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**State of Wisconsin
Governor Scott Walker**

**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**

DECE/BELP OPERATIONS MEMO			
No:	16-08	AMENDED	
DATE:	04/07/2016		
CC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	FS	<input type="checkbox"/>
W-2	<input type="checkbox"/>	BC+	<input type="checkbox"/>

FROM: Kath McGurk, Director
Bureau of Early Learning and Policy
Division of Early Care and Education
Department of Children and Families

SUBJECT: Wisconsin Shares Child Care Eligibility Verification

CROSS REFERENCE: Wisconsin Shares Policy Manual 1.4.1 Assistance Groups; 1.6.2.1 Non-Financial Eligibility Verification; 1.6.2.2 Financial Eligibility Verification; 1.6.2.3 Approved Activity Verification; 1.6.7 Verification Due Date; 1.6.9 Applicant Refusal to Produce Verification

EFFECTIVE DATE: April 11, 2016

PURPOSE: The purpose of this memo is to provide clarification regarding certain required verification items. This memo also provides information regarding ensuring that the Verification Checklist functionality allows seven days for the submission of required verification items.

BACKGROUND:

Since the publication of the revised Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Policy Manual there have been frequent questions regarding verification requirements. This memo is intended to resolve those questions. Because the text changes in each policy section relate to more than one topic, each topic is described first and the corresponding policy references follow.

These changes have been updated in the published Wisconsin Shares policy manual.

POLICY:***Minor Parent as a Dependent Child***

The definition of dependent child in Wisconsin Shares allows that 18 year olds may continue to be considered dependent children and be included in their parent's case as long as they are expected to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent by the 19th birthday. If the teen parent will remain a dependent child on their parent's case, the agency must collect written documentation from the high school (including an alternative school) that the student is expected to graduate by their 19th birthday. Please see excerpts of sections 1.4.1 Assistance Groups and 1.6.2.3 Approved Activity Verification later in this memo.

The Work Number

Employment and income verification through The Work Number is a valid source of verification for financial eligibility and the approved activity verification. The Work Number provides employer name, the employee name, the hire date, termination date, job title, rate of pay, gross earnings for current year-to-date including base pay, overtime, bonuses, and commissions. Please see excerpts of sections 1.6.2.2 Financial Eligibility Verification and 1.6.2.3 Approved Activity Verification later in this memo.

Earned Income Verification and Approved Activity Verification

If the applicant or participant has recently started a job, and is paid weekly and has received only 3 pay checks in the preceding 30 days and submits all 3 paystubs for verification then the requirement has been met. The requirement is to obtain all paystubs that have been issued in the preceding 30 days. This has been clarified in sections 1.6.2.2 Financial Eligibility Verification and 1.6.2.3 Approved Activity Verification.

Children in Out-of-Home Care

When there is a court order detailing the placement of the child in out-of-home care it must be provided to the eligibility agency by the applicant. Section 1.6.2.1 Non-Financial Eligibility Verification has been updated to include this requirement.

Proof of a Kinship Care payment, Foster Care payment, or Subsidized Guardian payment or Interim Caretaker payment may be provided by verbal or written confirmation from the Child Protective Services (CPS). Section 1.6.2.2 Financial Eligibility Verification has been updated to include this requirement.

When the child is in foster care or another court-ordered placement the CPS agency will have information regarding the natural or adoptive parents' income. The eligibility worker must obtain this income information **from the CPS agency** and must record this amount in the Manual Eligibility page in CWW. **If the information was obtained through a phone conversation with the CPS agency including** a case comment that documents the details of the conversation including, the date and the name of person spoken with. When the natural or adoptive household income exceeds 200% FPL, the eligibility worker must indicate the failure on the Manual Eligibility page and the financial eligibility test is then based on the caregiver household income and is tested at 185% FPL. If the caregivers' household income exceeds 185% FPL there is no eligibility for child care subsidy. Section 1.8.1 Financial Eligibility has been updated to include this information.

Citizenship Verification

Citizenship is one of the items that are to be verified once per lifetime per Section 1.6.3 Verify Only Once. Children who have been born in a Wisconsin hospital when the mother was a Medicaid recipient may use the MB (Medicaid Birth) as citizenship verification. The MB code is a code that is used only when the Income Maintenance agency has received direct information from a Wisconsin hospital regarding the birth of a child. Section 1.6.2.1 Non-Financial Eligibility Verification has been updated to include this information.

