

# IRIS Waiver Renewal: Summary of Public Input



Wisconsin Department of Health Services  
*Division of Medicaid Services, Bureau of Programs and Policy*

Long-Term Care Advisory Council  
November 12, 2024

# Overview

- Summary of DHS strategies for gathering waiver renewal input
- Description of participant/respondent characteristics
- Overview of feedback themes
- Next steps

# IRIS Waiver Renewal

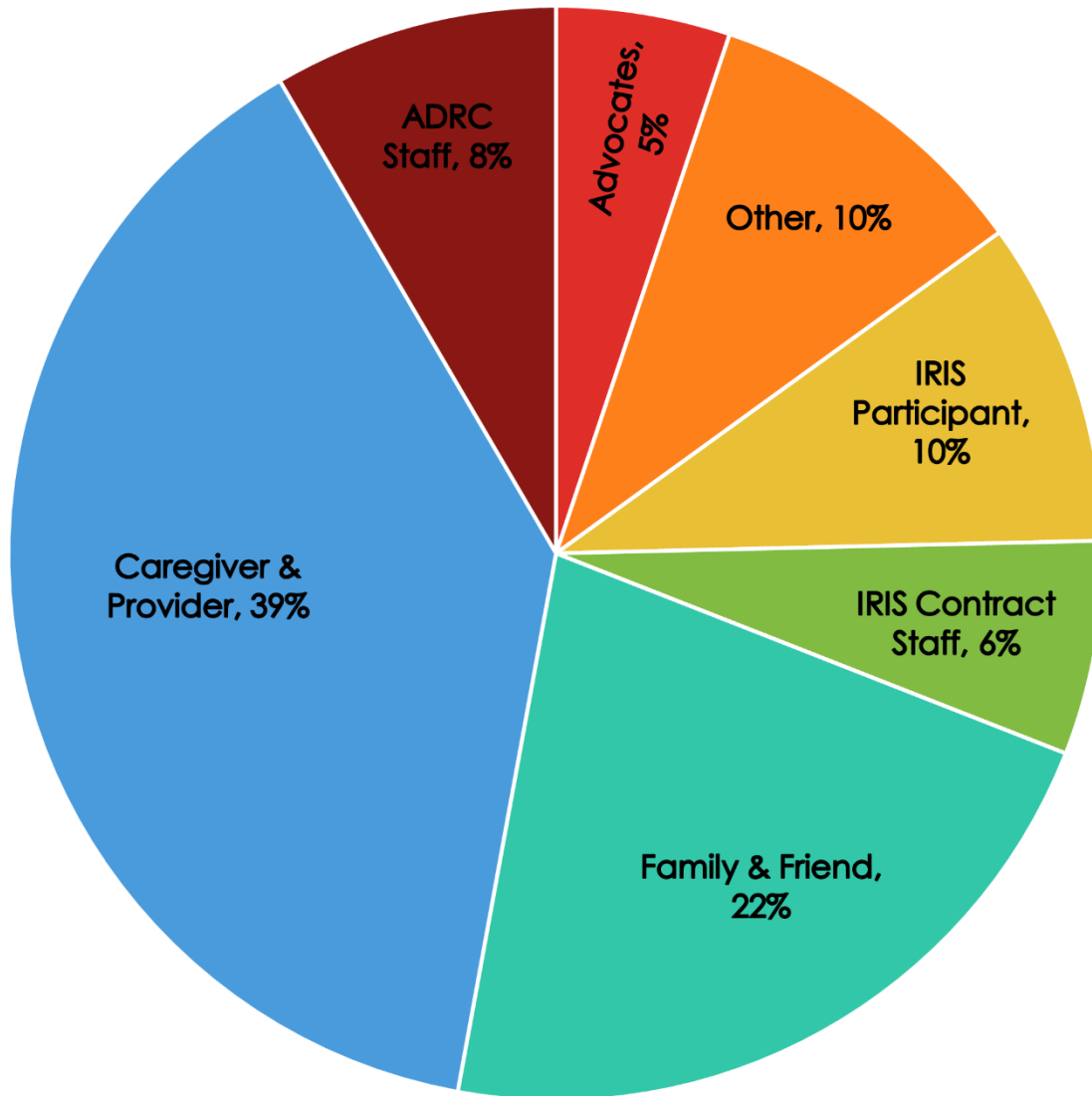
- 1915(c) HCBS waivers are applications to the federal government that let us have Medicaid programs like the IRIS program.
- 1915(c) HCBS waivers need to be renewed and approved every five years.
  - The IRIS program's waiver is due for renewal by January 2026.
- As part of this process, DHS pursued and gathered input from participants, families, legal decision makers, providers, IRIS Consultant Agency (ICA) and Fiscal Employer Agent (FEA) staff, advocates, and other partners.

