

# **TESTIMONY ON SB 341 ELIMINATING 24-MONTH TIME LIMITS**

**Senate Human Services and Aging Committee**

Thursday, February 10, 2000

10:30 a.m.

Room 201 SE

State Capitol

**Chairperson:** Senator Judy Robson

**Committee Members:** Senator Gwendolynne Moore  
Senator Carol Roessler  
Senator Peggy Rosenzweig  
Senator Robert Wirch

Good morning, Chairperson Robson and committee members. I am Alice Wilkins, from the Division of Economic Support, Department of Workforce Development and with me is Sherwood Zink, of the department legal staff, who has been advising the division on the 24-month review process.

Senate Bill 341 would repeal the 24-month time limit for participation in each W-2 employment position (Trial Job (TJ), Community Service Job (CSJ) and W-2 Transitions (W-2 T)). The Department is testifying in opposition to Senate Bill 341 because in light of the five-year federal time limit, a message of urgency is necessary in order to help our customers succeed. The 24-month time limit creates this sense of urgency. In the end, we would be doing a great disservice to our W-2 participants if we allowed their five-year time limit to expire without providing additional incentive for success.

We believe that the changes proposed would have only negative unintended consequences. In order to understand these consequences, we must first address the philosophy behind the 24-month time limit provision.

## **Philosophy**

Under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant program, which funds W-2, states are prohibited from using any part of the grant to provide assistance to a family if the family includes an adult who has received TANF assistance for 60 months. TANF further expands on the limitation of assistance for up to 60 months.

Under these TANF time limit provisions, Federal intent was to prompt states to develop their own state-specific time limit provisions in order to insure most clients would not exceed the federal 60-month limit.

Wisconsin allows up to 60 months of lifetime eligibility for W-2 benefits, but it limits the amount of time a person can participate in any single W-2 subsidized employment position to 24-months.

This is not inconsistent with other states. Although the policy surrounding time limits varies from state to state, the intended purpose is the same - to prepare individuals for the federal 60 month time limit.

State time limits vary depending upon length of state imposed time limit and what occurs when an individual reaches the time limit. For example, in some states when an individual meets the time limit, benefits are terminated completely, in other states benefits are reduced and, in other states, a work requirement is imposed once an

individual reaches the time limit. The following are just some examples of other state's time limits:

**Connecticut:** 21-month time limit (benefits terminated)

**Florida:** 24-month or 36-month time limit (benefits terminated)

**Arizona:** 24-month time limit (benefits reduced)

**Delaware:** 24-month time limit (work requirement; 48-month time limit  
(benefits terminated)

**Indiana:** 24-month time limit (benefit reduction)

### **Wisconsin's Philosophy**

Wisconsin's 24-month time limit is about more than terminating benefits when a person reaches a specific point. Time limits are intended to motivate participants to move toward self-sufficiency well before that point. The time limits stress mutual responsibility: government provides support and services designed to promote employment while, in return, participants are expected to prepare for and enter employment. The goal is to increase participants' employability and opportunities for employment and reduce reliance on government programs. Therefore, from the moment the participant

begins participating in W-2, s/he is urged to increase their work skills and enter the workforce as soon as possible, thus saving months of eligibility for future use.

Therefore, the unintended consequences of removing the 24-month time limits are numerous and far-reaching.

### **Consequences**

The 24-month time limit is one of a variety of policies designed to require, encourage and assist participants in finding jobs before W-2 benefits expire. Used in conjunction with other W-2 policies, the time limit policy helps motivate participants to find employment as soon as possible. The time limit policy is not meant to be a stand-alone policy and, therefore, removing it would have unintended consequences.

- **Lessens the sense of urgency time limits place on recipients, case workers and service providers.** It is a proven fact that people succeed in a goal-oriented, structured environment. In all of our jobs, we are expected to adhere to specific timelines and deadlines which help us meet these goals. Time limits place these same expectations on our W-2 participants. Time limits introduce

participants to the expectation of meeting certain deadlines in order to achieve their goals. Removing the time limit would lessen the sense of urgency placed upon participants to find unsubsidized employment or move up the W-2 ladder to a higher placement.

- **Lessens the effectiveness of other W-2 program policies.** All W-2 policies must be applied under intensive case management. Without impending time limits as a motivator, these additional policies would not be as effective, i.e. offering expanded appropriate services, holding participants accountable for actions through hourly reductions or strikes for nonparticipation, requiring full participation. By enforcing these other policies, in conjunction with time limits, we can reduce the number of participants who reach their time limit without jobs or other sources of support.
- **Removes the motivation necessary for success.** Introducing time limits in each W-2 employment position allows participants to experience successes that will motivate them to continue to work hard and leave W-2 while saving valuable months of eligibility. In essence, participants are creating their own safety net for any

future crises that may arise and require short-term, temporary assistance.

- **Fails to prepare participants for the 60-month TANF lifetime limit.** By introducing time limits in each W-2 employment position, participants become familiar with the expectations and rewards of upward movement and improvement, similar to what is experienced in the real world of work. To that end, they are better prepared and more likely to have left W-2 before they reach their 60-month time limit. TANF does allow a 20% undue hardship exemption from the 60-month TANF time limit. However, the 20% will be based on Wisconsin's W-2 caseload as of 2001 or the previous fiscal year, which, based on current caseload numbers, will be quite low. Therefore, it is imperative that we continue to help individuals to move beyond the need for W-2 cash assistance before they reach their 60-month time limit.
- **Would have a significant fiscal impact on W-2 agencies.** Under their current contract, W-2 agencies have a finite amount of funding to pay cash benefits. This change could result in an annual

increase in CSJ and W-2 benefits well over \$111 million dollars.

This increase would be a direct result of removing the urgency participants' face with the 24-month time limit, resulting in a lengthier stay on W-2.

### **Extensions**

To reduce the likelihood that children will be harmed by time limits and acknowledge that some of our more severely barriered participants may not find success in 24-months, Wisconsin law allows for extensions to the 24-month time limit on an individual basis.

Extensions allow parents to continue to work towards unsubsidized employment, another rung of the W-2 ladder or to identify other sources of support beyond the allowable 24-months.

Policy requires agencies to discuss extensions with participants and, if used correctly, employment position extensions are a good case management tool. Participants who are uncertain about whether they will meet extension criteria are more likely to focus their energy on finding a job rather than trying to fit the criteria for an extension.



Of those individuals who, between September 1999 and December 1999, reached their 24-month time limit, 101 were approved for extensions by their local W-2 agency and the Department. However, 76 participants were determined not eligible for an extension by the local W-2 agency during this same timeframe. A majority of these participants were determined not eligible for an extension because they failed to cooperate with program requirements. All participants found ineligible for an extension have a right to appeal the decision through a dispute resolution process. Despite loss of eligibility for a specific W-2 employment position, these individuals may still be eligible for other W-2 employment positions, case management services, food stamps, Medicaid and Child Care if they continue to meet program-specific eligibility requirements.

### **Proven Success**

The 24-month time limit is providing the motivation necessary for success and we have already begun to see the positive impact it has had. This impact is seen in both the actions of the W-2 agencies and the W-2 participants. The W-2 agencies have improved and intensified their case management efforts as a result of the 24-month

time limit. Workers, too, need the added incentive of time limits to move quickly to help their clients, receive services, find jobs, etc.

W-2 agencies have shown increased case management activity as a result of the 24-month time limit. As the time limit approaches, agencies have increased the number of in-depth assessments necessary to uncover hidden barriers. They have stepped up the number of home-visits not only to identify additional barriers, but also to ensure a safe and appropriate living environment. Case activity documentation has improved significantly and, we are seeing an increase in the creativity agencies have taken in developing and locating appropriate services. For example, one agency is using its Community Reinvestment dollars to establish a Hmong adult day care facility. This day care facility will allow for culturally competent services to be provided for one parent while the other parent goes to work.

