

# **Wisconsin's System Initiatives for Eligibility and Work-Based Programs**

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**State of Wisconsin**  
**System Initiatives for Eligibility and Work Based Programs**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

We appreciate the opportunity to discuss where we have been and where we are going. We hope to learn from other states similar experiences. We will be telling the story of Wisconsin's approach to automation of eligibility and work programs in considerable detail.

Wisconsin has a strong history of program integration and of working to minimize program differences. Organizationally, the Division of Economic Support (DES) was responsible for Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC), food stamps, and Medicaid eligibility. In 1996, the Division moved from the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) to the newly formed Department of Workforce Development (DWD) in order to emphasize the end of AFDC and the importance of attachment to work for former welfare recipients. Welfare reform and particularly the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program have had a profound effect on our organization and a bigger effect than we anticipated on our automated systems.

Wisconsin has also been a leader in automation with the first Financial Assistance Management Information System (FAMIS) certified system and first FAMIS replacement system. In 1993, Wisconsin replaced its 15 year old FAMIS system with a new system. Wisconsin's Client Assistance for Re-employment and Economic Support System (CARES) is a highly integrated system that uniquely identifies individuals and efficiently shares data across multiple eligibility programs and multiple work programs. Since its inception, CARES has undergone constant change and continues to do so. It is much more advanced than the previous system in terms of full automation and incorporation of work program tracking. For instance, through its Medicaid "cascade" CARES will test every individual in a household for more than 40 variations of Medicaid. CARES has also made inevitable a different approach to data and information because of its basic approach to storing historical data. (See app. A-1.)

## **Setting the Stage**

From 1986 through 1997, a series of increasingly complex welfare reform waivers were implemented in Wisconsin, even as the new system was being installed. These waivers included Learnfare, Two-tier, Pay-for-performance, Self-sufficiency First, Work Not Welfare, and others. These waivers helped shape the federal TANF legislation and paved the way for Wisconsin's primary TANF program, Wisconsin Works (known as W-2). Because of the large effort required to obtain and operate under them, the waivers highlighted the importance of the need for flexibility under TANF. By 1995, Wisconsin was on an accelerated effort, initiated by the legislature and embraced by the governor to replace AFDC by 1997. During this period, welfare reform and the emphasis on a work-based approach for the AFDC replacement became a major focus of the organization.

The welfare reform waivers required a series of modifications to the AFDC logic in the CARES system. This provided an opportunity to try out many of the features that were eventually put together for W-2. How we incorporated W-2 also illustrates a key attitude towards automation. We consider our automated systems as very malleable. We do not want the automated systems to define and limit program or policy. Putting W-2 into CARES was not a modified version of AFDC. W-2 was a new program; however, it used some of the concepts learned while modifying AFDC.

In addition to replacing AFDC with W-2, other major changes were made. Retrospective budgeting and monthly reporting were ended and replaced with prospective budgeting. Food stamp households were moved to a 3-month review cycle. (This has been recently phased out because it proved difficult for working families.) Wisconsin received a waiver to pass-through child support collections.

With the privatization of W-2 in Milwaukee and several other locations, a new administrative structure was needed to be able to distinguish between cases that

were in the local Income Maintenance (IM) agency vs. cases that were in the local W-2 agency. This necessitated setting up a second CARES structure of supervisors, workers, and cases attached to a W-2 office in each county and six in Milwaukee County.

### **Understanding the Impact of Change**

As we prepared for TANF, we proceeded in new directions and, somewhat to our surprise, continued to take directions we had not anticipated. This included our approach to programs and systems. It took time to understand that organizational changes have driven and become intertwined with our system initiatives and objectives.

At both the central and local levels, we thought we were going towards one local agency and one central bureaucracy responsible for TANF, food stamps, and Medicaid programs for the non-elderly disabled population. We have now split responsibility across multiple workers, multiple local agencies and multiple state departments. This is having a profound effect on the CARES system that was designed and implemented around a strong tradition based on integrating programs and minimizing their differences. Previously, we had one department responsible for the systems that supported TANF, food stamps, Medicaid, and child care. We now have these programs managed by two departments, DHFS for Medicaid and soon food stamps and DWD for TANF and child care. The two departments have different although complementary missions. DWD's mission: To build a world class work force, work environment and economy. DHFS's mission: To lead the nation in fostering healthy, self-reliant individuals and families.

While under DWD, we emphasized the use of Medicaid and food stamps as work supports. While they do support work for many, they are also entitlements. Throughout the organizational shifts, we have never lost sight of the continuing

need to provide efficient service to our customers. More than ever, the local delivery operations must accommodate multiple focal points while serving the same families. Often, local agency staff remind us that working families or hard to serve families call for coordinated approaches across multiple programs. After more than 4 years, the two departments are still working to arrive at a common understanding of how to jointly manage the automation and operation of these programs.