# Outreach Plan

## Summer 2024

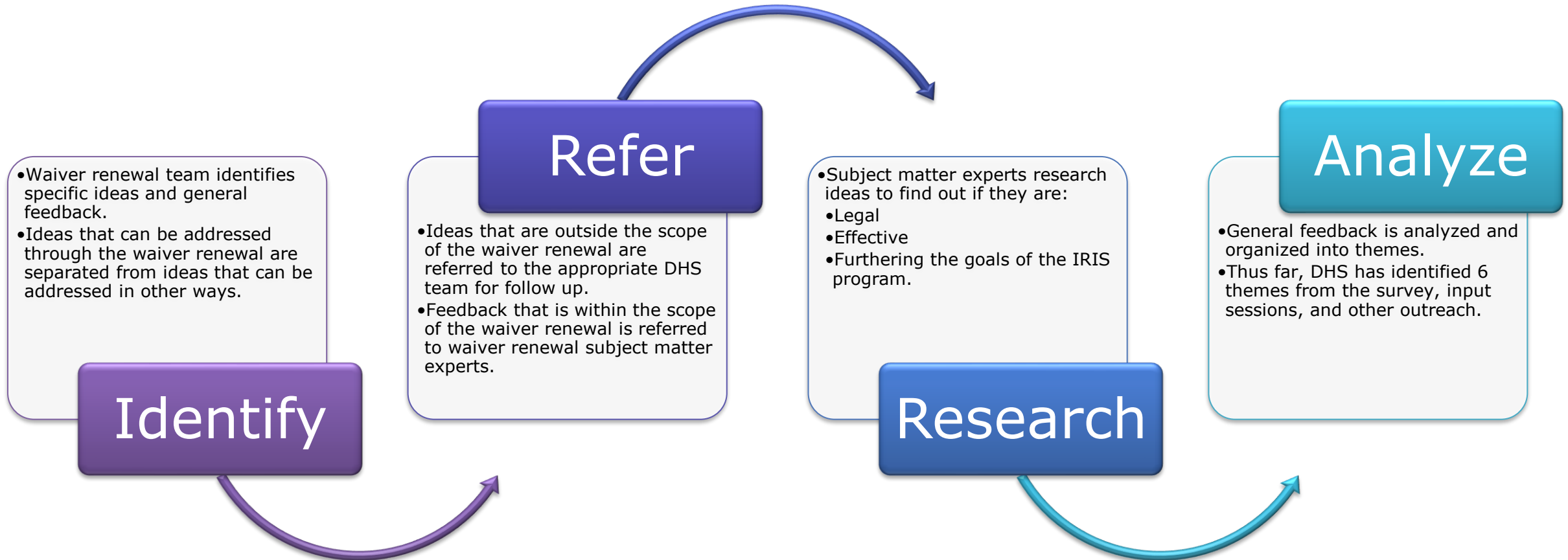
What	Who	When
<b>Survey</b>  (Available in English, Spanish, and Hmong with accessibility features)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants</li> <li>• Family, Friends, and Caregivers</li> <li>• Providers</li> <li>• Advocates</li> <li>• ICA/FEA staff</li> <li>• Other Partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• July 9, 2024 - August 2, 2024</li> </ul>
<b>Targeted Outreach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IAC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• July 23, 2024</li> </ul>
<b>Public Input Sessions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All partners</li> <li>• Open to the public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• July 30, 2024 (Evening option)</li> <li>• July 31, 2024 (Day option)</li> </ul>

