

# WELFARE TO WORK (W2) IN WISCONSIN: CRITIQUE AND ALTERNATIVES

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WELFARE TO WORK (W2) IN WISCONSIN: CRITIQUE AND ALTERNATIVES

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By

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## **Abstract**

### **ALTERNATIVES TO W2 DUE TO DYSFUNCTION AND MISDIRECTION OF THE PROGRAM**

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Research was conducted on alternatives to W2 related to perceived program dysfunctions. Research was conducted on five current W2 clients through a series of interview related to on work experience. Research was also gathered from Wisconsin from government documents and articles as well as websites to explore the dysfunctions of the program and find alternatives to W2.

#### **Key Terms:**

Wisconsin Welfare to Work (W2)

Alternatives to Wisconsin Welfare to Work (W2)







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## Chapter 1 Introduction

Wisconsin Welfare to Work (W2) has been in effect since 1997 (DCF Wisconsin, 2012). W2 has had many good and bad reviews. The program originators states that it provides employment preparation services, case management and cash assistance to eligible families. Perhaps the program was promising at the start but has become a barrier to many families and ultimately has been a setback for many.

In practice the program gives cash benefits but success with employment has been difficult for many participants. W2 has volunteer sites that are to be treated like a real job, however this form of work is very contradictory to actual work in non-programs (“real life”) due to the fact that a person cannot lose the job, nor be suspended as at regular work places. The most that can happen to a person for being late or not showing up is a pay cut in the form of \$5.00 per/hr. No call or no shows at a “real” job result in suspensions or being fired. People are not put into real employment situations whereas they would have experience of how to deal with work issues and to know what’s expected of them on the job. Yeah W2 puts people at a volunteer site where attendance is tracked and monitored but there are not real consequences if multiple days are missed.

The reality of someone losing a worksite is “obsolete”, so when a client does obtain employment they believe they can never lose the job. Many do not show up to work and believe they did nothing wrong and was entitled to employment. When the client does lose a job they do not know how to deal with it. During the study conducted of W2 clients regarding work experience one client stated “If you miss enough days of work experience you will just be rescheduled for a new one, so it’s not that similar to a job. You don’t always have another job lined up but you will be guaranteed to be rescheduled for a new work experience” (Unnamed

client, personal communication, August 13, 2012). The informal interview conducted in August 2012 communication with other clients leads to an impression that the program lacks effectiveness as well as realistic goals for clients in the program.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to provide a critical review of W2 using literature related to the State of Wisconsin.

### **Significance of the Study**

Understanding W2 and alternatives is critical to care-givers and to those concerned with policy.

### **Statement of the Problem**

To what extent is W2 effective? What steps can be taken to make it more constructive and achievable for the clients it serves.

### **Definition of Terms**

**W2:** Wisconsin Works (W-2) replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) in September, 1997. W-2 is based on work participation and personal responsibility. The program provides employment preparation services, case management and cash assistance to eligible families.

**Effectiveness:** to provide the necessary training, supportive services and financial incentives for low-income parents to obtain permanent and stable employment with access to further training that will lead to career advancement. Provide necessary and appropriate services to prepare individuals to work and to obtain and maintain viable, self-sustaining employment, which will promote economic growth.

### **Delimitations of Research**

The references used for the review of literature were collected over a period of 91 days using the resources of the Karmann Library at the University of Wisconsin – Platteville and Golden Meir Library at the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee. The several search engines provided by EBSCOHOST were used. The key search terms were “Wisconsin W2”, and “Effectiveness”.

### **Method of Approach**

A brief review of the history of W2 from 1986 to 2013 was conducted. A review of literature relating to research, studies, and anecdotal evidence of the effectiveness and alternatives to the program that could assist with society and the population involved. Another review of literature on related research was conducted. The findings were summarized and synthesized, and recommendations and alternatives were presented.

## **Chapter 2 Review of Related Literature**

The New Deal established the “safety net” for those affected by economic downturns and the lower classes. When President Franklin D. Roosevelt first discussed an array of programs with Frances Perkins, Secretary of the Department of Labor, he instructed her that he did not want a “Dole” established. One of the New Deal safety nets was the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), a federal assistance program in effect from 1935 to 1996. In later years the program was administered by the United States Department of Health and Services. The program was criticized as an “entitlement” and encouraging women to have additional children. In 1996 the program was replaced by a temporary assistance and in Wisconsin in 1997 the replacement of AFDC and some other safety net programs took the form of Welfare to Work (W2). The new program was aimed at still providing cash benefits but implemented a work component as well.

