

Chapter HFS 254

IM WORKER TRAINING

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Note: Chapter DWD 23 was renumbered Chapter HFS 254 under s. 13.93 (2m) (b) 1., Stats., and corrections were made under s. 13.93 (2m) (b) 6. and 7., Stats., Register March 2004 No. 579.

HFS 254.01 Introduction. (1) **AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE.** This chapter is promulgated under authority set forth in s. 49.78 (3), Stats., to ensure that each income maintenance worker employed by a county or tribal agency has successfully completed a training program to achieve acceptable IM worker job performance. Successful completion of prescribed training is required for all new IM workers. The department shall make ongoing training available for experienced IM workers.

(2) **APPLICABILITY.** This chapter applies to county and tribal income maintenance agencies and the income maintenance workers employed by those agencies.

History: CR 02-050: cr. Register January 2003 No. 565, eff. 2-1-03.

HFS 254.02 Definitions. In this chapter:

(1) "Automated system" means a computer-supported process used by the department and the department of workforce development, including CARES.

(2) "CARES" means the department of workforce development's automated client assistance for re-employment and economic support.

Note: CARES is the automated system used by DWD and DHFS to determine eligibility, calculate benefits, and retain data for income maintenance programs and W-2.

(3) "Case management" means the family-centered and goal-oriented process for assessing the needs of an IM group member and his or her family for employment, training, and supportive services and assisting the IM group member in obtaining services to achieve self-sufficiency.

(4) "County agency" means the agency established under s. 46.215, 46.22, or 46.23, Stats.

(5) "Department" means the Wisconsin department of health and family services.

(6) "Eligibility determination" means the act or process by which the situation of a person or a group is compared to a set of standards to determine whether the person or group meets the criteria for receiving a specific type of income maintenance.

(7) "Experienced IM worker" means an IM worker employed by a county, tribal or W-2 agency before December 1, 1999, or an IM worker who has completed initial income maintenance training.

(8) "IM handbooks, manuals, and instructional materials" means income maintenance handbooks, manuals, and memos that are issued by the department of health and family services and addressed to county and tribal agencies and set forth eligibility and benefit criteria and case maintenance and case processing information.

(9) "Income maintenance" or "IM" has the same meaning as "income maintenance program" in s. 49.78 (1) (b), Stats.

Note: Section 49.78 (1) (b) provides that "'income maintenance program' means the medical assistance program under subch. IV of ch. 49, the badger care health care program under s. 49.665, the food stamp program under 7 USC 2011 to 2036 or the cemetery, funeral and burial expense program under s. 49.778."

(10) "Income maintenance worker" or "IM worker" means a person employed by a county, a governing body of a federally

recognized American Indian whose duties include determinations or redeterminations of income maintenance program eligibility.

(11) "New IM worker" means a person who is employed by a county or tribal agency as an IM worker on or after December 1, 1999, including a permanent employee who transfers into an IM worker position and who has not completed initial income maintenance training.

(12) "Tribal agency" means an agency designated by the elected tribal governing body of a federally-recognized Wisconsin Indian tribe or band and contracted by the department or the department of health and family services to administer an income maintenance program.

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HFS 254.03 Initial income maintenance training.

(1) The department shall make initial IM worker training available to new IM workers directly or through contractors. The county or tribal shall ensure that each new IM worker completes the department's initial training during the first 6 months of employment.

(2) The new IM worker may not make independent decisions related to eligibility for income maintenance programs or perform case management functions until the initial income maintenance training is successfully completed. Successful completion requires attendance for all class hours and involvement and participation in all instructional activities. The county or tribal agency shall develop evaluation strategies to ensure that the new IM worker achieves a minimum standard of competence.

(3) The department shall develop a standardized curriculum for training new IM workers. The approved curriculum shall include courses, independent study, and closely supervised practical experience that total at least 100 hours and shall ensure that learning objectives support an acceptable standard of competency at completion. The curriculum may vary depending on job function and may include program philosophy, policy and procedure, eligibility determination, case management, interpersonal skills, and automated systems.

