

SECTION: ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PRACTICES

SUBJECT: Local Agency Staff Requirements

ITEM: Competency Requirements and Certification: WIC Nutrition Assistants (WNAs)

Purpose

To describe the process to certify California WIC staff to be WIC Nutrition Assistants.

Policy

Paraprofessionals and Dietetic Technician, Registered (DTRs) shall complete the WIC Nutrition Assistant (WNA) certification process. The Local Agency (LA) shall obtain certification from the State Agency (SA) for a staff person to become a WNA.

Registered Dietitians (RD), Registered Dietitian, Eligible (RDE), Degreed Nutritionists (DN), Master Degreed Nutritionists (MDN), and Registered Nurses (RN), are automatically considered a Competent Professional Authority (CPA) according to USDA regulations. However, local agency management may choose to verify competency by requiring completion of the WNA process.

Authority

7 CFR 246.2, 246.6 (b) (2), 246.7 (e), 246.7 (e) (1) (iii), 246.7 (e) (4), and 246.10 (b) (2) (iii).

22 CCR 40621

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Services Nutrition Services Standards - 1(C, G), 2(C), 3(A)

California WIC Nutrition Assistant (WNA) Certification Review's Manual.

Requirements

WNA shall meet the qualifications and perform the specified program functions, as stipulated below.

I. Minimum requirements for WNA Certification are:

A. high school diploma or GED; and

- B. a minimum of 1,000 hours of full time experience in a LA.
- II. A bachelor's degree in nutrition or a related field may be credited for 500 hours of the experience required above.
- III. A DTR with a current Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) certification card, or other document of certification from the ADA may be credited for 500 hours of the experience required above.
- IV. The WNA candidate shall demonstrate competency as outlined in the WNA Certification Manual in the following eight areas:
 - A. Communication and Cultural Competence
 - B. Participant Certification
 - C. Determination of nutrition and health issues (collecting and entering into ISIS participant nutrition and health related information necessary for identifying the appropriate nutrition and health intervention)
 - D. Individual Education
 - E. Food Instruments (selection and issuance)
 - F. Individual Nutrition Education Plan
 - G. Group education
 - H. Referrals and outreach
- V. A LA reviewer shall document on the WNA training manual *List of Competency Evaluations*, when the WNA candidate is competent in all of the eight training task areas and retain a copy for each task area until the candidate is fully certified as a WNA. However, a reviewer can authorize a candidate to perform the functions of a particular task area as part of regular work assignments before the candidate is fully certified as a WNA. The reviewer shall follow the guidelines for authorization as stated in the WNA Certification Reviewer's Manual - *How to Obtain Authorization*.
- VI. Verifying competency by testing and observation are ways to expedite the WNA process for professional staff, and should be decided on a case by case basis to determine which WNA modules and tests would be necessary for any area needing attention.

VII. To obtain WNA certification:

- A. The LA reviewer shall complete the WNA Certification Approval Request form in the WNA certification manual. An RD must review, sign, and forward all the forms and transcripts to their SA regional staff.
- B. The SA regional staff will review the request using the standards for certification of a paraprofessional and may follow up with the LA Director if more information is needed.
- C. The LA shall receive a signed certificate for every approved candidate from the SA.