As a result, our W-2 agencies are better able to insure families no longer need W-2 cash assistance long before they would potentially reach their time limits. Our W-2 participants are finding success before reaching their time limit as well. The monitoring of the

caseload indicates that the number of participants who actually run up against their 24-month time limit decreases substantially as the deadline approaches. At the time of review, these numbers showed that of those participants who reached their 21<sup>st</sup> month but did not reach their 24<sup>th</sup> month between September 1999 and December 1999, approximately 40% obtained jobs and 30% moved to a more appropriate W-2 employment position. The remaining 30% left W-2 for a variety of reasons such as relocation on the part of the participant, the participant choosing to leave W-2 and save months of eligibility for future use, loss of eligibility or denial an extension at the local W-2 agency level, primarily for not participating with program requirements.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, I reiterate that these successes indicate that the current 24-month time limit under W-2 has proven to be effective. To change it at this point would create reverberations that would threaten the very structure upon which W-2 has been built. Equally important, is the fact that repealing the W-2 24-month time limit would also be detrimental to the interests of both the people receiving W-2 services and administering W-2 services. It would bring to an abrupt halt the positive momentum both the W-2 agencies and our participants are

experiencing right now. It would be a step backwards into a trap that leaves these harder-to-serve cases increasingly more dependent on cash assistance just as we experienced under AFDC.

Furthermore, I believe that to remove the 24-month time limit would be inconsistent with the intent of the original W-2 legislation as well as Federal law. It would limit the ability of the local agencies to move individuals to unsubsidized employment, would put a financial strain on the agencies, and would move the philosophy of W-2 backward in terms of promoting individual responsibility and making best use of time limited benefits to address barriers to employment.

Thank you all, we would be happy to respond to questions you may have.

## Questions and Answers

**Question:** Is the 24-month time limit inconsistent with the flexibility the federal TANF program "affords" us? (*Remark made by Senator Moore in a press release*).

**Response:** No, actually quite the contrary. It is consistent with the flexibility allowed under TANF. TANF limits assistance to up to 60 months and prohibits cash assistance to any family that has a family member that has reached 60 months. By introducing time limits earlier than 60 months, as allowed by the federal law, we are assisting in preparing families for this federal lifetime limit.

**Question:** Does the 24-month provision acknowledge that working with the current caseload may take longer than two years? (*Remark made by Senator Moore in a press release*).

**Response:** Most definitely. While we expected that most cases would never reach the end of their time limit, we knew some cases would. Therefore, time limit extensions were provided for in the W-2 law.

**Question:** During the design of W-2, why was 24 months decided upon as the time limit for W-2 employment positions.

**Response:** The decision to make the W-2 employment position time limits 24 months was not an arbitrary one. It was based on our own experiences with the Work Not Welfare pilot. In the Work Not Welfare pilot, the overall time limit for the program was 24 months (24 months with a 3 year hiatus before being allowed to reapply for another 24 months. We had been running WNW for long enough to know that very few (2 – 6 out of 1,000) participants were going to reach the limit, therefore, it seemed more than reasonable to say that for a single component of W-2 under a 5 year lifetime limit, a 24 month stay was adequate for the vast majority of families. This is true particularly with a safety valve of being able to extend as specific cases warrant.

**Question:** How are agencies preparing individuals who will reach their 24-month time limit without an extension?

**Response:** The time limit concept is introduced to potential W-2 participants the moment they walk through the W-2 agency doors. The 24-month time limit is explained at application and at every review. Participants receive an update regarding the amount of time used on their clocks every 6 months through written

notices issued by CARES. As of the 18<sup>th</sup> month of participation, a discussion about extensions must take place between the caseworker and the participant. Within two days after a participant reaches his or her 20<sup>th</sup> month of eligibility, documentation of the agency's extension decision must be in the paper file and a CARES notice of decision is provided to the participant. Participants also receive notices in their 20<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> months regarding the impending expiration of their 24 month time limit.

**Question:** What happens to the individuals who hit the time limit without an extension?

**Response:** As is true for all W-2 families, the safety of the participant's children as well as the participant themselves is an ongoing, primary concern for families that reach their time limit and are found not to qualify for an extension. W-2 agencies per the contract are required to develop internal policies regarding appropriate case management practices for participants who reach the time limit and do not qualify for an extension. These practices must include, but are not limited to:

1. Ensuring participants are aware that although their cash assistance may be ending, they may still be eligible for food stamps and Medicaid.
2. Providing a list of community services.
3. Agency staff must continue to be alert observers in order to identify whether there is reasonable cause to suspect that abuse or neglect of the participant's child(ren) is occurring.
4. Evaluating the participant for eligibility for Welfare-to-Work or Community Reinvestment programs.
5. Referring the participant to other resources and services within the community, e.g. Job Training Partnership Act services, vocational rehabilitation services, and job placement and career information through the Job Service and the Job Center system.

**Question:** What do you see as the single, most impacting consequence of removing the 24-month time limit?

**Response:** Time limits are one of the most important elements upon which both W-2 and the Federal TANF law is built. To remove the 24-month time limit would put at risk many of the philosophies and policies that have made W-2 a successful program. Some of the far-reaching consequences include:

- Lessening the sense of urgency time limits place on recipients, case worker and service providers.
- Lessening the effectiveness of other W-2 program policies.
- Failing to prepare participants for the 60-month TANF lifetime limit.
- Removing the motivation necessary for success.
- Creating a significant fiscal impact on W-2 agencies.

**Question:** How does the removal of the provision result in such a large increase in program costs?

**Response:** The cost of the program would increase due to the lack of incentive to leave the program quickly. In December, the average lengths of stay for CSJ and W-2 T participants was approximately four months (17% of 24-months) and five and one-half months (23% of 24-months), respectively. Just using CSJ participants as an example, if the 24-month time limit were removed and only the 60-month time limit remained, the average length of stay for a CSJ participant would be ten months (pre W-2 avg.) (17% of 60 months). This would result in a 150% increase in the ongoing caseload and at a cash benefit rate of \$673 per month, the annual cost for CSJs would increase over \$71 million. Although the increase for W-2 T benefits would not be as significant, it would still result in over a \$39 million increase. In total, the increase would be over \$111 million.

# INTERFAITH CONFERENCE OF GREATER MILWAUKEE

*Founded 1970*

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Milwaukee, WI 53202  
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American Baptist Churches of Wisc.  
The Rev. George Daniels,  
Executive Minister

Episcopal Church  
The Milwaukee Diocese  
The Rt. Rev. Roger J. White, Bishop

Ev. Lutheran Church in America  
Greater Milwaukee Synod  
The Rev. Peter Rogness, Bishop

Milwaukee Jewish Council for  
Community Relations &  
Milwaukee Jewish Federation  
Paula Simon, Executive Director

Wisconsin Council of Rabbis  
Rabbi Steve Adams, President

Presbyterian Church (USA)  
Presbytery of Milwaukee  
The Rev. Phillip C. Brown,  
Executive Presbyter

Religious Society of Friends  
The Milwaukee Meeting  
Judith Gottlieb, Clerk

Wisc. Gen. Baptist State Conv.  
The Rev. Louis E. Sibley III, President

Unitarian Universalist Churches  
The S.E. Wisconsin Association  
Janet Nortrom, Representative

Roman Catholic Church  
The Milwaukee Archdiocese  
The Most Rev. Rembert Weakland,  
Archbishop

United Church of Christ  
The S.E. Wisconsin Association  
The Rev. Tom Bentz  
Association Minister

United Methodist Church  
Metro North District  
The Rev. Dr. Velma Smith,  
District Superintendent

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Testimony of Marcus White, Associate Director  
February 10, 2000

Regarding SB 341

The Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee is the vehicle through which eleven faith groups collaborate in addressing social concerns. The eleven member judicatories, including Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, and Unitarian traditions, consist of approximately 500 congregations in the greater Milwaukee area.

