Effective: 12/2000 Revised: 06/2020 Policy No. CT: 1

Certification

Policy

All applicants for the WIC Program must be determined to be eligible for the program through a process called certification usually performed by the local WIC clinic. Sometimes the certification will be done at another WIC clinic within the state or in another state. Upon the completion of the certification process where the applicant is determined to be eligible, they are entitled to a food package. Staff shall conduct certifications while practicing Participant-Centered Services (PCS) which must be done in a timely fashion and according to procedures outlined in this section.

Authority

7 CFR § 246.7

Procedure

Certification Steps

Any qualified staff member may evaluate an applicant's program eligibility criteria (category, residency and income); nutritional risk determination and food package prescription can only be done by a Competent Professional Authority (CPA).

> A CPA is an individual on the staff of the local agency authorized to determine nutritional risk and prescribe supplemental foods. The following persons are the only persons authorized to serve as a CPA: Physicians, Dietitians, Nutritionists (bachelor's or master's degree in Nutritional Sciences, Community Nutrition, Clinical Nutrition, Dietetics, Public Health, Nutrition, or Home Economics with emphasis in Nutrition), Registered Nurses, Physician's Assistants, or persons who have passed the Nevada State WIC CPA training.

1. When the new applicant first contacts the WIC clinic by telephone or in person, pre-screen the new applicant for category, residency, and income. If the new applicant appears to meet the three criteria, they will be given the first available clinic certification appointment within

the processing standards timeframes.

2. To schedule an appointment, a new family record will need to be created in NV WISH with a designated Head of Household (HOH) and any additional applicants under the HOH. **An address must be recorded even if it's a temporary one**. If an address is not recorded before scheduling, WISH will not properly record your clinic application information or run the processing standards report (see CT: 2).

3. Clinic staff will instruct applicants on which documents to bring to the certification appointment. If the clinic is currently maintaining a waiting list and the applicable category is not currently being served, the applicant will be placed on the waiting list according to procedure.

4. At the clinic certification appointment, a qualified staff member must review provided proofs of the applicant's identity, residency, income and any other documentation requested. If participant is homeless, check the 'Homeless' box in NV WISH. Ask if the participant wants to register to vote and record it in NV WISH. A Voter Registration Application shall be given to anyone wanting to register to vote, who have changed their address, or who want to change their political party affiliation. Staff shall provide any assistance requested toward voter registration services.

5. If the applicant passed the eligibility criteria for WIC, ask them to fill out the WIC 'Developmental Milestone Checklist Program' (DMCP) Checklist(s). Checklist covers infants and children up to age 4 years old. A checklist will be given for each infant and child selecting the corresponding age. *Must be that age or older to be an accurate assessment tool.

6. If found not eligible for certification, refer to other services and provide the participant (HOH) a copy of the "Notice of Ineligibility" from NV WISH. Document in comments/alerts in NV WISH, indicating the Notice of Ineligibility was printed and provided to HOH.

7. **CPA Only**: Perform a Value Enhanced Nutrition Assessment (VENA) to determine nutritional risk and gather missing information through use

of motivational interviewing techniques. The full Nutrition Interview in NV WISH must be completed before nutrition education is provided. Determine the appropriate nutrition and/or medical risk; manually assign nutrition risk codes that do not auto populate in NV WISH. Inform participant of the length of their certification, options for the next nutrition contact, and when they will have to recertify. Provide (1) nutrition education based on the participants needs and interests and help participants identify new areas for goal setting, (2) referrals, and (3) assign supplemental foods.

8. Inform participant of their Rights and Responsibilities and the date their certification will end. Issue and explain food benefits and set up an appointment for participant(s) to return to the clinic for their nutrition education contact or high-risk appointment.

Eligibility Criteria

To be certified, an applicant must meet four criteria:

- **Category:** Be a pregnant, breastfeeding, postpartum woman, infant, child under the age of five, and breastfed infants of participant breastfeeding women.
- **Residency:** Be a Nevada resident.
- **Income:** Be under 185% of poverty or adjunctively eligible. (See CT:5)
- **Nutritional Risk:** Have a risk identified through a medical/nutritional screening. (See CT:7)

Certification Periods

Certification periods terminate on the last day of the month for all categories except for pregnant women.

