


STATE OF WISCONSIN  
Department of Health and Family Services  
Division of Long Term Care

**DLTC Numbered Memo Series 2008-9/Action**  
**Date:** April 28, 2008  
**Index Title: Family Support Program Wait List Policy  
Change Requirement**

To: Listserv

For: Area Administrators / Human Services Area Coordinators  
County Department of Community Program Directors  
County Departments of Developmental Disabilities Services Directors  
County Departments of Human Services Directors  
County Departments of Social Services Directors  
County Waiver Coordinators  
County DD Coordinators  
Tribal Chairpersons

From: Sinikka Santala   
Administrator

Subject: Family Support Program wait list policy change requirement

### **Document Summary**

Counties are required to develop Family Support Program (FSP) wait list policy pursuant to 2007 Wisconsin Act 20, the 2007-2009 biennial budget bill. Counties must develop their policy in writing no later than May 31, 2008 and submit it to BLTS Children's Services Section. The policies must be effective starting July 1, 2008.

Wisconsin Statute 46.985 (2) (f) directs county departments to establish criteria for priority of services that take into account urgency of need, statewide consistency, developmental impact on eligible children and other factors, so as to ensure that all available funds are used consistently and effectively.

Family Support Program (FSP) funds are used by families of children with severe disabilities to purchase allowable goods or services not funded through other sources that will enable the child to reside with his/her parent(s), reduce stress in the family and avoid out-of-home placement. Use of these funds must be in accordance with the purposes and requirements set forth in Family Support Program Guidelines and Wis. Administrative Code, Chapter HFS 65.

### **Setting Priorities for Available Funding**

The administering agency are required to allocate available funding to families who meet eligibility requirements under Wis. Administrative Code, Chapter HFS 65.04 on a first come, first served basis, except that counties must take into account urgency of need and crisis need situations. Families determined to meet urgency and crisis need criteria must be moved to the top of the FSP waiting list regardless of the date the child was determined to meet all eligibility criteria and the child's name was placed on the FSP wait list for funding. In addition, crisis funds must also be reserved to ensure the provision of goods and services to families in the event of a crisis situation that may occur throughout the calendar year if funding is available.

Urgent need may be defined as follows:

1. Families in crisis situations
2. Families considering out-of-home placement
3. Families planning to bring a child home from an out-of-home placement
4. Families who have in-home health and safety concerns
5. Children who have one time urgent developmental needs that must be met in a time frame that will exceed the expected FSP wait list duration and cannot be met by another funding source.

The administering agency must develop criteria and procedures for determining if a family is in crisis and the extent of their need. The agency must prioritize the waiting list for these crisis situations based on the severity of need and other factors so that families most in need can be served first with limited funding dollars.

The administering agency should request assistance and advice from the local Family Support Advisory Committee in developing criteria which will be used to determine whether a family is in crisis. The advisory committee should also advise the administering agency regarding the criteria and method for prioritizing needs of children on the waiting list. Once the administering agency, with advice from the local advisory committee, develops waiting list policies, including procedures for determining how to prioritize needs, making one-time only purchases, and other issues that may arise, the policies must be written and included in the annual Family Support Program County Plan or as an addendum to the 2008 FSP Annual Plan no later than May 31, 2008.

As part of the agency's wait list policy, the administering agency must identify how the Service Coordinators will evaluate significant changes in the child and family's needs to assure these children's names are on the FSP waiting list if they meet the criteria.

Two examples of these evaluation efforts are:

Annual assessment by the service coordinator to determine the needs of the family and child.

OR

Families are informed by the service coordinator regarding how and when to notify the administering agency of any significant changes with the child's condition or the family's circumstances.

DHFS Staff will review the criteria as submitted and approve or modify in conjunction with the administering agency as needed by June 30, 2008. The new criteria for urgent or crisis needs will become effective for all funding decisions beginning July 1, 2008.

The Children's Services Section in the Bureau of Long-Term Support is available to support counties as needed in developing and implementing the new Family Support wait list requirements.

To summarize, as related to the Family Support Program, a county must:

- Develop FSP policies and procedures for prioritizing the FSP wait list based on crisis and urgency of need.

- Identify outreach efforts that will assist in determining that families on the FSP wait list who meet these criteria have access to available funding.
- Develop procedures for annual assessments to assist in determining urgency of need.
- Submit all policies and procedures to the Children's Services Section as part of the FSP Annual Plan for review no later than May 31, 2008.
- Submit all policies and procedures electronically to Julie Bryda by May 31, 2008 at [brydaja@dhfs.state.wi.us](mailto:brydaja@dhfs.state.wi.us) and your assigned CSS.
- Implement the policies and procedures beginning July 1, 2008

REGIONAL OFFICE CONTACT: Regional Children's Waiver Specialists

CENTRAL OFFICE CONTACT: Julie Bryda, Program and Policy Analyst

MEMO WEB SITE: [http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/dsl\\_info/](http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/dsl_info/)

Attachments: <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/bdds/clts/documentation/CSSContactMap.pdf>

Cc: DLTC Children' Service Section (CSS)  
DLTC Community Integration Program (CIP)