Policy

To establish a consistent method of determining income eligibility and to provide a statewide definition of income that is identical for all local agencies. Income determination is required for all clients at all certifications.

Procedure

General Sequence to Determine Income Eligibility

1. Assess adjunctive eligibility on the basis of eligibility to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

2. If the client is not adjunctively eligible, determine size of household/economic unit and assess total household income.

3. If the applicant reports zero income or has no proof of income, follow guidelines for self-declaration, if applicable.

I. Adjunctive Eligibility

To allow for automatic income eligibility, an applicant is adjunctively income eligible for WIC if documentation shows that the individual:

- Is certified as fully eligible to receive benefits from either SNAP, Medicaid, or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or
- is a member of a household containing
  1. a TANF recipient or
  2. a pregnant woman or infant currently on Medicaid
  3. In a household where a child or a postpartum woman has Medicaid, their Medicaid status cannot be used as a factor in determining income eligibility for other household members. Only the child or postpartum woman with Medicaid will be the adjunctively eligible.

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Medicaid</th>
<th>TANF</th>
<th>SNAP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant woman</td>
<td>Self and household members</td>
<td>Self and household members</td>
<td>Self and household members*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant</td>
<td>Self and household members</td>
<td>Self and household members</td>
<td>Self and household Members*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>Self</td>
<td>Self and household members</td>
<td>Self and household members*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PostPartum Woman</td>
<td>Self</td>
<td>Self and household members</td>
<td>Self and household members*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*SNAP identifies a head of household to receive Food Stamp benefits for all household members. Therefore, infants and children would not receive benefits individually, except eligible foster children.

Proof of adjunct eligibility based on enrollment in one of the three programs noted above must be confirmed at the time of application. Self-declaration is not sufficient...
as proof of being adjunctively eligible. Documentation must accurately represent current eligibility for participation in such a program.

Documentation may include:

1. Notice of Eligibility letter showing current eligibility dates
2. Confirm via telephone access to adjunct programs which verifies current eligibility.
3. Written verification from applicant’s caseworker as to current eligibility.

An applicant adjunctively income eligible for WIC is not subject to the income limits or further income verification. Staff is required to ask adjunctively eligible applicants to self-declare their income for statistical purposes and document this amount on the Rights and Responsibilities (R&R) form and in the WIC computer system.

If an applicant is not adjunctively income eligible or the clinic worker is unable to substantiate adjunctive income eligibility with information provided, traditional income eligibility screening is required.

If the adjunctive participant is found no longer eligible for the adjunct program then the income must be reassessed mid-certification. This also applies to other household members who may have been deemed eligible based upon another family member’s participation in an adjunct program.

II. Income Screening
Definition of Economic Unit/Family Size
The family size/economic unit is the number of persons, related and/or unrelated, living together as one economic unit and whose production of income and consumption of food, goods, and services are shared with the following guidelines and exceptions:

- A Foster child is counted as a family of one
- Persons who are claimed as dependents for income tax purposes may be counted as a member of the family whether or not they reside with the family
- A child is counted as a member of the family with whom s/he lives. In cases of dual custody of a child, the child is counted as member of the family with whom h/she spends the majority of time during the prior month. In dual custody cases, food packages may need to be tailored according to the amount of time spent with the family (or families) participating in WIC.
- A pregnant woman will be counted as two (or more depending on the number of embryos or fetuses) unless she specifically waives the increase in number. Clinic staff will document in progress notes when waived.
- Minor children who live with their parents, spouses or unmarried couples that live together should count in the total household size.

It is possible to establish that more than one economic unit lives under one roof. Exceptions will be reviewed on a case by case basis. To qualify as a separate economic unit, applicants should have an adequate source of income and usually purchase and prepare food separately or intend to purchase and prepare food separately after certification.
Definition of Current Income

Current income is defined as all gross income before deductions are made for income taxes, social security taxes, insurance premiums, child support, car payments etc. All income from the prior 30 days will normally be considered. Occasionally it may be appropriate to consider current income to be income that will be available to the family in the next 30 day (e.g. the sole supporter of the family has just been laid off and has been authorized to receive unemployment for the next 6 months). Income includes the following:

- wages, salary, commissions, or fees
- net income from farm and non-farm self-employment
- Social Security benefits
- dividends or interest on savings or bonds
- income from estates or trusts, on investments or net rental income
- public assistance or welfare payments
- unemployment payments
- Government, civilian employee or military retirement or pensions or veterans payments
- private pensions or annuities or insurance benefits
- alimony or child support payments
- regular contributions from persons not living in the household
- net royalties
- Income of 2010 Census workers
- other income includes, but is not limited to, cash amounts received or withdrawn from any source including savings, investments, trust accounts and other resources which are readily available to the family.