On a daily basis we work closely with congregations and service providers. For the last four winters the Interfaith Conference, The Red Cross, and local congregations have worked together to provide "emergency overflow shelter" for homeless women and families who cannot access the existing shelters because they are full. Our work with families and other organizations that serve low-income families leads us to our view that the two-year time limit for Community Service Jobs and other W-2 placements should be altered as SB 341 suggests.

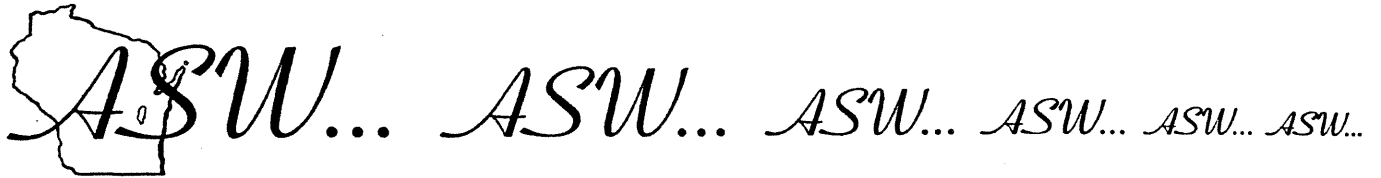
We understand that extensions can and have been given for people facing the two-year time limit. At the same time, we do not understand why 24 months was selected as the time limit nor why it is believed that 24 months is sufficient time for parents to address what are often serious and multiple barriers to sustained employment. It is our belief, a belief based on a long history of working directly with people in poverty, that many people need encouragement and time to get through the crisis they are facing. Again, we understand and appreciate that extensions have been widely used, but we will never know how many people were discouraged by an impending time limit and simply left W-2 before they were ready for sustainable employment. The fact that the state has the two-year limit in statute sets a tone that we believe discourages many people.

We believe that if W-2 participants are trying to succeed and want to continue with the program so that they can support their family while striving to attain a good job, then they should be allowed to continue with the program.

Thank you.

*"To uphold the dignity of every person and the solidarity of the human community"*





**PUBLIC HEARING SB 341  
February 10, 2000**

Senator Judy Robson and Members  
Senate Committee on Human Services and Aging:

We seek your support of Senate Bill 341 even though it does not directly affect most individuals with autism. We believe that most of the individuals who cannot comply with the requirements of W-2 often have some type of disability, often not easily diagnosed.

The requirements and resources of the W-2 program have helped some individuals to become more self-sufficient but for others the barriers and expectations are too high. The time has come to begin to "fine tune" the W-2 program and tailor the program to the needs of people who are more vulnerable because of less obvious disabilities (such as depression or learning disabilities).

The state has an obligation to help people to become self-supporting. However, society also has an obligation to show compassion to those who need some level of public support to maintain a decent existence.


We urge your support of SB 341. Thank you.

Framces Bicknell  
Legislative Chair  
Autism Society of Wisconsin



February 10, 2000

TO: Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services and Aging

FROM: James Strachota, Chairperson   
Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities

RE: Support for Senate Bill 341: Eliminating time limits for participation in the Wisconsin Works Employment Positions

The Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities (WCDD) strongly endorses legislation to end the current time limit for participation in any of the W-2 employment position categories. Since the inception of W-2, the WCDD has been concerned with two groups of W-2 participants:

1. Parents with a disabling condition that impedes their ability to obtain and hold employment but whose disability is not severe enough to be eligible to receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
2. Parents caring for a child who has a severe disability or special health care need that requires parental care in the home or prevents participation in a child care program.

Parents who have a disabling condition and are still W-2 participants often have significant barriers to long-term employment. The WCDD shares the goal of W-2 of helping people with disabilities to be in the workforce. But long-term solutions-jobs that enable people with disabilities to become self-sufficient-are rarely achievable within the short W-2 employment position timeline. A recent WCDD survey of all W-2 and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) agencies reinforced the need to eliminate the 24-month time limit. Many agencies cited the 24-month time limit as particularly problematic, and unrealistic. To achieve stable employment for people with significant barriers due to disability requires comprehensive assessment of the individual's skills as well as coordination and collaboration of the local W-2 and DVR agency. If the two agencies work together, there is a much greater likelihood of succeeding in long term stable employment. The two-year time limit places a barrier on the ability of the W-2 agency to develop a reasonable and achievable plan for an individual.

W-2 allows a parent caring for a child with a severe disability or a special health concern to have their W-2 Transition work placement include caring for their child at home. This protects children who would be adversely affected by childcare outside of the home and children for whom no adequate childcare placement is available. Caring for a child with a severe disability is a full time job-between doctor/therapy appointments, hospitalizations, basic daily maintenance. There is little time left for outside employment. Since there is no guarantee of who will receive an extension, the two-year time limit for W-2 T places an unnecessary burden and stress on a parent already struggling to care for a child with a permanent severe disability.

We urge you to support the elimination of the W-2 time limits on employment positions and thereby empower the W-2 agencies to determine the most appropriate placement for people with disabilities and for those caring for a child with a disability.



## WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

### **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 341 Repeal of Wisconsin Works Time Limit Presented by John Huebscher, Executive Director**

The Wisconsin Catholic Conference urges you to support Senate Bill 341. We believe this bill fosters the goal of keeping needy families connected to community efforts to assist them and provides a necessary addition to the "safety net" in the event of stagnating job opportunities or rising unemployment.

Our tradition of social teaching holds that there is a vital link between rights and responsibilities. In this context, the right to a job is grounded in our obligation to support our children and develop our potential.

Yet our tradition also holds that if the right is limited or can't be exercised, this mitigates the obligation. In the context of Wisconsin Works, the fact that a person is unable to work in a conventional job compels us to reassess their responsibility for doing so.

We have a work-based approach to public assistance. Consequently, those parents who reach the two-year time limit will be parents who have met the program work requirements and who have attempted to juggle the demands of raising children and holding a part time job. So extending the time limit does not mean they are absolved of the need to work. Rather it permits them to continue to work.

We remain concerned that the overly flexible use of the "job ready" category has artificially lowered the caseload. However, the dramatic decline in W-2 caseloads does suggest that those who remain in Community Service Jobs or trial jobs after two years are the people who find it most difficult to get and keep an "unsubsidized" job.

It is also important to assess this bill in the context of what is happening to the economy. The Federal Reserve Board's decision to raise interest rates was done with the deliberate intent of slowing the economic expansion to avoid inflation. Furthermore, the Fed's leadership is sending definite signals that more such moves are on the way. To cling to a policy of rigid time limits and apply those limits when we have good reason to believe that job opportunities may be more limited as a result of conscious decisions by those who guide the economy, in our opinion, is likely to place an unreasonable burden on needy families with children.

I also urge the Committee and the authors of the bill to examine the decision not to extend the time limits on individual job assignments. We believe that fostering work habits and skill development may be better served by longer placements in one location. We know that matching good managers and mentors with workers is one way to develop better employees. A

policy of forcing participants to change work assignments after relatively short periods may result in many lost opportunities.

We also assessed this aspect of the program in light of our study of W-2 families in the W-2 program. This study, *Raising Children in a World of Work Not Welfare* focused on single parents of pre-school children in Community Service Jobs and Transitional Placements. Our study found – among other things – that half of these women were depressed, that childcare arrangements were unstable for a significant number and that transportation was a major concern. All of these problems will be exacerbated by a need to alter their job arrangements every several months. It seems that such women are better served by being permitted to remain in one assignment for longer periods.

