

State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development

DWD 44
Child Support Incentive Payments

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development proposes an order to create chapter DWD 44, relating to child support incentive payments.

Analysis Prepared by the Department of Workforce Development

Statutory authority: ss. 49.24, and 227.11, Stats.

Statute interpreted: s. 49.24, Stats.

Relevant federal law: 42 USC 658a; 45 CFR Part 305

Pursuant to s. 49.24, Stats., the Department of Workforce Development distributes child support incentive payments to counties. A county may use the payments only to pay costs under its child support program. Funding for the incentive payments is from monies that Wisconsin earns under the federal child support incentive payment program and from child support assigned to the state by public assistance recipients. The state funds are transferred from the Wisconsin Support Collections Trust Fund to an appropriation account under s. 20.445(3)(k), Stats. Total payments to counties may not exceed \$12,340,000 per year, and payments from child support assigned to the state by public assistance recipients may not exceed \$5,690,000 per year.

The federal child support incentive payments are earned pursuant to the Child Support Performance and Incentive Act of 1998 (Pub. L. No. 105-200, 42 USC 658a) and implementing regulations published in the *Federal Register* on December 27, 2000. Under federal law, states compete against one another for a share of an incentive payment pool that is set by statute. A state's share of the incentive payment pool is determined by the state's performance on federal performance measures relative to the performance of other states. Pursuant to 45 CFR 302.55, the state must share incentives earned with any political subdivision that shares in funding the administrative cost of the state's child support program.

The proposed rule specifies the procedure for distributing incentive payments to counties and tribes that enter into a cooperative agreement with the department for the delivery of child support services under the state child support plan. The proposed rule is based on the federal procedure for distributing incentive payments to states, and the focus of the rule is to provide incentives for agency performance that will maximize the amount of the federal incentive payment that Wisconsin receives.

The proposed rule provides that the department consult with representatives of child support agencies in implementing the procedure for distributing incentive payments to counties. The representatives are a subcommittee of the members of the child support policy advisory

committee known as the county contract committee. The county contract committee is appointed by local child support agency representatives on the policy advisory committee and serves to advise the department on matters relating to child support incentive payments.

In consultation with the county contract committee, the department will estimate the total state and federal incentive funding that will be available for distribution to counties in the following year. In consultation with the county contract committee, the department determines each county's allocation, or share of the projected incentive funding, based on the following criteria: all child support agencies shall have funds available to achieve performance measures, agencies of similar size should receive equitable treatment, and a high level of performance is necessary in the large Wisconsin agencies to maximize the federal share of incentives. The allocation is the estimated minimum incentive payment amount that the agency is expected to receive if the actual incentive funding is equal to or exceeds the projected incentive funding and the agency's earned level is 100%.

In consultation with the county contract committee, the department establishes measures of performance and agencies earn incentive payments based on individual agency performance under each performance measure. The state measures for agency performance include one or more of the following federal measures for state performance:

- paternity establishment
- support order establishment
- collection of current child support due
- collection of child support arrearages
- cost effectiveness

The state performance measures also include any other measures or any modification to the measures used by the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement in providing incentive payments to states and any other measures as determined by the department in consultation with the county contract committee.

In consultation with the county contract committee, the department determines the weight to be given each performance measure and performance scales for each performance measure. The performance scales are used to determine agency earned levels for each performance measure. There are two methods of determining earned levels: (1) a table with performance levels and corresponding earned levels based on the federal performance levels, taking into account any potential federal penalties, or (2) an alternative method of evaluating performance levels based on an agency's incremental change from the agency's performance in the preceding year. In making the determinations, the department and agency representatives will consider state performance levels necessary to avoid federal penalties, past state performance on federal performance measures, projected future state performance on federal performance measures, and circumstances beyond the control of agencies that affect agency performance. The overall purpose of the determinations is to target areas for statewide improvement to maximize the state share of federal incentive dollars while ensuring that agencies have funds available to achieve the purposes of the child support program.

The formula to determine the amount of an agency's incentive payment is a 4-step process as follows:

1. The first step is to determine an agency's earned amount for each performance measure by multiplying each agency's allocation by the weighted earned level for each measure. The agency's earned amounts for all measures are then added to determine the agency's combined earnings.

2. The second step is determining the statewide combined earnings by adding the agency combined earnings for all agencies.

3. The third step is determining each agency's share of the total available incentive funding by dividing the agency combined earnings by the statewide combined earnings.

4. The fourth step is determining each agency's incentive payment amount by multiplying the agency's share of the total available incentive funding by the total available incentive funding.

The department will distribute the total available incentive funding to counties and eligible tribes or tribal organizations. A tribe or tribal organization that enters into a cooperative agreement with the department for the delivery of child support services under the state plan pursuant to 42 USC 654(33) shall receive an incentive payment under this chapter based on the same criteria and subject to the same restrictions as counties carrying out activities under the state plan. A tribe or tribal organization that receives direct tribal child support enforcement funding pursuant to 42 USC 655(f) may not receive an incentive payment under this chapter.