Income Exclusions

Exclusions from income include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Any basic allowance for quarters (BAQ) received by military services personnel for privatized on-base or off-base housing and cost of living allowance (OCONUS COLA) or Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA) received by military service personnel residing outside the United States, or Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance (FSSA). Off-base housing is usually indicated on the military Leave Earnings Statement (LES) as: VHA (Variable Housing Allowance, BAH (Basic Allowance for Housing).
- Armed Forces Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance (FSSA) payments provided to families of service members by the Department of Defense (DoD)
- Combat Pay, Armed Forces Hostile Fire Pay/Imminent Danger Pay (HFP/IPD) and Hardship Duty Pay (HDP). In addition, the following types of pay may be excluded from income calculations: Hardship Duty Pay-mission (HDP-M), Hardship Duty Pay – location (HDP-L), Family Separation Housing (FSH), Foreign Language Proficiency Pay (FLPP), Special Duty Assignment Pay (SDAP), Combat Related Injury and Rehabilitation Pay (CIP), and Hazardous Duty Incentive Pay (HDIP). Please contact the State Office for clarification on exclusions for HDP-M, HDP-L, FSA, FLPP, SDAP, CIP, and HDIP.
- The value of in-kind housing and other in-kind benefits (some employer’s process salary payments for the dollar amount contributed to health insurance as part of the employee’s gross income for tax saving purposes, even though the employee never actually receives the income directly.)
- The value of assistance to children or their families under the National School Lunch Act
- Non-cash food assistance, payments from the Home Energy Assistance Act of 1980
- Payment for child care under the Child Care and Development Block Grant
- Student financial assistance used for expenses related to the costs of attendance at the educational institution. Financial aid used to cover other expenses such as room and board and dependent care expenses should be included in the income calculations. (i.e.: Pell Grants, National Direct Student Loans, Work Study)
- EITC refund/payment
- Filipino Veterans Equity Compensation Fund payments
- Payments made under the NFIP for flood mitigation activities

### Summary of Military Inclusion/Exclusions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Included as Gross Income for Military</th>
<th>Excluded Income for Military Families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Basic Pay</td>
<td>- Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS)</td>
<td>- Basic Allowance for Quarters (BAQ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Deployment Pay such as Family Separation Allowance (FSA) Can exclude if all three are applicable: 1.) Received in addition to basic pay 2.) Received as a result of deployment to or service in an area that has been designated as a combat zone and 3.) Not received prior to deployment to or service in the combat zone.</td>
<td>- Variable Housing Allowance (VHA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Foreign Duty Pay -these payments can be counted over s 12 month period</td>
<td>- Family Separation Housing (FSH)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Bonus Pay (Bonus)- can be averaged for the year</td>
<td>- Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Continental United States Cost of Living Allowance (CONUS COLA)</td>
<td>- Overseas Continent United States Cost of Living Allowance (OCONUS COLA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Mandatory salary reductions for GI Bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowances (FSSA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Hazardous Duty Pay (HDP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Hostile Fire pay/Imminent Danger Pay (HFP/IDP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Hardship Duty Pay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Combative Pay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Filipino Veterans Equity Compensation Fund</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Combat Pay is excluded if it is: a) received in addition to the service member's basic pay; b) received as a result of the service member's deployment to or service in an area that has been designated as a combat zone; and c) is not received by the service member prior to his deployment to or service in the designated combat zone.

### Calculating the Total Household Income

WIC applicants will provide acceptable written documentation of the amount(s) of income received by each member of the economic unit with the exception of situations identified above. In determining the income eligibility of an applicant the clinic staff should consider the current income of the family or the family’s income.
during the past 12 months, whichever indicator more accurately reflects the family’s status. The State defines “current income” to refer to all income received by the household unit during the month (30 days) prior to the date of the application for WIC benefits. If the income assessment is being done prospectively (i.e. the sole support of that family has just been laid off but has been authorized to receive unemployment benefits for the next six months), “current” refers to income that will be available to the family in the next 30 days.

The applicant should provide income documentation that reflects the current income situation. If the applicant is paid weekly or bi-weekly and this amount is consistent (meaning it does not differ paycheck to paycheck), then the check stubs can be compared against the current Income Eligibility Guidelines (IEG) Table to determine eligibility. There are columns for weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, and annual determinations. In all cases, at least 30 days of income documentation for household unit must be used.

Acceptable documents for proof of income include:

- Check stubs stating current amount of earnings. A handwritten pay check stub may be accepted if the clinic staff can verify it is a valid payroll check. Check stubs should be consecutive and from month (30 days) prior to scheduled certification appointment.
- W-2 forms with corresponding income tax returns
- Signed statement from employer
- Checking or saving account statement, if reflective of current income
- Current tax records: An IRS U.S. Individual Income Tax Return 1040 form
- Income receipt book or other accounting records for self-employment

Income calculations
Income calculations will be determined based on the following guidelines, dependent on the client’s frequency of pay.

