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

**FROM:** Janice Peters, Director  
Bureau of Working Families  
Division of Family and Economic Security

<b>DFES OPERATIONS MEMO</b>					
<b>No: 09-78</b>					
<b>DATE: DECEMBER 17, 2009</b>					
<b>FS</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>MA</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>BC+</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>SC</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>CTS</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>CC</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>W-2</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>FSET</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>EA</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>CF</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>JAL</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>JC</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>RAP</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>WIA</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Other</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> *
<b>EP</b>					
<b>PRIORITY: HIGH</b>					

**SUBJECT: Emergency Assistance Financial Eligibility**

**CROSS REFERENCE:** Operations Memo 09-22  
Operations Memo 08-19  
Wisconsin Works Manual, Chapters 3 and 17

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** January 4, 2010

**PURPOSE**

This Operations Memo introduces changes to financial eligibility criteria and payment determination procedures for Emergency Assistance. This Operations Memo also introduces a revised Emergency Assistance Application Form Part 1 and Part 2. The financial eligibility criterion that is described in this memo replaces the following sections of the W-2 Policy Manual: 17.5.3, 17.5.4, 17.5.5 and 17.5.6. The manual will be updated with the revised policy language at a later date.

**BACKGROUND**

The Emergency Assistance program provides financial assistance to needy families that have an eviction notice for non-payment of rent or mortgage (impending homeless), are homeless, are experiencing an energy crisis, or have experienced a fire, flood, or natural disaster.

The changes to the Emergency Assistance program introduced here are recommendations of the Ad Hoc Workgroup that met from 2007 into 2009. Operations Memos 08-19 and 09-22 introduced other recommendations of the Ad Hoc Workgroup.

## **OLD POLICY**

### Financial Eligibility

In order to be found financially eligible, the group's monthly income had to be less than the group's monthly expenses plus the additional expenses related to the emergency.

### Grant Amount

The Emergency Assistance grant was required to be the lowest of:

- the total financial need,
- the amount requested by the group, and
- the maximum payment amount for the group size.

## **NEW POLICY**

### Financial Eligibility

Financial eligibility for Emergency Assistance now requires that the group is living at or below 115% Federal Poverty Level and has assets valued at \$2,500 or less as described in Chapter 3 of the W-2 Policy Manual.

### Non-Financial Eligibility

There have been no changes to the non-financial eligibility criteria for Emergency Assistance. Applicants must meet all EA non-financial eligibility criteria as described in Chapter 17 of the W-2 Policy Manual.

### Grant Amount

The Emergency Assistance grant amount is now the lowest of:

- the financial need; and
- the maximum payment amount for the group size. (Note: The maximum payment amounts introduced in Operations Memo 09-22 have not changed.)

There is no longer a requirement to consider the amount of funding requested by the group.

The process for determining financial need has changed. The chart below shows the types of expenses to include in the financial need calculation for each emergency type. Include only these expenses when determining the financial need, but do not include expenses that are covered by another resource such as insurance, FoodShare, LIHEAP, or a charitable organization.

<b>Emergency Type</b>	<b>Included Expenses</b>
Impending Homelessness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Unpaid rent/mortgage</li> <li>2. Late fees for past due rent/mortgage</li> <li>3. Court costs for eviction proceedings</li> </ol>
Homelessness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. First month's rent</li> <li>2. Security deposit</li> <li>3. Necessary household items</li> </ol>

Fire, Flood, Natural Disaster	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Temporary Housing</li> <li>2. First Month's Rent</li> <li>3. Security Deposit</li> <li>4. Clothing</li> <li>5. Medical Care</li> <li>6. Transportation</li> <li>7. Household Appliances</li> <li>8. Home Repairs</li> </ol>
Energy Crisis	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Home Heating Bill</li> <li>2. Electricity Bill</li> <li>3. Water Bill</li> </ol>

The sum of these expenses is the financial need. There is no longer a requirement to compare expenses to income in determining the financial need.

### **REVISED EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE APPLICATION**

The Emergency Assistance Application has been split into two parts. Part 1 is for the applicant to complete. Part 2 is for the W-2 agency to complete. A draft is attached to this memo. Descriptions of both sections are below. The final version will be available in the DCF Forms Repository by the effective date of this memo: January 4, 2010. W-2 agencies must begin using the revised Emergency Assistance Application, Parts 1 and 2 on that date.

