

DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION OF ECONOMIC SUPPORT
ADMINISTRATOR'S MEMO SERIES
99-04

NOTICE
January 28, 1999

DISPOSAL DATE: Ongoing

RE: W-2 24-MONTH
EMPLOYMENT POSITION
TIME LIMITS

To: W-2 Agency Directors

From: J. Jean Rogers /s/
Administrator

PURPOSE

To communicate policy and procedural information regarding the 24-month time limits on Wisconsin Works (W-2) employment positions.

BACKGROUND

The signing of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) on August 22, 1996 fundamentally altered the nature of public assistance. PRWORA introduced Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grants as a replacement to the AFDC program and made cash payments to recipients temporary and provisional. In general, payments of TANF funds are made temporary by limiting the receipt of cash benefits for up to 60 months (whether or not consecutive). The law allows States to exempt up to 20 percent of their caseload from this provision. The time limit is designed to provide a sense of urgency for both recipients and case workers and to encourage constant progress to enable recipients to move to self-sufficiency before the 60-month time limit for eligibility ends. The time limit applies only to TANF payments and does not apply to child care, food stamps or Medicaid.

Wisconsin continues to encourage participants to leave welfare for unsubsidized employment and self-sufficiency as soon as possible. One of the primary goals of W-2 is to reduce time spent on welfare and to end long-term welfare dependency by creating a system of goal-oriented, short-term support. Under W-2, time limited benefits, in combination with intensive case management, job training, and job placement assistance will provide both the incentive and the ability for participants to reach self-sufficiency as soon as possible.

Eligibility for W-2 employment components [Trial Jobs, Community Service Jobs (CSJs), and W-2 Transitions (W-2 T)] is limited to a total of 60 months, whether consecutive or not. In addition to the 60-month lifetime eligibility time limit, participation in any W-2 employment position is limited to 24 cumulative months.

24-MONTH W-2 EMPLOYMENT POSITION TIME LIMITS

Time limits provide a sense of urgency for both participants and case managers and encourage constant progress to enable participants to move to unsubsidized employment or another rung on the W-2 ladder before the 24-month time limit for a W-2 employment position ends.

Time-limited benefits are likely to achieve their desired affects when Resource Specialists (RS) and Financial and Employment Planners (FEP) clearly emphasize the urgency of becoming self-sufficient. It is essential that the RS encourage applicants to explore other resources as an alternative to receiving welfare. Those who are able to utilize other resources would then be able to save time-limited benefits for future use. FEPs must accurately monitor the participants clocks and, at a minimum, go over the participant's time limit balance at every review and with each new placement. In addition, both the FEP and the participant must consider an individual's time limit balance when developing the employability plan.

As of January 1, 1999, a participant who was placed in a W-2 employment position with the statewide implementation of W-2 (September 1997) could potentially have eight months of eligibility left in that employment position. The following are some recommended action steps W-2 agencies may want to take in preparation for the end of a participant's 24-month time limit:

- **Identify participants who have used the most time on the 24-month clock in their current placement and set up an appointment to bring these participants into the agency.** Through the personalized case management services offered under W-2, FEPs should be aware of those cases in their caseload in which participants are nearing the end of the 24-month time limit in their current placement.
- **Discuss with these participants the implications of the time limit policy to help them better understand the details of time-limited benefits.** Although participants may be aware of time limits, they often do not know the specific details about the policy. Without a good understanding of the time limit policy, participants may not see the need for appropriate action. Through staff and written materials, agencies need to provide a clear explanation of the time limit policy and continue to reinforce this message consistently. In addition to explaining the policy, each participant should be given a copy of the *Guide to Time Limits* Brochure (DES-10925-P).
- **Evaluate each participant's progress.** Research shows that for most welfare participants, the topic of time limits was neither at the forefront of the participant's minds nor a primary factor in influencing their current actions. Many participants are focused on day-to-day problems and concerns. The FEP should help the participant in sorting through those day-to-day problems as well as assist the participant in translating the time limit message into a specific, short-term strategy for moving into unsubsidized employment or to another rung on the W-2 ladder. The FEP must also update the participant's employability plan accordingly.