At the same time, we favor keeping the review with the option of reassigning the person if that seems desirable.

Overall, despite this last reservation, Senate Bill 341 merits support. It is consistent with the objective of keeping needy families connected to the world of work and the support of the community. It is also responsible and realistic in light of national economic trends and policies. Its passage is in the public interest.



MILWAUKEE COUNTY  
**HUMAN SERVICES**  
DEPARTMENT

Adult Services  
Financial Assistance

Mental Health Division  
Youth Services

235 West Galena St.

Milwaukee, WI 53212 414-289-6818

289-6688 TTY/TDD For Hearing Impaired

Ralph E. Hollmon  
Director

February 9, 2000

State Senator Gwendolynne Moore  
State Capitol - Room 409 South  
P O Box 7882  
Madison WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Moore:

Attached is Milwaukee County's written testimony in favor of Senate Bills 316 and 341.

I had planned to attend the hearings in Madison on February 10 to personally present this testimony, however, I will be unable to attend due to the fact that I will be attending the funeral of former Milwaukee County Supervisor Bernice Rose. Mr. Richard Buschmann, of my staff, will be present at the hearings in the event any questions are raised regarding our support of these two bills.

Sincerely,

Ralph E. Hollmon  
Director, DHS

REH:hmf

Attachments



MILWAUKEE COUNTY  
**HUMAN SERVICES**  
DEPARTMENT

Adult Services  
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235 West Galena St.

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Ralph E. Hollmon  
Director

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF 1999 SENATE BILL 341**  
**Before the Senate Committee on Human Services and Aging**  
**February 10, 2000**

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

I am Ralph Hollmon, Director of the Milwaukee County Department of Human Services. I regret that I am unable to attend today's hearing, but I am pleased to offer these comments supporting Senate Bill 341 regarding the elimination of the 24-month time limit for W-2 employment positions.

The Milwaukee County policy is expressed in the attached resolution passed by the County Board of Supervisors and agreed to by Milwaukee County Executive F. Thomas Ament.

Milwaukee County recognizes that W-2 has been successful within the context of a robust economy to assist the employment and self-sufficiency of those willing and able to work. Furthermore, time limits and sanctions have created a sense of urgency and accountability for those able but perhaps less willing to work. However, the small numbers of families remaining on W-2, engaged and making progress, seem to be more challenged and require more time to become employable. Unfortunately, the time limits for those families seems to add undue pressure to their genuine efforts to comply with program requirements.

**Testimony in Support of 1999 Senate Bill 341**  
Page 2

Given that the W-2 agencies have scrutinized their requests for extensions so well that the State has approved them all, it would seem appropriate to eliminate the two-year time limit and rely more on the federal five-year time limit. This would enable W-2 agencies to spend sufficient time to overcome barriers to employability and less time in bureaucratic paperwork and processing to meet State time limit requirements.

The Governor has always promoted adjustments to W-2 based upon actual experience in implementation. This seems to be one more reasonable accommodation to maintain W-2 as a national model for welfare reform.

Respectfully submitted,



Ralph E. Hollmon, Director  
Department of Human Services

REH:hmf

Attachment

1 By Supervisors Quindel, Coggs-Jones, Borkowski, and White

2 A RESOLUTION

3 authorizing and directing that the Director of Intergovernmental Relations  
4 convey Milwaukee County's position to the Governor and the Wisconsin State  
5 Legislature regarding the critical need to change existing State of Wisconsin  
6 regulations which automatically terminate W-2 payments if clients have not  
7 obtained permanent positions in the workforce within a two-year period of time

8

9 WHEREAS, since the State of Wisconsin approved W-2 work-rules in 1996,  
10 57,000 families have been removed from traditional welfare rolls; and

11 WHEREAS, almost 90 percent of families who were receiving welfare checks  
12 three years ago are no longer receiving checks at this time; and

13 WHEREAS, one of the requirements imposed by the revision of Wisconsin's  
14 welfare laws included the stipulation that virtually all persons on welfare would be  
15 required to join a work program, with two-year limits placed on participants in  
16 those work program jobs; and

17 WHEREAS, W-2 clients who have been placed in work programs are now  
18 reaching their two-year limits and are facing the possibility that they could lose their  
19 W-2 benefits because they have stayed in work programs beyond the two year  
20 statutory limit; and

21 WHEREAS, Federal law allows a person to remain in a work-program for a  
22 period of five years; and

23 WHEREAS, many people remaining in work programs/community service in  
24 excess of two years have been in substantial compliance and have maintained  
25 satisfactory attendance records; and

26 WHEREAS, some individuals are unable to obtain permanent positions  
27 because of low skills, educational deficits, health problems, alcohol and other drug  
28 abuse problems and child care or transportation problems; and

29 WHEREAS, in November 1999, of the total number of 7,389 persons  
30 statewide participating in the W-2 program and receiving payments, 6,000 of these  
31 individuals were Milwaukee County residents; and

32 WHEREAS, in November 1999, of the total number of 3,999 persons  
33 statewide participating in the W-2 program but not receiving payments, 3,127 were  
34 Milwaukee County residents; and



35 WHEREAS, the Federal Government requires that each state, in order to  
36 receive continuous TANF funding, collect demographic data for each household  
37 receiving cash benefits, including information relating to household size; and

38 WHEREAS, removal of W-2 recipients from work programs and community  
39 service will have a considerable impact on the economic health and viability of  
40 families struggling to remain in compliance with the program; and

41 WHEREAS, children of W-2 clients dropped from the W-2 program could be  
42 placed under undue stress, as families face possible eviction and homelessness and  
43 children face the possibility of being placed on child welfare; and

44 WHEREAS, sometimes, work-program participants need additional time to  
45 locate and obtain private sector jobs, a goal compatible with the public's desire that  
46 W-2 clients compete in the marketplace for steady and gainful employment; and

47 WHEREAS, automatically removing a W-2 client who has been unable to  
48 obtain permanent employment within a two year period, unless the client has  
49 obtained a six-month exemption from the State of Wisconsin Department of  
50 Workforce Development, will have a severe economic impact not only for W-2  
51 families but also for Milwaukee County government; and

52 WHEREAS, as a result, no fiscal savings can or will result for the State of  
53 Wisconsin or Milwaukee County if substantially compliant workers are removed  
54 from work-programs and are forced to become unemployed because of an arbitrary  
55 two-year cut-off date for W-2 participation; and

56 WHEREAS, County Executive F. Thomas Ament, in his remarks to the  
57 Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors on September 30, 1999, called on the State  
58 of Wisconsin to make the W-2 Program more flexible, by providing extensions of  
59 time limits for participants who are making good faith efforts to join the workforce;  
60 and

61 WHEREAS, at its November 15, 1999 meeting, the Milwaukee County W-2  
62 Monitoring Task Force voted unanimously in support of this resolution; now,  
63 therefore,

64 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors hereby  
65 authorizes and directs that the Director of Intergovernmental Relations convey to  
66 the Governor and the Wisconsin State Legislature the critical need to reconsider and  
67 revisit existing State of Wisconsin regulations requiring that payments to a W-2  
68 client cease if that client has been unable to obtain, within a two-year period, a  
69 permanent position in the workforce; and

70 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the State of Wisconsin also consider the  
71 development of accountability standards in order to facilitate measurements of case  
72 outcomes; and

73 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Director of Intergovernmental Relations  
74 is hereby authorized and directed to convey to the State Legislature the need for  
75 specific policy guidelines, including the development of an additional step  
76 providing for an automatic review process if a client faces termination from the W-2  
77 Program solely because of time constraints; and

78 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the County Clerk is hereby authorized and  
79 requested to send certified copies of this resolution to the Secretary of the United  
80 States' Department of Health and Human Services and to Wisconsin's Congressional  
81 representatives in the United States House of Representatives and the United States  
82 Senate.

