Date: March 15, 2019

DMS Operations Memo 19-14

To: Income Maintenance Supervisors
         Income Maintenance Lead Workers
         Income Maintenance Staff

Affected Programs:

☐ BadgerCare Plus   ☐ Caretaker Supplement
☒ FoodShare   ☐ FoodShare Employment
☐ Medicaid   and Training
☐ SeniorCare

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            Bureau of Enrollment Policy and Systems
            Division of Medicaid Services

Treatment of Case Management Follow-Up Plus Payments for FoodShare Eligibility

CROSS REFERENCE

- Operations Memo 18-J7
- FoodShare Wisconsin Handbook, Section 4.3.4.2 Counted Unearned Income
- FoodShare Wisconsin Handbook, Section 5.1.1 Transitional FoodShare Benefits (TFS)
- 7 CFR §273.9(c)(2) and (c)(5)

EFFECTIVE DATE

October 1, 2018

PURPOSE

This operations memo clarifies the policy on how Wisconsin Works (W-2) Case Management Follow-up Plus (CMF+) payments are treated with respect to eligibility for Transitional FoodShare (TFS) benefits and financial eligibility for FoodShare.

BACKGROUND

W-2 is a time-limited program that provides temporary cash assistance and case management services to low-income parents and pregnant women. W-2 participants who were previously in a paid placement and obtain unsubsidized employment while in W-2 are eligible for case management follow-up services.

The TFS program extends FoodShare benefit eligibility for five months to FoodShare assistance groups once their W-2 cash assistance ends. These FoodShare assistance groups receive a benefit amount based on their income during their last month receiving W-2 cash assistance (less the W-2 cash assistance payment amount) for the five-month TFS period.

Effective June 23, 2018, W-2 participants who obtain unsubsidized employment and meet minimum work participation requirements could become eligible to receive a monthly $50 supplemental payment in addition to the case management follow-up services currently offered. This program is referred to as CMF+.

The purpose of providing supplemental payments is to help W-2 participants who become employed and stop receiving federally funded assistance transition into stable unsubsidized employment. Supplemental payments serve as an additional support for eligible families to retain employment and participate in services that may improve employment.

POLICY

CMF+ payments are residual job retention payments that are not considered cash assistance payments for the purposes of determining TFS eligibility. CMF+ payments are also not considered a paid placement under the W-2 program because they are provided as a separate state program with state funds to promote job retention. Therefore, if a FoodShare member's W-2 cash assistance ends and he or she is only enrolled in CMF+, the member is eligible for TFS benefits.

After the TFS period ends, the CMF+ payments must be included as counted unearned income for purposes of determining the FoodShare assistance group's ongoing eligibility and benefits because they are regular and predictable payments, and are not provided and used for an identified expense.

CARES

Currently, a monthly batch runs outside of CARES to initiate TFS for members who are no longer receiving a paid W-2 placement but are receiving CMF+ payments.

Beginning March 2, 2019, CARES will automatically initiate TFS for a member when a paid W-2 placement ends and the household is only receiving CMF+ payments. After the TFS period ends, any future CMF+ payments will be counted as unearned income in the Gross Income Test section on the FoodShare Budget page (see Figure 1).

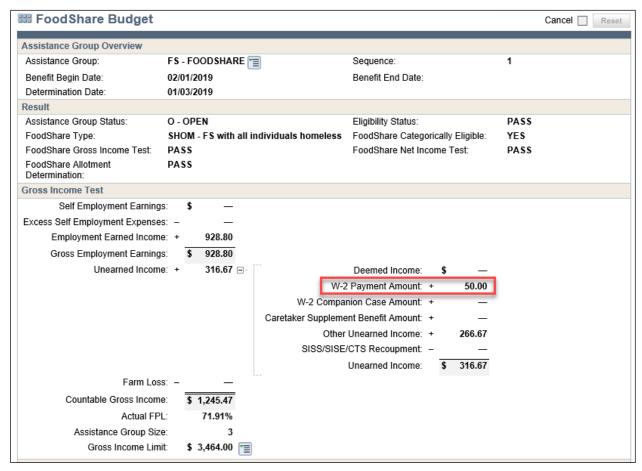**Note:** Workers will not be required to take any new action for this process.

Figure 1: FoodShare Budget Page After TFS Ends and CMF+ Payments Are Being Received

CONTACTS

BEPS CARES Information and Problem Resolution Center

DHS/DMS/BEPS/SM