

**WIC NUTRITION ASSISTANT
CERTIFICATION GUIDANCE
FOR
CANDIDATES & REVIEWERS**

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TASK CONTENT OUTLINE

Each task represents a service goal of the WIC program.

TASK I: COMMUNICATION AND CULTURAL COMPETENCE	TASK IV: INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION/COUNSELING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Service (internal & external) • Communication (verbal & nonverbal) • Working with Diverse Staff & Participants • Civil Rights, Confidentiality & Sexual Harassment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic Counseling Skills • Participant Centered Counseling • Nutrition Questionnaire • Individual Nutrition Education Plan (INEP) • Holds
TASK II: CERTIFICATION	TASK V: FOOD INSTRUMENTS AND FOOD PACKAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Eligibility & Enrollment • WIC Services Orientation • Explanation of Why Participant Qualifies for Services • Rights and Responsibilities While Enrolled in the WIC Program • Holds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prescribing • Issuing • Maintaining Food Instrument Security
TASK III: NUTRITION AND HEALTH IN WIC	TASK VI: GROUP EDUCATION (CLASS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic Nutrition & Food Safety • Nutrition & Health Assessment • Prenatal & Breastfeeding Objectives • Postpartum, Infant and Child Nutrition including: Anthropometric, Biological, Clinical and Dietary Assessments • Nutrition & Health Referrals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Education • Preparation and Facilitation of Group Education • Learner-Centered Principles
TASK VII: BABY BEHAVIOR EDUCATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baby Behavior Crying, Sleep, and Cues • Interviews Prenatal and Early Infancy • Observations 	

WNA CERTIFICATION PROCESS

PURPOSE OF WNA CERTIFICATION:

Under the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) requirements and WIC Program Policy (WIC Program Manual 130-20), paraprofessional staff must have WIC Program approval to:

- Determine nutrition risk
- Perform certification procedures
- Prescribe food instruments
- Provide nutrition education

Additionally, in California, paraprofessional staff must demonstrate mastery of the following competency areas to become WNA Certified:

- Communication and Cultural Competence
- Certification
- Nutrition and Health in WIC
- Individual Education/Counseling
- Food Instruments and Food Packages
- Group Education (Class)
- Baby Behavior Education

WNA CERTIFICATION PROCESS

CERTIFICATION PROCESS: The following table includes the steps necessary to complete WNA certification.

WHO	WHAT	HOW
CANDIDATE	Completes each task.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individually • Group setting • Self paced by using the training manual or other material • Attend a training
REVIEWER	Initials, dates, and prints name and title, on each competency evaluation for each task.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial and date each candidate assessment, interview, observation, and file audit on the “List of Competency Evaluations” for each task, verifying the candidate’s successful completion of each task. • Print name and title at the bottom of the form. • If there is more than one reviewer, all reviewers must print their name and title on the same sign-off sheet for each candidate. • If you are reviewing more than one candidate at the same time, you may want to keep all the “Lists of Competency Evaluations” for each candidate in your “Reviewer’s Guide”, to keep track of their progress. • RD, designated supervisors, or health educators must be the reviewer and sign off for Tasks III and IV.
RDN	Completes and signs the WNA Certification Approval Request form.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain form by clicking on the “Certification Approval Request Form” link on the WIC Nutrition Assistant (WNA) Candidate’s Assessment Workbook webpage. • A RDN is required to sign this form, certifying the candidate has successfully completed all tasks, and is ready to be WNA certified.
LOCAL AGENCY	Send the completed WNA Certification Approval Request form and all signed List of Competency Evaluations to the Training Services Unit at WICTCDS@cdph.ca.gov or Fax to (916) 440-5569.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The envelope symbol at the bottom left corner of each “List of Competency Evaluations” page is to remind you to mail these to the state. • The WIC Program will mail you a signed WNA certificate for each approved candidate. Be sure to include the name and address of where to send the certificate.
LOCAL AGENCY	Give the original signed certificate to the candidate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a copy of the signed certificate in your files. • The WIC program tracks certified candidates, but not authorized ones (see WNA Authorization, page 6). • Certification authorizes the WNA in all agencies.

