

Subject: Requirements for Orientation to WIC**Item: Program Orientation and Follow-up**

PURPOSE:

To provide guidance on providing program orientation to new participants.

POLICY:

- I. The local agency (LA) staff must provide basic information about the WIC program to the family representative at the initial certification. The LA may repeat any part of the orientation, as necessary at the initial certification of additional family members or foster children.

PROCEDURE(S):

- I. Initial Certification. LA staff must explain:
 - A. General Program Information:
 1. An overview of WIC benefits and services including breastfeeding promotion and support, referrals, nutrition education, and the use of the WIC Card.
 2. Information about WIC authorized foods:
 - a. WIC foods issued are only for the personal use of the participant.
 - b. WIC foods are not authorized while the participant is hospitalized.
 - c. WIC foods are not authorized for use in the preparation of meals served in a communal food service.
 - d. Food benefits are issued in 30-day increments. If a participant attends an appointment before the benefit start date, their new food benefits begin only after the previous month's benefits expire.
 3. The participant's rights and responsibilities. Refer to WPPM 260-40.
 4. Option to select caretakers. Refer to WPPM 290-10.
 5. When and how to contact the LA when the participant has questions or concerns.
 6. How to contact the State-contracted 24/7 toll-free customer service hotline at 1-844-4MY-FAMILY (1-844-469-3264) for cardholder assistance on the following services (these services can also be completed at the LA site):
 - a. Get information on the current food balance and expiration dates.
 - b. Report a lost or stolen card.
 - c. Obtaining shopping/purchase transaction details.
 - d. Selecting or changing the Personal Information Number (PIN).

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- B. Shopping Guidelines. The participant/family representative/caretaker must:
1. Bring the WIC Card every time they shop for WIC foods.
 2. Only purchase the food specified on their food balance.
 3. Not exchange food benefits for credit, cash, or unauthorized items.
 4. Not sell, return, or trade foods purchased with food benefits for cash or other unauthorized items.
 5. Not make a verbal offer of sale to another individual or post WIC foods, food benefits and/or WIC Cards for sale in print or online, or allow someone else to do so.
 6. Redeem food benefits at WIC authorized vendors only.
- C. Redeeming Food Benefits
1. How to Use the WIC Card:
 - a. The first and last day food benefits can be redeemed.
 - b. How to get the food balance.
 - c. The type and quantity of food to buy.
 - d. How to replace lost or stolen WIC cards. Refer to WPPM 330-20.
 - e. WIC Card care, including PIN number security.
 - f. How to download and use the California WIC App.
 - g. Finding locations of nearby WIC authorized vendors.
 2. At the WIC authorized vendor:
 - a. Separate WIC foods from other grocery items.
 - b. Swipe the WIC Card before other forms of payment and enter the PIN.
 - c. How to report problems with the WIC authorized vendor or WIC Card transaction.
- D. Referrals
1. Provide each family representative with written information on health-related and public assistance programs. Refer to WPPM 700-02.
 2. Provide individuals 16 years of age and over the opportunity to register to vote at initial certification, recertification, and whenever there is a change of address or name. Refer to WPPM 700-06.

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E. Assessing Understanding at Initial Certification

1. After explaining orientation topics, assess the family representative and caretaker's (if present) understanding of WIC authorized foods and use of WIC Card by asking open-ended questions.
2. Explanation that it is the responsibility of the family representative to ensure that their designated caretakers understand how to use the WIC Card and shop for WIC authorized foods.

II. At Subsequent Appointments**A. LA staff must:**

1. Check-in with the family representative/caretaker regarding WIC Card use as necessary.
2. Address any questions or concerns the family representative/caretaker has regarding their shopping experience.

B. Discussing WIC Card use does not qualify as a nutrition education contact.**AUTHORITY:**

[7 CFR §246.7\(a\), \(b\), \(j\), and \(o\)](#)

[7 CFR §246.8](#)

[7 CFR §246.9\(c\)](#)

[7 CFR §246.11 \(a\)](#)

[7 CFR §246.12\(p\)](#)

[22 CCR §40749\(a\)](#)

CROSS REFERENCE:

WPPM 260-40 Participant Rights and Responsibilities

WPPM 290-10 Designation of Caretaker

WPPM 330-20 Lost, Stolen, or Damage WIC Card

WPPM 700-02 Referral Requirements at Certification

WPPM 700-06 Guidelines for Implementing the NVRA