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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

DFES OPERATIONS MEMO					
<b>No:</b>	10-42				
<b>DATE:</b>	MAY 27, 2010				
<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 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: Medium</b>					

**SUBJECT:** Wisconsin Works (W-2) in ACCESS

**CROSS REFERENCE:**

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** June 11, 2010

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this memo is to announce the inclusion of the W-2 program in the Am I Eligible (AIE) portion of ACCESS.

**BACKGROUND**

In August 2004, the Department of Health Services developed an Internet-based self assessment tool that allows Wisconsin residents to assess their potential eligibility for FoodShare (FS), Health Care (including BadgerCare) and Senior Care. The tool is called ACCESS to Eligibility Support Services for Health and Nutrition, or just ACCESS and can be found at <https://access.wisconsin.gov/>.

ACCESS was updated in January of this year to include the Child Care program and, effective June 11, 2010, ACCESS will assist users in determining potential eligibility for the W-2 program as well. The goal for including W-2 in ACCESS is to increase consumer awareness of potential eligibility for the program and to increase enrollment in the program among eligible families who want to participate in the program.

## ACCESS UPDATES

### SELF ASSESSMENT TOOL DESCRIPTION

The self-assessment tool is designed so that anyone with access to a computer and an Internet connection can answer simple questions about their household circumstances and income to assess their potential eligibility for W-2.

ACCESS will screen potential eligibility for the following types of assistance groups:

1. Custodial parents with no earned income;
2. Custodial parents with earned income;
3. Pregnant women with no born children; and
4. Minor Parents.

When users have completed the self-assessment questions, they will receive information about the programs for which they may be eligible, including W-2. We anticipate that people who have used the tool will apply for W-2, particularly if it appears that they may be eligible for the program. At the end of the screening, they will receive a printout summarizing the information they provided and the results they received based on that information. They will also receive contact information for the local W-2 agency through a link to the W-2 Agency Locator.

Because the information currently gathered in ACCESS corresponds with the information necessary to determine potential W-2 eligibility, there were very few changes to the existing ACCESS tool to accommodate W-2. Most of the changes can be seen in the results received by the user. Below you will find a summary of changes that were made to ACCESS as a result of determining potential W-2 eligibility.

- Welcome Page – added both *Cash assistance* and *Help finding a job* to the list of services a user may be able to receive.
- Relationship Page – split the *parent/step-parent* and *child/step-child* relationships.
- Your Money Page – added *SSI/SSDI* as an *Other Type of Income*
- Other Income Details Page – added a new field to collect *SSDI* income information.
- W-2 Failure Reasons Detail Page – the following failure reasons are being added, *Based on what you told us today*:
  1. . . . *it looks like the people in your household have too much income right now to get W-2 cash assistance.*
  2. . . . *it looks like you are not a parent of a child. You must be a parent of a child to get W-2 cash assistance.*
  3. . . . *you are receiving SSI or SSDI. People receiving SSI/SSDI are not able to get W-2 cash assistance. You may be able to get Wisconsin's Caretaker Supplement (CTS) payment. CTS is a cash payment for parents who get SSI. You can ask for CTS at your county agency.*
  4. Next Steps Page – added an external link to the W-2 Agency Locator for users to get specific W-2 agency information when they are potentially eligible for W-2. The link is <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/w2/resources/w2agencies.asp>.

In order to keep the screener as user-friendly as possible, many eligibility considerations will be addressed in disclaimers present on the page where users receive their results. Following is a list of all of the possible result messages and disclaimers that a user might see for W-2:

Condition/Disclaimer	Message
Eligible custodial parents with no earned income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>It looks like [name] could get W-2 cash assistance and help finding a job or applying for SSI. W-2 pays between \$628 and \$673 a month if you participate in activities that will help you find a job. The amount of money you get will be decided by how ready you are for a job.</i></li> <li>• <i>It looks like you could begin getting this W-2 cash assistance 30 days to 45 days after you apply for W-2. You might only get part of the payment at first.</i></li> </ul>
All eligible households other than minor parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Keep in mind that you have to live in Wisconsin to get help from W-2. Also, you have to cooperate with Child Support unless you and your child would be in danger if you did. You also have to either have a Social Security Number or have asked for a Social Security Number for each person applying for W-2.</i></li> <li>• <i>Assets owned by anyone in the household are counted for W-2. If you own assets worth more than \$2,500, you will not be able to get cash assistance.</i></li> <li>• <i>You may not be able to get W-2 cash assistance if you are not a U.S. citizen or a qualified alien.</i></li> </ul>
Eligible custodial parents with earned income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>It looks like [name] might be able to get W-2 cash assistance and help finding a job. Because someone in your household has money from a job, the monthly W-2 payment may be under \$673 a month. The amount of money you get will be decided by how many hours you work at your job now. You will also have to participate in activities that will help you get more money from the job now or from a different job.</i></li> <li>• <i>Keep in mind that you may not be able to get any W-2 cash assistance because someone in your household gets some money from a job. You might be able to get help finding a job that pays more money though.</i></li> <li>• <i>The W-2 program counts your self-employment money before you subtract business costs. If you told us that someone in your house gets money from self-employment you told us how much money was made after subtracting business costs. Your W-2 worker will help you with this.</i></li> </ul>
Pregnant women with no born children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>It looks like [name] may be able to get W-2 case management services for pregnant women.</i></li> <li>• <i>W-2 case management services include meeting with a W-2 worker who can give you information about:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>parenting resources,</i></li> <li>▪ <i>employment goals,</i></li> <li>▪ <i>child care services,</i></li> <li>▪ <i>budget planning, and</i></li> <li>▪ <i>other community resources.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Condition/Disclaimer	Message
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Based on what you told us today, it does not look like you can get W-2 cash assistance. If your situation changes like you are three months or less away from your due date and your doctor tells you that you cannot work because of your pregnancy you might be able to get W-2 cash assistance. You may also be able to get W-2 cash assistance when you have your baby.</i></li> </ul>
Eligible minor parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>It looks like [name] may be able to get W-2 case management services for minor parents.</i></li> <li>• <i>W-2 case management services include meeting with a W-2 worker who can give you information about:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>getting W-2 cash assistance in the future,</i></li> <li>▪ <i>available child care services,</i></li> <li>▪ <i>high school and job preparation,</i></li> <li>▪ <i>employment goals,</i></li> <li>▪ <i>budget planning, and</i></li> <li>▪ <i>other community resources.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### **COMMUNICATING WITH APPLICANTS ABOUT W-2 ELIGIBILITY RESULTS**

Because this self-assessment covers only the most basic W-2 eligibility questions, there is some risk that an applicant will have received positive results from ACCESS, but is not actually eligible for W-2. This is a risk that is managed through the use of disclaimers on the results screen. In addition, the following talking points may be useful when discussing W-2 eligibility results from ACCESS with applicants:

- As described on the first page of ACCESS, this tool is just a simple test to see if someone *might* be eligible for W-2. No one can get W-2 without completing the application process.
- ACCESS is much simpler than the W-2 application process because we wanted to give people a chance to spend a little bit of time and find out whether or not it looks like it is worth taking the time to apply.
- Because ACCESS is a simplified version of the application, there are some ways in which it isn't always accurate. We tried to err on the side of telling people they are eligible instead of telling people who could be eligible that they are not.
- We did not ask about a number of things that may make people ineligible, such as assets, intentional program violations, time limits, strike status, drug felon or fleeing felon status, etc. We left those questions out because they can be complicated and we did not want people to be confused by them and not apply.
- No matter what the self-assessment results, everyone has the right to apply for W-2.

### **CONTACTS**

For Policy Related Questions: Regional Office Staff

For CARES Processing Questions: W-2/CC Help Desk, call (608) 261-6317, Option 3 or send an email to [dcfw2careshd@wisconsin.gov](mailto:dcfw2careshd@wisconsin.gov).

– 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/MMM