CLARIFICATION OF PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:**Best Available Information**

The Child Care Help Desk has had requests for clarification regarding using the “best available information.” Current policy does not include a provision to confirm open eligibility based on information that is required to be verified but has not been verified. This was changed in the September 2015 publication of Wisconsin Shares policy as shown below:

12/10/13 version of the Child Care Policy Manual Sections 1.7.6 and 1.7.7

- **1.7.6 Applicant Unable to Produce Verification** If the applicant is unable to produce the requested verification items, or requires assistance to do so; the applicant agency must assist the applicant in obtaining the verification. To do this, the agency may need the applicant’s signature on a written Release of Information form to obtain the information from a third party. If the applicant has made a reasonable effort and cannot obtain the information, the application must not be denied based upon the information that could not be obtained. Instead, the agency must use the available information to process the case and then reassess the case when the requested information is received.
- **1.7.7 Applicant Refusal to Produce Verification** stated, if the applicant is able to produce the information, but refuses or fails to do so, no eligibility shall exist.

The 9/28/2015 version changed this policy to state the following:

- **1.6.8 Required Agency Assistance**
If the applicant has made a reasonable effort and cannot obtain the information, the agency must assist the applicant in obtaining the verification. No signed release of information is needed when assisting the client to obtain this information.

If neither the applicant nor the agency can get the required verification by the 30th day from the application, eligibility must be denied.

- **1.6.9 Applicant Refusal to Produce Verification**
If the applicant is able to produce the verification, but refuses or fails to do so, eligibility does not exist.

In addition to this change, the policy also includes a provision to use Collateral Contact as a means to obtain employment verification as stated in **1.6.2.2 Financial Eligibility Verification**.

THE NOTICE OF ACTION NEEDED:

Verification Checklist

Currently the Verification Checklist (VCL) functionality in Cares Worker Web (CWW) does not automatically set the correct due date if there is an existing verification due date for a prior VCL; instead, the system sets the existing due date. When there is an existing VCL on the case and a second VCL is to be generated, the worker must adjust the due date to allow the applicant or participant seven (7) business days from the issuance date on the Notice of Action Needed to submit the necessary verification.

THE WISCONSIN SHARES POLICY MANUAL:

Below are sections of the manual that have been changed.

1.4.1 Assistance Groups (AG)

Eighteen (18) year old teen parents can continue to be dependent children in their parent's case as long as they are expected to graduate high school or achieve its equivalent by their nineteenth (19th) birthday.

1.6.2.1 Non-Financial Eligibility Verification

- **Eighteen Year Old Teen Parent:** When an 18 year old teen parent will remain a dependent child on their parent's case, the agency must collect written documentation from the high school that states the high school graduation requirements and the progress the teen parent has made and then based on this information the documentation must show that the student is expected to graduate by the 19th birthday.
- **U.S. Citizenship of children:** Certified copy of Birth Certificate; U.S. Passport; data exchange with SCHIP-I; CARES Birth Query (Wisconsin births only); Native American ID card issued by a federally recognized tribe; Certificate of Naturalization; Certificate of Citizenship; Medicaid Birth as documented by a Wisconsin Hospital.
- **Placement of children:**
 - Shared Placement: Legal documents stating child placement; Self-declaration.
 - Out-of-Home Care: When there is a court order detailing the placement of the child in out-of-home care it must be provided to the eligibility agency by the applicant.

1.6.2.2 Financial Eligibility Verification

The following lists the financial eligibility items that must be verified and includes a list of document types that satisfy the corresponding requirement.

- **Earned Income of all adults in the Assistance Group:** Dated paycheck stubs and pay statements for the immediately preceding thirty (30) days must include

the employer and employee name, rate of pay, and hours worked. If the applicant or participant has started a new job in the last thirty (30) days and as a result does not have paystubs for the entire thirty (30) day period, but has all of the paystubs for the new job that have been issued then they have met the requirement of providing all the paystubs for the preceding thirty (30) days.

Applicants and participants with ongoing employment must provide paystubs for the entire preceding thirty (30) days.

Employer Verification of Earnings (EVF-E) form with the employer's signature, number of hours of work per week, company name, and rate of pay; a letter from the employer bearing the employer's legible name, contact information and signature and includes the employee's name, rate of pay, and hours of work; earned income verification through The Work Number; or Equifax verification through the Federal Data Services Hub (FDSH) wage match (so long as the data is correct and reports on the approved activity income within the past thirty (30) days).