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86 FISCAL NOTE: Approval of this resolution will require an expenditure of staff  
87 time.

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98 J/L/QuinBorkW-2twoyrlimits.doc November 29, 1999

3  
4 (ITEM 2) Resolution by Supervisors Quindel, Coggs-Jones, Borkowski and others,  
5 authorizing and directing that the Director of Intergovernmental Relations convey  
6 Milwaukee County's position to the Governor and the Wisconsin State Legislature  
7 regarding the critical need to change existing State of Wisconsin regulations which  
8 automatically terminate W-2 payments if clients have not obtained permanent  
9 positions in the workforce within a two-year period of time, by recommending  
10 adoption of the following:

11 **AN AMENDED RESOLUTION**

12 WHEREAS, since the State of Wisconsin approved W-2 work-rules in 1996,  
13 57,000 families have been removed from traditional welfare rolls; and

14 WHEREAS, almost 90 percent of families who were receiving welfare checks  
15 three years ago are no longer receiving checks at this time; and

16 WHEREAS, one of the requirements imposed by the revision of Wisconsin's  
17 welfare laws included the stipulation that virtually all persons on welfare would be  
18 required to join a work program, with two-year limits placed on participants in  
19 those work program jobs; and

20 WHEREAS, W-2 clients who have been placed in work programs are now  
21 reaching their two-year limits and are facing the possibility that they could lose their  
22 W-2 benefits because they have stayed in work programs beyond the two year  
23 statutory limit; and

24 WHEREAS, Federal law allows a person to remain in a work-program for a  
25 period of five years; and

26 WHEREAS, many people remaining in work programs/community service in  
27 excess of two years have been in substantial compliance and have maintained  
28 satisfactory attendance records; and

29 WHEREAS, some individuals are unable to obtain permanent positions  
30 because of low skills, educational deficits, health problems, alcohol and other drug  
31 abuse problems and child care or transportation problems; and

32 WHEREAS, in November 1999, of the total number of 7,389 persons  
33 statewide participating in the W-2 program and receiving payments, 6,000 of these  
34 individuals were Milwaukee County residents; and

71 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors hereby  
72 authorizes and directs that the Director of Intergovernmental Relations convey to  
73 the Governor and the Wisconsin State Legislature the critical need to reconsider and  
74 revisit existing State of Wisconsin regulations requiring that payments to W-2 clients  
75 with special needs who are otherwise in general compliance with W-2 requirements  
76 - such as clients with large families; clients with children who have special needs;  
77 clients with families that require special crisis support; clients who require alcohol  
78 and other drug abuse treatment for work readiness; clients who are illiterate; clients  
79 who need extended job training and education; clients who are students and are not  
80 able to make their co-payments; clients that have pending applications for SSI; and  
81 clients with other substantive barriers to private employment - cease if these clients  
82 have been unable to obtain, within a two-year period, a permanent position in the  
83 workforce; and

84 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the State of Wisconsin also consider the  
85 development of accountability standards in order to facilitate measurements of case  
86 outcomes; and

87 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Director of Intergovernmental Relations  
88 is hereby authorized and directed to convey to the State Legislature the need for  
89 specific policy guidelines, created legislatively or administratively, for the  
90 development of an additional step providing for an automatic review process, if a  
91 client faces termination from the W-2 Program solely because of time constraints;  
92 and

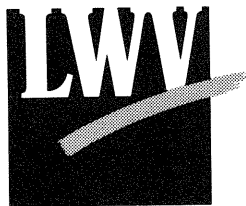
93 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the County Clerk is hereby authorized and  
94 requested to send certified copies of this resolution to the Secretary of the United  
95 States' Department of Health and Human Services and to Wisconsin's Congressional  
96 representatives in the United States House of Representatives and the United States  
97 Senate.

98 **FISCAL NOTE:** Approval of this resolution will require an expenditure of staff  
99 time.

100

101 EC:ssd

102 December 13, 1999



# The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin, Inc.

122 State Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53703-2500  
608/256-0827 FX: 608/256-2853 EM: [genfund@lwvwi.org](mailto:genfund@lwvwi.org) URL: <http://www.lwvwi.org>

## Statement to the Senate Committee on Human Services and Aging in Support of SB 341

February 10, 2000

The League of Women Voters has long supported efforts to help needy Wisconsin residents to become self-sufficient. Although we supported the general philosophy behind the W-2 program, we objected to many of the provisions which we believe would prevent it from working to achieve its goals. The two year time limit is one of those provisions.

The two year time limit is a one-size- fits-all approach which does not fit with the very diverse nature of our population of citizens needing assistance. The barriers to employment can be so high, the quality of the services provided and the access to them can be so variable that it is impossible for all participants to be truly job-ready within 24 months. It is true that the Department of Workforce Development can grant extensions to the limit on a case by case basis. However, if agencies fail to make good assessments of client needs, or if they fail to provide services, or if the services are inadequate, clients may be pushed into the job-ready category before the barriers to their employability are really removed. DWD never gets a request for extension for them.

As the first two years of the program come to an end, it is becoming obvious that more extensions will be necessary and that some clients will be off the program without any safety net. It makes sense to recognize that the two-year time limit should be eliminated. to allow all W-2 workers to become successful employees.

We urge the committee to recommend passage of SB 341.

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LWVWI Legislative Committee Contact: Sally Phelps

TO: Members of the Committee on Human Services and Aging

FROM: Jean Verber and Anne Hazelwood, Coordinators  
Milwaukee Women and Poverty Program

RE: SB 341 - relating to time limits for W-2 participants

We thank you for this opportunity to speak in support of SB 341.

As members of the W-2 Monitoring Task Force, a subcommittee of the Milwaukee County Board Health and Human Needs Committee, we endorsed the County Board's Resolution (copy enclosed) urging a change in the time limits policy for persons participating in good faith in the W-2 program.

We also come as representatives of the many women wishing to be heard on this issue today but must be engaged in activities which prevent them from attending.

We summarize here a number of reasons that support the extension of or better the elimination of time limits for persons participating in the W-2 community service/transition programs.

1. If a person is fulfilling the requirements of the program and attempting to cooperate with these requirements, she should not be penalized but rather assisted to overcome barriers to readiness for employment.
2. There is nowhere to go in the present ladder arrangement after completing community service; trial jobs aren't available.
3. People on W-2 have been reported to be persons with multiple barriers. More time should be provided to properly assess and refer people to appropriate treatment, education, or experience that may be required to address one's barriers.
4. W-2 agencies indicated that they needed 'start up' time to get organized, train, and get rid of 'the bugs'. How can we say that these have been two full years of participation and assistance? Should not the participants have more time to recognize this start up time also? We think so.
5. With the job market in the city of Milwaukee, there are not sufficient local entry level jobs that are full time and pay 'self sufficiency' wages. This accounts for some participants needing to remain on assistance until meaningful employment is found. (See ETI report).
6. Without the education and training component in W-2, expectations of successful employment poses an additional reason for removal of time limits so reasonable readiness can be assured.
7. While a direct cause and effect cannot be documented, the high eviction rate, if not already, will be exacerbated by cutting people off at the two year limit. There is no safety net. The shelters are full now. Where will these families go!

We are learning more and more about the dynamics of how W-2 is administered, the barriers that are faced by poor women, the limitations of the labor market in the city of Milwaukee, and the overstretched food and shelter programs. We do not need to contribute to the human suffering already a visible part of poor people's lives by maintaining time limits that do nothing positive for anyone involved. As a government and a people, we have a moral responsibility to assist the poor especially those participating in good faith to meet their needs.