## **PART I: OVERVIEW OF SYSTEM INITIATIVES AND THEIR OBJECTIVES**

### **1. Replace Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)**

Eliminate the AFDC program and replaced it with the new work based Wisconsin Works (W-2) TANF program. A related objective has been to develop a more integrated approach to the multiple work programs. There has been a stovepipe approach to work programs even though they are often serving the same people. (Note that children-only AFDC was also ended and replaced by Kinship Care and Caretaker Supplement which are TANF programs run by DHFS.)

### **2. Medicaid Expansion**

The Medicaid program is being expanded. New programs have been implemented in CARES and are reaching previously ineligible people. Multiple efforts, often involving automation improvements, are focused on ensuring that all people in Wisconsin who are eligible for Medicaid are receiving it. Automation improvements are aimed at outdated or cumbersome parts of the CARES system. These are being done to make the system more efficient and to make it easier for workers and applicants.

3. **Food Stamp Changes**

Address multiple issues with the Food Stamps Program. This included issues similar to the Medicaid program of access and expansion to all eligible people. It also included dealing with high error rates and program simplification. Electronic Benefit Transfer has been implemented. Many of the automation improvements are aimed at reducing or eliminating complexity. Some of these, like eliminating the 3-month review will also be more accommodating to working families.

4. **Outcomes Measurement and Performance-Based Contracts**

With more attention on work requirements, there is wide interest in accountability at both the state and local level. This has resulted in a growing number of system initiatives to track and report on program outcomes and performance standards. Performance standards with target rates are now built into the W-2 contracts. Federal TANF reporting and performance standards have also required substantial system initiatives.

5. **Enhanced Data and Reporting Capability**

Build an infrastructure that will improve access to data and information. Plan and manage the use of the infrastructure. This includes a variety of traditional approaches such as reports, extract files, and new data warehouse technologies.

6. **Software Integration for One-Stop Job Centers**

Support a multiprogram job center approach. Current job center partners operate multiple programs that often serve the same participants. These programs are supported by multiple automated systems. The Case Managers' Desktop Reference (CMDR) system by using a social security number pulls information from CARES and other major systems to provide a picture of how a participant is currently being served. The other systems

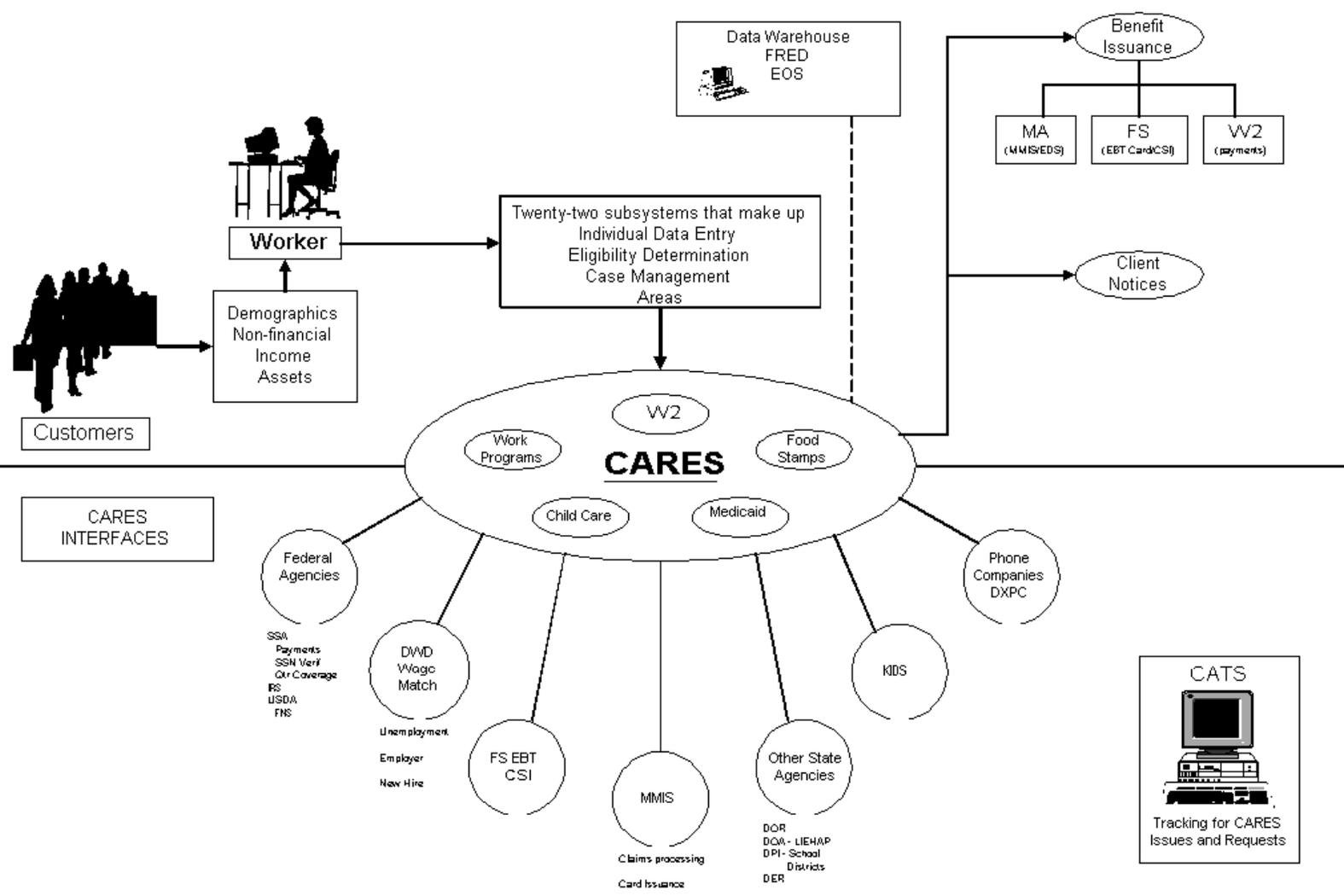
support programs including Unemployment Insurance (UI), New Hire, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Workforce Investment Act (WIA). We anticipate future efforts will focus on making it easier for case managers to accomplish a seamless delivery of services across multiple systems.