WNA CERTIFICATION PROCESS

COMPETENCY EVALUATION METHODS: You will be using four methods to evaluate competency of the candidate (*detailed below*):

WHAT	WHY	HOW
CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT	<p>Assesses recognition and recall of knowledge, as well as, application of knowledge in structured scenarios.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used when answers are clear-cut and there are only a few correct answers to simple questions or scenarios. Used when candidate must be able to quickly recall or identify information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The candidate completes these themselves. Reviewer goes over answers with candidate. Candidate may prefer to have reviewer present questions orally, instead of in writing. Reviewer and candidate develop intervention plan, as needed.
INTERVIEW	<p>Assesses critical thinking, attitudes, ability to tailor their approach to different situations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used for more complex questions and scenarios with many answers. Used to reinforce the candidate's understanding of the process, rationale and philosophy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The reviewer asks the candidate a series of questions in a discussion format. Reviewer provides candidate feedback on conceptual process. Can be given as a quiz, especially for candidates with good written skills. Reviewer models mentoring skills the candidate can apply when working with participants. Reviewer and candidate develop intervention plan, as needed.
OBSERVATION	<p>Assesses ability to apply knowledge and skill in real life WIC settings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used for evaluating candidate's ability to communicate and to demonstrate education skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The reviewer observes the candidate with one or more participants or staff. Reviewer (and possibly candidate) uses checklist to evaluate mastery of skill. Reviewer provides feedback and intervention to candidate.
FILE AUDIT	<p>Evaluates assessment and documentation skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used to evaluate accurate and consistent data collection, and input. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The reviewer checks candidate's documentation in WIC MIS or charts. Reviewer goes over results with candidate and discusses trends. Reviewer and candidate develop intervention plan, as needed.

WNA CERTIFICATION PROCESS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVIEWERS

REVIEWERS ROLE:

- Guide and coach candidate during the certification process.
- Offer candidate support and encouragement.
- Assist candidate as needed in learning new information and skills necessary to complete the certification process.

WORKING WITH YOUR CANDIDATE(S):

- Gather and review certification materials.
- Familiarize yourself with the content (tasks, evaluation methods, etc.)
- Organize the content to fit your needs (by task, by category, etc.)

PAY ATTENTION TO THESE SYMBOLS (denotes participant category; appear at bottom left of “Task” pages):

-  ALL
-  Pregnant Women
-  Postpartum Women
-  Infants
-  Children

Note:

- *You may separate pages using symbols*
- *Not all tasks have all 4 competency evaluation methods*

PRE-ASSESS CANDIDATES:

- Assess (or have candidate self-assess) existing experience, knowledge, skills, and training.

WNA CERTIFICATION PROCESS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVIEWERS

ORIENT CANDIDATE TO THE CERTIFICATION METHOD:

- Explain the philosophy and benefits of the certification system
- Outline expectations, timeline, and planned activities
- Review content with the candidate to eliminate surprises
- Explain your role as a reviewer
- Discuss candidate's goals, strengths, concerns

DEVELOP EMPLOYEE TRAINING PLAN AND SCHEDULE, AND CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- Candidate's skill, experience and confidence
- Reviewer's time, and skill in different tasks
- How soon the candidate will be performing certain job requirements (e.g. timeline, authorization versus certification)
- Flexibility of clinic schedules - days, times, order of tasks and evaluations
- Space and layout in sites for working together
- Integration with training - consider how training will fit in with certification

CANDIDATES WILL PROBABLY NEED TRAINING AS THEY WORK TOWARD CERTIFICATION. THIS TRAINING MAY INCLUDE:

- A formal, local agency training program
- A statewide seminar
- On-the-job training and mentoring
- WIC Training Manual
- Self-study - workbooks, DVD's, CD-ROMS, books
- College classes in nutrition related topics
- A variety of other means

WNA CERTIFICATION PROCESS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVIEWERS

OBSERVE, GIVE FEEDBACK AND EVALUATE:

- Reviewer evaluates candidates through observation and feedback.
- If a candidate does not succeed the first time, they may retake the training as many times as needed to succeed.
- If a candidate has difficulty mastering a competency, you should let the candidate know their strengths and weaknesses.
- Check for understanding of the expected skill and how to achieve it.