We, therefore, urge support of SB 314, especially in light of the federal five year limit to allow sufficient time for those striving to prepare for and attain meaningful employment.

Thank you.

February 10, 2000



"For these are all our children . . .  
we will all profit by, or pay for,  
whatever they become." James Baldwin

## SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND AGING

Testimony on the Removal of W-2 Two-Year Time Limits  
Jill Groblewski, Community Mobilization Coordinator  
Wisconsin Council on Children and Families  
February 10, 2000

As is readily acknowledged, caseloads under W-2 have declined drastically, leaving only the "hardest to serve" population receiving services. The vast majority of families remaining in W-2 are contending with a combination of severe barriers that prevent them from entering the workforce. Those familiar with W-2 have frequently heard the list of barriers:

- Mental illness (both diagnosed and undiagnosed)
- Alcohol and other drug abuse
- Homelessness
- Physical disabilities (either of the parents or their children who oftentimes require at-home care)
- Severe educational deficiencies (such as 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading levels)
- Little or no work experience
- Domestic violence
- Cultural and language barriers

I come to WCCF as a former W-2 caseworker (FEP) in Dane County. More than anything else, I urge the Committee to try to imagine and truly understand the circumstances of W-2 participants. For example, how can someone with a 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading level obtain enough education and training in two years in a Community Service Job placement to be able to find a sustainable unsubsidized job? They will not have the opportunity to move into a Trial Job because they essentially do not exist.

I have an intimate knowledge of the struggles W-2 families are facing and the dearth of available community resources. Take homelessness as an example. In Dane County, W-2 eligible families had the option to apply for rent assistance through three programs other than Emergency Assistance: Job Access Loans, Eviction Prevention (funded with community reinvestment dollars), and a grant through the Tenant Resource Center. Two of the three programs ran out of money well before the need was met.

RESEARCH • EDUCATION • ADVOCACY



Considering the complexity of problems most W-2 families are currently facing and the lack of necessary supports, it is unreasonable to expect those remaining to be able to move into employment – either subsidized or unsubsidized – within the span of two years.

As a FEP I had a case in which the true barriers were first coming to light as her two years in a W-2 Transition position were about to expire. Before I took her case, she had applied for SSI on the grounds of physical disabilities and had been enrolled in W-2 for a year. Although I suspected she had mental health issues, I did not have the training to diagnose her and for a long time she was resistant to completing a mental health assessment. She was an extremely intelligent woman who was pained by the suspicion that she may have a mental health disorder. When I left the County, her final appeal for SSI had been denied and she had to begin the application process over – this time including documentation regarding her mental health status. She was not granted a W2T extension due to noncompliance.

Certainly W-2 policy takes into account that some families will not be able to advance to the next rung of the ladder in two years. The ability to request an extension was included in the original policy. It was assumed that extensions would be a rarity, but with the drastic decline in caseloads combined with the concentration of severe barriers, extensions are becoming the rule rather than the exception. Moreover, WCCF has heard from County W-2 agencies that the procedure to request an extension is extremely burdensome. (Please see attached Operations Memo for a description of the process.) Extension requests are consuming precious time that caseworkers need to be working directly with their clients. In other cases WCCF has heard that workers are reluctant to request extensions for fear that the Department may point out support services that have been overlooked. The Department has indicated that “issues identified in any case review may be potential future contract issues, . . .” (Operations Memo at page 2)

Lastly, it is necessary to comment on the Department’s fiscal estimate regarding the removal of two-year time limits. There is neither a statistical basis nor any reasonable logic to assume that a “participant would have an average length of stay equal to 17% of the time limit, regardless of the time limit’s length.” According to this line of thinking I could be given an exam, told I had 5 minutes to complete it, and finish it in three. By the Department’s reasoning, if the same exam were given again and I was told I had ten minutes, it would take me six. The Department should not declare an inability to absorb additional program costs that have been calculated according to an illogical assumption.

It was my experience that most FEPs were trying to move clients beyond W-2 as quickly as possible, and most clients were trying to get off W-2 as quickly as possible as well. Removing the two-year time limits will not change this. W-2 is a program that only those who have nowhere else to turn are willing to subject

themselves to. The Department poses the argument that people were more likely to have left W-2 within two years because of the time limit. This is certainly true in some cases, but have these families' issues been thoroughly addressed? Are they still receiving needed services? Are they self-sufficient? Have they moved out of poverty? The two-year time limit acts as a barrier to self-sufficiency by directing people to focus on obtaining any job as quickly as possible rather than addressing complex problems with a long-term approach.

The State needs to recognize that the complexity of the current W-2 caseload makes a two-year time limit unreasonable and that extension requests have not proven to be an adequate solution. Eliminating the two-year time limit will not decrease the sense of urgency to leave W-2. It will help provide opportunity to truly focus on becoming self-sufficient.

We must acknowledge that people who have reached their two-year limit have somehow been failed by the system: either they have not received necessary services or they have problems that require more time to fully address.



WISCONSIN

DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
Division of Economic Support  
Bureau of Welfare Initiatives

TO: Economic Support Supervisors  
Economic Support Lead Workers  
Training Staff  
FSET Administrative & Provider Agencies  
Child Care Coordinators  
W-2 Agencies

FROM: Stephen M. Dow  
Program Implementation Team  
Policy Analysis & Program Implementation Section

**BWSP OPERATIONS MEMO**

No.: 99-89

File: 2411

Date: 11/22/99

Non W-2  W-2  CC

PRIORITY: Medium

SUBJECT: **W-2 24-MONTH EXTENSIONS**

**CROSS REFERENCE:** W-2 Manual  
BWSP Operations Memo 99-49

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Immediately.

**PURPOSE**

This memo provides W-2 agencies with:

1. Background on why the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) needs specific information when processing extensions.
2. A 24-Month Extension Request checklist that provides W-2 agencies with additional guidance in preparing extensions.
3. An explanation regarding DWD's recommended action steps resulting from extension reviews.
4. Guidelines when transferring potential extension cases between W-2 agencies.
5. An updated form (DES 11283) for submitting subsequent extensions to DWD for review.

**BACKGROUND**

Upon the request of the W-2 Contract and Implementation Committee, a workgroup was convened to discuss a number of issues surrounding the 24-month extension process. The workgroup consisted of W-2 agency representatives, the Division of Economic Support (DES)

Division Administrator, DWD legal counsel and staff from DES's Bureau of Field Support and Bureau of Work Support Programs.

Based on the workgroup's discussions, it was determined that the following information should be shared with the W-2 agencies:

1. Information that will assist agencies in preparing extension requests. This includes background information that explains why DWD requests specific items for its extension review; an explanation on how DWD utilizes this information; and a checklist that will assist agencies in compiling initial and subsequent extension information.
2. An explanation regarding the implications of the recommended actions steps that are included in the letter to the W-2 agency notifying them of DWD's response to a W-2 agency's extension approval concurrence request.
3. Guidelines agencies should follow when transferring cases approaching their time limit.

## ***INFORMATION NEEDED TO PROCESS EXTENSION REVIEWS***

### ***Purpose of the Department's Internal Review Process***

As provided by in Wisconsin Stats., 49.147(3)(c), (4)(b)(2), and (5)(b)(2) the W-2 agency may, with concurrence of DWD, grant extensions to W-2 participants in all W-2 subsidized employment positions (Trial Job, Community Service Job and W-2 Transition) if they meet the statutory extension criteria specific to the employment position. As reiterated in Operations Memo 99-49, it is the W-2 agencies' responsibility to determine if a W-2 participant qualifies for an extension based on the statutory criteria. If the W-2 agency determines that an individual qualifies for an extension, they must submit the approval to DWD for concurrence. DWD then reviews the information to determine that, based upon the facts available, the granting of an extension is a reasonable conclusion by the W-2 agency.