- **Explore other resources.** Participants may view the time limit as a one-time deadline for leaving W-2 without considering whether they might need to return to W-2 in the future. The FEP should again explore other resources with the participant and explain the benefits of saving their months for the future, if possible. Applicants and participants who have not been able to work or participate for an extended period of time because of a physical or mental health disability should be referred to the local Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) for appropriate services and evaluated for SSI eligibility. All refugee families who are reaching the 24-month limit should be referred to the local refugee service provider for additional assistance.

Each step should be documented thoroughly in the case file.

Notices

In order to assist both participants and FEPs in monitoring the clock status, new CARES notices will be available in February 1999. At each review, participants in open W-2 assistance groups will receive a clock status notice identifying months used in each placement. Each participant will also receive a warning notice at 20 months and again at 23 months that participation in a W-2 employment position may soon end.

Reports

Three clocks reports are available on Enterprise Output Solutions (EOS): 1) Individual Clocks Report; 2) W-2 Transition (W-2 T) 24-Month Clocks - Eligibility Months Used; and 3) Community Service Job (CSJ) 24-Month Clocks - Eligibility Months Used.

Individual Clocks Report

The Individual Clocks Report (**Form Name: C785; Report ID: CRP769RA**) is broken down by agency, worker and each worker's caseload. The report displays how much time participants have used on each of their clocks, i.e., W-2 Employment Position clocks, Jobs Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) clock, 60-Month clock, etc. This report should assist workers in managing their caseload with respect to how much time participants in their caseload have used on their clocks.

W-2 T and CSJ 24-Month Clocks - Eligibility Months Used Reports

The W-2 T 24-Month Clocks - Eligibility Months Used Report (**Form Name: CT05**) and the CSJ 24-Month Clocks - Eligibility Months Used Report (**Form Name: CT06**) indicate the number of individuals who have used time on their 24-month CSJ and W-2 T clocks. There are several factors which should be considered when reviewing these numbers. First, this report captures only participants who were in W-2 placements in the month designated at the top of the report. For instance, on the December report, an individual who has used 13 months on their clock but left W-2 in November would not appear on this report. Only if the person remained on the caseload in December would they appear on the chart. Second, the participants identified in the "Number of Participants" column may have been in any one of the W-2 placements in the month designated at the top of the report. Participants with "0" months used on their clock have never been in a CSJ placement while participants with one or more months used on the CSJ clock may be in a CSJ or some other W-2 placement in the month designated at the top of the report. Finally, the reports only look at one participant per W-2 assistance group. In some two-parent families, there may be some families in which **both** parents have months used on their 24-month CSJ or W-2 T clocks.

Extensions

In exceptional circumstances, some parents may not find a job or be able to advance to a higher W-2 employment position within the 24-month limit. Therefore, extensions of the 24-month limit for each W-2 employment position (Trial Job, CSJ and W-2 T) may be made in unique circumstances, such as:

1. On a case-by-case basis, a Trial Job participant may be granted an extension to the 24-month limit if the participant has made all appropriate efforts to find unsubsidized employment and has been unable to do so because the local labor market conditions preclude a reasonable unsubsidized employment opportunity for that participant.
2. On a case-by-case basis, a CSJ participant may be granted an extension to the 24-month limit if the participant has made all appropriate efforts to find and accept unsubsidized employment and has been unable to do so because the local labor market conditions preclude a reasonable unsubsidized employment opportunity for that participant and, for the same reason, there are no Trial Jobs available.
3. W-2 participants with significant barriers to obtaining unsubsidized employment or to placement in a Trial Job or a CSJ may be granted extensions to the 24-month time limit on a case-by-case basis. Extensions to the 24-month time limit for W-2 T may be extended on a case-by-case basis if the W-2 agency determines that significant barriers prevent advancement to a higher W-2 employment position.