Note: *You may need to modify the way you are training them. For example, some candidates may do better working on their own, others do better watching skilled coworkers, and others may need more hands-on practice.*

RECOGNIZE CANDIDATE'S ACHIEVEMENT:

- Reviewer is encouraged to recognize the candidate's achievements throughout the process and at completion.
- Reviewer can formally recognize the candidate's certification with the following:
 - ♦ an in-house ceremony,
 - ♦ a framed certificate, or
 - ♦ other methods determined by the local agency.

STRICTNESS ON MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:

- If the candidate has the main idea, they have completed the minimum entry-level requirements.
- If the minimum requirements are not met, DO NOT provide the answer, instead give them tools to search for the information.
- When the candidate can correctly answer the questions, the task is complete.

WNA CERTIFICATION PROCESS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVIEWERS

ORDER OF TASKS:

- You may complete the six tasks in any particular order or within any time limits. You may find it easier to complete all of the observations for a task at one time.
 - You may want to split up the observations and do them on different days.
 - It is also possible to observe a candidate work through several tasks with one participant.
- (Some agencies find it helpful to complete one task at a time; others group tasks together, such as certification, assessment and individual education. Some agencies prefer to evaluate in a specific order - candidate assessments, interviews, observations, and then file audits.)*
- You may need to take notes during observations so you can refer to these notes later during the file audits to ensure the candidate entered data correctly in WIC MIS or on charts.

(While all local agencies offer the same services to WIC participants, agencies organize these services differently or offer them in different ways. When you develop a certification schedule, use days, times and order of tasks best suited for you, your candidate(s) and your agency.)

DOCUMENTING CANDIDATE'S PROGRESS:

- You and the candidate will work together to document as the candidate masters the required knowledge, attitudes and skills. Use the *List of Competency Evaluations* pages to document candidate's completion of all methods for each task.

MAINTAIN LEARNER-CENTERED PRINCIPLES DURING THE REVIEW PROCESS:

- Respect the candidate
- Make the corrections/feedback immediately meaningful for entry level
- Establish a safe feedback environment
- Engage them in the feedback process
- Don't ask what you can tell
- Be a good example on how to "Correct with Respect"

WNA CERTIFICATION PROCESS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVIEWERS

AGENCY-SPECIFIC SECTIONS:

- Certain areas have answer sections more specific to the agency. Before beginning the training, be sure to obtain agency guidance for each of these tasks.

LENGTH OF PROCESS:

- This can be agency specific however the goal should be to complete the certification in a maximum of 6 – 12 months.

INITIALING/SIGNING THE CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT/INTERVIEW/OBSERVATION/FILE AUDIT SECTIONS:

- Do this after the candidate has completed all of the minimum requirements for the particular section.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR REVIEWERS:

- Most of the reviewers in California will be the supervising RDN.
- RDN, Health Educators or Supervisors must review and sign off on the *Nutrition and Health in WIC* or *Individual Education* modules.
- RDN must sign the *WNA Certification Approval Request* form.

Note: *Under the direction of an RDN, a local agency director may assign experienced DN, MDN, NDTR, or WNA to act as reviewers for some tasks, such as Communication & Cultural Competence, or Certification.*

INFORMATION LINK TO PAMPHLETS LISTS:

- Current Office of State Publishing (OSP) order list at: [WIC Forms](#) (OSP 501,502,503,504)

WNA AUTHORIZATION PROCESS

AUTHORIZATION PROCESS: Before a candidate is fully certified as a WNA, they may be authorized to provide services to a specific category of participants, such as infants, before they are authorized to work with another category of participants, such as prenatal women. The following table includes the steps necessary to complete authorization of a WNA candidate:

WHO	WHAT	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
CANDIDATE	<p>Demonstrates competency in the following tasks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication and Cultural Competence 2. Certification 3. Nutrition and Health in WIC 4. Individual Education/Counseling 5. Food Instruments and Food Packages 6. Group Education (Class) 7. Baby Behavior Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidate completes only category-specific sections of these tasks, depending on the category/ies the candidate is being authorized to employ. • Tasks 1-3: (from previous column) represent core skills necessary to provide services to any category of participants. • Tasks 4-7: Candidate completes only category-specific sections of these tasks, depending on the category/ies the candidate is being authorized to employ.
LOCAL AGENCY	Local agency maintains documentation of authorization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorization is not transferable from agency to agency.