The total incentive payment to a county under this chapter may not exceed the costs per year of the county's child support program. A county that receives an incentive payment may use the funds only to pay costs under its child support program. A county that receives an incentive payment may use the funds only to supplement, and not supplant, the baseline level of county funding for its child support program as determined by averaging the county's contribution to its IV-D expenditures in calendar years 1996, 1997, and 1998, unless waived by the department. The department will waive this requirement if the state is in compliance with federal reinvestment requirements under 45 CFR 305.35.

SECTION 1. Chapter DWD 44 is created to read:

Chapter DWD 44
CHILD SUPPORT INCENTIVE PAYMENTS

DWD 44.01 Authority and purpose. This chapter is promulgated under the authority of s. 49.24, Stats., for the purpose of specifying the procedure by which the department will distribute federal and state child support incentive payments to counties.

DWD 44.02 Definitions. In this chapter:

(1) “IV-D” means part D of title IV of the social security act of 1975, the federal law on the child support and establishment of paternity program (42 USC 651 to 669b).

(2) “IV-D case” means a parent or alleged father who is now or eventually may be obligated under law for the support of a child or children receiving services under the title IV-D program. A parent or alleged father is a separate IV-D case for each family with a dependent child or children that the parent or alleged father may be obligated to support. If both parents are absent and liable or potentially liable for support of a child or children receiving services under the IV-D program, each parent is considered a separate IV-D case.

(3) “Agency combined earnings” means each agency’s total earned amounts.

(4) “Agency share of total available incentive funding” means the percentage of actual total funding available for distribution under s. 49.24, Stats., that an agency receives.

(5) “Allocation” means the estimated minimum incentive payment amount that the agency is expected to receive if the total available incentive funding is equal to or exceeds the projected incentive funding and the agency’s earned level is 100%.

(6) “Child support agency” or “agency” means the county child support agency under s. 59.53 (5), Stats.

(7) “County contract committee” means a subcommittee of the members of the child support policy advisory committee, as appointed by local child support agency representatives on the policy advisory committee, that serves to advise the department on matters relating to child support incentive payments.

(8) “Department” means the Wisconsin department of workforce development.

(9) “Earned amount” means an agency’s allocation multiplied by the agency’s weighted earned level for an individual performance measure.

(10) “Earned level” means the number that is determined based on an agency’s performance level on an individual performance measure and that is used in calculating an agency’s earned amount for that performance measure.

(11) “Federal fiscal year” means October 1 of one year through September 30 of the following year.

(12) “Incentive payment amount” means the dollar amount the agency receives pursuant to s. 49.24, Stats.

(13) “Office of child support enforcement” means the office that administers the IV-D program within the federal department of health and human services, administration for children and families.

(14) “Performance level” means an agency’s score on a performance measure.

(15) “Performance measure” or “measure of performance” means a standard used to evaluate agency performance for purposes of determining incentive payment amounts under s. 49.24, Stats.

(16) “Performance scale” means a table of agency performance levels and corresponding earned levels used in calculating an agency’s incentive payment amount.

(17) “Projected incentive funding” means the estimated total funding that will be available for distribution to counties under s. 49.24, Stats.

(18) “Statewide combined earnings” means the total of agency combined earnings for all agencies.

(19) “Total available incentive funding” means the actual total funding available for distribution to counties under s. 49.24, Stats., as determined by the department, for a particular contract year.

DWD 44.03 Projected incentive funding. In consultation with the county contract committee, the department shall estimate the total state and federal incentive funding that will be available for distribution to counties under s. 49.24, Stats., in the following year.

DWD 44.04 Allocation to counties. (1). ALLOCATION CRITERIA. In consultation with the county contract committee, the department shall determine the amount of the projected incentive funding that will be allocated to each county using the following criteria:

- (a) All child support agencies shall have funds available to achieve performance measures.
- (b) Agencies of similar size shall receive equitable treatment.

(c) A high level of performance is necessary in the large Wisconsin agencies to maximize the federal share of incentives.

(2) NOTICE. The department shall make a good faith effort to notify agencies of the estimated allocation for each county in time for agencies to plan their budgets for the following year.

DWD 44.05 Performance measures. (1) In consultation with the county contract committee, the department shall establish state measures of performance, and agencies shall earn incentive payments specified under s. 49.24, Stats., based on individual agency performance under each measure of performance.

(2) The state measures of performance shall include one or more of the following:

(a) *Paternity establishment percentage.* The paternity establishment percentage is one of the following:

1. The ratio of the total number of nonmarital children in the IV-D caseload in the federal fiscal year or as of the end of the federal fiscal year for whom paternity is established or acknowledged to the total number of nonmarital children in the IV-D caseload as of the end of the preceding federal fiscal year.