(4) A county or tribal agency may develop its own training to implement the HFS standardized curriculum under sub. (3), with approval by the department. A county or tribal agency that chooses not to participate in the initial training for new IM workers offered by the department or its contractors shall submit a training implementation plan to the department for approval at least 45 days before the planned start date of training. Training plans shall be submitted to the department on an annual basis. The plan shall:

(a) Specify the number of hours of classroom training, independent study, planned exercises, and activities.

(b) State how IM handbooks, manuals, and instructional materials will be used.

(c) Explain how training will address the interpersonal and case management skills needed to perform the IM function.

(d) Specify the number of hours of supervised practical experience, including the use of automated systems, IM program policy and procedure application, and case management techniques.

(e) Indicate the length of the training program.

- (f) Describe how learning will be evaluated.
- (g) Include the name, address, position title, and qualifications of each trainer.

Note: Send the proposed IM training implementation plan to: DHFS IM Training Coordinator, 1 W. Wilson Street, Room 1050, Madison, WI 53702.

History: CR 02-050: cr. Register January 2003 No. 565, eff. 2-1-03.

HFS 254.04 Ongoing training for experienced IM workers. (1) The department shall develop an ongoing course or courses for experienced IM workers and shall make the course or courses available each year directly or through contractors. The department shall annually define required training courses and develop a standardized curriculum for each job function as needed. The curriculum shall include the following:

- (a) Policy and procedure in IM handbooks, manuals, and instructional materials.
- (b) Automated systems used in IM programs.
- (c) Interpersonal skills needed to perform IM functions.
- (d) Enhanced case management information and skills, including:

1. Programmatic techniques that provide intermediate or advanced training in skills that ensure accuracy in program delivery.

2. Special needs of the IM recipient or a family member, including substance abuse, domestic abuse, and physical or mental disabilities.

3. Community resources and supportive services available to assist IM participants.

(2) A county or tribal agency may develop its own training to implement the DWD standardized curriculum under sub. (1), with approval by the department. A county or tribal agency that chooses not to participate in training offered by the department or its contractors shall submit a training implementation plan to the department for approval at least 45 days before the planned start date of training. Training plans shall be submitted to the department on an annual basis. The plan shall:

- (a) Specify the number of hours of classroom training, independent study, planned exercises, and activities.
- (b) Indicate the length of the training program.
- (c) Describe how learning will be evaluated.
- (d) Include the name, address, position title, and qualifications of each trainer.

Note: Send the proposed IM training implementation plan to: DHFS IM Training Coordinator, 1 W. Wilson Street, Room 1050, Madison, WI 53702.

History: CR 02-050: cr. Register January 2003 No. 565, eff. 2-1-03.

HFS 254.05 Trainer qualifications. The department shall ensure that the person doing the training has:

(1) Knowledge of the programs and procedures in which the person will conduct training as evidenced by prior experience or education.

(2) Experience or education in training techniques or adult education.

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HFS 254.06 Local responsibility for implementing updates. Each county or tribal agency shall ensure that new and experienced IM workers are trained in a timely manner on all IM policy and procedure and automated system updates that are issued by the department or the department of health and family services.

Note: These updates include Handbook and Manual releases, Administrator's Memos, and Operations Memos.

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HFS 254.07 Reports and records. (1) **ANNUAL REPORT OF ALL IM WORKER TRAINING.** Each county or tribal agency shall submit to the department by February 1 of each calendar year a report that documents training completed by all new and experienced IM workers during the previous calendar year.

(2) **REPORT OF INITIAL IM WORKER TRAINING.** Each county or tribal agency shall submit to the department by the first day of each month a list of IM workers who are required to complete initial IM worker training.

(3) **PERSONNEL FILE.** Each county or tribal agency shall include in the personnel file of all new and experienced IM workers information needed to document successful completion of training, including the title of the training program, dates of training, trainer's or sponsoring organization's name, number of hours of training, and location of training. The county or tribal agency shall make the training records available to the department upon request.

Note: Send the monthly list of IM workers who are required to complete initial IM worker training and the annual report on training to: DHFS IM Training Coordinator, 1 W. Wilson Street, Room 1050, Madison, WI 53702.

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