# Survey Responses and Input Session Attendees

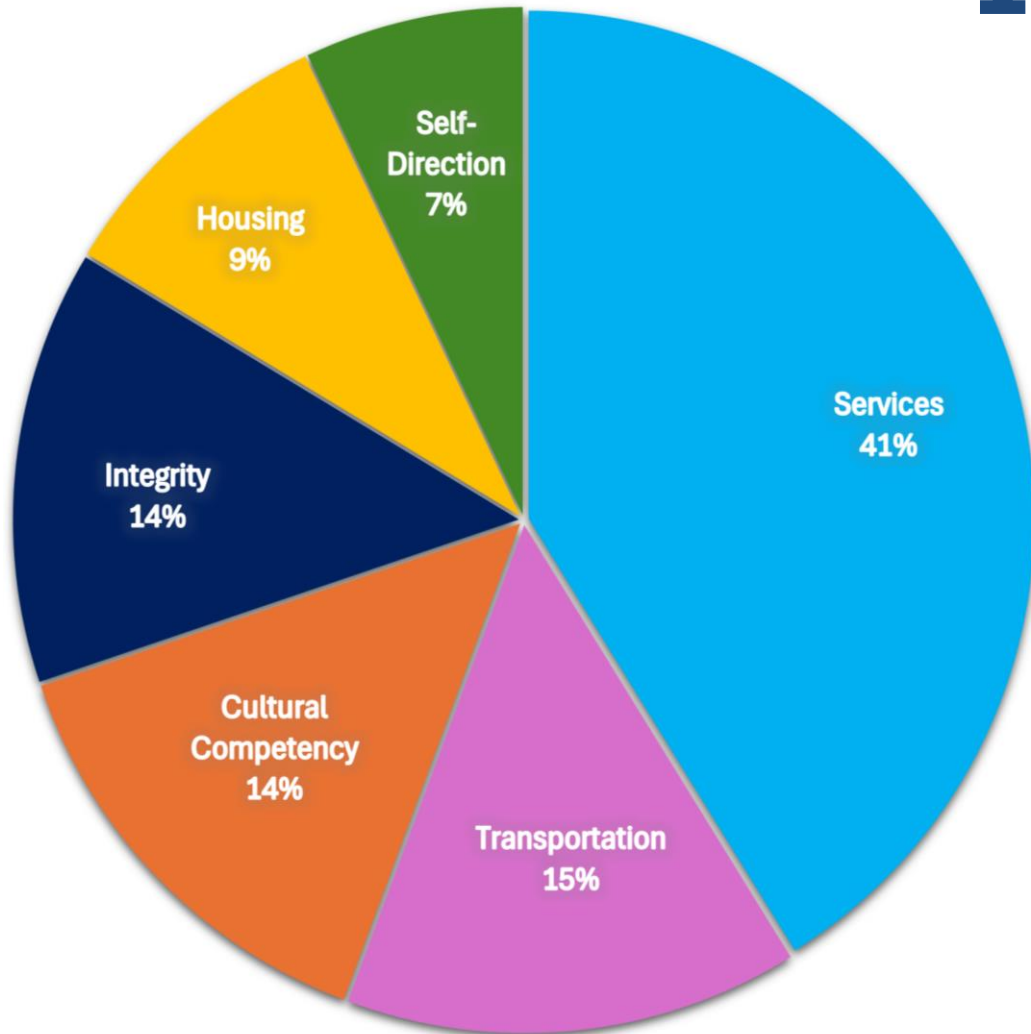


- Over 2,100 survey responses
- More than 150 input session attendees

# Reviewing Feedback



# IRIS Feedback Themes



- The themes represent common **requests, issues,** and **experiences** reported by IRIS participants, family, friends, support people, and other program partners.
  - The themes were identified based upon feedback from the survey, public input sessions, and other outreach.
- Many of the themes represent complex issues that cannot or would not be addressed through the waiver renewal.
- Common issues about ICAs and FEAs were identified and provided to Quality and Oversight for program improvement.

# Theme #1: Services

- Providing access to necessary services empowers individuals to live more independently.
- Equitable access to services helps bridge gaps in care and support.

From a provider perspective, a community needs assessment and clear information on how to access information on covered services, which would be beneficial to aid in the development of services that will support the needs of the community.

-ADRC Staff



# Theme #2: Transportation

- Lack of transportation is a major barrier to accessing the community and needed services.
- Participants, families, and support people desire more reliable, accessible, flexible, and convenient transportation options.

Transportation assistance is lacking for me. I get money for public transit, but that's it. If I needed to go somewhere I couldn't access by bus, my only good option is to ask my caregiver to drive me. This puts more stress on my caregiver since I can only access this through him.

-IRIS Participant

# Theme #3: Cultural Competency

Match participants with providers who can relate to their culture, background and values. If that is not possible, consider annual diversity trainings and practical ways to be inclusive.

-IRIS Caregiver and Provider

- Explore additional services to support cultural differences and minimize barriers to care.

- Consider a resource for culturally competent services to ensure that care is tailored to the diverse needs of individuals.

We could use more cultural/language-specific day service opportunities, especially for the elderly. There are few adult daycare programs for Hmong or Spanish-speaking participants.

-Family Member or Friend

# Theme #4: Integrity

Assess for when the IRIS member is no longer able to self-direct. There seem to be a lot of folks on the program who can't advocate for their own best interest.

-Other Partner

There are individuals on IRIS that should have an alternate decision maker. There are times when IRIS is not appropriate or the participants are not safe or when the alternate decision maker's decisions are not in the best interest of the person.

-IRIS Caregiver and Provider

- A program with strong integrity guarantees that resources are used effectively and responsibly, which ensures participants receive the services and supports needed to achieve their long-term care outcomes.

# Theme #5: Housing

- Participants request more assistance with finding affordable, safe, and accessible housing.

There are a limited number of housing options for adults with disabilities to maintain the quality of life they are accustomed to when living at home with parents/loved ones.