### **History/Brief Overview of W2 Program**

“Wisconsin Works (W-2) replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) in September, 1997. W-2 is based on work participation and personal responsibility” (DCF Wisconsin 2012). The program provides employment preparation services, case management and cash assistance to eligible families. Under W-2, there is no entitlement to assistance. The program is available to low-income parents with minor children who meet eligibility requirements and who are willing to work to their ability. Each W-2 eligible participant meets with a Financial and Employment Planner (FEP), who helps the individual develop an employability plan. The program originally aimed at helping families become economically

stable. This was to be done through giving families a cash payment as well as medical and food share benefits.

The program did not originally involve participants to go out and look for a job. After the initial contract the family member who was deemed eligible was required to actively be involved in employment activities which could vary from job skills workshops, a worksite, or employment search. The eligible household member is determined by previous steady work history and lacks barriers. Barriers are defined as obstacles or problems that could enable a person from obtaining full-time employment. Steady work history is defined as holding employment for a long period of time and not usually defined by temporary jobs or on assignment opportunities.

W-2 has the following paid placements transitional jobs, community service job, W2 transition, care taker of an infant, and At Risk Pregnancy. Trial Jobs (Subsidized Employment): Individuals who have the basic skills, but lack sufficient work experience to meet employer requirements, may be placed in a Trial Job. Through a Trial Job contract, the employer agrees to provide the participant with on-the-job work experience and training in exchange for a wage subsidy. Trial Jobs are expected to result in permanent employment. The employer must pay the participant a wage comparable to regular employees in similarly classified positions. Trial Job participants may be eligible for the state and federal Earned Income Credit, Food Share, Medicaid, child care assistance, and Job Access Loans.

**Community Service Jobs (CSJ):** CSJ placements are developed for individuals who lack the basic skills and work habits needed in a regular job environment. CSJ positions offer real work training opportunities, but with the added supervision and support needed to help the participant succeed. CSJ participants receive a monthly grant of \$653. Individuals who are employed part-

time, but have personal barriers that prevent them from increasing their work hours, may be placed in a part-time CSJ position with prorated benefits. In addition to a cash grant, CSJ participants may be eligible for Food Share, Medicaid, child care assistance, and Job Access Loans.

**W-2 Transition (W-2 T):** W-2 T is reserved for those individuals who, because of employment barriers, are unable to perform independent, self-sustaining work. Those individuals who have permanent employment barriers are assisted in securing federal Supplemental Security Insurance benefits. W-2 T participants receive a monthly grant of \$608. In addition to a cash grant, W-2 T participants may be eligible for Food Share, Medicaid, child care assistance, and Job Access Loans.

**Caretaker of an Infant (CMC):** CMC placements are for individuals who are the custodial parent of an infant who is 12 weeks old or less. Individuals in a CMC placement receive a monthly payment of \$673 and are not be required to participate in an employment position unless he/she volunteers to participate. In addition to a cash grant, CMC participants may be eligible for Food Share, Medicaid, child care assistance, and Job Access Loans.

**At Risk Pregnancy (ARP):** ARP placements are available to unmarried women in the third trimester of pregnancy who have a medically verified at risk pregnancy. Individuals in an ARP placement receive a monthly payment of \$673. In addition to a cash grant, W-2 T participants may be eligible for Food Share and Medicaid. In addition to the paid placements described above, noncustodial parents, minor parents, and pregnant women may be eligible for an array of case management services. Also, custodial parents who are employed then they apply or become employed after participating in W-2 may be eligible for case management services. The final



group eligible for case management services is W-2 participants who reach their time limit but ask for case management services.

## **Program Services**

**Case Management:** Provide ongoing case management services to W-2 participants. Provide ongoing W-2 eligibility determination and review eligibility for supportive services such as Child Care and Job Access Loans, family needs assessment by utilizing various assessment strategies and/or tools. Identify and utilize available community resources to address personal and employment barriers. Work collaboratively with participants to identify short and long-term goals in the most efficient path to economic self-sufficiency.

**Assessment:** Provide assessments to see if mental health or physical health assessments are needed. This may include formal and informal assessments.