Income Source(s) with Same Pay Frequency
If an applicant has only one income source, or if there are more than one income sources with the same pay frequency, do not use income calculations. Compare the income, or sum of all the incomes, to the published Income Eligibility Guidelines (IEG) Table for the appropriate household size and pay frequency to make the WIC income eligibility determination (see Policy CT: 6 for the IGE table).

**Note: The information in bold in each example is to be followed to get an accurate monthly income to report in the MIS, and does not need to be utilized to determine Program eligibility.

**Consistent Income Source(s) with Same Pay Frequency**

- Example 1: Weekly check stub = $550; Household size of three (3); reference the IEG Table for household size and Gross Weekly column; applicant is under the Gross Weekly Income maximum for family of three and eligible for benefits.

**Using the Income Frequency Table below multiply the gross weekly total of $550 by 52 to annualize income. To report in the WIC MIS as monthly income divide by 12 months. Example: $550 x 52 = $28,600 divide by 12 months = $2,383.33 monthly.**
Consistent Income Source(s) with Same Pay Frequency

- Example 2: Bi-weekly check stub = $1,110.00; Household size of five (5); reference the IEG table for household size and Gross Bi-weekly column; applicant is under the Gross Bi-weekly Income maximum and eligible for benefits.

** Using the Income Frequency Table below multiply the gross Bi-weekly total of $1,110.00 by 26 to annualize income. To report in the WIC MIS as monthly income divide by 12 months. Example: $1,110 x 26 = $28,860 divide by 12 months = $2,405 monthly.

Income Sources with Different Pay Frequencies

If an applicant reports two or more sources of income and the incomes are not received at the same interval, annualize all incomes with the following calculations in the below table and then combine for the total gross annual income to determine Program eligibility.

- Example 3: Income source #1: Weekly check stub = $350; Income source #2: Bi-weekly check stub = $750; Calculate by annualizing income: $350 X 52 weeks = $18,200; $750 X 26 weeks = $19,500; $18,200 + $19,500 = $37,700; Household size of four (4); reference the IEG table for household size and Gross Annual column; applicant is under the Gross Annual Income maximum and eligible for benefits.

- **Do not round the values resulting from each calculation.**
- Add together all the unrounded, calculated values/incomes.
- Compare the un-rounded total to the published annual income for the appropriate household size on the IEG table to make the final income eligibility determination.

**To report in the WIC MIS as monthly income divide total annual gross income (from example #3) by 12 months = $3,141.66.

Income Frequency Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>To Obtain Annual Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Multiply by 52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bi-weekly (every two weeks)</td>
<td>Multiply by 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-monthly (2x a month)</td>
<td>Multiply by 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Multiply by 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>Multiply by 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hourly</td>
<td>Rate x hours per week x 52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Rate x 5 (or number of workdays per week) x 52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Incomes with Same Frequency but Varying Amounts

- Example 4: (weekly pay): Week 1 = $200, Week 2 = $150, Week 3 = $175, Week 4 = $250. In this situation the weekly amounts will be summed to a monthly total of $775. Example: $200 + $150 + $175 + $250 = $775 divide by 4 = $193.75 weekly. There is no need to annualize in this situation, and only utilize the corresponding frequency interval on IEG Table, CT: 6, to determine eligibility and enter monthly income in the MIS.

- Example 5: (bi-weekly pay): Paycheck #1 = $400, Paycheck #2 = $600. This is the same as above, sum both bi-weekly paychecks: $400 + $600 = $1,000 divide by 2 = $500 bi-monthly and use the corresponding interval on IEG Table to determine eligibility and enter monthly income in the MIS as $1,000.

- If a participant reports multiple pay sources with varying/inconsistent pay as both examples above, follow the same steps by summing to a monthly total and using the IGE Table to determine eligibility and enter monthly in the MIS.

If an applicant receives sporadic or unusual pay, such as an annual bonus or overtime that does not typically occur such as only during the holidays, request that they provide proof of their normal pay with either a typical pay stub that is recent and current, or their W2. If neither of these documents is available, issue one month of benefits and request that they bring in documentation reflecting their typical pay for their next appointment.

If a bonus, holiday pay or overtime is received yearly, this income should be included as part of the annual income that will be measured against the IEG. These monies are part of the annual income the WIC family receives regularly – even if only received one time per year. W2 would be a good means to determine an annual amount to measure against.

Income Averaging

Income averaging may not be used to determine income eligibility for individuals that are seasonally employed or have large fluctuations in income. Household income must be determined based on current, annual or prospective 30 days income, whichever most accurately reflects the household’s current income status. Local agency staff does not have the discretion to choose time periods for income calculation outside of current or annual income.

