
SECTION: CERTIFICATION

SUBJECT: Eligibility Requirement

ITEM: Presence Requirement

Policy

A Local Agency (LA) shall ensure that applicants and recertifying participants are physically present at all certification appointments, with limited exceptions. In the case of infants and children participants, a parent/caretaker shall also be present.

Required Procedures

I. Exemption to required presence during initial certification

- A. Infants under eight weeks of age who cannot be present at certification for a reason determined appropriate by the LA and for whom all necessary certification information is provided, may be exempt from the physical presence requirement.
- B. LA staff shall require the parent(s)/caretaker(s) to bring the infant to the next appointment **by** eight weeks of age.
- C. Food instruments shall be single issued only once until the infant has been present **within** 8 weeks of age, except if the infant meets exemption criteria as disabled.
- D. Food Instruments shall not be issued **after** the infant reaches eight weeks of age unless the infant has been present at the local WIC agency or the infant is disabled.

II. Exemptions to required presence during initial certification and recertification

- A. LA staff shall excuse an applicant from the physical presence requirement if physical presence would present an unreasonable barrier to current participation under the following circumstances:

A participant or parent/caretaker of a participant who is a qualified individual with a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Examples include:

1. a medical condition that necessitates the use of medical equipment that is not easily transportable;
 2. a medical condition that requires confinement to bed rest;
 3. a serious illness that may be exacerbated by coming into the WIC site; or
 4. a serious illness that is highly contagious (e.g., tuberculosis).
- B. All applicants with disabilities are not automatically exempt from the physical presence requirement. Only those disabilities that create a current barrier to the physical presence requirement may serve as a basis for an exemption.

III. Exemptions to required presence during recertification

- A. The following participants may be excused from the physical presence requirement at recertification:
1. An infant or child:
 - a. who was present at the initial certification,
 - b. is receiving ongoing health care, and
 - c. whose physical presence would pose an unreasonable barrier to participation.
 - d. Was present at certification or recertification within the last 12 months and
 - e. who is under the care of one or more working parents/caretakers, AND whose working status presents a barrier to bringing the infant or child to the WIC clinic.
 - B. Infants and children determined exempt from presence at a recertification because of working parents/caretakers, **must** be present for the next certification. In households where there are two parents/caretakers, BOTH parents/caretakers **MUST** be working in order for the presence at certification exemption to apply.
 - C. Infants and children are determined exempt from presence at mid-certification when anthropometric data are brought in to the WIC appointment. This data shall be from referral forms or other allowable sources as listed in WPM 210-10 and must be less than 60 days old.

IV. Length of time for exemption

- A. At, or prior to recertification, the need for the applicant's exemption from physical presence shall be reassessed. In the case of short-term or limited conditions, the length of time an applicant may be exempt from the physical presence requirement is limited to the current certification period. In the case of long-term or permanent conditions, an extended exception to the physical presence requirement may be necessary.

- B. Infants that are exempt from presence at enrollment certification for up to eight weeks following birth must be brought to the WIC site **by** eight weeks of age or deemed ineligible for the WIC Program unless they meet exemption criteria as disabled.

V. Documentation

- A. LA staff shall document whether an applicant/participant is present at a certification appointment in the “Present at Cert” field on the Certify Individual Screen in the Integrated Statewide Information System (ISIS). Acceptable codes are:

Present at Cert Code	Definition	Use of Code	Type of Hold Needed
Y	Yes - Present	Enrollment or Recertification	None
D	Not Present - D isabled	Enrollment or Recertification	O hold with comments in Family Comments
H	Not present at recert – Ongoing H ealthcare	Recertification only	O hold with comments in Family Comments
I	Infant, less than 8 weeks old, not present at enrollment	Enrollment only	Individual P hold
W	Not present at recert – W orking parents (infant/child)	Recertification only	O hold with comments in Family Comments
Legend for Type of Hold:			
P = Hold, Infant Presence at Cert. O = Hold Other (Hold with comments in Family Comments)			

- B. The LA is still responsible for obtaining proof of identity, address and income (WPM sections 270-20, 210-06, 210-01 et. al.) for all applicants, including those unable to be present.

C. Examples of Code Use

1. (D) Disabled:
 - a. Infant hospitalized since birth and not present within 8 weeks of age.
 - b. Participant/Caretaker of an infant/child is disabled and cannot transport the infant or child to the WIC agency.
 - c. Participant/Caretaker or infant/child has contracted a contagious disease such as active tuberculosis or chicken pox.

2. (H) Ongoing Health Care:

Infant/Child is receiving on going health care and cannot travel to the WIC agency. This code can only be used if the child was present at the initial certification.

3. (I) Infant less than eight weeks of age:

Infants under eight weeks of age who cannot be present at certification for a reason determined appropriate by the LA and for whom all necessary certification information is provided.

One example in which this applies is in California, cultural tradition in some Hispanic cultures forbids the infant from leaving the home for up to six weeks after birth.

4. (W) Working Parents:

The parent/caretaker of the infant/child must leave work to recertify an infant/or child, but cannot obtain enough time off to retrieve the child from daycare, bring the infant/child into the agency, return the child to daycare, and return to work.

a. An infant/child must have been present for the initial WIC enrollment.

b. In two-parent/caretaker families, BOTH parents/caretakers must be working and it must present a barrier to participation for the infant/child if neither person were able to leave work and bring the infant/child to the recertification appointment.

Authority

CFR 246.7 (p) (1) (2)

All States Memorandum 00-79

All States Memorandum 04-52

FNS Instruction 803-10, REV. 1

WRO Policy Memo 8/29/2011: Guidance for Providing Quality WIC Nutrition Services During Extended Certification Periods

Definitions

Caretaker - any non-parent adult who provides support and care of a child or infant that resides in their abode. Caretaker includes but is not limited to a guardian, stepparent, foster parent, relative, significant other or trusted friend, who acts as substitute parent in the absence of or cohabitation with a natural or adoptive parent.