**SSI/SSDI Advocacy:** Through screening, formal assessment and consultation with other providers of disability-related services, the W-2 agency is responsible for identifying participants who have a reasonable chance of obtaining SSI/SSDI. When there is agreement between the participant and the agency that the participant is appropriate for SSI/SSDI advocacy, the agency is responsible for assisting with the SSI/SSDI application and appeals process to the extent needed by each participant (DCF Wisconsin, 2012).

**Employability Planning:** Collaborating on an employment plan with your client. This is where activities are scheduled to assist a client with obtaining employment. This could also be used to supply information for why a client cannot obtain employment.

**Work Experience:** Work experience is a worksite that is setup to allow a client to obtain employment skills for future employment positions. A work experience is supposed to help clients with punctuality, accountability, soft skills, and ext.

**Job Readiness and Employment Workshops:** These workshops provide clients with job leads for positions that are currently hiring. These workshops also go over interview attire as well as interview etiquette. These workshops also hold job fairs and onsite hiring events.

**Education:** A GED program is also in place at every W2 agency to attempt to assist clients in obtaining their GED which will also make them more marketable in the workforce field.

**Job Development:** Job developers assist clients with job search efforts as well as placement when an opportunity is available.

**Job Retention:** Refers to helping clients maintain employment when employment is secured. This includes making follow up phone calls with clients to check on current employment. This also includes providing transportation and case management while the client is working. In extreme circumstances this may involve contacting a client's job in efforts to help them in retaining employment. If job loss occurs reattachment to employment is another function of job retention.

**Supportive Services:** Supplies clients with transportation, emergency needs, cash management classes. This provides clients with non-financial assistance when w2 clock runs out.

## **Dysfunction of the Program**

When looking into W2 there are those who support it and those are highly critical. “People who support believe it really makes a difference in the lives of the people on it as well as their community” (Bonds, 2006 pg.51). People who are critical often see it as a hindering dysfunctional program. This comes from an array of different problems. Through research it was found that there was an immediate problem with the work experience attached to W2 as well as the sanctioning of a client. (Bonds, 2006, pg.52) The developers of W2 states that it aims to help people become economically stable and job ready but these two things go against the mission statement of W2 (DCF Wisconsin, 2012). W2 is said to aim to make the work experience similar to a full-time job. The work experience is a worksite that tracks attendance as well as the manner in which a client conducts themselves at the jobsite. Clients are given the option to find or pick a worksite from the various worksites offered. The problem that comes into play with this is the disinterest of the client wanting to attend a worksite that isn’t similar to the type of work in which they are interested in. According to research “this causes excessive sanctioning of clients due to the client having a lack of interest in the assigned worksite. Research showed a direct correlation to worksite disinterest and sanctioning” (Bonds, 2006 pgs. 40-41). Out of the 5 clients who were in the survey 3 of them stated that they were sanctioned heavily for missed work experience. Each client stated different reasons for the missed hours. Each client made it known through the survey that they informed their case worker that they didn’t like the worksite and didn’t want to be at the worksite.

Authorities say the “Statewide, the average client was sanctioned 12 hours per week for work experience” (DWD, 2004, p. 2) . This would directly correlate with the survey conducted of five

current W2 clients at the YWCA which is one of four W2 agencies in Milwaukee. Through this self-conducted survey each client had negative feelings about work experience. One client interviewed stated that work experience is a waste of time and that it does not lead to a job and ultimately takes time away from employment search itself. This client stated that she had been to three different work experiences. The client stated that when she began to pick her worksite the choices were limited and that she would not essentially seek full-time employment in that area. This was alarming for two reasons, why would clients be placed in a worksite that isn't of any interest to them. (E. Barber, personal communication, August 13, 2012). This would explain the relationship of clients missing work experience and experiencing sanctions which ultimately takes a portion of their grant benefit. According to DWD "W2 agencies need to hold periodic roundtables for FEP(Case Managers) and supervisory staff to review worksites and discuss if alternative worksites or job skills trainings need to be created to decrease the dissatisfaction with work experience" (DWD, 2004, p. 5). Although it is stated in W2 policy that a client must attend at least 12 hours of work experience this part of the program may need to be re-evaluated due to the high number of clients being sanctioned for work experience. What was more troubling about the interviews conducted was that all clients preferred to be in employment search versus work experience. Clients stated that they "feel "as if work experience is leading to a job and it takes a lot of valuable employment search time. One client in particular stated that they had been to three different worksites and none of them led to a job. The client expressed frustration regarding this because they stated that W2 has a time limit of 60 months and that they have been in a worksite for 11 months which was a fifth of their W2 time limit clock. As expressed by those interviewed, all seemed to have the same dislike of the worksite for various reasons. Clients believed the types of worksites that they were able to pick from were not related to their job

skills. The also showed that all clients would prefer employment search over work experience. As stated “it’s inevitable for a client to miss an activity that he or she is not interested in or finds of little use (DWD, 2004, p. 2).

