



TO: **Child Care Eligibility and Authorization Workers and Supervisors**
Income Maintenance Supervisors
Income Maintenance Lead Workers
Income Maintenance Staff
Training Staff
Child Care Coordinators

DECE/BCCSA OPERATIONS MEMO
No: 23-33
DATE: 09/15/2023
Child Care

FROM: Junior Martin, Director
Bureau of Child Care Subsidy Administration
Division of Early Care and Education
Department of Children and Families

SUBJECT: Wisconsin Shares Handbook Updates

CROSS REFERENCE: [Wisconsin Shares Handbook](#)
Operations Memos [23-01](#), [23-05](#), [23-06](#), [23-12](#), [23-15](#), [23-22](#), [23-23](#),
[23-25](#), [23-31](#), [23-32](#)

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2023

PURPOSE: This Operations Memo informs local agencies of updates that have been made to the Wisconsin Shares Handbook that will be published and effective on October 1, 2023.

BACKGROUND: The Handbook has been updated with the Operations Memos published from January 2023 through September 2023. Additional updates have also been made for minor clarifications of policy. Local agency staff must thoroughly review the Handbook updates.

POLICY: The changes listed below were incorporated into the Wisconsin Shares Handbook effective October 1, 2023. Changes that do not reference an Operations Memo are clarifications and were not published in an Operations Memo.

NEW POLICY

3.2 Request for Assistance (RFA): The methods to apply for assistance have been broken out to clarify that parents can apply by submitting the [Wisconsin Shares Child Care Registration form \(DCF-F-2835\)](#) to the local agency (this was previously combined with the option to apply in person).

3.3 Interview: Revised to remove the requirement for a face-to-face interview when the parent has a prior Intentional Program Violation (IPV) and to change the time frame in which a worker must make a second attempt at a phone interview in accordance with [Operations Memo 23-23](#).

4.2 Applicant Age: Clarified who to contact to verify supervised independent living arrangements.

4.7.3 Good Cause Publication: Revised references to reflect the change from the obsolete Good Cause Notice form (DCF-F-DWSP2018-E) that parents needed to sign and return to the [Child Support and Good Cause publication \(DCF-P-5600\)](#) that is intended for parents to keep.

5.1.2 Education: Revised to state that education is a stand-alone approved activity and that there is no work requirement for education to qualify as an approved activity in accordance with [Operations Memo 23-25](#).

5.1.2.1 High School: Removed reference to the education work requirement in accordance with [Operations Memo 23-25](#).

5.1.2.2 Basic Education: Removed policy regarding the need to be employed at least 20 hours per month for education to qualify as an approved activity in accordance with [Operations Memo 23-25](#). Removed policy regarding Approved Activity Search Periods (ACTS) for parents who are unable to maintain 20 hours per month of employment since education is now a stand-alone activity.

5.1.2.3 Postsecondary Education: Removed policy regarding the need to be employed at least 20 hours per month for education to qualify as an approved activity in accordance with [Operations Memo 23-25](#). Removed policy regarding ACTS periods for parents who are unable to maintain 20 hours per month of employment since education is now a stand-alone activity.

5.1.2.5 Education Tracking: Removed policy regarding not tracking education when the parent is in an ACTS period for employment while participating in education since education is now a stand-alone activity.

5.1.5 FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET) Participation: Revised to reflect the FSET code updates in accordance with [Operations Memo 23-06](#).

5.3.1 Activity Break Period Eligibility: Removed policy regarding parents who are participating in basic, postsecondary, or online education who are no longer able to meet the work requirement since education is a stand-alone approved activity in accordance with [Operations Memo 23-25](#).

5.3.6 Ending an Activity Break Period Early: Clarified that running with dates as required in Section 11.2 applies during an Activity Break Period the same as it applies for any other approved activity.

6.1.1 Application Income Limit: Updated to 2023 Federal Poverty Level (FPL) in accordance with [Operations Memo 23-01](#).

6.1.2 Ongoing Eligibility Income Limit: Updated to 2023 State Median Income (SMI) in accordance with [Operations Memo 23-01](#).

6.4 Monthly Income Calculations: Clarified that workers must not update income for a temporary change of less than a calendar month if it does not reflect their ongoing, prospective income.

7.7 Nonfinancial Eligibility Verification: Revised to change Date of Birth (DOB) verification from required to only required if questionable in accordance with [Operations Memo 23-12](#). Added Online Wisconsin DMV Driver's License query and any other source that does not display the address or current residency status to the examples of unacceptable sources to verify residency and residence.

7.8 Approved Activity Verification: Revised to combine Basic Education and Postsecondary Education and removed verification of at least 20 hours per month of employment in accordance with [Operations Memo 23-25](#).

7.9 Financial Eligibility Verification: Added email as a means of obtaining a biological or adoptive parent's income from the Child Protective Services (CPS) worker. Revised in accordance with [Operations Memo 23-05](#) to indicate that:

- For fluctuating income, more than 30 calendar days of pay stubs may be used to determine the prospective budget.
- If pay stubs from the past 30 calendar days are not representative of prospective income and the employer refuses to provide additional verification, the submitted pay stub(s) and parent's verbal statement of expected hours may be used to prospectively budget income.
- If the pay stubs do not show hours worked for a salaried employee, the worker must not request further verification and does not need to document the hours.

7.9.2 Ongoing Financial Verification: Revised in accordance with [Operations Memo 23-15](#) to indicate eligibility must be manually ended if income over 85% SMI is discovered through a State Wage Income Collection Agency (SWICA) discrepancy or other data exchange and verbal confirmation or verification is not provided.

7.9.3 SWICA Discrepancies: Revised in accordance with [Operations Memo 23-15](#) to indicate eligibility must be manually ended if income over 85% SMI is discovered through a SWICA discrepancy or other data exchange and verbal confirmation or verification is not provided.

9.2 Financial Eligibility: Updated to 2023 Federal Poverty Level (FPL) in accordance with [Operations Memo 23-01](#). Clarified existing policy that if a parent adopts a child that was previously placed with them in an out-of-home care arrangement, the adoptive family must meet financial eligibility criteria based on their income. Added email as a means of obtaining a biological or adoptive parent's income or Kinship Care payment status from the CPS worker.

12.2 Authorization Comments: Revised to remove language regarding writing an authorization to a next expected change that requires the authorization to be based on the assessment results when documenting the reason for the authorization end date in accordance with [Amended Operations Memo 22-19](#). Removed the requirement to document the results of the Wisconsin Shares Hourly In-Home Price Calculator because the policy requiring the subsidy to account for the minimum wage when a provider is caring for children in the children's home for 15 hours or more was repealed in accordance with [Operations Memo 23-32](#).

14.4 Provider Prices and Registration Fees: Added requirement for providers to submit registration fee amounts to the local agency before registration fees can be approved to that provider.

- **Note:** This update will be made with a December 1, 2023, update to the Handbook.

14.4.1 Licensed Provider Prices: Revised the conversion factor used to determine part-time weekly prices when the provider only has a full-time price, daily price, or hourly price in accordance with [Operations Memo 23-32](#).

14.5 Written Payment Agreement: Added any fees the provider charges, parent and provider signatures, and the date signed as a required components of the written payment agreement between the parent and provider in accordance with [Operations Memo 23-31](#).

14.6 Prohibited Actions: Clarified that charging a higher price, before any discounts are applied, for parents who receive Wisconsin Shares than parents who do not receive Wisconsin Shares is a prohibited provider action.

14.8 Provider Reporting Requirements: Revised policy to require providers to submit registration fee changes to the local agency.

- **Note:** This update will be made with a December 1, 2023, update to the Handbook.

15.1 Authorization Begin Dates at Application and Renewal: Clarified that even though prices must be entered before an authorization can be written to the provider, the date the prices are entered is not a factor in determining the authorization begin date.

15.2 Authorization Begin Dates During Ongoing Eligibility: Clarified that even though prices must be entered before an authorization can be written to the provider, the date the prices are entered is not a factor in determining the authorization begin date.

15.3 Authorization End Dates: Revised policy to indicate that authorizations must be written to the next expected change, not the next expected change that must be based on the assessment results, in accordance with [Amended Operations Memo 22-19](#).

16.1.1 Approved Activity Schedules: Clarified policy regarding hours that can be authorized for accelerated education programs.

16.1.2 Child Care Need Schedule: Clarified that a case comment indicating that the child always needs care whenever the parent is participating in their approved activity is sufficient to meet the case comment requirement.

16.1.2.2 School-Age Children Authorizations: Clarified that children between the ages of 6-18 who are required to be enrolled in school per the Department of Public Instruction and are not enrolled are not eligible for authorizations during the typical school day (excluding expelled children while the parent searches for a new education arrangement).

