DEPARTMENT OF
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
Secretary Reggie Bicha
201 East Washington Avenue, Room G200
P.O. Box 8916
Madison, WI 53708-8916
Telephone: 608-266-8684
Fax: 608-261-6972
www.dcf.wisconsin.gov

State of Wisconsin
Governor Jim Doyle

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
Secretary Karen Timberlake
1 West Wilson Street
P.O. Box 7850
Madison, WI 53707-7850
Telephone: (608) 266-9622
FAX: (608) 266-7882
www.dhs.wisconsin.gov

DFES OPERATIONS MEMO

No: **10-33**

DATE: APRIL 12, 2010

FS	☐	**MA**	☐	**BC+**	☐
SC	☐	**CTS**	☐	**CC**	☐
W-2	☒	**FSET**	☐	**EA**	☐
CF	☐	**JAL**	☐	**JC**	☐
RAP	☐	**WIA**	☐	**Other EP**	☐*

PRIORITY: High

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

SUBJECT: Implementing Policy and Automation for SSI Transition Plans and Updating Policy and Automation for W-2 Supportive Service Plans

---

CROSS REFERENCE: Request for Proposals (RFP) to Administer Wisconsin Works (W-2) and Related Programs for the Period January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2011:

- Part One: About the RFP, Section Two (Milwaukee Service Delivery Structure), Subsection 1.3.3, SSI/SSDI Support and Advocacy
- Part Two: W-2 and Related Programs Plan: Section 2.A.3.2, W-2 Case Management for Participants Receiving SSI/SSDI Advocacy (Balance of State Response Items)

Operations Memo 02-12, Supportive Service Plan (Will be obsolete on the Effective Date of this Operations Memo)

EFFECTIVE DATE: May 3, 2010

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to provide W-2 agencies with:

1. New policy and automation instructions for developing SSI/SSDI Transition Plans for W-2 participants who are in the process of transitioning from the W-2 program to receipt of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits; and
2. Updated policy and automation instructions for developing W-2 Supportive Service Plans for:

a. applicants that withdraw their W-2 applications prior to W-2 placement; and
b. participants who are placed in a case management placement.

BACKGROUND

<u>SSI/SSDI Transition Plans</u>
The Request for Proposals (RFP) to Administer Wisconsin Works (W-2) and Related Programs for the Period January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2011, established new W-2 requirements for both the Milwaukee SSI/SSDI Advocacy agencies and the Balance of State W-2 agencies to develop SSI/SSDI Transition Plans for individuals who are transitioning from the W-2 program to receipt of SSI and/or SSDI benefits. The purpose of a Transition Plan is to identify resources that the W-2 participant and his/her family may access to address personal and family-related needs after W-2 participation has ended.

A section of this memo covers the timeframes for completing a Transition Plan with a participant and examples of the types of resources that should be included in a Transition Plan. In addition, a web-based application has been developed for agencies to utilize when creating a Transition Plan for participants. A self-study guide for using this application is attached to this memo.

<u>W-2 Supportive Service Plans</u>
Operations Memo 02-12 provided W-2 agencies with policy and instructions for completing W-2 Supportive Service Plans with individuals who were: 1) leaving a W-2 paid placement and placed in Case Management Follow-up; 2) immediately placed in a case management placement; or 3) were “diverted from W-2 participation”. Much of the original policy language in Operations Memo 02-12 is out-of-date, including the language found in Supportive Service Plan template that was given to agencies as part of the memo.

At the December 2009 Policy and Program Operations (PPO) workgroup meeting, Department staff talked with members of the workgroup to discuss the value of requiring W-2 Supportive Service Plans and what changes should be made to bring the policy up-to-date. A section of this Operations Memo will cover the updated policy requirements based on that discussion. In addition, a web-based application has been developed for agencies to utilize when creating a Supportive Service Plan for participants. A desk aid for using this application is attached to this memo.

SSI/SSDI TRANSITION PLAN POLICY AND PROCEDURE

<u>SSI/SSDI Transition Plan Policy</u>
Throughout the time a W-2 participant is receiving SSI advocacy services, the case manager should have ongoing discussions regarding the types of benefits and supportive services that are available once an individual becomes eligible for SSI/SSDI. The case manager may begin to develop a written Transition Plan with the participant early in the SSI advocacy process using the automated SSI/SSDI Transition Plan discussed later in this memo. The Transition Plan must be developed during a face to face meeting between the FEP and the participant. Once there is a formal decision handed down from the Social Security Administration regarding eligibility for SSI/SSDI the Transition Plan should be finalized with the participant. The final Transition Plan should be issued to the participant no sooner than 90 days prior to W-2 eligibility ending and reviewed regularly with the participant up until W-2 eligibility ends. The case manager must document in CARES case comments when the final plan was printed and given to the participant.

Circumstances will vary greatly from one family to another, requiring case managers to be resourceful as they work through the plan with the participant. Areas of need that should be addressed include:

- Emergency Needs;
- Housing Needs;
- Household Budgeting/Money Management Needs;
- Access to Economic Supports;
- Education and Training Needs (Participant and other family members);
- Legal Assistance Needs;
- Employment Support Needs with particular emphasis on work connection resources targeted at persons with disabilities;
- Child Care Needs (for job search and work);
- Transportation Needs;
- Personal and Family Health Care Needs; and
- Other needs identified by the participant.