It is the responsibility of the W-2 agency, along with the input from the participant, to determine whether a participant may need an extension of the 24 month limit. All extension requests must have the approval of the Department of Workforce Development.

In order to apply for an extension, W-2 agencies must submit the 24-Month W-2 Employment Position Extension Request form. The form must be submitted to the local Division of Economic Support (DES) W-2 Contract Manager no later than 90 days prior to the last day of the participant's 24th month. All extension applications require a review by and a signature of the FEP supervisor and W-2 Agency Chief Executive Officer. A decision on the extension will be made by the Department within 30 days of receiving the extension request. An extension may be granted for up to 90 days from the last day of the participant's 24th month at which time extra effort must be taken to link the participant with unsubsidized employment or to provide services that will enable the participant to move to a higher rung on the W-2 ladder. It is imperative that each and every action be documented as intensive case management services continue to be provided during the extension period.

Under rare circumstances, an extension request may be accepted inside of the 90-day submission requirement. For more information, contact your local DES W-2 Contract Manager.

The DES is aware that there could potentially be participants who have used up to 21 months of their 24-month time limit, thus making the 90 day extension request timeframe impossible. These participants would have had to begun participating in W-2 during the pilot programs operated by both Pierce and Fond du Lac Counties in March 1997. The division will identify these cases and directly contact the agencies where these cases currently reside.

Note: Although the federal law allows States to exempt up to 20 percent of their caseload from the 60-month lifetime limit, the Department will still be reviewing all extension requests on a case-by-case basis. The Department will not set minimum or maximum standards to be applied to extension requests in order to meet the 20 percent allowed by federal law.

Extension Reviews

If, after an extension approval is granted, the W-2 agency determines a subsequent extension period may be necessary, the agency must submit in writing a request for a review of the extension. The 24-Month Extension Review form must be submitted to the DES W-2 Contract Manager no later than 30 days prior to the last day of the extension period. The Department will respond to extension review requests within 15 days of receipt of the extension review. A reapproval of an extension request may be granted for up to 90 days from the last day of the participant's current extension. Again, continuing documentation of all efforts taken to assist the participant is essential.

Forms

Two forms have been developed for the extension request process: the *24-Month W-2 Employment Position Extension Request form (DES-11282)* and the *24-Month W-2 Employment Position Extension Review Request form (DES-11283)*. Each form must be signed by both the FEP supervisor and the W-2 Agency Chief Executive Officer. The types of documentation that must be submitted for review are listed on the forms; however, agencies are encouraged to supply as much pertinent supporting documentation as possible so as to allow for a more thorough review by the Department. For extension review requests, documentation supporting the intensive case management services provided during the extension period is essential in assisting the Department in considering subsequent extensions.

REGIONAL OFFICE CONTACT: DES Area Administrator

Attachments

cc DES Bureau/Office Directors
Area Administrators/Assistant Area Administrators
Section Chiefs

24-MONTH W-2 EMPLOYMENT POSITION EXTENSION REQUEST

Personal information you provide may be used for secondary purposes [Privacy Law, s. 15.04 (1)(m)].

