TO: Income Maintenance Supervisors
     Income Maintenance Lead Workers
     Income Maintenance Staff
     Training Staff
     Child Care Coordinators

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

SUBJECT: 2018 Federal Poverty Level Changes for the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program

CROSS REFERENCE
Wisconsin Shares Policy Manual, Sections 1.5.1.1 & 1.5.1.2
2018 HHS poverty guidelines at https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines

EFFECTIVE DATE: February 1, 2018

PURPOSE: This memo introduces the 2018 Federal Poverty Level (FPL) that is used in determining financial eligibility for the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy program.

BACKGROUND: Each year, the federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) updates the FPL guidelines based on the Consumer Price Index. Poverty guidelines are used to determine financial eligibility for Community Services Block Grant programs and several other publicly funded programs, including the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy program.

POLICY: Beginning February 1, 2018, new applicant eligibility will be determined using the 2018 FPL limits. The 2018 FPL limits will be applied to ongoing cases on February 3, 2018.

The 2018 FPL table for financial eligibility in the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy program is as follows:
Wisconsin Shares Financial Eligibility:  The financial eligibility limit for new Wisconsin Shares applicants, including cases in which child care has been closed for more than a calendar month, is 185% FPL. Once financial eligibility has been met, financial eligibility may continue until the income reaches 200% FPL.

Financial eligibility for foster parents, subsidized guardians under Wis. Statute 48, interim caretakers, and relatives with court-ordered placement who receive a Kinship Care payment (and relatives of children in tribal placement homes under a substantially similar Wisconsin tribal law) 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.

CARES/CSAW:  The CARES mainframe income limit table, TCCS (Childcare Need Standard), which is used to determine Wisconsin Shares eligibility, has been updated with an effective date of February 1, 2018 and a CARES mass change for Wisconsin Shares eligibility will run the weekend of February 3, 2018. The CARES mass change selects all ongoing Wisconsin Shares cases and compares the household income to the 2018 FPL amounts for February eligibility. Because the income thresholds are increasing, this process will not have a negative eligibility impact for Wisconsin Shares cases.

Wisconsin Shares Family Copayments:  The Wisconsin Shares copayment schedule will also change as a result of the change in the FPL. This change is planned for March 1, 2018. A separate Operations Memo will be issued for the copayment schedule change.

CONTACTS:

For Wisconsin Shares Child Care policy questions outside of Milwaukee County contact your Bureau of Regional Operations (BRO), Child Care Coordinators at BROCCPolicyHelpDesk@wisconsin.gov.
For Child Care CARES/CWW and CSAW Processing Questions statewide, and policy questions in Milwaukee County, contact the Child Care Subsidy and Technical Assistance line at: childcare@wisconsin.gov or (608) 422-7200.

DCF/DECE/BELP/RH