GLOSSARY

REVIEWER: Local agency staff who evaluate paraprofessional staff going through the certification method.

CANDIDATE: Local agency paraprofessional staff going through the certification method.

RDN, DIETITIAN: Registered Dietitian Nutritionist or RD, someone who has 1) earned a four year degree in dietetics, 2) completed a supervised internship; and 3) passed a national registration exam by the American Dietetics Association.

NDTR: The Nutrition & Dietetics Technician, Registered has at least an associate's degree in a nutrition-related field. A NDTR shall complete WNA certification, although expediting the certification process is allowable. They shall possess and maintain the NDTR credential or the right to use the term "nutrition & dietetics technician, registered" as approved by the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) of the American Dietetic Association (ADA). The NDTR shall work under the supervision of an RDN.

DN: The Degreed Nutritionist (DN) has a four year degree in nutrition-related field (bachelor's degree). The degree may have been earned from institutions within or outside the United States. DNs do not require WNA certification. The DN shall work under the supervision of a RDN.

MDN: The Masters Degreed Nutritionist (MDN) has a master's degree in a field covering clinical nutrition from a accredited college or university in the United States. The California Business and Professional Code Section 2585-2586 allows these individuals to provide the services of nutritional assessment, education, and treatment. MDNs do not require WNA certification.

PARAPROFESSIONAL: Various nutrition support personnel, often referred to as nutrition assistants. Can also include professional staff, such as health educators, who are not Registered Dietitians (N).

USDA: United States Department of Agriculture, the federal agency overseeing the WIC program.

WNA: WIC Nutrition Assistant, the term used by California WIC for paraprofessionals who are designated Competent Professional Authority (CPA) by USDA.

WNA CERTIFICATION APPROVAL REQUEST

Please send completed form and signed List of Competency Evaluations to WICTCDS@cdph.ca.gov or fax to (916) 440-5569

<i>Information To Be Completed By Local Agency</i>	<i>Information To Be Completed By State</i>
<p><u>LOCAL AGENCY</u> Name: _____ Number: _____ Contact Person: _____ Phone: _____</p> <p><u>CANDIDATE</u> Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____ <small>(needed to assign certificate number)</small></p> <p>High School Diploma/GED: <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>WIC Work Experience: <input type="checkbox"/> YES <small>(6 Months, FT or Equivalent)</small> <input type="checkbox"/> NO <small>(Attach Justification)</small></p> <p><u>CERTIFICATION PROCESS</u> Completion Date: _____ Start Date of Certification Process: _____</p> <p>Reviewers sign-off sheets for each task: <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Demonstrated knowledge and application of Tasks 1 - 7: <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>AUTHORIZING SIGNATURE: _____ <small>Registered Dietitian Only</small></p> <p>SIGNED BY: _____ <small>(Print/Type Name)</small></p>	<p><u>TRAINING SERVICES UNIT</u> Date Received: _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> APPROVED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT APPROVED</p> <p><i>(If not please explain)</i> _____ _____ _____</p> <p>EFFECTIVE DATE: _____</p> <p>Certificate Number Assigned: _____ - _____ - _____ <small>(MM) (YY) (LA)</small></p> <p>APPROVAL SIGNATURE: _____ <small>(State WIC Staff)</small></p> <p>SIGNED BY: _____ <small>(Print/Type Name)</small></p> <p>Certification Mail Date: _____</p> <p><i>Comments:</i> _____ _____ _____ _____</p>
<p>MAIL CERTIFICATE TO:</p> <p>Attn: _____ Site No: _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>City _____ State _____ Zip _____</p>	