Pregnant Women

- The duration of the woman's pregnancy plus up to six weeks postpartum.

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- *Presumptive Eligibility for Pregnant Applicants Only*
  Staff may certify a pregnant woman for the program without doing a nutritional risk assessment if she has been determined categorical, residency, and income eligible. The risk assessment is required to be completed within 60 days (30-day extension does not apply) after the presumptive certification. The woman will be removed from the program if no nutritional risk is found after this date. Assign risk code 503 and Priority IV. Once a complete certification has been performed, remove code 503.

Postpartum Women

Non-Breastfeeding
- Up to 6 months after the delivery or termination of the pregnancy.

Breastfeeding
- Breastfeeding women are certified up to the last day of the month in which her infant turns one year old, unless the formula requested exceeds the maximum allowed for MBF or until the woman ceases breastfeeding, whichever occurs first.
- If a breastfeeding woman quits breastfeeding after 6 months from delivery date, terminate her effective immediately from program without benefits. Provide client with a Notice of Termination letter (see CT: 13) and graduation education.

Children
- Children are certified every 12 months, ending with the last day of the month of their 5th birthday.

- Child Health Assessment (CHA)
  All children certified for longer than a 6-month period must be offered a Child Health Assessment. This Health Assessment is a health screening and nutrition education contact which occurs approximately in the middle of the child's certification period. Staff are **not** required to redetermine residency or income eligibility. All original risk codes are retained and assign new ones as determined (an exception to this is removing risk 401 if other risks are found). Staff is required to provide relevant nutrition education, guidance

on feeding, physical activity and encourage ongoing healthcare. Children are required to have four contacts made available during the 1-year certification this is inclusive of the certification and CHA.

*Child participants cannot be disqualified for failure to complete a CHA appointment. If a child participant misses their health assessment appointment, staff must attempt to contact the sponsor to reschedule within 3 business days. One month's benefits can be issued to the participant when the CHA appointment is rescheduled and the remaining benefits upon CHA appointment completion. All attempts to reschedule the CHA appointment must be documented in comments/alerts in NV WISH.

A Child Health Assessment (CHA) shall include the following:

1. Obtain weight and height or length measurements to assess growth.

2. Determine if an iron test is required based on the child's previous iron test results and whether they were within normal test limits.

3. Follow-up on any goals the participant set at the previous appointment and any previous concerns or nutrition risks identified.

4. All children will be screened for immunization status.

5. Ask open-ended questions to follow-up on health and nutrition status.

6. Complete the CHA appointment by creating a new Nutrition Interview in NV WISH and answering all the assessment questions. Offer education and referrals based on the participants' needs, desires and concerns. Work with the participant on "next steps" to facilitate behavior change.

7. Assess previously prescribed food package for any needed or participant preferred changes.

Infants

Infants are certified up to 1 year of age.

Infant Health Assessment (IHA)

- All infants certified for a period of 9 months or longer shall be offered an Infant Health Assessment performed prior to the end of their current certification. This Health Assessment is a health screening and nutrition education contact which occurs approximately in the middle of the infant's first year. The Infant Assessment is an expanded nutrition education appointment, not a certification or eligibility determination. Staff is **not** required to re-determine residency or income eligibility at the Infant Assessment. Staff is required to provide relevant nutrition education, guidance on complementary feeding, and encourage ongoing healthcare. Retain all original risk codes (except for breastfeeding codes if no longer breastfed) and assign new ones as determined. A hemoglobin screening will be performed between 9 and 12 months of the participant's age.

- Infants who are initially enrolled in WIC at less than five months of age shall be scheduled for an Infant Health Assessment between five and eight months of age.

  *Infant participants cannot be disqualified for failure to complete an IHA appointment. If an infant participant misses their health assessment appointment, staff must attempt to contact the sponsor to reschedule within 3 business days. One month's benefits can be issued to the participant when the IHA appointment is rescheduled and the remaining benefits upon IHA appointment completion. All attempts to reschedule the IHA appointment must be documented in the participant's record.