7.

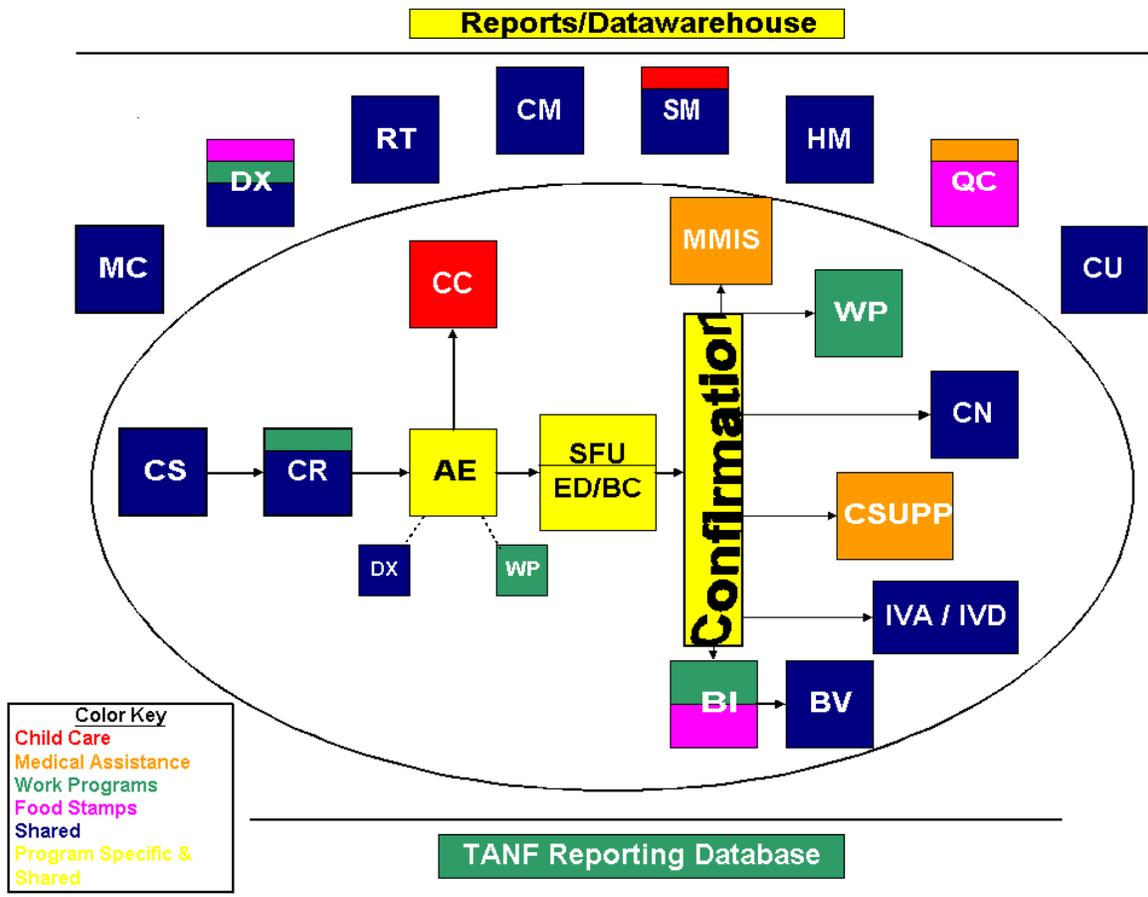
# **Appendix A – Charts and Graphs**

- A –1 High Level View of CARES Processing
- A –2 CARES Subsystems (primary in the oval)
- A –3 Software Distribution By Business Program  
CARES Caseload Counts for Various Assistance Group Combinations
- A – 4 W-2 Caseload and Placement
- A – 5 Food Stamp Caseload  
Child Care Caseload
- A – 6 Medicaid Caseload
- A – 7 Wisconsin Workforce Development Services
- A – 8 Diagram of Families Served and Targeted by Employment and Work Support Programs
- A – 9 Front-End Data Mart Approach for Enterprise Data Warehouse