2. The ratio of the total number of minor nonmarital children for whom paternity has been established or acknowledged during the federal fiscal year to the total number of nonmarital children born during the preceding federal fiscal year.

(b) *Support order establishment measure.* The support order establishment measure is the ratio of the number of IV-D cases with support orders during the federal fiscal year to the total number of IV-D cases during the federal fiscal year. These support orders include all types of legally enforceable orders, such as court, default, and administrative orders.

(c) *Current collections measure.* The current collections measure is the ratio of the total dollars collected for current support in IV-D cases to the total dollars owed for current support in IV-D cases.

(d) *Arrears collection measure.* The arrears collection measure is the ratio of the total number of eligible IV-D cases paying toward arrears to the total number of IV-D cases with arrears due.

(e) *Cost-effectiveness measure.* The cost-effectiveness measure is the ratio of the total IV-D dollars collected to the total IV-D dollars expended.

(f) *Other federal measures.* Any other measures or any modification to the measures under pars. (a) to (e) used by the federal office of child support enforcement in providing incentive payments to states pursuant to 45 CFR Part 305.

(g) *Other state measures.* Any other measures as determined by the department in consultation with the county contract committee.

(3) The state measures for agency performance in par. (2) (a) to (f) are based on federal measures for state performance at 45 CFR Part 305. The department shall follow the federal office of child support enforcement interpretation to resolve any ambiguities on the measures in sub. (2) (a) to (f).

DWD 44.06 Performance levels. (1) In consultation with the county contract committee, the department shall determine all of the following:

(a) *Weight.* A weight to be given each performance measure in s. DWD 44.05(2). The combined weight of the measures shall total 100%.

(b) *Performance scales.* Performance scales used to determine agency earned levels based on performance on each measure in s. DWD 44.05(2). There shall be the following two methods of determining earned levels:

1. Performance levels and corresponding earned levels based on federal performance levels at 45 CFR 305.33, taking into consideration any potential penalties under 45 CFR 305.40.

2. An alternative method of evaluating performance levels based on an agency's incremental change from the agency's performance in the preceding year.

(2) The purpose of the determinations in sub. (1) is to target areas for statewide improvement to maximize the state share of federal incentive dollars under 45 CFR Part 305 while ensuring that agencies have funds available to achieve the purposes of the child support program. The following factors shall be considered in making the determinations in sub. (1):

(a) State performance levels necessary to avoid federal penalties under 45 CFR 305.40.

(b) Past state performance on federal performance measures.

(c) Projected future state performance on federal performance measures.

(d) Circumstances beyond the control of agencies that affect agency performance.

DWD 44.07 Incentive payment formula. The formula to determine the amount of an agency's incentive payment is a 4-step process as follows:

(1) The first step is to determine an agency's earned amount for each performance measure by multiplying each agency's allocation by the weighted earned level for each measure. The agency's earned amounts for all measures are then added to determine the agency's combined earnings.

(2) The second step is determining the statewide combined earnings by adding the agency combined earnings from sub. (1) for all agencies.

(3) The third step is determining each agency's share of the total available incentive funding by dividing the agency combined earnings under sub. (1) by the statewide combined earnings under sub. (2).

(4) The fourth step is determining each agency's incentive payment amount by multiplying the agency's share of the total available incentive funding under sub. (3) by the total available incentive funding.

DWD 44.08 Distribution and use of incentive payments. (1) The department shall distribute the total available incentive funding under s. 49.24, Stats., to counties and to tribes or tribal organizations eligible under sub. (2).

(2) A tribe or tribal organization that enters into a cooperative agreement with the department for the delivery of child support services under the state plan pursuant to 42 USC 654(33) shall receive an incentive payment under this chapter based on the same criteria and subject to the same restrictions as counties carrying out activities under the state plan. A tribe or tribal organization that receives direct tribal child support enforcement funding pursuant to 42 USC 655(f) may not receive an incentive payment under this chapter.

(3) The total state and federal incentive payments to a county per year under s. 49.24, Stats., may not exceed the costs per year of the county's child support program under s. 49.22, Stats.

(4) A county that receives any state or federal incentive payments under s. 49.24, Stats., may use the funds only to pay costs under its child support program under s. 49.22, Stats.

(5) A county that receives any state or federal incentive payments under s. 49.24, Stats., may use the funds only to supplement, and not supplant, the baseline level of county funding for its child support program as determined by averaging the county's contribution to its IV-D

expenditures in calendar years 1996, 1997, and 1998, unless waived by the department. The department will waive this subsection if the state is in compliance with 45 CFR 305.35.

EFFECTIVE DATE. This rule shall take effect on the first day of the month following publication in the Wisconsin administrative register as provided in s. 227.22(2)(intro.), Stats.