16.1.2.2.2 School Closed Hours: Clarified that children between the ages of 6-18 who are required to be enrolled in school per the Department of Public Instruction and are not enrolled are not eligible for school closed hours (including expelled children while the parent searches for a new education arrangement).

16.1.4 Travel Time: Revised policy to indicate that any travel time requests of more than two (2) hours per day must be verified, as well as questionable requests of any amount in accordance with [Operations Memo 23-22](#).

16.4.3 In-Home Care for 15 or More Hours Per Week: Removed policy without replacement in accordance with [Operations Memo 23-32](#).

17.2 Activity Break Period Authorizations: Clarified that parents are allowed to change providers during an Activity Break Period, subject to the same policies as all other authorizations.

17.2.2 Children Not Previously Authorized: Clarified that if a change creates a gap of any length between authorizations during an Activity Break Period, the parent is not eligible for the new authorization that would follow a gap.

17.4 Excessive Unexplained Absences: Clarified that since the threshold for reporting a child's absence is 30 calendar days, a referral to the Child Care Fraud Mailbox only needs to be created if the provider received payments for a child who was absent *more than* 30 calendar days.

18.5 Subsidy Calculation: Revised policy to indicate how the subsidy calculation will convert hourly authorizations to a full-time or part-time subsidy amount beginning with the October 2023 benefit in accordance with [Operations Memo 23-32](#).

18.5.1 Subsidy Maximum Rates: Clarified that unlike copayments and FPL amounts, maximum rates are not updated on an annual basis.

18.6.3 Provider Changes: Clarified that when a parent stops receiving a discount, the removal of the discount is effective the date the family no longer receives the discount.

18.6.4 Departmental Mass Changes: Clarified that unlike copayments and FPL amounts, maximum rates are not updated on an annual basis.

18.7 Subsidy and Registration Fee Availability: Added new policy regarding when registration fee funds will be available on the parent's EBT card in accordance with [Operations Memo 23-31](#).

Chapter 19: New chapter inserted for Registration Fees. Previous Chapter 19 Authorization Correspondence renumbered to Chapter 20, previous Chapter 20 Fair Hearings renumbered to Chapter 21, and previous Chapter 21 Collections renumbered to Chapter 22.

19.1 Registration Fee Eligibility (new): Added new policy regarding when parents may receive a registration or enrollment fee in accordance with [Operations Memo 23-31](#).

19.2 Registration Fee Limits (new): Added new policy regarding the maximum amount of registration fees in accordance with [Operations Memo 23-31](#).

- **Note:** The limit on registration fee frequency will be made with a December 1, 2023, update to the Handbook.

21.1 Parent Appeals: Revised policy to indicate that a parent's appeal rights include the registration fee amounts and any denials.

- **Note:** This update will be made with a December 1, 2023, update to the Handbook.

Appendix III Benefit Calculation Examples: Revised to reflect the benefit calculation conversion method in accordance with [Operations Memo 23-32](#).

Appendix VI Red Flag Reports and Referrals: Updated as follows:

- Removed obsolete reports.
- Removed parent requesting to have funds loaded back on to the EBT card post-expungement as a reason for a client referral.
- Added frequent requests in a short period for registration fee funds to the same provider as a reason for a client referral in accordance with [Operations Memo 23-31](#).
- Removed underutilization and a failure to report the change in child care need as a reason for a provider referral.

Appendix VIII Client Sanctions: Clarified that paying a provider for a child who has not attended in the previous 30 calendar days is a type of client overpayment and paying a provider who never opens for operation is an example of collusion.

Appendix IX Returning Funds: Clarified that a retraction is appropriate if the child did not attend the child care provider location in the previous 30 calendar days. Revised policy to indicate that VPAs must be submitted directly to the Bureau of Child Care Subsidy Administration (BCCSA) rather than the local agency.

Appendix X Provider Program Integrity: Added a provider receiving and retaining payment for a child who did not attend in the previous 30 calendar days due to the provider refusing to provide care is a type of provider violation.

Glossary: Added definitions for Sheltered Employment/Workshop and Supported Employment.

CONTACTS:

For Wisconsin Shares policy questions outside of Milwaukee County contact your Bureau of Regional Operations (BRO), Child Care Coordinators at BRCCPolicyHelpDesk@wisconsin.gov.

For Program Integrity technical assistance, Child Care CARES/CWW and CSAW Processing Questions statewide, and policy questions in Milwaukee County, contact the Child Care Help Desk at: childcare@wisconsin.gov or 608-422-7200.

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