# CARES PROCESSING



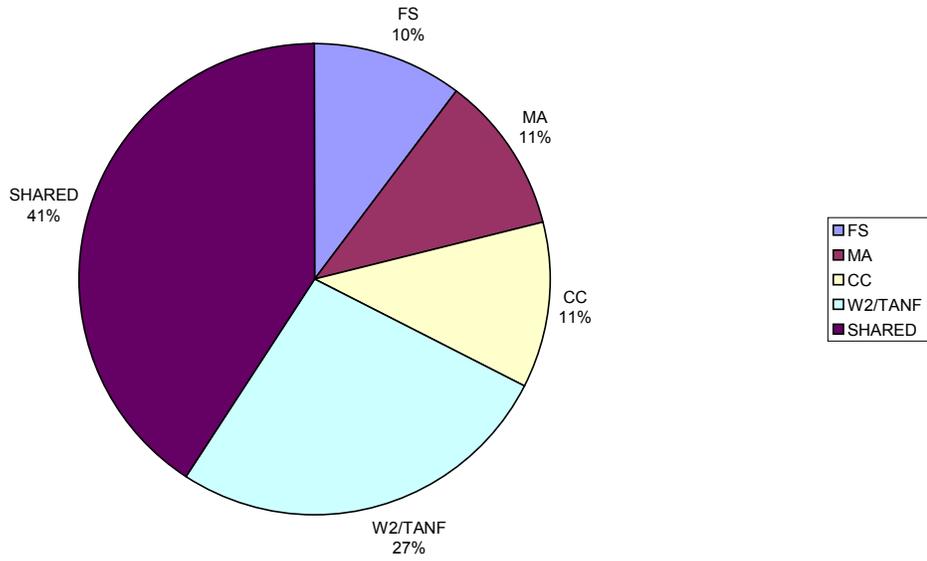
## Current CARES Subsystem View



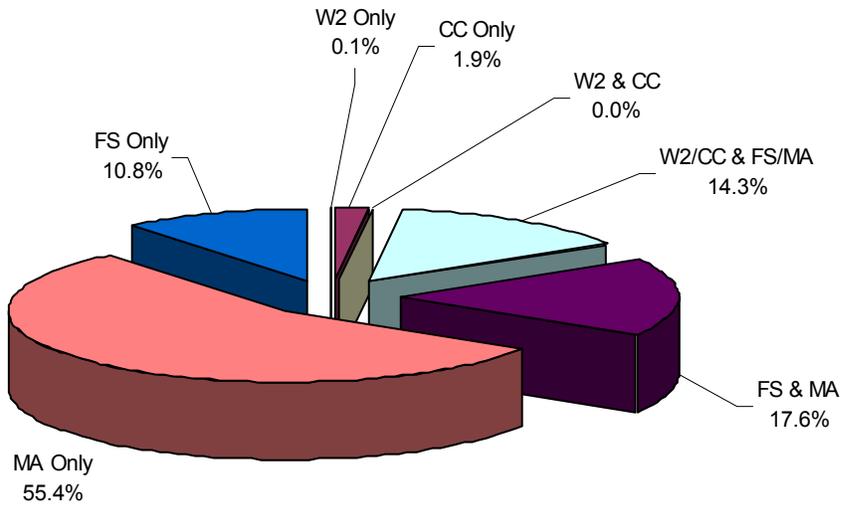
**CARES SUBSYSTEMS :**

CLIENT REGISTRATION	(CR)	WORK PROGRAMS	(WP)
APPLICATION ENTRY	(AE)	MASS CHANGE	(MC)
STANDARD FILING UNIT	(SF)	DATA EXCHANGE	(DX)
ED/BC - Eligibility	(ED)	REFERENCE TABLES	(RT)
CLIENT SCHEDULING	(CS)	HISTORY MAINTENANCE	(HM)
CLIENT NOTICES	(CN)	SECURITY MAINTENANCE	(SM)
CASELOAD MANAGEMENT	(CM)	MMIS INTERFACE	(MI)
MONTHLY REPORTING	(MR)	1V-A/IV-D	(IV)
BENEFIT ISSUANCE	(BI)	ACCESS TO OTHER SYSTEMS	(OS)
BENEFIT RECOVERY	(BV)	CHILD CARE	(CC)
QUALITY CONTROL	(QC)	COMMON UTILITY	(CU)

