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TO: **W-2 Agencies**
Income Maintenance Supervisors
Income Maintenance Lead Workers
Income Maintenance Staff
Workforce Development Boards
Job Center Leads and Managers
Training Staff
Child Care Coordinators

FROM: Janice Peters, Director
Bureau of Wisconsin Works
Division of Family Supports

DFS OPERATIONS MEMO					
No:	07- 22 Corrected				
DATE:	5/15/2007				
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: EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TRACKING SYSTEM (EATS)

CROSS REFERENCE: W-2 Manual Chapter 17, Operations Memos 02-48; 02-52; and 02-60

EFFECTIVE DATE: May 21, 2007 for enhancements in EATS
June 1, 2007 for monthly reconciliation of Emergency Assistance (EA) payment amounts in EATS with the agency's accounting system/check register

PURPOSE

This Operations Memo:

- 1) Clarifies required entries in EATS;
- 2) Notifies agencies of an extension in the EATS time period for completing entries to confirm EA applications;
- 3) Requires W-2 agencies to enter EA grant information in EATS in a timely manner and prior to EA payment; monitor information in EATS to ensure EATS entries are accurate and complete; and reconcile the Emergency Assistance (EA) payment amounts in EATS with the agency's accounting system/check register;
- 4) Introduces optional and required new and renamed EATS information fields; and
- 5) Introduces enhancements to EATS reports that may be used by agencies for monitoring and tracking information reported in EATS: a Summary Statistics Report and a Detailed Grant Report.

BACKGROUND

EA is a resource for households that meet program requirements in emergencies due to fire, flood, natural disaster, energy crisis, homelessness, or impending homelessness and is designed to meet emergency needs of households with children to avoid destitution and provide living arrangements for children in homes.

Emergency Assistance Tracking System (EATS)

EATS was introduced in 2002 and is the automated system that is used to:

- Search and verify each caretaker relative's history of EA grants;
- Track data for all approved and denied EA applications; and
- Provide reports on approved EA grant amounts and denied applications.

Please refer to the W-2 Manual section 17.8.0 for a link to EATS and instructions for using EATS. Agency staff who currently do not have access to EATS can request this access at <https://www.dwd.state.wi.us/dwseats/>. Agency staff may contact the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Service Desk at (608) 266-7252 about any problems in accessing EATS.

POLICY CLARIFICATION

A DWD internal review of EATS compliance practices has revealed several inconsistencies between current policy, accepted financial management practices and actual W-2 agency compliance. Because EATS is the primary tool for DWD to assess the program integrity of EA payments, changes are being made to information collected, reports available, W-2 agency responsibilities and DWD monitoring of EATS compliance activity. DWD recognizes that the purpose and functions of EATS has evolved over time as the EA program has grown and that different agencies have adopted different practices. Because of these differences, DWD wants to allow agencies time to adopt these new requirements, assess whether additional adjustments are necessary and further inform DWD as to the impact of these changes. It is the intent of DWD to assess these new directives over the next year to determine if further refinement is required.

Required Entries in EATS

A DWD audit of EATS entries has revealed that many EA grants currently reported in the system do not include all of the information that is required by EA policy. The information fields that are required in order to confirm the EA grant in EATS are marked in EATS with a red asterisk. Entering all of the information marked with a red asterisk and then confirming the EA grant retains that EA information in EATS. However this does not include all of the information entries required by policy.

In addition to entering information in the fields marked with a red asterisk, EA policy requires the W-2 agency to enter information in all EATS fields that are necessary to determine the EA grant amount. For example, although EATS allows an EA grant to be confirmed in EATS with just one caretaker relative entered, EA policy also requires all dependant children and any other caretaker relatives to be entered in EATS. Complete EATS entries and EATS searches of caretaker relatives who already received EA will prevent issuance of EA payments to caretaker relatives who have received EA in the previous twelve-month period.

Furthermore, the new EATS payment information fields for **Check Number**, **Check Date**, **Check Amount** and **Payee Name** are required fields. If a voucher system is used for EA payments, a voucher number may be entered into the check number field, along with the voucher date and the voucher amount for the respective grant. These fields will facilitate reconciliation of EA payment amounts in EATS with the agency's accounting records. These fields are not marked with a red asterisk so agencies can confirm the rest of the EA entry even if the payment information is not yet available. This will prevent the EATS entry from being deleted simply because payment information is not yet available and/or entered. However, these fields are required to be entered within ten calendar days of the payment date.