An Infant Health Assessment (IHA) shall include the following:

1. Obtain weight and height or length measurements to assess growth.

2. Determine if an iron test is required if the infant is between 9 and 12 months old.

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3. Follow-up on any goals the participant set at the previous appointment, any previous concerns or nutrition risks identified as well as immunization status.

4. Ask open-ended questions Related to the Infant Nutrition Interview to follow-up on health and nutrition status.

5. Offer education and referrals based on the participants' needs, desires and concerns. Work with the participant on "next steps" to facilitate behavior change.

6. Assess previously prescribed food package for any needed or participant preferred changes.

Recommended infant appointment schedules for the first year are as follows:

Age at Initial Certification	**Age for 2nd NE Contact**	**Age at IHA**	**Age for Additional 2nd NE**	**Age at Recertification & Hgb/Hct* Test**
Birth–2 months	3–4 months	6 months	8–9 months	12 months
3 months	None	6 months	9–10 months	12 months
4 months	None	7 months	10 months	12 months
5–7 months	8–9 months	None	N/A	12 months
8 months	Approx. mid-cert	None	N/A	Schedule Hgb/Hct check between 9-12 months
9–12 months	Approx. mid-cert	None	N/A	At certification

*Hgb/Hct test cannot be done before 9 months of age

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30 Day Extension

A grace period of plus or minus 30 days is allowed for certification periods for breastfeeding women, infants or children (other than those resulting in categorical ineligibility e.g. a child who turns 5 years of age). An extension is not allowed for pregnant women or non-breastfeeding women. This option should be utilized in cases where there is difficulty in appointment scheduling (illness, coordination of family appointments, time off from work) or for failure to provide required eligibility documentation.

The certification grace period cannot exceed 30 days. After this the client must be re-certified before food instruments can be issued.

Insufficient Information/30 Day Presumptive Eligibility
If a participant is certified for a 30-day period due to inadequate/missing documentation as defined in CT: 5 and 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 below. The certification cannot be back-dated to the first date the participant presented themselves at the clinic.

Participants who provide documents within the 30 days
Fill in the missing eligibility documentation and on the certification panel, fulfill provisional certification and provide remaining months of benefits due.

Participants who provide documents after 30 days but before 60 days
A new certification will need to be completed

Participants who provide documents after 60 days
A new certification will need to be completed
A new height and weight will need to be obtained

Participants who provide documents after 90 days
A certification will need to be completed
A new height and weight will need to be obtained
A new hemoglobin will need to be obtained

Regression
A participant who has previously been certified eligible for the WIC program

may be considered at nutritional risk in the next certification period if the CPA determines there is a possibility of regression in nutritional status without supplemental foods. Risk codes that are allowable to be used for regression are listed in Policy CT: 8 with a "R". Participants certified for regression remain in the same priority in which they were previously assigned. A participant is only allowed to be regressed one time following a certification in which a nutritional risk was identified.

Institutional Residence Participants

Participants residing in an institution (i.e. homeless shelter, shelter for victims of domestic violence, home for unmarried mothers, penal institution) are eligible for program benefits, if the following conditions are met:

- The institution may not accrue financial or in-kind benefit from the resident's participation in WIC.
- Food items purchased with WIC EBT are to be used by the participant(s) only.
- Institutional proxies may not, as a standard procedure, pick up WIC EBT card for all program participants or transact the EBT issuance in bulk. (Refer to Policy FD:9)
- No institutional constraints may be placed on the ability of the WIC participant(s) to partake of supplemental foods and all associated WIC services made available to the participants by the WIC local agency.

Local agencies are required annually to contact institutional residences in their service area where WIC participants reside to assess compliance with regulations. If the institution where a participant is staying is found to be non-compliant, staff will follow the procedure below:

- During the initial certification, the participant will continue to receive all WIC benefits.
- If the participant re-applies for WIC services and is still residing at the institution, staff will not issue the participant Food Benefits, with the exception of formula. The participant will continue to receive WIC education and referrals.

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