Software Distribution by Business Program

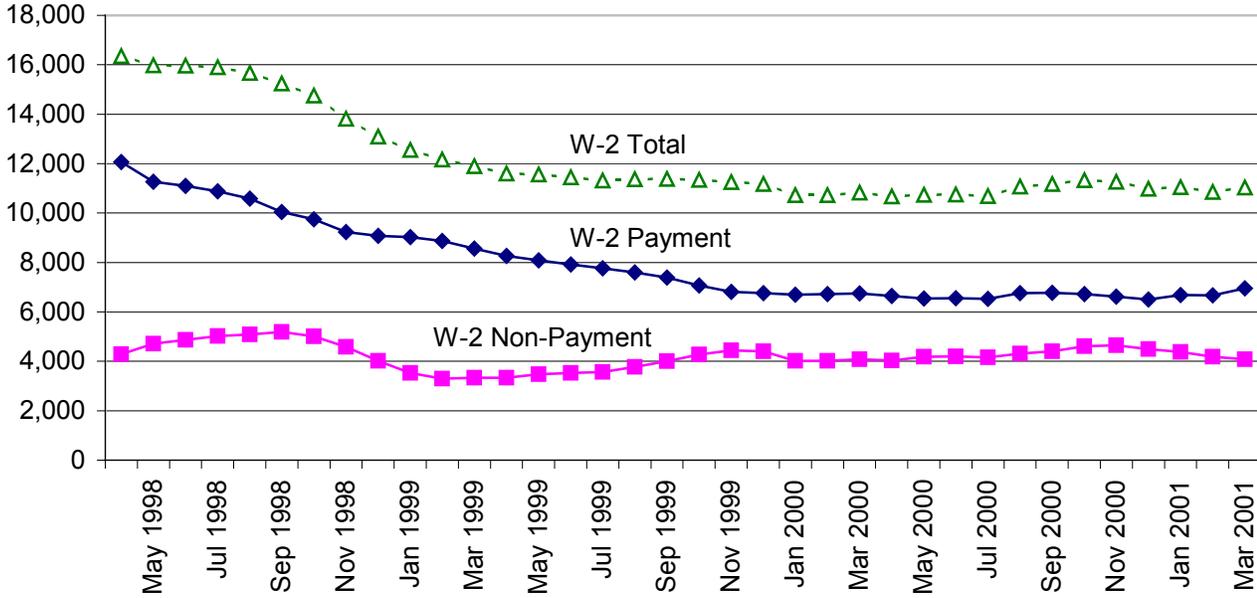


CARES Counts for Various AG Combinations

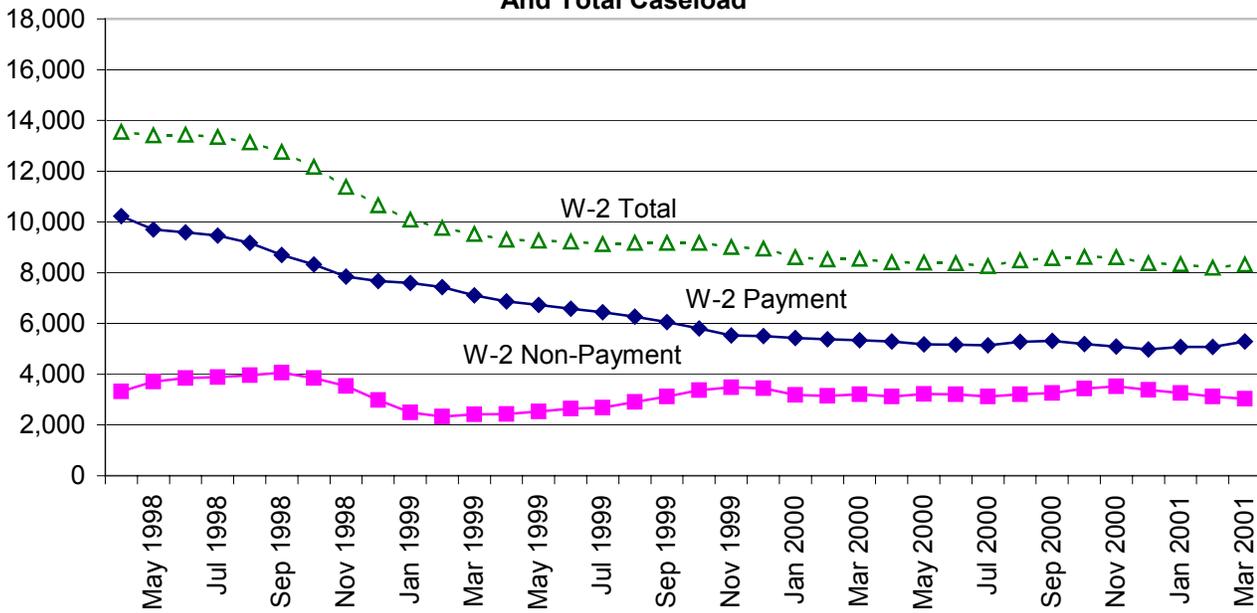


January 2001 Data

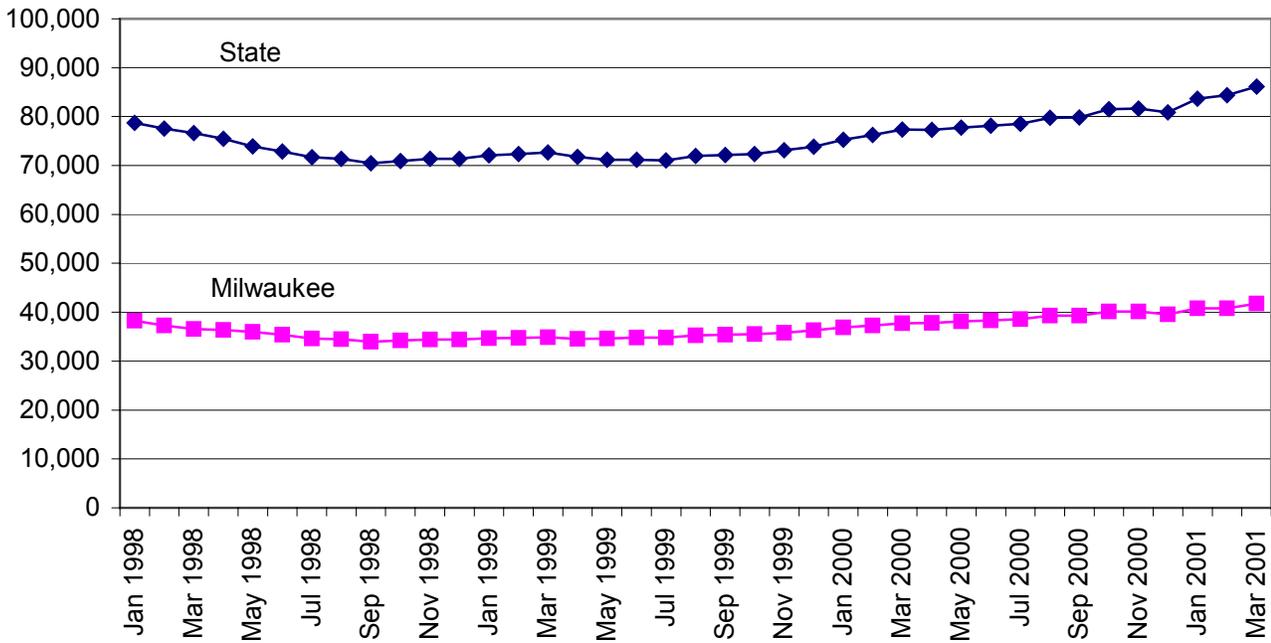