The Transition Plan must include at a minimum, the following elements for each need that is identified:

1. A plan of action. A short-term plan of action should help the participant address emergency or short-term needs. A long-term plan of action includes the steps necessary to carry out a goal towards self-sufficiency such as completing an education or training program or securing permanent housing; and
2. Resource and referral information for any known government and community resources that may help to address the need. The plan should explain the purpose of each resource and how it addresses or relates to the identified need.

Important Topics to Be Covered in the SSI/SSDI Transition Plan

1. Benefits and supportive services targeted at persons with disabilities, including recipients of SSI/SSDI. Examples include:

   A. Disability Program Navigator (DPN): Complex rules surrounding entitlement programs, along with fear of losing cash assistance and health benefits, can often discourage people with disabilities from working. In order to address these concerns, the Federal Department of Labor and the Social Security Administration established the DPN Initiative to help people with disabilities "navigate" through the enormous challenges of seeking employment. More information about the DPN program is available at: http://www.dpnavigator.net/pages/main_p2.html

      W-2 agencies are encouraged to directly contact the DPN assigned to their county (see attached – DPN Roster) and discuss how s/he may be of direct assistance to W-2 participants transitioning over to SSI/SSDI.

   B. Disability Benefit Specialist and Counseling Programs: A number of agencies throughout Wisconsin offer benefits counseling and services to persons with disabilities. Case managers should review information on the following websites to learn more about services available in their counties:

      http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/disabilities/benspecs/program.htm

      http://www.independencefirst.org/services/other/benefits_counceling.asp

      http://www.eri-wi.org/benefitspecialists.htm

C. Ticket to Work: The Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program is an employment program for people with disabilities who are interested in going to work. The Ticket Program is part of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 – legislation designed to remove many of the barriers that previously influenced people's decisions about going to work because of the concerns over losing health care coverage. The goal of the Ticket Program is to increase opportunities and choices for Social Security disability beneficiaries to obtain employment, vocational rehabilitation (VR), and other support services from public and private providers, employers, and other organizations. To access a list of Ticket to Work providers for your area, go to: http://www.yourtickettowork.com/endir?action=state&state=WI&Find=Find

D. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR):
- Provides employment services and counseling to people with disabilities;
- Provides or arranges for services to enable an individual to go to work; and
- Provides training and technical assistance to employers regarding disability employment issues.

A person is presumed eligible for DVR services if they are receiving SSDI or SSI and want to work. DVR service locations are available at: http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/locations/default.htm

Also refer to Operations Memo 10-01 for information about resources that have been developed to assist W-2 and DVR agencies in collaborating at the local level to better serve individuals with disabilities who may benefit from services from both programs.

E. Independent Living Centers (ILC): Wisconsin ILCs are community based, consumer directed, not for profit organizations. Independent Living Centers are nonresidential organizations serving persons of any age with any disabilities in all 72 counties. Unique in the world of human services, ILCs are governed and operated by board and staff composed of a majority of people with disabilities. All ILCs provide four core services, which include:

- **Peer Support** – staff and trained volunteers provide support, encouragement and guidance for persons with disabilities.
- **Information and Referral** – one-stop shopping for information related to disability or services for individuals with disabilities, families, employers, and the community.
- **Independent Living Skills Training** – assessment and training to people with disabilities in areas such as money management, housekeeping, communication, self-advocacy, prevocational skills and socialization.
- **Individual and Systems Advocacy** – consistent with the philosophy of independent living, persons with disabilities are taught to advocate for themselves. In addition, ILCs can engage in activities designed to affect positive change in local, state, and federal systems affecting persons with disabilities.

More information about these centers and where they are located is available at: http://www.ilcw.org/WCILC.html

F. Application Information for Caretaker Supplement: Wisconsin's Caretaker Supplement (CTS) is a cash benefit available to parents who are eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments. Caretaker Supplement benefits are $250 per month for the first eligible child and $150 per month for each additional eligible child. More information on what CTS is and how to apply is available at: http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/ssi/caretaker.htm

G. Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs): ADRCs are service centers that provide a place for the public to get accurate, unbiased information on all aspects of life related to aging or living with a disability. These centers are friendly, welcoming places anyone can contact to receive information and assistance regarding not only the public benefits that may be available, but all of the programs and service available throughout the area. Individuals, concerned families or friends, or professionals working with issues related to aging, physical disabilities, developmental disabilities, mental health issues, or substance use disorders, can receive information specifically tailored to each person's situation. ADRC services can be provided at the Center, or via telephone or through a home visit, whichever is more convenient to the individual seeking help. More information on what services are provided and ADRC locations is available at: http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/LTCare/Generalinfo/RCs.htm

2. Government-funded economic supports, including but not limited to:
   A. Caretaker Supplement;
   B. FoodShare;
   C. BadgerCare Plus (for dependent children of the SSI/SSDI recipient);
   D. Child Support;
   E. Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program – for individuals who plan to work in unsubsidized employment or attend job skills training while employed; and
   F. Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP)

3. Community-based supportive services that may address unmet needs and prevent crisis situations from arising. Examples include:
   A. Subsidized housing programs;
   B. Household Budgeting/Money Management Services;
   C. Transportation Services;
   D. Legal Assistance Services;
   E. Mental Health and AODA Services;
   F. Domestic Violence Services;
   G. Adult Literacy services; and
   H. Other services including volunteer organizations.