This not only had an effect on all clients statewide, but it also had an effect on clients of different races as well, which causes more problems with the program. “Statewide in comparison to white participants, black participants received an average monthly grant of \$37.61 less in 2004 and \$23.88 less in 2005” (DWD, 2004, p. 2). The DWD stated that this could be accredited to variations by agency and caseworker in the interpretation and application of W2 policy. DWD feels strongly that recommendations such as implementing new work experiences need to be created as well as the implementation of letting a client select their own worksite. This also makes W2 go in the opposite direction of what it intends to accomplish. If a client check is constantly sanctioned it makes them have less money and makes them more economically unstable. This causes an immediate problem because clients become more dependent on W2 and may eventually stay on it longer and not see it as a short term plan. Authorities (Wisconsin Works, 2004 pg. 2) suggest that as the economy changes, changes are needed to W2. The perception is that agencies need to be more lenient on W2 clients and that more compassion needs to be shown. Authorities also say that Wisconsin has set fourth some misguided precedents for W2 as well as the participants. “If our goal is to lift people out of poverty rather than simply reduce the number of welfare recipients (1) we must provide opportunities for education and training to job development skills, (2) increase the minimum wage and create better-paying jobs, (3) guarantee adequate childcare and healthcare, (4) extend eligibility for subsidized childcare beyond the age of 12 for those afflicted with mental or physical disabilities, and (5) create an accurate system for evaluating welfare reform measures” (Moore, 2007, pg.3).

Looking at the first point made it seems as if authorities are suggesting that there needs to be an improvement with education and job skills training which the state believes is lacking at this time. “Education clearly is the key to self-sufficiency. Labor market trends predict that 80 percent of jobs in 2012 will require education beyond high school” (Moore, 2007 pg. 4). Low skill, low-wage jobs even if plentiful will not support families. The W2 program does not encourage education and training. Many job will be inaccessible to W2 clients unless they have their high school diploma or beyond in education. With that being said W2 may want to push more towards education and job skills training in hopes to help clients move from welfare to payroll.

Increasing minimum wage as well as better paying jobs is always an incentive to make things better. If there are higher paying jobs it may make people more likely to want to be off of W2. Poverty remains high among single mothers and their children. Welfare recipients continue to experience serious barriers to stable employment. Poor women and children face an uncertain economic and social future as welfare eligibility is exhausted and the economy continues to spiral. The last point made stated that there is a need to create an accurate system for evaluating welfare reform measures. This is important because there needs to be an evaluation of all outside factors that can contribute to the way people on welfare react as well as how the economy plays a role on W2. W2 is now currently under a new reform and changes are being made to move more towards employment focused base which would correlate better with the definition and mission of W2. (Wisconsin Works, 2004 pg. 3)

## **Effectiveness to the corrections of the program**

Given the suggested changes that need to be made to the program, education remains the most important aspect of change. Many jobs now require that you have a minimum of a high school diploma or a GED. Education gives us knowledge of the world around us. It develops in us a perspective of looking at life. It helps us build opinions and have points of view on things in life. People debate over the subject of whether education is the only thing that gives knowledge. Education is the process of gaining information about the surrounding world while knowledge is something very different. If there is a stronger push for education, it will make the program far more effective. If clients gain their high school diploma they become more marketable and susceptible to higher paying jobs. “50 percent of clients as of 2007 lack a high school diploma which make them less likely to obtain employment that will allow them to support their families”( Moore, 2007 pg.4). With this being said moving towards education may in fact make W2 more effective.

Increasing minimum wage will not only affect the mindset of W2 clients but it will give them more hope to strive for better. Minimum wage has a great effect on the mindset of people according to this report. If people know that they have the opportunity to better their way of living it is assumed that steps to better it will be taken more serious versus not working towards better. “We must focus on the issues that will bring true change and not hide our failures behind false rhetoric and faulty statistics” (Moore, 2007 pg. 3). These two mentioned areas are the important aspects of change.