**Wisconsin  
W-2 Payment Placement  
Non-Payment Placement  
And Total Caseload**



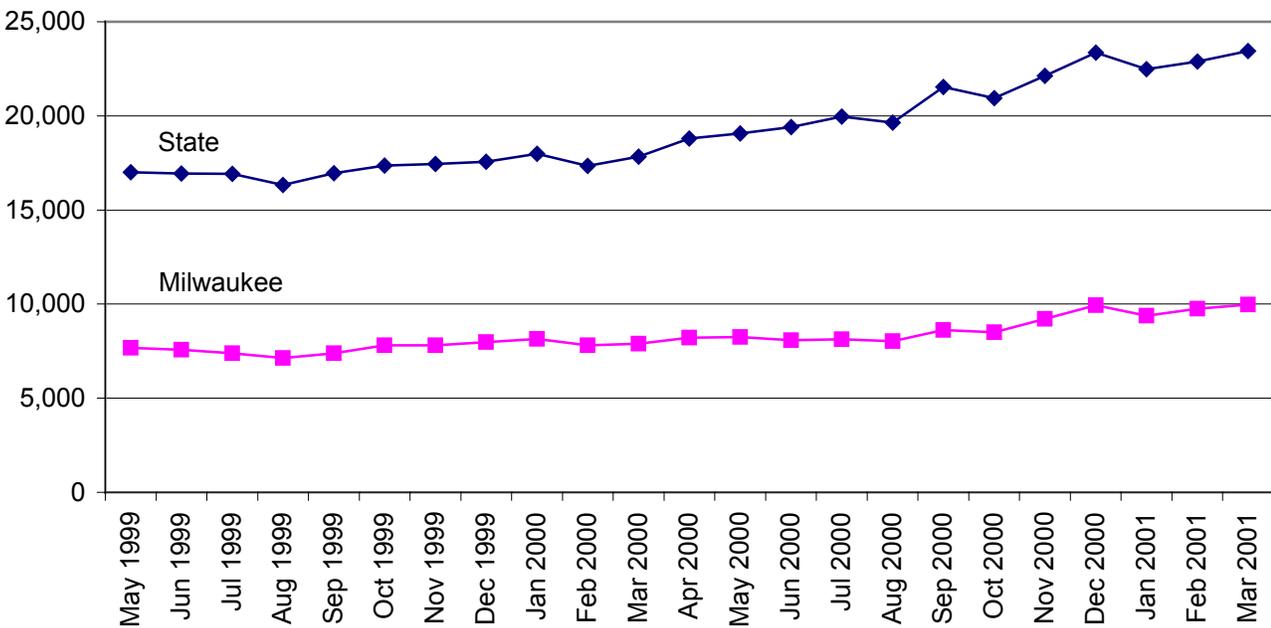
**Milwaukee  
W-2 Payment Placement  
Non-Payment Placement  
And Total Caseload**