It would be great to invest/expand partnerships between organizations that offer housing vouchers so there are more resources to provide affordable quality housing options.

-IRIS Participant

# Theme #6: Self-Direction

- Provide self-direction opportunities for participants to make independent decisions about the services and supports that best meet their unique needs and preferences.

Not everyone fits into a box where they all need the same thing.

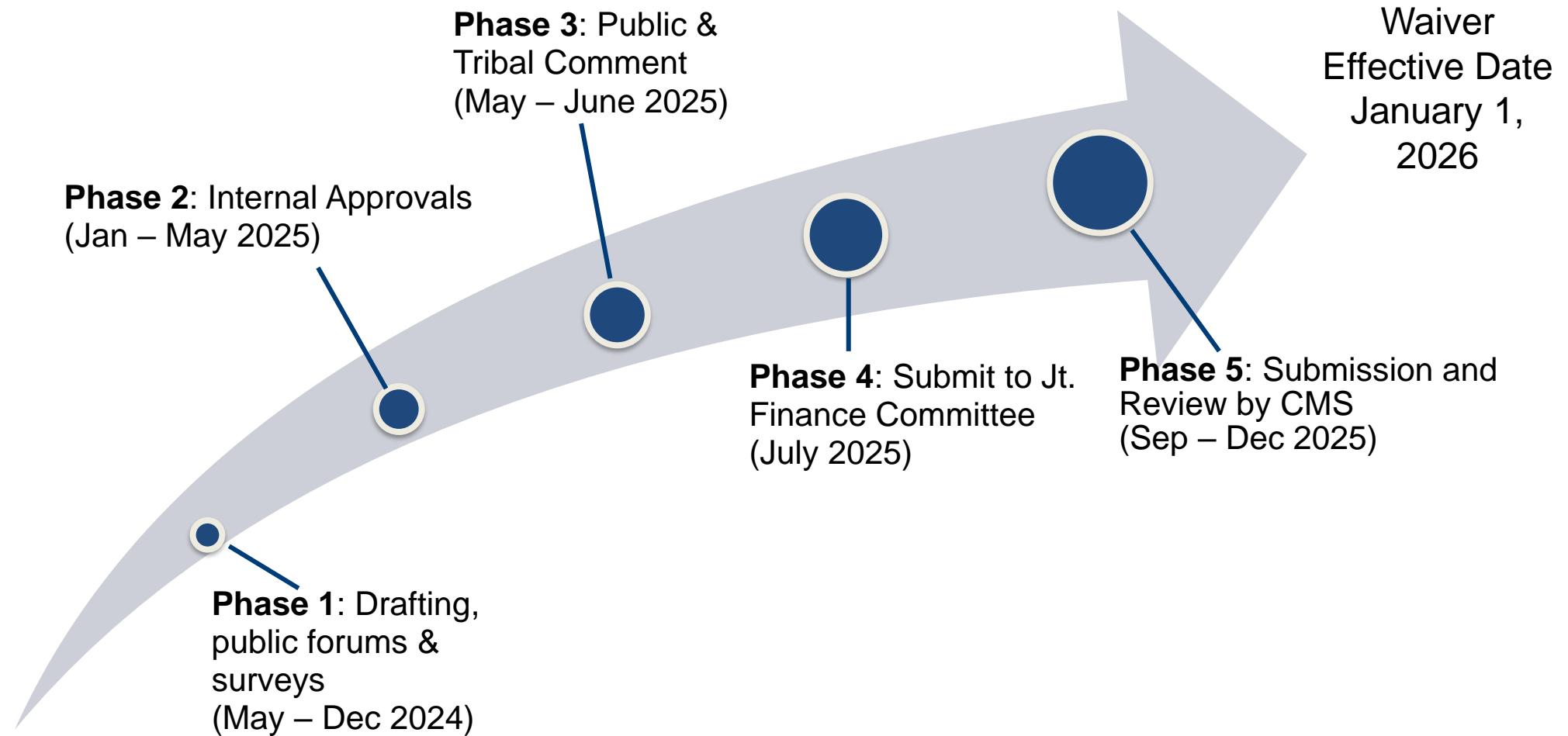
-IRIS Participant

A better understanding of the budget, what it is used for, and how much if any is left over would be helpful.

-IRIS Caregiver and Provider

- Allow participants more flexibility in creating and managing their service plans.

# Waiver Renewal Timeline



# Next Steps

- Ideas and issues that can be addressed through the waiver renewal will be considered as part of the drafting process.
- DHS will continue to review feedback for specific themes and actionable ideas.
- For program improvement, provide Quality and Oversight with common issues about ICAs and FEAs identified through public input.

# Thank You!

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/iris/waiver-renewal.htm>