W- 2 Agency/County		Date of Extension Review Request
PART I - Participant Data		
1. Participant's Name (Last, First, MI)	2. PIN	3. Case Number
4. Current W-2 Employment Position	5. W-2 Placement Date (current placement)	6. Last Day of the 24 th Month
PART II - Extension Reason		
<p>7. Check one of the following extension reasons. In the space provided, include additional supporting information. (Supporting documentation such as case comments, medical documentation, assessment notes, etc. must be submitted with this form as attachments.)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Trial Job participant has made all appropriate efforts to find and accept unsubsidized employment and has been unable to do so because the local labor market conditions preclude a reasonable unsubsidized employment opportunity for the participant. (Describe participant's job search efforts and why labor market conditions preclude a reasonable job opportunity.)</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p><input type="checkbox"/> CSJ participant has made all appropriate efforts to find and accept unsubsidized employment and has been unable to do so because the local labor market conditions preclude a reasonable unsubsidized employment opportunity and, for the same reason, there are no Trial Jobs available. (Describe participant's job search efforts and why labor market conditions preclude a reasonable job opportunity.)</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p><input type="checkbox"/> W-2 T participant has significant barriers that prevent advancement to a higher W-2 employment position. (Describe the significant barriers, e.g. continued incapacitation of the participant, etc.)</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other rare circumstances. (Provide extensive detail regarding other rare circumstances which may not meet any of the reasons listed above.)</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		

Re: Wisconsin Statutes 49.147(3)(c), (4)(b)(2) and (5)(b)(2), DWD 12.16(2)(e)(2), (3)(e)(2), (4)(c), Wisconsin Administrative Rules.

White: W-2 Contract Manager Yellow: Case Record Pink: DWD

PART III - Case History

8. W-2 Activities (List all assigned activities and the dates they were assigned for the W-2 Employment Position specified in Item 4. WPCH screen prints and other additional documentation may be attached.)

9. Nonparticipation Activity (List all nonparticipation hours for the activities assigned in the W-2 employment position specified in Item 4. Include the number of nonparticipation dates, hours, reason and good cause determination. WPNP and WPNH screen prints and other additional documentation may be attached.)

PART IV - Proposed Plan

10. Attach a proposed W-2 Employability Plan (EP) for the requested extension period. The EP must be filled out in its entirety, including Sections 1 through 3.

11. Describe the long-term plan for moving the participant to self-sufficiency.

12. Authorized Signature	13. Title FEP Supervisor	14. Date Signed
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15. Authorized Signature	16. Title W-2 Agency Chief Executive Officer	17. Date Signed
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Part V: Review Resolution (To be completed by the Department of Workforce Development [DWD])

18. <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Denied	19. Extension Approved Until (Date):
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20. Comments:

21. DWD Authorized Signature	22. Title	23. Date Signed
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24-MONTH W-2 EMPLOYMENT POSITION EXTENSION REVIEW REQUEST

(A complete copy of the current extension request must be attached)

Personal information you provide may be used for secondary purposes [Privacy Law, s. 15.04 (1)(m)].

W-2 Agency/County	Date of Subsequent Extension Review Request
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PART I - Participant Data		
1. Participant's Name (Last, First, MI)	2. PIN	3. Case Number
4. Current W-2 Employment Position	5. W-2 Placement Date (current placement)	6. Last Day of the Current Extension

PART II - Extension History
7. W-2 Activities (List all activities assigned during the extension period. Below each activity, provide a brief description of the participant's progress in each activity. Include any nonparticipation hours.)
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PART III - Proposed Plan
8. Attach a proposed W-2 Employability Plan (EP) for the subsequent extension period. The EP must be filled out in its entirety, including Sections 1 through 3.
9. Describe the long-term plan for moving the participant to self-sufficiency.
<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black;"/> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black;"/> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black;"/>

12. Authorized Signature	13. Title FEP Supervisor	14. Date Signed
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15. Authorized Signature	16. Title W-2 Agency Chief Executive Officer	17. Date Signed
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Part IV: Review Resolution (To be completed by the Department of Workforce Development[DWD])	
15. <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Denied	16. Subsequent Extension Approved Until (Date):
17. Comments:	
<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black;"/> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black;"/> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black;"/>	

18. DWD Authorized Signature	19. Title	20. Date Signed
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Re: Wisconsin Statutes 49.147(3)(c), (4)(b)(2) and (5)(b)(2), DWD 12.16(2)(e)(2), (3)(e)(2), (4)(c), Wisconsin Administrative Rules.

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