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**State of Wisconsin
Governor Scott Walker**

**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 Working Families
Division of Family and Economic Security

DFES OPERATIONS MEMO					
No: 11-54					
DATE: 10/04/2011					
FS	<input type="checkbox"/>	MA	<input type="checkbox"/>	BC+	<input type="checkbox"/>
SC	<input type="checkbox"/>	CTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	FSET	<input 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"/>
RCA	<input type="checkbox"/>	RMA	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/> *
				EP	<input type="checkbox"/>
PRIORITY: HIGH					

SUBJECT: Restoring the W-2 24-Month Time Limits

CROSS REFERENCE: [W-2 Manual Chapter 2](#)
[W-2 Manual, Chapter 5](#)

EFFECTIVE DATE: New Policy Effective January 1, 2012
Agency Action Required Immediately

PURPOSE

The Operations Memo informs W-2 agencies of:

1. The restoring of the 24-month time limits for Trial Job, Community Service Job (CSJ), W-2 Transition (W-2 T) and Custodial Parent of an Infant (CMC) W-2 employment positions.
2. The need for agencies to begin communicating with participants on the upcoming policy change and evaluating ongoing participants for 24-month time limit extension eligibility.

BACKGROUND

The 2009-2011 Biennial Budget (Wisconsin Act 28) eliminated the 24-month time limit for Trial Job, Community Service Job (CSJ), W-2 Transition (W-2 T) and Custodial Parent of an Infant (CMC) W-2 employment positions effective October 30, 2009.

The 2011-2013 Biennial Budget (Wisconsin Act 32) restored the 24-month time limit for Trial Job, CSJ, W-2 T placements and, in some instances, CMC placements effective January 1, 2012. The restored language is the same language that was eliminated under Wisconsin Act 28.

For a 26-month time period (November 2009 through December 2011), there will have been no 24-month employment position time limits. However, while the 24-month time limit was eliminated during this time period, the Bureau of Working Families (BWF) continued to count months that participants accumulated in these W-2 employment positions in CARES and displayed this count on CARES screen AIWC.

POLICY

Chapter 2 and Chapter 5 of the W-2 Manual will be updated effective January 1, 2012. However, because some participants will be at their 24th month or beyond on January 1, 2012 and agencies must begin assessing these participants for extension eligibility, the updated policy language has been included as an attachment to this Operations Memo. (See **Evaluating Cases for 24-month Extensions and Agency Action** for more information).

The following is a summary of the changes:

Chapter 2

- 2.10.1** Added reference to 24-month time limits.
- 2.10.2** Clarified 60-month lifetime limit policy language.
- 2.10.2.2** Clarified Native American time limit exemption policy language.
- 2.10.2.3.1** Re-numbered and clarified how to count months of eligibility for applicants that received TANF in another state.
- 2.10.3** Added new section on 24-month time limits.
- 2.10.3.1** Added new section on the restoring of the 24-month time limits in 2012.
- 2.10.4** Clarified the title of the section.
- 2.10.5** Renumbered section and clarified the wording.
- 2.10.6** Added new section on time limit extensions.
- 2.10.6.1** Added new section specifically for 24-month time limit extension criteria and clarified the title of the section.
- 2.10.6.2** Clarified the policy language on 60-month time limit extension criteria and clarified the title of the section.
- 2.10.6.3** Clarified the policy language on local labor market extension denials.
- 2.10.6.4** Clarified the title of the section.
- 2.10.6.4.1** Added references to 24-month time limits.

- 2.10.6.4.3 Added new section on how to process extensions when participants will reach their 24th month time limit within 6 months of reaching their 60-month time limit.
- 2.10.6.5 Added reference to 24-month time limits and revised the example.
- 2.10.6.6 Added references to 24-month time limits and added documentation requirements.
- 2.10.6.7 Added references to 24-month time limits and clarified requirements for offering the BST at application for applicants who have already reached their time limit.
- 2.10.7 Added references to 24-month time limits and updated language on when the the BST must be offered in relation to time limit extensions.
- 2.10.8 Added new section that incorporates all time limit policy, including extensions, for the Custodial Parent of an Infant (CMC) placement.
- 2.10.8.1 Added references to 24-month time limits and changed the CMC eligibility from 12 weeks to 8 weeks to correspond with upcoming policy changes effective on January 1, 2012.

Several sections were reorganized and renumbered, but the policy language remains the same.

Chapter 5

- 5.4.1.1 Clarified that for ongoing participants the BST must be offered if the FEP is considering denying a 24-month or 60-month extension and the BST has not been completed or declined within 12 calendar months prior to the participant's 24th or 60th month. Added the requirement that the BST must be offered to all applicants who have reached either the 24 or 60 month time limit.

Restoring the 24-Month Employment Position Time Limits

Although 24-month time limits were eliminated in October 2009, CARES continued to calculate the number of months participants spent in a Trial Job, CSJ and W-2 T for case management purposes. As a result, the number of months currently listed on CARES screen AIWC includes the months accumulated since November 2009 that do not count against the 24-month time limit. On January 1, 2012, on CARES screen AIWC, the 24-month time limits for all open or closed cases will be reset to the number of months used as of October 2009.

Example 1: Shondra was in a CSJ placement from February 2008 through October 2009. When the clock cycle ran in September 2009, Shondra had accumulated 21 months toward her CSJ 24-month time limit. Shondra then returned to the W-2 program and the CSJ placement in November 2011. Shondra would accumulate two more months (November and December) on her CSJ placement time limit for a total of 23 months in December 2011, but when the 24-month time limits go into effect on January 1, 2012, Shondra will have her CSJ months of eligibility reset to 21 months because that was what she had accumulated prior to November 2009 when 24-month time limits were eliminated.