## **Implementing Changes**

Implementing these changes to the program could take quite some time. Research shows (Wisconsin Works, 2004 pg. 3), that there has been many road bumps along the way with W2. There needs to be less variation by agency and caseworker in the interpretation and application of W2 policy. This would eliminate sanction variations amongst race and different agencies. The push for employment doesn't need to stop but there also should be an increased push for education throughout all agencies. Training needs to be provided to case managers and supervisory staff to increase awareness of diversity issues. The rules include "An examination of case manager's decision making on sanctioning, with the goal of reducing differential impacts" (DWD, 2004, p. 3). Developing policy and staff training to emphasize the accommodation for participants needs to be evaluated and assessed in the implementation of changes. As suggested through DWD W2 agencies need to identify best practices that reduce inappropriate sanctioning to be implemented with agencies statewide. Determine if there are case management strategies or practices that lead to inappropriate sanctions.

As of January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013 changes have already taken place with the W2 contracts in Wisconsin. Wisconsin has implemented many drastic changes that were unforeseen to clients as well as people working in the W2 agencies. The changes have been received by many clients and agents in the system as "shocking". That is, these changes all came as a shock because the suggested changes that had previously been requested are totally different from the current changes. These changes were not in favor to neither the client nor the W2 agencies. There were two major changes that were implemented by the administration of Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker. These changes were the pay for performance as well as moving the time clocks back



from sixty months to twenty four months.

“The 2013-2016 contracts will use a payment structure that includes a combination of capitated rate payments, performance-based payments and some program cost reimbursement. The capitation payment amount is based on the monthly caseload of enrolled eligible families. Contractors shall achieve specific performance outcomes to earn the performance-based payments” (DCF, 2013). Although some W2 agencies are non-profit agencies this has somewhat made them for profit, because instead of getting funds upfront in the contract they are now pay for performance. This means that an agency will only be paid once an eligible claim is put in. There is no longer upfront money paid out to any agency. In the past agencies have been able to show and prove after funds have already been distributed but the new policy does not allow for funds to be distributed unless performance has been obtained. This has been rather hard on agencies because some agencies depended on upfront funds to assist with helping the clients in which they serve. This has also caused some agencies to lay-off workers due to not enough funding coming in as can be seen recently with UMOS which is one of four W2 agencies that serve Milwaukee County. UMOS recently laid off 31 employees due to low performance rates.

According to walker, “W2 clients have not been put into the right positions to obtain employment and enough pressure has not t been placed on them to find employment” (Schultze & Romell, 2011). The vote to put the new rules in place was not unanimous; according to DCF it was a vote of ten to six in favor of Governor Walker’s recommendations. The votes were taken from appointed officials of Walker who oversaw the vote as well as sixteen members of the department of children and families who voted. Welfare reform waivers followed soon after the changes went into place. According to DCF “80% of W2 clients were very frustrated with new W2 changes and believe as if welfare reform waivers needed to be signed, which were denied by

Walker”(DCF, 2012). This change not only has an effect on agencies but clients and they quickly realized that. This is a problem for clients because they are only being able to be helped with funds that are available. So not giving funds upfront has limits on the W2 agencies but it has limitations on funds for clients.

The second major change implemented was replacing the sixty month W2 clock with the twenty four month clock. Previously clients had a time clock of sixty months or five years to find employment and receive employment services, and a check while on W2. This clock has been taken down to two years because the Walker administration felt as if clients were given too much time to find employment and become economically stable. This change was also one of the major reasons a welfare reform petition was started. This change had many psychological effects on clients for many reasons. Clients believe as if they were not fairly given an opportunity to find employment in today’s economy. People who already had time used on their clocks weren’t given the chance to get a reset on their clocks. If people already had time used it was not erased with the new policy, the twenty four month clock still stood. This caused many problems for families. When the initial policy went into place clients thought that they were going to get a reset on their clock, but when it went into place that did not occur.

