the W-2 agency or another provider is providing related advocacy services.

Personal Care - PC: (New Definition) Report this activity for timeframes when a participant cannot be assigned to other work activities due to medical restrictions that are expected to last more than six months. The medical restrictions and the expectation that the personal care activity will last more than six months must be certified by a qualified medical or mental health professional.

Adult Basic Education - BE: (Changes are underlined) Report this activity for participants who are engaged in an Adult Basic Education (ABE) course that is not tied to participation in a job skills training. ABE is instruction designed to focus on the areas of reading, mathematics, communication skills, social studies, physical sciences, health and career education. Purpose of assigning ABE is to prepare participants for employment. ABE consists of 3 levels:

1. Level 1, or Beginning ABE:
Instruction designed for adults whose academic functioning level is comparable to grades 0 – 5.9
2. Level 2, or Intermediate ABE:
Instruction designed for adults whose academic functioning level is comparable to grades 6.0 – 8.9

3. Level 3 or Adult Secondary Education (ASE):
Instruction which delivers competencies, academic or occupational, comparable to that offered in secondary schools (grades 9.0 – 12.9)

Study time that is required for adult basic education should be assigned under this activity if the study time is supervised and tracked for attendance purposes.

English as a Second Language - EL: (Changes are underlined) Report this activity for participants who are engaged in English as a Second Language (ESL) course that is not tied to participation in job skills training. ESL is a course of study intended to teach English skills related to reading, writing, speaking and listening for students whose primary language is not English. Purpose of assigning ESL is to prepare participants for employment.

Study time that is required for the ESL course should also be assigned under this activity if the study time is supervised and tracked for attendance purposes.

Literacy Skills - LS: (Changes are underlined) Report this activity for participants who are engaged in a literacy skills course that is not tied to participation in job skills training. Literacy Skills is a course of study aimed at teaching reading, writing, math and communication skills necessary to prepare a participant to participate in ABE, occupational programs, or unsubsidized employment. Instruction may be provided in a formal educational institution, through a literacy council or through another provider.

Study time that is required for the LS course should also be assigned under this activity if the study time is supervised and tracked for attendance purposes.

Personal Development - PD: (Changes are underlined) Report this activity for participants who are engaged in activities that promote a healthier lifestyle but the activity has not been determined to be medically necessary. The activity must be assigned with the goal of a moving the participant towards employment. These activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Personal Journaling;
- Motivational Reading;
- Exercise at Home;
- Smoking Cessation;
- Weight Loss Promotion;
- Ongoing Support Groups for Domestic Violence, Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, etc.

Occupational Testing - OC: (Changes are underlined) Report this activity for participants engaged in testing related to employment. Testing may include: exploration, aptitude, skills, and interest testing and interpretation.

Career Planning and Counseling - CE: (Changes are underlined) Report this activity for participants receiving services geared towards assessment of a participant's career interests and guidance in the career planning process. Examples of activities include:

- Career assessments;
- Educational needs assessments;
- Career exploration/Job shadowing;
- Reviewing labor market information and training opportunities; and
- Career guidance and counseling.

Career Advancement Services - CR: (Changes are underlined) Report this activity for employed participants exploring and pursuing career advancement opportunities. An actual career advancement plan is to be developed, describing the steps and actions required to meet career advancement goals. Other acceptable activities include:

- Assisting the participant in accessing career advancement services, such as undergoing further occupational assessment; and/or
- Enrolling in appropriate education/training programs; or
- Accessing career advancement opportunities offered through the employer, like career ladders programs.

The length of time in this activity should reflect the time spent developing the career plan and doing career exploration.

Mentor/Coach - MN: (Changes are underlined) Report this activity for participants assigned hours in which they are required to interact with their mentor/coach. Mentoring pairs more skilled or experienced individuals with a newly employed participant to help him/her succeed in the workplace. The agency maintains ongoing supervision of, and support for, mentors and mentees.

GUIDANCE ON USE OF ACTIVITIES

Caseworkers should review the new definitions carefully to ensure that activities that are being posted on WPCS have a direct correlation with activities that are assigned on each participant's Employability Plan. Agencies must take steps to review W-2 cases that are assigned to activities where the definition has changed to determine if adjustments should be made on WPCS/WPCH.