And later in this same section:

- **Unearned Income for all Assistance Group members:** Unemployment Compensation award letter unless auto-populated by UI database; divorce documents showing financial settlement, maintenance, family support, or child support; documentation of court-awarded settlement; Social Security award letter; Veteran's Administration award letter; compensation award letter; Financial Aid award letter; rental income documentation; self-employment business tax records for unearned rental income; other tax records showing unearned income, and documentation from any other source of income. Proof of a Kinship Care payment, Foster Care payment, or Subsidized Guardian payment or Interim Caretaker payment may be provided by verbal or written confirmation from the Child Protective Services (CPS) agency.
- **Proof of Natural or Adoptive Parent Income:** The eligibility worker must obtain the natural or adoptive parent income at the time the child was removed from the home. This information is available from the local Child Protective Services agency. This income information shall be noted in case comments and recorded on the Manual Eligibility page.

1.6.2.3 Approved Activity Verification

The following lists the approved activity eligibility items that must be verified and includes a list of document types that satisfy the corresponding requirement. All parents in the assistance group must be in a verified approved activity.

Acceptable Sources of Verification for Approved Activity Types:

Employment: Dated paycheck stubs and pay statements for the immediately preceding thirty (30) days must include the employer and employee name, rate of pay, and hours worked. If the applicant or participant has recently started a job and has received only 3 pay checks in the preceding 30 days and submits all 3 paystubs for verification then they have met the requirement of providing all the paystubs for the preceding 30 days.

Applicants and participants with ongoing employment must provide paystubs for the entire preceding thirty (30) days.

Employer Verification Form – Earnings (EVF-E) with the employer’s signature, number of hours of work per week, company name, and rate of pay; a letter from the employer bearing the employer’s legible name, contact information and signature and includes the employee’s name, rate of pay, and hours of work; employment verification obtained through The Work Number, and Equifax verification through the Federal Data Services Hub (FDSH) wage match (so long as the data is correct and reports on the approved activity income within the past thirty (30) days).

Collateral contact with the employer is a valid form of approved activity verification when the agency worker is assisting the client to obtain earned income and employment verification. The worker must document the phone conversation in CWW case comments including the date and time, and name and phone number of the person that was contacted.

And later in 1.6.2.3:

HSED, GED, High School: Enrollment letter from school. The most current grade report for the student must be obtained to review for satisfactory progress; if passing grades are not achieved there must be documentation that the student took part in the required classes and performed the required work. If a teen parent will remain a dependent child on their parent’s case, the agency must collect written documentation from the education institution which identifies the high school graduation or high school equivalency requirements and the progress the teen parent has made; and based on this information the documentation must show that the student is expected to achieve graduation or its equivalent by their 19th birthday.

1.8.1 Financial Eligibility

The financial eligibility test for foster care, subsidized guardianship, interim caretaker, and relatives with court-ordered placement who receive a Kinship Care payment is based upon the child’s biological or adoptive parents’ income tested at 200% Federal Poverty Level (FPL) at the time the child was removed from the home. This income information is usually available from the CPS agency that is involved in the case.

Being on the Kinship Care payment waitlist does not qualify as receipt of a Kinship Care payment.

If the biological or adoptive parents’ income exceeds 200% FPL, the eligibility worker must fail eligibility on the Manual Eligibility page in CWW and the financial eligibility test is then based on this caregiver household income and is tested at 185% FPL. With the exception of this financial eligibility variation, all other requirements under section 1.5 must be met for foster care parents, subsidized guardians, interim caretakers, and relatives with court-ordered placement who receive Kinship Care. If the caregivers’ household income exceeds 185% FPL there is no eligibility for child care subsidy.

CONTACTS:

For Wisconsin Shares Child Care policy questions outside of Milwaukee County contact your Bureau of Regional Operations (BRO), Child Care Coordinators at http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/regional_operations/pdf/contact-list.pdf

For Child Care CARES/CWW, CSAW and CCPI Processing Questions statewide and policy questions in Milwaukee County contact the Child Care Help desk at: childcare@wisconsin.gov or (608) 264-1657.

*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, BC+ Core – BadgerCare Plus Core, 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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