EATS Entries Must be Confirmed within Five Business Days

Previously EATS batch processing occurred each night and all unconfirmed EA grants were deleted from EATS in that process. This batch processing timeframe is being extended and will occur five business days from the EA application date entered in EATS by the W-2 agency. The five days timeframe will allow W-2 agencies to gather, verify, and enter accurate information in EATS, and will prevent unconfirmed EA grants being deleted from EATS during the five days timeframe while the W-2 agency still may be gathering and verifying information.

Policy on the timeframe for processing EA applications has not changed. EA policy in W-2 Manual section 17.2.0 requires the W-2 agency to process EA applications within five business days of the agency's receipt of a signed EA application, and further requires that the payment must be issued within those same five days unless the EA application meets the Payment Delay Exception criteria described in W-2 Manual section 17.2.1. When there is a Payment Delay Exception to the five days payment timeframe, if all EATS information fields marked by a red asterisk are not entered and the EA grant is not confirmed within the five days timeframe, the EATS system will delete the information on the unconfirmed EA grant. Then the agency must re-enter the EA grant information in EATS until the agency confirms the EA grant in EATS.

EATS Entries Must Be Prior to EA Payment and EA Payment Amounts Reported in EATS Must Be Reconciled to the Agency's Accounting System/Check Register

A DWD audit of EA amounts reported in EATS compared to EA amounts reported to CORE for reimbursement over an extended time period has revealed the total EA payment amounts in EATS for many W-2 agencies are significantly lower than the total EA amounts reported to CORE for reimbursement. The W-2 agency is required to enter EA grant information in EATS in a timely manner and prior to issuing an EA payment. The W-2 agency also is required to monitor EA grant information reported in EATS to ensure accuracy and completeness. In addition, the W-2 agency is required to reconcile EA payment amounts in EATS monthly with the agency's accounting system/check register for issued EA payments.

To facilitate reconciliation of EA payment amounts in EATS with the agency's accounting system/check register, DWD requires the W-2 agency to enter the new EATS payment information fields of **Check (or voucher) Number**, **Check (or voucher) Date**, **Check Amount (voucher amount for the respective grant)** and **Payee Name**. If a single voucher is issued for multiple grants, the voucher amount to be entered in the check amount field should be the voucher amount applicable to the respective grant. DWD also encourages the W-2 agency to utilize the new optional EATS payment information fields for the payee address.

Renamed and New Information Fields in EATS

Three required information fields will be renamed in EATS. Eight new information fields will be added in EATS. The **Grant Date** field will be renamed **Application Date**. The **Application Date** is the date the EA application is received by the W-2 agency. The W-2 agency must complete the **Application Date** field when the initial EA application information is entered into EATS. The **Amount** field (previously in the New Payment Details screen) will be renamed **Approved Grant Amount**. The **Application Date** and **Approved Grant Amount** fields will be in the New Grant Details screen and are required fields. (See the New Grant Details screen below.)

The screenshot shows the 'New Grant Details' form for Jane Doe (DOB 03/25/1979) in the EATS system. The form is displayed in a Microsoft Internet Explorer browser window. The form fields are as follows:

- Application Date ***: A text input field with a calendar icon and a placeholder '(mm/dd/yyyy)'.
- Emergency Type ***: A dropdown menu.
- W-2 Contract Agency ***: A dropdown menu.
- Status ***: A dropdown menu.
- Approved Grant Amount ***: A text input field with a placeholder '(x,xxx.xx) or (xxx)'.
- Comments**: A large text area with a scroll bar. Below the text area, it says '0 of 500 characters.' and there is an 'Add' button.

In addition, the **Date** field will be renamed **Check Date** and will be a required field. If your agency uses a voucher system, the voucher date should be entered into the check date field. Also, eight new information fields will be added to EATS. The required new information fields are **Check (or voucher) Number**, **Check Amount (voucher amount for the respective grant)** and **Payee Name**. The optional new information fields are the payee address fields (**Address 1, Address 2, City, State and Zip**). The **Payee Name** is the entity/person who will receive the EA payment. These fields will be in the New Payment Details screen. (See New Payment Details screen on the next page.)

When there is more than one check for an EA grant, then the information for additional checks can be entered by clicking on the New button located at the bottom of the Payment Details screen to access additional New Payment Details screens. (See example of the Payment Details screen on the next page.)

DWD requires W-2 agencies to enter the new EATS payment information fields for **Check Number, Check Date, Check Amount** and **Payee Name**. The use of these fields facilitates reconciliation of EA payment amounts in EATS with the agency's accounting system/check

register. In addition, DWD strongly encourages W-2 agencies to utilize the optional information fields for payee address.

EATS: Add Payment - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Address: http://acc.dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwseats/grant/PaymentAdd.aspx?EA_GRNT_SK=338

WI Emergency Assistance Tracking System

Home Search New Reports help

New Payment Details

Check Number
 (mm/dd/yyyy) **Check Date**
 (x,xxx.xx) or (xxx) **Check Amount**
 Payee Name
 Address 1
 Address 2
 City
 State
 Zip
 Comments
 0 of 500 characters.

EATS: Grant Overview - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Address: http://acc.dwd.wisconsin.gov/DWSEats/Grant/GrantOverview.aspx?EA_GRNT_SK=396

Grant Number: 396
Application Date: 04/02/2007
Emergency Type: Homelessness
W-2 Contract Agency: Rock County Human Services Dept.
Status: Approved
Approved Grant Amount: \$300.00
Comments:

Assistance Group Members

<input type="button" value="Edit"/>	Doe, Jane (Caretaker Relative) Relationship: Self Birth Date: 06/21/1979
<input type="button" value="Edit"/>	Doe, Son (Dependent Child) Relationship: Son Birth Date: 06/12/2000

Payment Details

<input type="button" value="Edit"/>	Check Number: 2514 Check Date: 04/03/2007 Check Amount: \$300.00 Payee name: House Rental, Inc. Payee address: 101 Main St. Beloit, WI 53511 Comments:
Payment Total \$300.00	

Enhanced EATS Reports

Two EATS reports are being enhanced. The Summary Statistics Report will be enhanced to: allow any number of W-2 agencies to be selected and displayed in the report (i.e. eliminates the previous limit of twenty agencies per report). The report will include a line-by-line display for each W-2 agency selected in the report with the grand total of expenditures for all of the selected W-2 agencies. In addition to allowing EA information to be searched by W-2 Contract Agency and Geographic Area, the Summary Statistics Report also will allow searches by each of the Workforce Development Areas. A consortium W-2 agency's search by Geographic Area allows the agency to access EATS information for each of the counties or Milwaukee regions included in the consortium and reported in EATS by the agency. (See example of a Summary Statistics Report below.)

Wisconsin Emergency Assistance Tracking System
Summary Statistics Report

Report Criteria Selected
W-2 Contract Agency: Rock County Human Services Dept.
Date Range: 01/01/2007 through

W-2 Contract Agency	Emergency Type	Grants Issued	Number of Payments	Total Payment	Average Payment
W-2 Contract Agency: Rock County Human Services Dept.					
	Energy Crisis	2	2	\$850.00	\$425.00
	Fire	11	11	\$4,300.00	\$390.91
	Flood	3	4	\$1,800.00	\$450.00
	Homelessness	9	13	\$3,643.00	\$280.23
	Impending Homelessness	3	4	\$1,650.00	\$412.50
	Impending Homelessness (Domestic Abuse)	1	1	\$500.00	\$500.00
	Natural Disaster	4	4	\$1,500.00	\$375.00
Rock County Human Services Dept. Totals		33	39	\$14,243.00	\$365.21
Total		33	39	\$14,243.00	\$365.21
By Age Group					
	Adults	39			
	Children	29			

In addition to information already displayed, the Detailed Grant Report will display the Number of Children included in the EA application and, when applicable, the Denial Reason. The Detailed Grant Report also will display the **Check Date, Check Number and Payee Name** fields (See example of a Detailed Grant Report on the next page.) **If your agency uses a voucher system, you may enter voucher information in the check-related fields.**

CONTACTS

Policy Questions: Contact your DFS W-2 Regional Administrators

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/DFS/BW-2/BDS