The statutory requirement is not the sole reason DWD reviews all extension approvals. DWD has the responsibility to implement the policy established by the state legislature. Therefore, DWD must have firsthand knowledge of the types of cases that require extensions. Additionally, it is crucial that all available resources be identified to assist the hard-to-serve population approaching the time limit. This is particularly important in light of the approaching 60-month federal and state lifetime limit. Therefore, DWD's review allows DWD to review all extension approval cases and identify resources that the W-2 agency may or may not be aware of, but which may be available for these harder-to-serve cases. As a result, the W-2 agencies are provided with recommended case management steps that may assist participants who have reached this critical stage in their W-2 participation. (See "Recommended Action Steps").

While these case reviews are not a step in the contract compliance process, issues identified in any case review may be potential future contract issues, so DWD believes it is important to alert the responsible agency or agencies of DWD's assessment. Of course, an agency is only responsible for the case management for the period in which it had the case.

Because DWD's review serves more than one purpose, there are two types of information requested by DWD:

1. Information necessary to determine if the agency had sufficient facts and reasonable basis to arrive at its extension approval decision (D); and
2. Information necessary to understand the agency's case management plan (C).

Where appropriate, the 24-MONTH EXTENSION REQUEST CHECKLIST attached to this Memo contains either a D or a C next to specific items to let agencies know the reason for requested information.

### Need for Additional Information

DWD, through your local DES regional office, may have a need for additional case information to supplement an extension request. Circumstances under which DWD may request additional information are:

1. An incomplete extension record was provided. An incomplete extension record would be a record that did not contain one of the items asked for on the 24-Month W-2 Employment Position Extension Request form (DES 11282) or the 24-Month W-2 Employment Position Extension Review Request form (DES 11283) necessary for subsequent extensions, should they be requested.
2. Clarification is needed regarding how the W-2 agency reached its conclusion that a W-2 participant qualified for an extension based on the statutory criteria. Based on the information submitted in the extension, if it is not clear to DWD how the W-2 agency arrived at its approval decision or DWD does not immediately see how it could concur with the agency's decision, DWD may ask for additional clarifying information.

When DWD does not concur with a W-2 agency's extension approval, the W-2 agency may supplement the information and ask DWD to reconsider if the agency believes that DWD made a material error in its decision. If, again, DWD does not concur with the W-2 agency's decision, and in the future there is a substantial change in the case circumstances, the W-2 agency may then reapply for an extension.

### **24-MONTH EXTENSION REQUEST CHECKLIST**

The following has been developed to assist you in preparing extension forms.

- Are pages 1 and 2 of the request filled out?** All sections of the form must be filled out. If necessary, questions can be answered on additional paper and attached to the form.
- Do you have the correct Last Day of the Participant's 24th Month (or the last day of the current extension)?** On screen AIWC, locate the number of months of eligibility used in the UD column for the participant's current W-2 employment position. That number reflects the number of months of eligibility used as of the last business day of the previous month. In order to determine the last day of the 24th month, count forward (including the month you are in) until you reach 24 months. The individual's last day would be the last day of that month. (D)

**Example:** In the month of May, Worker A trans to AIWC. The participant is currently in a W-2T. The UD column next to W-2T indicates that the participant has used 18 months of eligibility in the W-2T placement as of the last business day of April. Therefore, the participant is currently in his/her 19th month of eligibility of a W-2T placement. In order to determine the last day of the participant's 24th month, the worker counts forward six months (18 months plus six months equals 24 months). October 31 would be the last day of the participant's 24 months of eligibility in a W-2T as long as s/he continuously participated.)

April 18	May 19	June 20	July 21	August 22	September 23	October 24
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- Have you attached a case summary?** A case summary is required for both initial and subsequent extension reviews. However, the information required in the case summary for the initial extension differs somewhat from the information required in subsequent extension. In both cases, however, the case summary is an opportunity for the FEP to submit his or her observations and insights regarding the case. Also, in both cases, the case summary must **not** be combined with the long-term agency plan and supporting facts. These items must be distinctly separate. (D)

#### Initial Request Case Summaries

Initial case summaries must contain: family demographics, brief history of participant's receipt of W-2, participant's education and work experience, participant's attitude toward work and W-2 and any additional information the W-2 agency believes is pertinent to the request.

#### Subsequent Request Case Summaries

Subsequent case summaries must contain: Any changes in family demographics; an explanation of the outcomes of the recommended action steps provided by DWD in its response to the previous extension request (in cases in which recommended action steps were not appropriate, explain why a particular action step was not appropriate); the participant's progress in the W-2 activities assigned during the current extension period; and any additional information the W-2 agency believes is pertinent to the subsequent request.

- Have you included a proposed Employability Plan (EP)?** The dates on the proposed EP must begin on the first day of the potential extension period and cover the entire extension period. The participant need not sign proposed EPs. You may also submit current EPs as well, though this is not a requirement. Current EPs should be signed. (C)
- Does your long-term plan clearly describe your agency's planned actions during the extension period?** (C)

- Do the facts you considered in your analysis of this case address the extension criteria?** Facts should directly support the specific employment position extension criteria. In all cases, at least one supporting fact must address nonparticipation. If the participant has been cooperative, a statement stating such is sufficient. If there is a history of nonparticipation, but the agency has determined that the individual qualifies for an extension, provide a brief statement as to why. Supporting facts must also address specific employment position criteria. For example, if a CSJ participant has made all appropriate efforts to find unsubsidized employment and has been unable to do so, identify why the local labor market precludes a reasonable unsubsidized employment opportunity for the participant. Or, if a W-2 T participant has significant barriers preventing advancement to a higher W-2 employment position, identify all existing barriers. (D)
- Have you included all required signatures (participant, FEP supervisor and W-2 Agency Chief Executive Officer)?**
- Have you included the documentation you used to reach your approval decision?** Your request must include any available documentation that supports an individual's barriers. For example, it is extremely helpful to include pertinent case comment screens or education level assessments.

The following lists are not all inclusive. Although the list suggests types of supporting documentation, the suggestions may not be appropriate for every case.

**Supporting documentation for W-2T extensions may include:**

- Medical diagnoses of specific physical barriers for the participant or other W-2 group member
- Medical capacity forms for the participant or other W-2 group member
- Psychological/Psychiatric evaluations for the participant or other W-2 group member
- SSI denial/appeal documentation for the participant or other W-2 group member
- SSI advocacy documentation for the participant or other W-2 group member
- Documentation supporting family crises

**Supporting documentation for CSJ extensions may include:**

- A written assessment by the CSJ site supervisor of participant's work habits, potential for unsubsidized employment, participation, etc.
- A written statement regarding the efforts made by job developers (or similar staff) to assist participants in finding unsubsidized employment and the reasons why these efforts were unsuccessful.

Upon receipt of your extension form, the Regional Office will review the information provided. If something is missing or clarification is needed, the Regional Office will contact the agency as soon as possible and request the additional information.

The timeframe that the Division has to review the agency's extension decision does not begin until:

1. A completed request is received in the regional office; or,
2. The due date of the request (due date is 3 months prior to the last day of the participant's 24th month), whichever is later.

DES has 1 month to review initial extension information and 15 days to review subsequent extension information.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS**

### Purpose of Recommended Action Steps

As stated earlier, it is crucial that all available resources be identified to assist the hard-to-serve population approaching their time limits. This is particularly important in light of the approaching 60-month federal and state lifetime limit. Therefore, the DWD's review of cases for which W-2 agencies have approved extensions allows DWD to identify additional, sometimes unique and innovative case management strategies being used around the state that are not indicated as being considered in the extension submission. We share these additional case management ideas with other W-2 agencies through recommended action steps as appropriate.