During an interview conducted on March 18, 2013 of 5 clients who had high time clocks(clocks with 18 or more months) it was evident that they were not only mentally effected by the recent changes but that they were physically effected. When clients were asked what was their initial reaction to the change with the time clock 100% of clients stated that they were caught off guard and devastated by the change. This change was not something in which they could mentally prepare for, or even come up with a plan in which they could try to adapt with the time in which they were given. Four out of five clients stated that they had lost weight due to

stress of the recent change. Clients reported that it's hard to eat when you don't know how you will be able to provide for yourself and your family with less than six months for your current income to be eliminated. It was clear that clients were physically and mentally affected by the change with the time clock. This was apparent through the constant saying of "I do not have a clue of how I am going to make it unless I find a job soon" (Client 1, 2013).

Three out of the five clients stated that their mental state could be described as unstable due to the immediate change. Clients believe they would have had a better chance of dealing with the time clock change if they were able to get a fresh start with their time clock. Clients thought it would have made more sense for every client on W2 to be given a fresh start with the time clock. They said they felt as if it would have been easier to mentally prepare with a full clock versus a clock being cut from sixty months to twenty four months with time already used. Five out of five clients stated that they would have to move in with a relative if their clock had expired before they found employment because there would be no way that they could make it living without the income provided by W2. It was clear that this change not only affected how clients began to think but also how they began to act. Four out of five clients stated that they began to become angered with anyone who they felt were not trying to help them. Clients stated that they disliked everything in that Scott Walker had done with W2 as well as other changes he implemented in Wisconsin. Clients felt strongly that Governor Walker clearly was not in touch with the population in which he was making changes for. Clients stated that "Walker candidly had no interest in how poor and impoverished people were going to survive or even be able to find employment during these trying times with the economy". All five clients that were interviewed ask where people think all of these jobs are going to come from. The last time they checked the unemployment rate was very high and this change would only add to the high levels

of unemployment. After the panel interview was conducted, clients wanted to make sure that Case managers realized that their anger was not towards them but towards the new changes with the policy. They believe as if they were not put in the best positions to win by the Walker administration. They wanted workers to know that they clearly were affected mentally and physically by the changes, and had little hope for the future.

### **Chapter 3 Conclusions and Recommendations**

Problems with race and class have long affected residents of Wisconsin, certainly at least back to 1967 and probably earlier. Critics of Wisconsin race relations (e.g. Jones, 2009) contend that the white power structure continues to dictate how and where African Americans will live in Wisconsin. It has been well documented that once African Americans have found a way to get a grasp on the economic ladder there is a force to keep the walls of segregation up and make sure that inequality stays intact. Looking back at the research and suggestions for the program, one may conclude that there needs to be changes made to the program and there needs to be a push made to alternatives to the program. As stated previously the mission statement of W2 is contradicted within the constraints of the program. This is stated because there is a clear disconnect of the design of W2 with the clients of W2. W-2 is based on work participation and personal responsibility. The program provides employment preparation services, case management and cash assistance to eligible families. The program clearly struggles in these areas due to a lot of factors, some that are inside and others created by the economy. “Politicians across the nation hope that by repeating the welfare reform mantra, “everyone will work”, it just might happen. Yet economic realities make this desirable outcome unlikely” (Moore, 2007, pg. 6). This program would have a better chance of being successful if the economy is better. Not only the economy but wages need to be increased and jobs need to be created. W2 is failing because clients lack job skills as well as education to make them capable of getting jobs that can help them take care of their families. It is safe to conclude that W2 needs to be restructured and it needs to be a concise decision within the state that everyone can agree with for the majority. Although W2 is operated out of many different agencies there needs to be training implemented so that case managers and supervisors are on the same page and that will eliminate sanctioning

problems. If this is practiced on W2 the transition into the workforce would be smoother, and it will be easier for clients to adapt. The sanctioning of clients need to be revisited as well.

The alternatives to the program as previously mentioned should receive more focus. Not saying we should do away with W2, but the WIA and FSET program aims at the same goals as W2, but the approach is different. There is less hand holding and the push for employment is the main focus. These programs have things in place to reassess clients if employment isn't found in the determined time frame. These programs get little to no attention and they should be looked at as other options to push employment throughout the state.

Overall W2 is a program that could work with a combination of things going right. You have to have clients that really want to find employment and remove themselves from below the poverty line. You also have to create more jobs and increase minimum wage for clients to have something to shoot for. Education has to be pushed as much as employment as well. There also has to be a better education and job skills training piece that will pay dividends in the long run to help clients move into the workforce. W2 needs to be reassessed due to the fact that the economy has changed. The focus of W2 needs to be more employment focused, to see the results in which the state is seeking.

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