W-2 SUPPORTIVE SERVICE PLAN POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The W-2 agency must offer assistance in developing a Supportive Service Plan with:
1. Applicants that withdraw their W-2 applications prior to W-2 placement. In this circumstance, the Supportive Service Plan would generally be developed between the Resource Specialist and the applicant; and
2. Participants who are placed in a case management placement, including: Case Management Follow-up (CMF); Case management for those in unsubsidized employment (CMU); Case management for participants who are denied or decline an initial or subsequent extension (CMD); Non-custodial parent case management; Minor parent case management; and Case management for pregnant women.

The goal of a Supportive Service Plan is to proactively help individuals address family and work-related needs. The Supportive Service Plan must include information necessary to connect applicants/participants with supportive services available within the agency as well as other resources in the community. The Supportive Service Plan must also include strategies for addressing family and work emergencies before these situations result in family crisis and/or loss of employment.
The Supportive Service Plan must be developed during a face-to-face meeting between the case manager and the applicant/participant. The case manager must document in CARES

case comments when the plan was printed and given to the individual. An applicant/participant may refuse the offer to develop a Supportive Service Plan. If this occurs, the refusal should be documented in CARES case comments.

Note: Documenting the Supportive Service Plan in CARES case comments will not be possible in circumstances where a case is not established in CARES.

Circumstances will vary greatly from one family to another, requiring case managers to be resourceful as they work through the plan with the applicant/participant. Areas of need that should be addressed include:

- Emergency Needs;
- Housing Needs;
- Access to Economic Supports;
- Household Budgeting/Money Management Needs;
- Education and Training Needs (Participant and other family members);
- Legal Assistance Needs;
- Employment Support Needs (i.e. Work Connection and Retention Services);
- Child Care Needs (for job search and work);
- Transportation Needs;
- Personal and Family Health Care Needs;
- Other needs identified by the participant that impede the participant's ability to find and retain a job.

The Supportive Service Plan must include at a minimum, the following elements for each need that is identified:

1. A plan of action. A short-term plan of action should help the participant address emergency or short-term needs. A long-term plan of action includes the steps necessary to carry out a goal towards self-sufficiency such as completing an education or training program or securing permanent housing;

2. Resource and referral information for any known government and community resources that may help to address the need. The plan should explain the purpose of each resource and how it addresses or relates to the identified need; and

3. W-2 Agency contact information

Example: Susie has never attempted to get her driver's license. While she was in a CSJ, she was able to take a bus to her work site with little difficulty and preferred this mode of transportation. But her new job requires a much longer bus ride making it difficult for her to get home from work before her children arrive home from school. Susie confides to her worker during the Supportive Service planning meeting that she is considering quitting her job.

-cont.-
Together, the FEP and Susie talk through her options. As a result, her long-term plan of action is to pursue her driver's license and purchase an automobile. Her short-term plan of action is to locate an after-school program that the children may attend so that they are not left alone during the time Susie is on the bus returning home from work. Susie is informed that she can apply for a child care subsidy through Wisconsin Shares to help cover costs for any child under the age of 13.

The FEP identifies four community resources that Susie may benefit from. These include: a community driver's education program; two after school programs that are near Susie's home; and a community bank that assists low-income individuals with automobile loans.

WEB BASED APPLICATION FOR SSI/SSDI TRANSITION PLAN AND W-2 SUPPORTIVE SERVICE PLAN

A new web-based application has been developed to collect information for the SSI/SSDI Transition Plan and the W-2 Supportive Service Plan. The application will be put into production the weekend of April 30, 2010 and will be available for use on May 3, 2010.

A self-study guide titled *W-2 Plans Application* has been developed to instruct workers on how to use the web based application. See Attachments. This guide can also be accessed through the PTS learning center website located at the following web address: https://wss.ccdet.uwosh.edu/stc/dcf/

W-2 SUPPORTIVE SERVICE PLAN PAPER FORM

The web based application cannot be accessed until after an applicant has been referred to CARES Work Programs. When developing a Supportive Service Plan with an applicant who withdraws his or her W-2 application prior to placement and no referral to CARES Work Programs was made, the worker must use a paper version of the Supportive Service Plan. The Department has updated Form 12956 for this purpose.

If a case has been established in CARES, the worker must scan the paper Supportive Service Plan into ECF and document in CARES casements when the plan was printed and given to the individual. Scanning the Supportive Service Plan into ECF and documenting in CARES case comments will not be possible in circumstances where a case is not established in CARES.

ATTACHMENTS

Disability Program Navigator Roster
W-2 Plans Application Self-Study Guide

CONTACTS

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.

DCF/DFES/BWF/HH