W-2 PARTICIPANTS ASSIGNED TO PL – PARENTING/LIFE SKILLS

Caseworkers must take the following steps for cases assigned to PL – Parenting/Life Skills:

1. Beginning October 1, 2006, caseworkers must stop assigning new cases to Parenting/Life Skills - PL on WPCS. Instead, caseworkers must begin assigning these activities using one or both of the new CARES activity codes, Life Skills - LF and Parenting Skills - PA. The caseworker must determine which of these new activity codes are most appropriate to use (or if both are appropriate to use) based on content of classroom activity or the services being provided. Note: If both life skills and parenting skills are offered as part of one class, they do not need to be separated out on the participant's Employability Plan.
2. By October 31, 2006, all cases currently assigned to Parenting/Life Skills - PL must be reviewed and steps must be taken to end-date this activity and add the new Life Skills - LF and/or Parenting Skills - PA activity code on WPCS/WPCH. Caseworkers should focus their efforts first on reviewing and updating those cases placed in W-2 Transition and Community Service Job placements before reviewing cases in other W-2 placements.
3. In the month of November, the Department will take action to end the Parenting/Life Skills - PL activity code from any cases where the code has not been end-dated.

W-2 PARTICIPANTS ASSIGNED TO PC – PERSONAL CARE AND SD – SS(D) ADVOCACY/APPLICATION

Personal Care - PC

The new definition for PR - Physical Rehabilitation may now include any type of medically necessary activities that are anticipated to last six months or less and geared towards helping the individual recover from a medical condition so that s/he may enter or re-enter the workforce. This may include bed rest or personal care activities conducted in the home provided it meets all of the other criteria laid out in the new definition.

All cases currently assigned to Personal Care - PC must be reviewed to determine if the activity the participant is engaged in meets the new definition of Physical Rehabilitation - PR. In any case where the activity meets the new definition of PR, the activity code must be changed on WPCS/WPCH by October 31, 2006.

SS(DI) Advocacy - SD

Given the new focus of the Physical Rehabilitation - PR activity on helping individuals recover from a medical condition so that s/he may enter the workforce, it is not appropriate to assign this activity to participants receiving SS(D)I advocacy services.

1. In any case where a participant is currently assigned to both SS(D)I Advocacy/Application - SD and Physical Rehabilitation - PR, the PR activity code must be end-dated on WPCS/WPCH by October 31, 2006.
2. In the month of November, the Department will take action to end the Physical Rehabilitation – PR activity code for any remaining cases where the participant is also assigned to SS(DI) Advocacy/Application – SD.

W-2 PARTICIPANTS ASSIGNED TO ADULT BASIC EDUCATION - BE, ENGLISH –AS-A-SECOND-LANGUAGE- EL OR LITERACY SKILLS – LS

Three new educational activities, Vocational Adult Basic Education - VA, Vocational English-as-a-Second-Language - VE, and Vocational Literacy Skills - VL, are similar to three existing educational activities which are Adult Basic Education - BE, English-as-a-Second-Language - EL, and Literacy Skills - LS. The difference between the new activities and the existing activities is that the new activities are assigned only when the education is completed as part of a job skills training program. The existing activities are assigned when the education is not tied to participation in a job skills training. All six activity definitions should be reviewed carefully to ensure that caseworkers begin assigning the appropriate activity based on the participant's circumstances.

USE OF PHASES ON WPCS/WPCH

The new Federal TANF Regulations require that states track daily attendance for individuals assigned to work activities. Attendance information must be verified and documented in each participant's case file. This documentation must align with the activity information (i.e., begin date, weekly scheduled hours, daily scheduled hours, actual end date) posted on WPCS/WPCH. *Note: New procedures regarding attendance verification and documentation will be issued through a separate Operations Memo.*

In order to accurately represent the date in which a participant begins a new activity, caseworkers must follow instructions found in the [Wisconsin CARES Guide, Section 2 – Work Programs, Chapter 06, Version 3 – Posting Statuses and Components](#) for posting the S-Scheduled and A-Actual Phases for each activity on WPCS/WPCH.

Instructions require the caseworker to:

- ✓ Report the Scheduled Phase of an activity when the W-2 participant is scheduled to participate in the activity, and the exact start date is known.
- ✓ Report the Actual Phase of an activity only after the activity has been verified to have actually begun. The BEGIN DATE on WPCS is the actual start date of the activity. Activities have started even if the participant fails to show up. The caseworker may update from the Scheduled to the Actual phase to process a payment reduction on WPNH if the participant misses the first day of the activity.

CONTACTS

Policy Questions: please direct to your local Regional Office

CARES and CWW Questions: please direct to the BHCE CARES Information & Problem Resolution Center

*Program Categories – FS – FoodShare, MA – Medicaid, SC – Senior Care, CTS – Caretaker Supplement, CC – Child Care, W-2 – Wisconsin Works, FSET – Food Stamp Employment and Training, CF – Children First, EA – Emergency Assistance, JAL – Job Access Loan, JC - Job Center Programs, RAP – Refugee Assistance Program, WIA – Workforce Investment Act, Other EP – Other Employment Programs.

DWD/DWS/BW-2/HH