III. Documentation of Income

After calculating a participant’s total income, the procedure for documentation will be as follows:

1. Provide a description of the documents used to determine income eligibility (adjunct eligibility document(s) or paycheck stub(s) and show how the income recorded was calculated on the “Rights and Responsibility” Form. Example: (same amount & frequency) Bi-weekly check stubs = $1,100 X 26 = 28,600 divide by 12 = $2,383.33 monthly or current Medicaid approval letter.
2. Residency and/or income only need to be documented once per family if the family member’s charts are cross referenced.
3. Routine photocopying of documents is not allowed.
Insufficient Information
WIC staff will routinely and clearly communicate to applicants the kinds of information they need to bring to their appointments, however if an applicant/participant fails to provide the necessary documentation, local agencies are instructed to implement the following options:

1. If the applicant receives SNAP, TANF, or Medicaid, it may be possible for the local agency to contact staff at the appropriate social service office and verify verbally that the applicant is adjunctively eligible.

2. If determined that the applicant meets all other eligibility criteria, screen for income based on self-declaration, provide one month of food benefits and require that appropriate documentation be brought in before more benefits are issued. The self-declared income amount must be documented as part of income screen and determined eligible before issuing 30-day presumptive benefits.

   a. If the participant returns within the 30-day period with the missing and appropriate documentation, their certification period will continue from the original date that the applicant was certified. Use same R&R to document income, initial and date and provide remaining months of benefits due.

   b. If the participant fails to return within the 30-day period, the certification period expires. If that same person returns after the 30 day period, a new certification process must be conducted as outlined in CT: 1. The certification cannot be back-dated to the first date the participant presented themselves at the clinic.

If a clinic exercises the option of self-declaration the “Rights and Responsibilities” must be completed and filed and/or cross referenced in each participant’s chart. If the participant fails to provide the documentation within the 30-day time limit or provides the documentation and is found to be over WIC’s income limit, terminate the participant (refer to CT:13)

Migrant Farm Workers
An instream migrant farm-worker’s income only needs to be assessed once, per family, per twelve month period. For transfers reassess income eligibility at the subsequent certification if it falls outside the twelve-month income eligibility period indicated on WIC transfer form.

Self-Employed
If an applicant is self-employed and does not receive regular pay checks, the most recent IRS U.S. Individual Income Tax Return form may be used as proof of annual income. The adjusted net income figure on the Tax Return should be used and further calculations are not needed.

No Proof of Income and Special Income Situations
An applicant may be unable to provide proof of income, examples include:

- the homeless
- migrant farmworkers
- persons working for cash
- emancipated minors
- employees on strike or furlough
In these situations, applicants must sign “Rights and Responsibilities” form specifying why he/she cannot provide documentation of income. Applicants will be told (if possible) to bring a letter from their employer or reliable third party that has knowledge of their income at a subsequent appointment. The inability to provide such documentation in these limited circumstances will not prevent participation.

Zero Income
Given WIC’s definition of family size/economic unit all applicants declaring zero income will be prompted to describe in detail their living circumstances and how they obtain basic living necessities(such as food, shelter, medical care and clothing) to establish if, in fact, the individual is truly with minimal or no resources. These participants will be dealt with on a case by case basis and thoroughly documented on the WIC Participant Statement/Documentation on the Rights and Responsibilities document.

Reassessment of Income Eligibility Mid-Certification
The clinic staff is not responsible for seeking out the continued income eligibility of participant(s) during the current WIC certification period. A local agency must reassess a participant’s household income during a current certification period IF the local agency receives information indicating that the participant’s income has changed. After reassessment, one of the following options will apply:

1. If a participant’s household income does exceed income guidelines, AND if all members have fewer than 90 days remaining in their certifications, then no action to terminate any of the members needs to occur.
2. If at least one member has 90 or more days remaining in the certification and the agency makes a determination that the household is income ineligible, then all WIC participants in the household should be terminated; even those with fewer than 90 days remaining in their certification. The procedure for “Notification of Ineligibility” will be followed.

EXAMPLE - If local agency/clinic receives information October 5, 2016 indication the mother has resumed work and the household is income ineligible, the following actions could occur:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WIC Household Member</th>
<th>Certification Period</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 year old child</td>
<td>01/2016 – 12/2016</td>
<td>Terminate Oct. 2016- fewer than 90 days remain in this child’s cert.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### WIC Household Member

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WIC Household Member</th>
<th>Certification Period</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 year old child</td>
<td>01/2016 – 12/2016</td>
<td>Income assessment completed in October and fewer than 90 days remain in any member certification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 year old child</td>
<td>01/2016 – 12/2016</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 month old infant</td>
<td>01/2016 – 12/2016</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Transfer Clients**

Transfer clients are not required to present proof of income; only identity and residency.