### Wisconsin Food Stamp Caseload

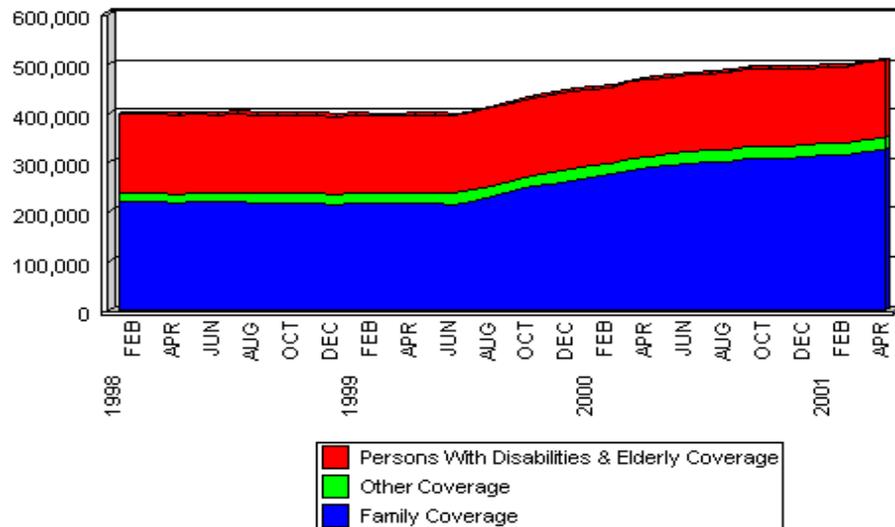


### Wisconsin Served Child Care Families

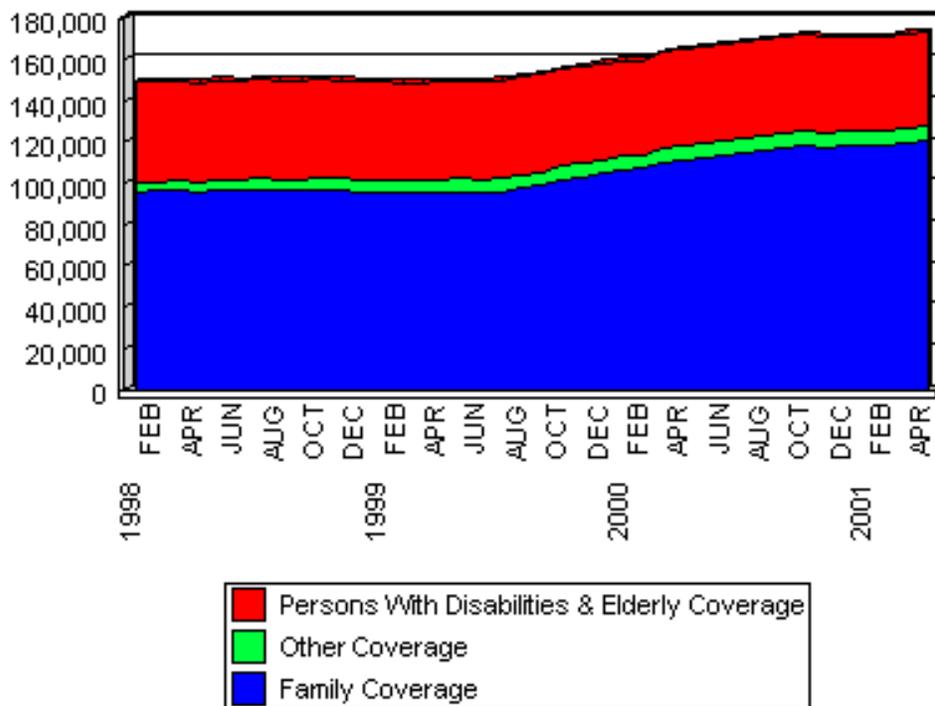


## Wisconsin Medicaid

Recipients Statewide by Coverage Type for Each Month and Year



## Milwaukee Medicaid

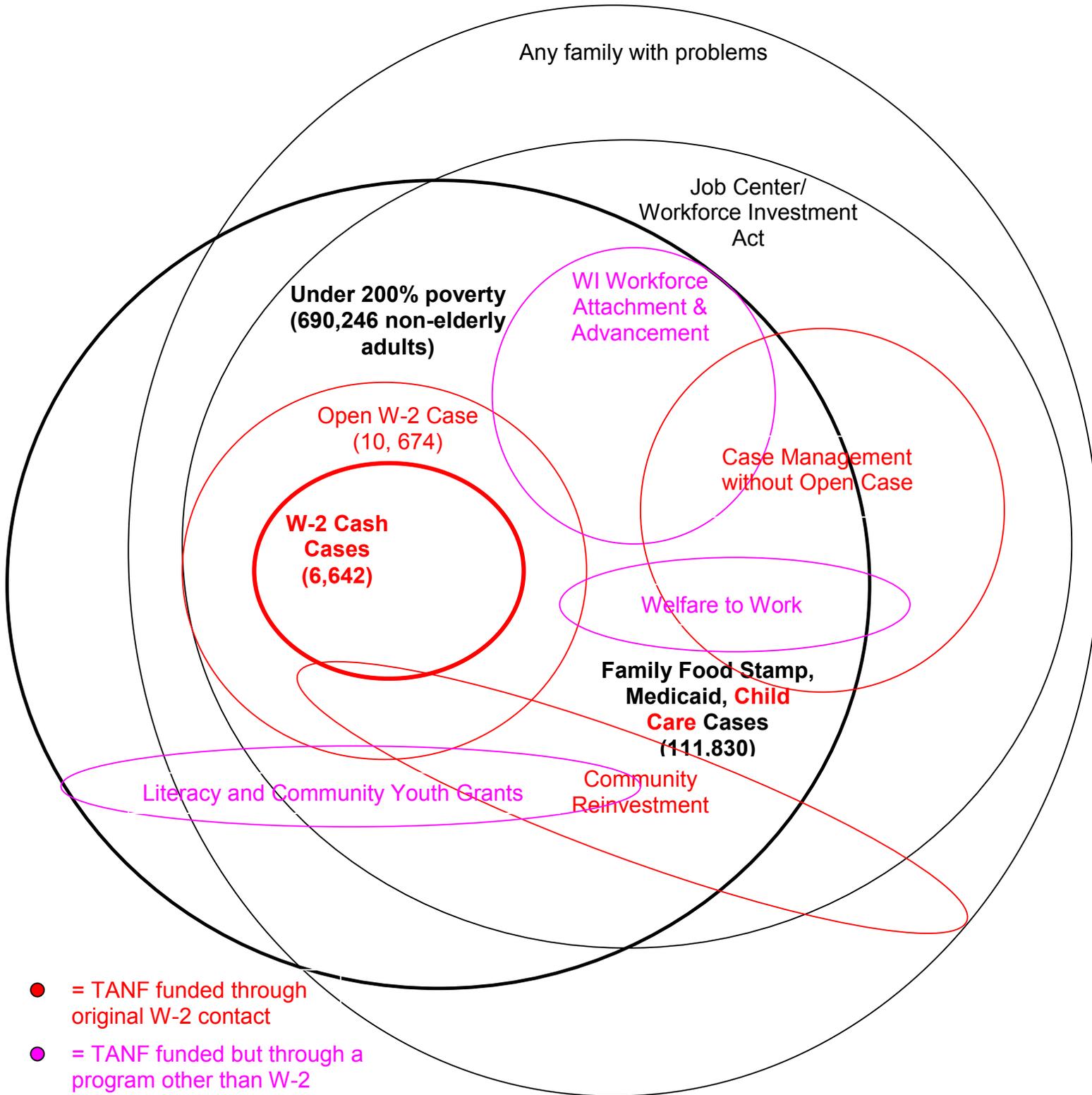


## Wisconsin's Workforce Development Services

SELF SERVICE PRODUCTS		
<p>Job Fairs</p> <p>America's Job Bank</p> <p>Labor Market Info.</p>	<p>Internet JobNet</p> <p>Training Opportunities</p> <p>Seasonal Job Website</p>	<p><b>Employer and Workforce Services – General</b></p> <p>Employer Services      Labor Law Clinics      New Hire Reporting</p> <p>WI Business Resource Network</p> <p>Equal Rights      Migrant Services</p> <p>Children First</p> <p>UI      - FPL* Related</p> <p>WC      Child Care</p> <p>DVR      Transportation</p> <p>Skills Adv.      W-2</p> <p>Workshops      WtW</p> <p>School-to-Work      WAA</p> <p>Child Support      FSET</p> <p>Veterans Services      ESAP</p> <p>Apprenticeships      WIA</p> <p>WIA</p> <p>*Federal Poverty Limit</p>

*"Everyone can be a member of Wisconsin's workforce"*

Employment and Work Support Programs in Wisconsin: A visual comparison of programs and target groups.



Note: All caseload numbers are from April 2000 with the exception of the 200 percent to poverty figure, which was estimated based on 1996 census data and the state poverty figures cited in "In Midst of Reform: Wisconsin in 1997."

# Front-End Data Mart Approach

