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

FROM: Amy Mendel-Clemens
Technical Assistance and Training Section
Bureau of Enrollment Management
Division of Health Care Access and
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BEM/DFS OPERATIONS MEMO

No: 08-10

DATE: 2/26/2008

FS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MA	<input type="checkbox"/>	BC+	<input type="checkbox"/>
SC	<input type="checkbox"/>	CTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	FSET	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CC	<input type="checkbox"/>	W-2	<input checked="" 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	<input type="checkbox"/> H
				EP	

PRIORITY: HIGH

SUBJECT: Voluntary FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET) Program

CROSS REFERENCE: FoodShare Handbook 3.16.1; FSET Manual (Version 07-02)

EFFECTIVE DATE: MARCH 1, 2008

PURPOSE

Beginning March 1, 2008 Wisconsin FoodShare (FS) Applicants and Recipients will no longer be required to participate in the FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET) Program. The FSET program will continue to serve FS recipients who wish to voluntarily enroll, but FS applicants and members will no longer be sanctioned from benefits for non-participation in the FSET program.

This memo explains the policy and process changes for the new voluntary FSET Program.

BACKGROUND

Wisconsin's 2007-2009 state budget:

- Transferred the administration of FSET from the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) to the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS); and
- Created a voluntary FSET program. Until now, FS recipients without a work program exemption were required to comply with FSET requirements to continue to get benefits.

DHFS and DWD have agreed that DWD will continue to contract with the Wisconsin Works (W-2) agencies to administer the FSET program for calendar year 2008 as part of the W-2 and Other Related Programs contract.

POLICY

PREVIOUS POLICY

FS recipients who were mandatory FSET participants were required to fulfill work, employment search, or training requirements assigned by W-2/FSET agencies. If work requirements were not met, the person was sanctioned from receiving FS benefits for one to six months, depending on case circumstances. Recipients who were not required to participate could volunteer for the FSET program and receive the same services but were not sanctioned for non-participation. Individuals could also be sanctioned from the FS program for refusing a job or voluntarily quitting a job.

NEW POLICY

March 1, 2008, the FSET program is no longer a mandatory program. No one can be sanctioned for FSET non-compliance, a voluntary job quit or a job refusal. Adult FoodShare recipients who are working less than 30 hours per week can volunteer for FSET services. All services that are currently available to FSET clients will remain available to anyone wishing to volunteer.

At application and review, the IM worker must inform the group of FSET services offered in their county either verbally or with the attached FSET Fact Sheet and refer any household members who wish to voluntarily enroll in the program to the W-2/FSET agency.

NOTE: The fact sheet language will be incorporated into the Guide to Applying and the FoodShare Enrollment and Benefits publications as soon as possible. Agencies will be notified when that change occurs.

Support services are available for voluntary FSET participants. However, if the volunteer chooses not to attend within 30 days of the referral, support services should be terminated.

The attached letters with information about the program change will be sent to individuals who are currently sanctioned or participating in FSET.. Individuals who are currently sanctioned must re-request FS benefits to be added back into the group.

CASE PROCESSING

REFERRAL

CARES enhancements to support a voluntary FSET program are scheduled for late spring. Until CARES changes can be made to accommodate the new policy, AIWP will continue to display the "M" (mandatory) status for anyone not meeting one of the current FSET exemptions. Workers should not process (PF24) AIWP for FS only cases if no one in the household wishes to volunteer for FSET. If AIWP has to be processed for a W-2 referral, the FSET workers will not take any action on the mandatory referral for FSET.

When CARES is coded as "M" or "E" (exempt) and the person wishes to volunteer, the IM worker should override the "M" or "E" with a V (voluntary) and process AIWP to send the referral to the FSET agency. The referrals will continue to appear on WPRL and can be accessed via WPRR.

Please note that after the "M" is overridden with the "V", if AIWP is later accessed, CARES will again set the reg code to M if no exemptions apply. As a result, IM workers should be mindful not to process the "M" but continue to override with the "V" if AIWP is processed again.

Beginning March 1, 2008 FSET agencies who receive the referral will only follow up with referrals coded as "V".

NOTICES

Letter AEO1 is automatically generated if an "M" or "V" is processed on AIWP. This letter is not generated if the person is coded as exempt. Workers must suppress this letter on CNIN for anyone that is coded as "M".

EMPLOYMENT PLAN AND ACTIVITIES

FSET workers should continue to develop an employment plan with assigned activities for each volunteer. A volunteer can be involved in activities for up to 27 hours per week.

NON PARTICIPATION

For voluntary participants, continue to use WPNP to document non-participation. FSET workers should continue to record non-participation and the appropriate FSET/W-2/IM worker should adjust the support services for child care and transportation reimbursement. Support services can be reduced due to lack of participation, but a FS sanction cannot be imposed for non participation.

FSET sanctions will no longer be processed on the Work Programs Sanctions page in CWW. As a result, the FSET worker should no longer post the SA component on the WPCS screen in CARES to notify the IM worker that a FS sanction is requested.

If an individual stops participating in an assigned activity, the IM worker will change the referral from Voluntary to Mandatory or Exempt and the individual can be disenrolled.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

If the person is in a Case Management for individuals in Unsubsidized Employment (CMU) or a Case Management Follow-Up (CMF) placement for W-2, the CARES screen AIWP will show a mandatory status for FSET. Follow the above instructions to refer the person only if they wish to volunteer.

REMOVING CURRENT FSET AND VQT SANCTIONS

During the Pending Sanction Period. If the sanction is still in the Pending Sanction Period:

- AE delete the Work Program Sanctions page to end an FSET sanction.
- Enter the 'EX' good cause reason on the Loss of Employment page to end a VQT sanction.
- Run eligibility for any months the person was not included in the group and issue auxiliary benefits if appropriate. Since the individual has become exempt prior to the sanction begin month, a request to be added back to the case is not necessary.

After the FSET or VQT Sanction Begin Date. Once the sanction period has begun, the sanctioned individual must request to be added back to an open case or reapply if the case closed when the sanction was imposed. If the case is closed less than one month, the Break in Service policy can be followed. Since all individuals are now exempt from participating in FSET, all sanctions can be ended once the individual re-requests.

If the individual is going to be added back to an open/ongoing FS case, the change is effective the first of the month following the month the re-request was made. This follows the person add policy.

If the case closed when the sanction was imposed and has been closed for more than one month, the individual must reapply and eligibility begins as of the file date.

If less than one month has passed since the case closed, apply the Break in Service policy to determine if the case can reopen without a new application

CARES PROCESSING

When the individual requests to be added back to an open case, re-applies after being closed or can reopen under the Break in Service policy”:

- Enter the re-request and the re-request date on the Work Program Sanctions page to end an FSET sanction. If the sanction period has not expired, enter the month of the re-request as the 'Override End Month' and the 'FX' (FSET Exemption) code as the reason code.
- Enter a re-request date on the Loss of Employment page along with the 'FS' Good Cause Reason to end the VQT sanction.

When the individual is being added back to an open/ongoing FS case and the re-request is done after Adverse Action, run with dates to determine the amount of the

auxiliary that will need to be issued for that month. Then, run without dates and confirm the benefits.

When reopening a new case, CARES will automatically prorate benefits from either the file date of a new application or from the date all requirements are met for reopening under the Break in Service policy.

ATTACHMENTS

- [FSET Fact Sheet](#)
- [Letter for Current Participants](#)
- [Letter for Open Cases](#)
- [Letter for Closed Cases](#)

CONTACTS

BEM CARES Information & Problem Resolution Center

Program Categories – FS – FoodShare, MA – Medicaid, BC+ – BadgerCare Plus, 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.

DHFS/DHCAA/BEM/JW
DWD/DFS/BW2/TM