



Date: January 19, 2022

DMS Operations Memo 22-01

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

Affected Programs:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> BadgerCare Plus | <input type="checkbox"/> Caretaker Supplement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FoodShare | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FoodShare Employment and Training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medicaid | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SeniorCare | |

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Changes to FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET) Program Activities

CROSS REFERENCE

- FoodShare Employment and Training Handbook, [1.4 FSET Component Activities](#), [4.5 Initial Employment Plan](#), [8.2 Ongoing Assessment](#)
- FoodShare Wisconsin Handbook, [3.16.1 Work Requirements](#), [3.17.1 Able-bodied Adults Without Dependents \(ABAWDs\)](#)

EFFECTIVE DATE

January 19, 2022

PURPOSE

This operations memo announces several changes made to the FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET) Program activities with the goal of improving alignment with Federal regulations and reporting requirements.

BACKGROUND

The FSET program is Wisconsin's employment and training program operated as part of the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known as FoodShare in Wisconsin. The purpose of FSET is to provide FoodShare members with opportunities to gain skills, training, and experience needed to improve employment opportunities and reduce reliance on FoodShare benefits. Wisconsin's

FSET program focuses on identifying the strengths, needs, and preferences of program participants to provide comprehensive, individualized services that will result in successful competitive employment.

FSET agencies must offer a variety of activities to comprehensively address the unique needs of each participant. FNS organizes the SNAP employment and training program into different components including supervised job search, job search training, workfare, work experience, education, self-employment training, and job retention.

FSET workers and program participants jointly develop an employment plan (EP) with two main components: 1) goals and action steps and 2) individualized activities. FSET workers conduct regular EP reviews with participants and review changes in employment, educational attainment, and barriers to employment to revise the goals, action steps, and assigned activities.

To improve alignment with Federal regulations and reporting, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has made several changes to allowable FSET program activities and requirements and has clarified the appropriate assignment to those activities.

POLICY

The following FSET program changes are effective January 19, 2022.

NEW CASE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY REQUIREMENT

A new activity, Case Management (code CM), must be on **all** Employment Plans for **all** FSET participants. The Case Management activity will be used for all initial and ongoing case management appointments. FSET workers must also assign at least one activity in addition to case management for all FSET participants. For individuals who need to meet the able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD) work requirement, FSET workers must assign at least one additional qualifying activity for a total of three.

CHANGES TO WORK EXPERIENCE COMPONENT

Work experience is designed to improve the employability of household members through actual work experience, training, or both, and to enable individuals employed or trained under such programs to move promptly into regular public or private employment. Work experience must be a planned, structured learning experience that occurs in the workplace for a limited time period. Work experience may be arranged within the private for-profit sector, the non-profit sector, or the public sector. A work experience assignment includes either Work Activity or Work-based Learning Activity.

WORK ACTIVITY

FSET workers may assign FSET participants to Work Activity to provide with them with an opportunity to acquire the general skills, knowledge, and work habits necessary to obtain employment. The purpose of Work Activity is to improve the employability of those who cannot find unsubsidized full-time employment. FSET workers should use the current activity code WX for Work Activity assignments.

WORK-BASED LEARNING ACTIVITY

FSET workers may assign FSET participants to Work-based Learning Activities for a sustained interaction with industry or community professionals in real world settings to the extent practicable, or

simulated environments at an educational institution that foster in-depth, firsthand engagement aligned to curriculum and instruction. Work-based Learning emphasizes employer engagement, includes specific training objectives, and leads to regular employment. Work-based Learning Activities include on-the-job training, pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, short-term government-sponsored subsidized employment, and internship.

- FSET workers may assign On-the-Job Training (code OJ) when an FSET participant is performing tasks or processes related to their occupation. The FSET participant typically performs tasks that are essential to their job function with the supervision of a manager, coach, or mentor. This type of training is typically used to broaden an employee's skill set and to increase productivity.
- FSET workers may assign Pre-apprenticeship/Apprenticeship (code AP) for individuals interested in career paths that require apprenticeship training. Pre-Apprenticeship is an opportunity to help FSET participants gain the necessary skills for an apprenticeship. These programs can play a valuable role in preparing FSET participants for a career, while contributing to the development of a diverse and skilled workforce. After completing the program, participants can visit our Registered Apprenticeship page and put their new skills to action. Apprenticeships offer numerous benefits to both employers and participants. Apprenticeship is post-secondary education like a college or university, but apprentices learn only a portion of their skills in a traditional classroom. They receive most of their training on-the-job, while working for an employer who pays a good wage. The employment is the primary requirement for an apprenticeship – a job must exist for the apprentice to be trained.
- FSET workers may assign Transitional Job (code TJ) for participants interested and involved in government-sponsored employment programs where the state subsidizes short-term work opportunities, which can include placement and training as well as pay, to previously unemployed individuals in either the public, private, or non-profit sectors. Criteria for participating will depend on the employment sector.
- FSET workers may assign Internship (code IN) to participants seeking short-term work experience to get entry-level exposure to a particular industry or field. It is as much of a learning experience as it is work. Ideally, interns spend their time working on relevant projects, learning about the field, making industry connections, and developing both hard and soft skills. Internships sometimes lead to full-time job offers. The criteria for participation will vary depending on the internship industry or field. For example, if a marketing internship is offered, workers will research the skills, knowledge, and experience necessary to participate in the marketing internship. If a participant does not meet the standards for the program, the FSET worker will assign the participant to other activities to gain the required skills for the marketing internship program.

REQUIRED COMPENSATION IN CERTAIN WORK ACTIVITY CIRCUMSTANCES

FSET workers must only assign the number of hours calculated by household allotment divided by minimum wage in all work-related activities including Workfare, Work Activity, and Work-based Learning Activities. However, because Wisconsin operates a voluntary employment and training program, FSET participants can volunteer additional hours in a work-related activity beyond the hours equal to the household allotment divided by the minimum wage. In this scenario, the FSET participant must receive the same compensation earned by non-FSET participants while performing comparable work for comparable hours and in compliance with minimum wage laws. FSET participants do not need

to be paid for those additional hours if others participating in the work-related activity are also not paid while performing comparable work for comparable hours and the work does not fall under state or federal minimum wage requirements.

REMOVAL OF JOB CLUB ACTIVITY

Current FSET policy does not allow workers to assign job clubs as an allowable activity. FSET Job Club (code FJ) was removed from the client scheduling page in the FSET Tool in CWW to align with FSET and FNS policy. Workers should instead assign a more appropriate activity that aligns with participants' employment goals.

CHANGES TO JOB SEARCH ACTIVITY CODE DESCRIPTION

The activity code description for ES will be changed to Supervised Job Search to align with current policy and the Federal regulations relating to job search supervision.

CONTACTS

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