Additionally, DWD has links to other divisions within its agency, e.g. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and other state agencies. If a W-2 agency is experiencing difficulty or inconsistencies in obtaining services from other service providers, DWD may be able to assist.

The recommended case management steps are made based on information provided in the extension request. For example, if something in the record suggests that the participant is having trouble attending certain appointments or activities, a recommendation may be made to accompany the person to future appointments or ensure transportation is available for appointments. In order to communicate the intent behind the DWD's recommended future action steps, these will be tied to the item in the record that prompted a particular suggestion. For example, if the record indicated that a person expressed interest in a particular type of employment or activity, a recommendation may be made that based on the participants interest in "x" employment, assist the participant in contacting employers in "x" field to discuss ways to prepare for employment.

Under most circumstances, recommended action steps are targeted toward the participant; however, some steps may be suggested for other individuals in the W-2 group.

### Requirement to Implement Recommended Action Steps

If a recommended action step is deemed inappropriate by the W-2 agency, the agency is not required to implement the recommendation. It is expected, however, that the agency will implement more appropriate alternatives to the state's suggestion. Therefore, in subsequent extension materials, agencies will be asked to explain how they addressed the barriers presented by a case including consideration of the recommended action steps contained in the previous extension letter and/or locally developed alternatives.

## **TRANSFERS**

Communication and flexibility between W-2 agencies are key aspects to any case transfer under W-2. The current W-2 transfer policy states that when a participant moves to another county, and is able to continue in current activities, the W-2 agency from which the participant is transferring must determine when to terminate the employment position and must do so



according to the needs of the participant, the agency, and the W-2 employer/work training provider. Just as a transfer may need to be delayed due to the convenience or appropriateness of ending a W-2 employment position, a transfer may also need to be delayed due to the fact that a case is approaching its time limit or is already in an extension period.

Therefore, the need to communicate and be flexible becomes even more important when a case approaching its time limit is transferred between agencies. Under AFDC, where time limits were not an issue, a new relationship was typically begun with the participant by the receiving agency and, for the most part, all the information the agency needed was in CARES. If particular assessment information was not available in CARES, an agency would take steps to gather that information for the participant, which most times meant starting from square one by setting up new assessment appointments.

Now, in light of time limited benefits, a FEP's priority for cases received through a transfer must be to obtain information that is already available. This means accessing CARES, asking the participant for any documentation and contacting the transferring agency for additional case file information. By collecting information already available, it allows the receiving W-2 agency to provide seamless service to the participant rather than asking him or her to start over with assessments. Also, particularly for participants approaching their time limit, it saves valuable time on both the 24-month and 60-month clocks.

W-2 agencies should develop internal policies regarding how to contact other W-2 agencies for case information. In order to assist with the development of internal policies, we have identified a number of ways in which information regarding the transferring agency can be identified in CARES:

**1. To identify the transferring W-2 agency.**

The Office Transfer screen (ACCT) contains a history of the county and office numbers between which a particular case has been transferred. In order to identify which county and office the participant was transferred from most recently, TRAN to ACCT with the case number and a forward slash with a future date in the PARM field. For example TRAN to ACCT with 1234123412/010100 in the PARM field. Using the PF8 key, find the county and office number from which the case was transferred.

**2. To identify the FEP in the transferring agency who most recently provided case management services to the participant.**

The Wisconsin Works Information screen (ACWI) contains the FEP ID. As above, TRAN to ACWI with the case number and a forward slash with a future date in the PARM field. TRAN: ACWI PARM: 1234123412/010100. Using the PF8 key, find the FEP ID of the most recent W-2 placement.

Once the FEP ID has been identified, TRAN to SMUM with the FEP ID in the PARM field to locate the FEP's name and telephone number.

**3. To identify the transfer coordinator from the transferring agency.**

CARES contains a transfer coordinator table that identifies all transfer coordinators. In order to identify the transfer coordinator from the transferring agency, TRAN to RTDT with TOCD in the PARM. Once you have identified the appropriate transfer coordinator, TRAN

to SMUM with the Office Transfer Coordinator ID in the PARM to locate his or her phone number.

**NOTE:** This list does not contain the Milwaukee W-2 Agency Transfer Coordinators. The most current list of Milwaukee Transfer Coordinators can be obtained by calling Delores Parr at the Milwaukee Private Industry Council at 414-270-1742.

When developing internal transfer policies or when transferring a case between W-2 agencies, the following guidelines should be considered. If there are local agency agreements currently in place that conflict with the guidelines established below, contact your supervisor or program manager for further direction.

1. Prospective case management is the responsibility of the receiving agency.
2. An original case hard file stays where it was created. This means that an agency would not have to transfer its case hard file. Rather, upon request by the receiving agency, the transferring agency would copy and send the requested, appropriate information.
3. In 18+ month cases, the transferring and the receiving agencies must cooperate to accommodate the time and information requirements for extension reviews. On a case-by-case basis, the state will apply maximum flexibility to expedite the review process.
4. For those cases that transfer after an extension request has been sent to DWD for review, the transferring agency continues to be responsible for the case request which includes obtaining any additional information necessary for DWD to complete its review. Cooperation by the receiving agency would also be expected if appropriate.
5. An extension is granted to a participant, not an agency. Therefore, if a participant transfers to another W-2 agency, the extension transfers with him or her.
6. For those cases that transfer during an extension period, the receiving agency may reassess the participant's situation and determine that a change in case plan is necessary or they may make a determination that makes the extension no longer necessary, e.g. movement to another W-2 placement. However, the agency cannot deny an extension that has already been granted.

If a W-2 agency has difficulty obtaining case information from another W-2 agency, the requesting agency should contact the local DES Regional Office to help expedite the exchange of information.

### ***SUBSEQUENT EXTENSION REVIEWS***

Effective immediately, please use the attached 24-Month W-2 Employment Position Extension Review Request (DES 11283) when submitting subsequent extensions to DWD.

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
 Division of Economic Support

**24-MONTH W-2 EMPLOYMENT POSITION EXTENSION REVIEW REQUEST**

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	
<b>PART I - Participant Data</b>			
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
7. Extension Requested for (Check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> one) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5    OR <input type="checkbox"/> 6 months			
<b>PART II - Extension Summary</b>			
8. Provide a one-page summary that includes information regarding the participant's progress during the current extension period. At a minimum the summary must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An explanation of the outcomes of the recommended actions steps provided by the Department in its response <i>letter</i> to the <i>previous</i> extension request (in cases where the recommended action step was not appropriate, please explain why the particular action step was not appropriate);</li> <li>• The participant's progress in the W-2 activities assigned during the extension period; and</li> <li>• Any additional information the W-2 agency believes is pertinent to the subsequent request.</li> </ul>			
<b>PART III - Proposed Plan</b>			
9. 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.			
10. Attach documentation that describes the W-2 agency's long-term plan for moving the participant to self-sufficiency. Include in the long-term plan specific actions the agency will be taking to assist the W-2 participant during the subsequent extension period.			
11. Attach documentation that identifies the facts that support approving an extension for this participant. Facts should directly support the extension criteria specific to the W-2 employment position. See W-2 Manual, Section 2.3.2.1 for extension criteria. (The criteria for initial and subsequent extensions are the same.)			
12. Participant's Signature		13. Date Signed	
14. Authorized Signature		15. Title <b>FEP Supervisor</b>	16. Date Signed
17. Authorized Signature		18. Title <b>W-2 Agency Chief Executive Officer</b>	19. Date Signed
<b>Part IV: Review Resolution (To be completed by the Department of Workforce Development(DWD))</b>			
20. <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Denied		21. Subsequent Extension Approved Until (Date):	
22. Comments:			
23. DWD Authorized Signature		24. Title	25. Date Signed

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