

# COVID-19 WI PUBLIC BENEFITS UPDATES

DCF's Bureau of Working Families has made some policy changes to try to help families impacted by COVID-19 be able to more easily access benefits like W-2 cash assistance and Emergency Assistance. Information about all the policy changes can be found [here](#).

## W-2 & RELATED PROGRAMS

(CASH ASSISTANCE FOR LOW-INCOME FAMILIES)

### HIGHLIGHTS

#### VERIFICATIONS

- reminder to Financial and Employment Planners (FEPs) that they have significant flexibility to accommodate applicants who have challenges obtaining verifications likely to be experienced during the public health emergency
- reminder that 7 working day verification deadline can be extended to 30 days for extenuating circumstances

#### SUSPENSION OF IN-PERSON SIGNATURE & MEETING REQUIREMENTS

W-2 agencies may conduct all appointments, typically held in-person, by telephone as necessary to reduce risk of COVID-19 exposure.

#### STATE 60-MONTH TIME LIMIT EXTENSION CRITERIA

Families are typically only allowed 60 months of W-2 benefits in their lifetime. In making extension approval vs. denial decisions, W-2 agencies are encouraged to review and interpret time limit extension requests favorably for the applicant or participant due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on low-income parents and their families.

#### THREE-MONTH EXTENSION FOR ELIGIBILITY REVIEWS

W-2 agencies are required to conduct a W-2 eligibility review at least every six (6) months. The due dates for W-2 eligibility reviews originally scheduled for months March through August 2020 have been extended for a period of 3 months (i.e., eligibility reviews originally scheduled for March 2020 will now be held in June 2020).

#### NEW GOOD CAUSE REASON CODE

Individuals who are unable to participate in assigned activities due to the public health emergency must be provided Good Cause for non-participation.



## CASE CLOSURE FOR LOSS OF CONTACT

Under existing policy, FEPs are required to close a case for noncooperation if they have not been able to contact a participant for 30 days or more after repeated attempts. Due to COVID-19, FEPs may keep cases open even if they have been unable to contact the participant for 30 days or more.

## ADJUSTMENT OF SCHOOL ENROLLMENT & ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Individuals who were unable to participate in assigned school activities due to COVID must be provided Good Cause for nonparticipation.

## EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

(ONE-TIME PAYMENT THAT CAN HELP LOW-INCOME PARENTS PAY AN EMERGENCY HOUSING OR UTILITY-RELATED EXPENSE)

### HIGHLIGHTS

## SUSPENSION OF IN-PERSON SIGNATURE AND MEETING REQUIREMENTS

Due to COVID-19, W-2 agencies may conduct all appointments, typically held in-person, by telephone as necessary to reduce risk of COVID-19 exposure.

## SUSPENSION OF IN-PERSON SIGNATURE AND MEETING REQUIREMENTS

Due to COVID-19, when determining the combined total earned and unearned income of the EA Group to be at or below 115% of the FPL, workers may use either:

- The prior 30 days prior to and including the EA Application date; or
- Prospective budgeting using a best estimate of what income will be received in the next 30 days.

To apply for benefits like W-2 or Emergency Assistance, clients should contact their [local W-2 agency](#).

If you have clients who are being wrongfully denied or terminated from benefits or the above policy changes are not being enacted, please reach out to End Abuse. Clients may also contact the following organizations to ask for free representation in appealing the denial or termination of their benefits:

- [Legal Action of Wisconsin](#)
- [Judicare](#)
- [ADRC Benefits Specialists](#)



End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin: The Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence