CERTIFICATION

Subject: Eligibility Requirement

Item: Length of Certification

PURPOSE:
To outline the statutory guidelines for local agencies (LAs) with regard to certification and eligibility issues.

POLICY:
I. The LA must notify the participant either verbally or in writing of the length of their certification period and must provide verbal or written notification to each participant, not less than 15 days before the expiration of each certification period that their eligibility to receive program benefits is about to expire.

PROCEDURE(S):
I. Initial Certification Period Guidelines
   Staff must designate certification periods for eligible participants for the full allowable period above. However, the length of the certification period may be shortened if a participant is later disqualified from the program (e.g., increased income) prior to expiration of the period in accord with WPPM 280-20.
   A. Prenatal women.
      1. The duration of the woman’s pregnancy plus up to six weeks postpartum.
   B. Non-breastfeeding postpartum women.
      1. Approximately six months, ending with the last day of the sixth month following the delivery or termination of the pregnancy.
   C. Breastfeeding women.
      1. Period of up to one year, ending with either the end of the month in which the mother stops breastfeeding or in which the infant reaches her/his first birthday, whichever comes first.
   D. Infants.
      1. Period of up to one year, ending with the end of the month in which the infant reaches her/his first birthday.
      2. Or, a period of six months if enrolled when 7 months old or more.
   E. Children.
      1. Period of up to one year, ending with the end of the month in which the child reaches her/his fifth birthday.

II. Mid-certification category/priority change
   When a participant’s category changes at mid-certification, the participant’s priority ranking may also change. The following section describes specific situations and their consequences:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IF category changes from…</th>
<th>AND…</th>
<th>THEN the LA must…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breastfeeding to Non-Breastfeeding</td>
<td>The participant is more than six months postpartum</td>
<td>Issue a Notice of Action Affecting WIC Program Participation and disqualify the participant.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participant is less than six months postpartum

Determine if the indicators of participant’s nutritional need that applied in the breastfeeding categories are valid for non-breastfeeding category.

If yes,
- continue to serve until the end of the sixth month following delivery, and
- it is not necessary to conduct a new assessment for eligibility or risk.

If no,
- Reassess nutritional risk if eligible, update the record with the new nutrition indicators and continue to serve until the end of the sixth month following delivery, or if ineligible, issue a Notice of Action Affecting WIC Program Participation and disqualify the participant.
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<th>IF category changes from...</th>
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<tr>
<td>Either Breastfeeding or Non-Breastfeeding</td>
<td>The participant becomes a prenatal applicant</td>
<td>Reassess participant and if eligible, recertify as a prenatal participant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant to a Child at One Year</td>
<td>Infant was enrolled at seven months of age or older</td>
<td>Continue to serve the participant for a full six months. There is no requirement for new eligibility or risk evaluation until the next certification.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A. If a change in category causes a participant to be categorically ineligible, or in a priority not currently being served by the LA.
   1. Then a LA must issue a *Notice of Action Affecting WIC Program Participation* and disqualify the participant.

III. Recertification period guidelines.

A. The following guidelines apply to subsequent certifications:
   1. A participant is not eligible for food instruments after the end of their certification period unless a LA recertifies them.
   2. The recertification period always follows the previous certification period and the periods never overlap.
   3. A LA must make every effort to schedule and complete a recertification during the last month of the current certification period to avoid any breaks in receipt of food instruments (FIs).

B. The prenatal certification period is valid until a LA conducts the “six-week postpartum certification.” During the six-weeks following delivery, LAs must issue the appropriate prescription according to the woman’s current category.
   1. If a LA does not conduct the “six-week postpartum certification” within the six weeks following delivery and the participant is ineligible for recertification, the participant may not receive FIs at that certification visit if she is ineligible, since the prenatal certification period will have expired. If the participant is found ineligible, a LA must disqualify the participant, and issue a *Notice of Action Affecting WIC Program Applicants* effective immediately.
IV. Six-week postpartum certification

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>And it is the...</th>
<th>Then...</th>
<th>And the LA issues...</th>
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<tr>
<td>Eligible</td>
<td>Month prior to month certification ends</td>
<td>The recertification period begins the day after the current certification period ends</td>
<td>Food instruments for the current month and the following month(s) as appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible</td>
<td>Month certification ends</td>
<td>The recertification period begins the day after the current certification period ends</td>
<td>Food instruments for the current month and the following month as appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible</td>
<td>Within two months after certification end date</td>
<td>The current month becomes the first month of the new certification period</td>
<td>Food instruments for the current month and the following month as appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td>Month prior to month certification ends</td>
<td>The following month shall be the final month of participation and disqualify participant</td>
<td>Food instruments for the current and following month as appropriate (if over income, issue only current month) and a <em>Notice of Action Affecting WIC Program Participation.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td>Month certification ends</td>
<td>The current month shall be the final month of participation and disqualify participant</td>
<td>Food instruments for the current month and a <em>Notice of Action Affecting WIC Program Participation.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td>Within two months after certification end date</td>
<td>The current month shall be the final month of participation and disqualify participant</td>
<td>Food instruments for the current month and a Notice of Action Affecting WIC Program Participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible, but currently not serving the participant’s priority</td>
<td>Month prior to end of certification</td>
<td>The following month shall be the final month of participation; disqualify participant and, place participant on a waiting list</td>
<td>Food instruments for the current and following month as appropriate and a Notice of Action Affecting WIC Program Participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible, but currently not serving the participant’s priority</td>
<td>Month certification ends</td>
<td>The current month is the final month of participation; disqualify participant and place on a waiting list</td>
<td>Food instruments for the current month and a Notice of Action Affecting WIC Program Participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible, but currently not serving the participant’s priority</td>
<td>Within two months after certification end date</td>
<td>Use disqualification function since eligibility has expired - applicant is ineligible</td>
<td>A Notice of Action Affecting WIC Program Applicants.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### AUTHORITY:

- 7 CFR §246.7(g) and (h)
- 22 CCR §40677
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WRO Policy Memo 8/29/2011: Guidance for Providing Quality WIC Nutrition Services During Extended Certification Periods

CROSS REFERENCE:
WPPM 280-20 Criteria for Disqualification
WPPM 230-20 Waiting Lists
WPPM 280-10 Criteria for Determination of Ineligibility
WPPM 260-40 WIC Participants Rights and Responsibilities