Example 2: Louisa was in a W-2 T placement from July 2008 through August 2008. When the clock cycle ran in August 2008, Louisa had only accumulated 2 months toward her W-2 T 24-month time limit. Louisa then returned to the W-2 program and the W-2 T placement in February 2010. She stayed in the W-2 T placement for 12 months. At this point, Louisa had accumulated 14 months on her W-2 T placement time limit. Louisa then returned again in December 2011 and accumulated one more month in a W-2 T putting her total accumulation of months on the W-2 T placement time limit at 15 months. When the 24-month time limits go into effect on January 1, 2012, Louisa will have her W-2 T months of eligibility reset to 2 months because that was what she had accumulated prior to November 2009 when 24-month time limits were eliminated.

Evaluating Cases for 24-month Extensions

When the 24-month time limits are reset in January 2012, there will be W-2 participants that will be at their 24th month or more in a W-2 employment position. If they are *not* within 6 months of their 60-month time limit, they must be evaluated for a 24-month extension. If they are within 6 months of their 60-month time limit, those participants must be evaluated for a 60-month extension rather than a 24-month extension.

The 60-month extension decisions must be entered no later than a participant's 56th month. There is no change to this policy. By policy, 24-month extensions must be entered no later than a participant's 20th month. Because the CARES changes will not be in place until January 1, 2012, however, agencies cannot begin entering 24-month extensions until January 2012. For that reason, extensions for participant's at 20 months or more on January 1, 2012 must be entered between January 2, 2012 and January 31, 2012. Cases at 24 or more months that are denied an extension or do not have an extension entered will then close when the January W-2 clock cycle runs the evening of January 31st.

Report Identifying Cases That Need To Be Evaluated For 24-Month Extensions

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) developed a short-term report to help agencies determine who on their caseload will need to be evaluated for a 24-month extension due to the resetting of the 24-month time limits. The report will be run monthly September 2011 through February 2012 and will be distributed by the regional staff on a monthly basis. Below is an example of the report.

CASE	PIN	PREVIOUS PLACEMENT	PREVIOUS 24MO CLOCK	CURRENT PLACEMENT	CURRENT LIFETIME CLOCK
COUNTY=BROWN CONTRACT*AGENCY=115. BAY AREA CONSORTIUM (FKMB) WP OFFICE=1411 PRIMARY WORKER=XBR507					
		CSJ	18	CSJ	22
COUNTY=DANE CONTRACT*AGENCY=101. DANE CONSORTIUM (DDMS) WP OFFICE=0811 PRIMARY WORKER=XDAB01					
		W2T	18	W2T	48
		W2T	18	W2T	49
		CSJ	18	CSJ	37

PREVIOUS PLACEMENT and CURRENT PLACEMENT: Participants selected for the report have to be in the same placement now as they were in October 2009 (or the last month the case was open prior to October 2009).

PREVIOUS 24MO CLOCK: The participant's W-2 T or CSJ time limit has to be greater than or equal to (\geq) 18 months as of October 30, 2009 or prior.

CURRENT LIFETIME CLOCK: Only those participants that will be at less than 56 months on their state 60-month time limit in December 2011 are included on the report. The reason for this is that once someone reaches their state 60-month limit, the 60-month extension decision applies to both the 60-month and 24-month time limits. Therefore, for the report run using August 2011 data, the participant's state 60-month lifetime limit has to be less than or equal to (\leq) 51 months. In September, the participant's state 60-month lifetime limit will have to be less than or equal to (\leq) 52 months and so on through December 2011.

After February 2012, agencies can use the *Timely Entry of 60-Month Extension Requests Weekly Due* report found in the monitoring folder on WEBI. This report will be updated to include 24-month information in January 2012.

ACTION REQUIRED

The agency must begin discussing with the participants identified on the report the implementation of the 24-month time limits and how their cases will be affected by the policy change. The agency must review and complete both the *24-Month Time Limit* flyer and the *W-2 Agency Time Limit Extension Record (11661)* with these participants by December 31, 2011. Participants must receive a copy of both documents.

The *24-Month Time Limit* flyer is a tool that describes the reinstatement of 24 month clocks and the number of months the individual participant has remaining. FEPs must use this flyer during the meeting they have with each participant who is nearing their 24 month time limit. At this meeting, the FEP must also discuss the participant's eligibility for an extension. This flyer must not be mailed to the participant or given to participants without a discussion.

As of January 2012, agencies must begin entering extension decisions for those participants who will be at 20-months or more in January 2012, with a priority on those cases at 24 or more months. For participants who will be at 18 and 19 months, agencies must enter extension decisions for these cases no later than the participant's 20th month.

A second Operations Memo will be published later this year which will provide further instructions on how to enter an extension into CARES.

ATTACHMENTS

Updated *W-2 Agency Time Limit Extension Record (11661)* form
Updated W-2 Manual, Chapter 2, Section 2.10, W-2 Time Limits with Track Changes
Updated W-2 Manual, Chapter 2, Section 2.10, W-2 Time Limits (final)
Updated W-2 Manual, Chapter 5, Section 5.4.1.1, When to Use the BST with Track Changes
Updated W-2 Manual, Chapter 5, Section 5.4.1.1, When to Use the BST (final)
New *24-Month Time Limit* flyer for participants that appear on the short-term 24-month time limit report

CONTACTS

For Policy Questions in the Balance of State: Bureau of Regional Operations, W-2 Regional Coordinators

For Policy Questions in Milwaukee: Milwaukee Operations Section Regional Administrators

For CARES Processing Questions: W-2 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, RCA – Refugee Cash Assistance Program, RMA - Refugee Medical Assistance Program, *Other EP – Other Employment Programs.

DCF/DFES/BWF/MMM