

W-2 Basic Assumptions

PURPOSE: This memo introduces seven new basic assumptions about the W-2 program that are intended to guide agencies in their day to day work with participants.

POLICY: W-2 agencies must provide services that are strengths-based, family centered and consistent with parents' interests and goals. Agencies must also focus on ensuring that parents work cooperatively with agency staff to participate in assigned activities. This focus will identify and build on the strengths and skills of parents and families and ensure agency and parent accountability that result in successful outcomes for families. The following basic assumptions will guide W-2 agencies in the provision of high quality services to parents and their families:

- 1. Work is the best way for parents to support their families.**
Getting a job is the first step in the process of achieving economic stability. W-2 assists parents with preparing for, finding and maintaining consistent employment. W-2 also works with parents who are unable to work due to a disability by assisting these parents with navigating the Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance application process.
- 2. Family income should improve when parents work.**
W-2's goal is to have parents get the best possible job. W-2 also helps parents access work supports (e.g. Earned Income Tax Credit [EITC], FoodShare [FS], BadgerCare [BC], Child Support [CS] and Wisconsin Shares Child Care) that will support keeping them employed.
- 3. Consistent work is essential for parents to achieve economic stability.**
W-2 commits to working with parents before and after they find a job. W-2 supports job retention and advancement in a variety of ways because individual progress toward independence and prosperity is a process. W-2 connects interested parents to needed education and training either before or after gaining employment, in order to help them move forward to better employment.
- 4. W-2 participants are parents as well as job seekers.**
Working parents have multiple family and work obligations. W-2 works with parents to identify strategies to enable them to balance work and family. W-2 also assists parents who are connected to other programs or supports integrate those activities with the family's service plans.
- 5. Eligible parents must be willing to participate in exchange for W-2 benefits.**
Parents across the state have access to individualized quality services. Parents, for their part, must participate to the best of their abilities.
- 6. Families benefit from participating in W-2.**
W-2 assists parents with identifying their goals and locating needed resources. During each interaction, W-2 works to ensure parents understand their choices and the resulting consequences. This approach empowers parents to make informed decisions that strengthen their family. W-2 works with both custodial parents in a two-parent family and extends services to non-custodial parents when appropriate.
- 7. W-2 matches the needs of working parents with the needs of local employers.**
W-2 agencies operate cooperatively within the larger community. W-2 objectives are best achieved by understanding the needs of local employers and matching that need with the skills and interests of W-2 participants.