#### Emergency Assistance Application Part 1

Part 1 of the Emergency Assistance Application is similar to the existing application. The new version of the Application now includes a place for the Case Number on page 1 and the EA Financial Worksheet page has been revised and moved to Part 2 of the Application.

#### Emergency Assistance Application Part 2

The second part of the Emergency Assistance Application consists of two worksheets: the Financial Eligibility Worksheet and the Payment Calculation Worksheet. These worksheets must be completed by the W-2 agency staff with information provided by the applicant.

#### Financial Eligibility Worksheet

The W-2 agency must use the Financial Eligibility Worksheet to determine financial eligibility for Emergency Assistance. In order to be found financially eligible, applicants for Emergency Assistance must be at or below 115% Federal Poverty Level and not exceed the asset limit of \$2,500, as described in Chapter 3 of the W-2 Policy Manual. The Financial Eligibility Worksheet is an Excel worksheet that automatically calculates financial eligibility using the data entered by the worker.

Emergency Assistance applicants that are in one of the following W-2 placements are financially eligible for Emergency Assistance:

- Caretaker of an Infant (CMC)
- Community Service Job (CSJ)
- W-2 Transition (W-2 T)
- Case Management for Unsubsidized Employment (CMU)

Workers are instructed to check the box "Currently in a qualifying W-2 placement" and print CARES screen WPWW and attach it to the Financial Eligibility Worksheet as verification of financial eligibility. No further action is required to determine financial eligibility for these applicants.

For every Emergency Assistance applicant that is not in one of the W-2 placements listed above, the W-2 agency must complete the entire Financial Eligibility Worksheet.

When the Emergency Assistance applicant is receiving Wisconsin Shares Child Care (CC), FoodShare (FS), Medicaid, or in a W-2 placement other than the placements listed above, the W-2 agency may utilize financial eligibility information contained within CARES to assist in determining eligibility for Emergency Assistance. For example, if the applicant is receiving FS, the W-2 agency could use earned income data from the CWW employment page to complete the Financial Eligibility Worksheet. Because this information has been verified for FS, there is no need to re-verify the information for EA.

Note: Emergency Assistance applicants who are open in CARES for CC, FS or MA do NOT automatically meet Emergency Assistance financial eligibility. CC, FS, and MA have different eligibility criteria and different income thresholds. The W-2 agency will need to collect asset information from these applicants.

#### Payment Calculation Worksheet

After financial and non-financial eligibility is determined, the agency must proceed with determining the payment amount using the Payment Calculation Worksheet.

The grant amount is determined by comparing the financial need to the maximum payment amount; the grant amount will be the lesser of the two for each emergency type.

Note: Do not complete the Payment Calculation Worksheet until the group has passed both financial and non-financial eligibility.

#### Verification

The W-2 agency must verify information as is instructed in the W-2 Manual at Chapter 17.3.1.

### **EATS**

A new Emergency Assistance denial reason regarding failure to pass the financial eligibility criteria will be available in the EATS system on January 4, 2010. W-2 Agencies are instructed to select this denial reason for applicants that do not meet the financial eligibility criteria.

There are two new reports available in EATS: Emergency Assistance Activity Summary report and Application Denials by Emergency Type report. The Activity Summary report displays a summary of EA activity for a specified time period. The Denials report displays EA denials sorted by emergency type.

The Summary Statistics report now calculates the average payment by the number of approved grants rather than the number of payments issued, as more than one payment may be issued for each approved grant application.

### **TRAINING**

A WisLine training session will be available in January 2010. For information, please check the January Training Times newsletter or the Learning Center website, which is located at the following web address: <http://wss.ccdet.uwosh.edu/stc/dcf>.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Emergency Assistance Application Parts 1 and 2

Part 2 of the draft materials has been provided in Excel format to allow staff an opportunity to become familiar with the worksheets and to practice entering data to determine financial eligibility and grant payment amounts. These documents will be available in their final form in the DCF Forms Repository on January 4, 2010.

Note: If you are unable to open Part 2 documents using MS Excel please contact Rose Prochazka for help at the following email address: [rose.prochazka@wisconsin.gov](mailto:rose.prochazka@wisconsin.gov)

For Policy Related Questions: BWF Regional Office Staff

For CARES Processing Questions: W-2/CC Help Desk

\*Program Categories – FS – FoodShare, MA – Medicaid, BC+ – BadgerCare Plus, SC – Senior Care, CTS – Caretaker Supplement, CC – Child Care, W-2 – Wisconsin Works, FSET – FoodShare 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.

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