
SECTION: CERTIFICATION

SUBJECT: Requirements for Orientation to WIC

ITEM: Program Orientation

Policy

The Local Agency (LA) shall orient the participant, and the parent or caretaker applying on behalf of an infant or child, to the WIC program by providing them with basic program information, as determined by the State Agency. The LA may determine what portion of this policy needs to be repeated at the initial enrollment appointment of additional family members or foster children.

Required Procedures

- I. The LA shall provide the following general program orientation Information:
 - A. an overview of WIC benefits and services including breastfeeding promotion and support, referrals, nutrition education, and food instruments (FIs) for specific foods;
 - B. WIC authorized foods and FI use to include:
 1. supplemental foods issued are only for the personal use of the participant;
 2. supplemental foods are not authorized while the participant is hospitalized on an in-patient basis; and
 3. supplemental foods are not authorized for use in the preparation of meals served in a communal food service;
 - C. the participant's rights and responsibilities;
 - D. the option to select an alternate or proxy;
 - E. when and how to contact the WIC local agency when the participant has questions or concerns; and
 - F. the LA will make health services and nutrition education available to the participant and they are encouraged to participate in these services.

- II. The LA shall educate the participant on the correct use of FIs to include:
 - A. first/last day that the FI can be redeemed;
 - B. redeeming the FI only at WIC authorized grocer locations;
 - C. type and quantity of food to buy; and
 - D. lost or stolen FIs cannot be replaced.

- III. The LA shall educate the participant on correct FI redemption procedures to include:
 - A. separating WIC foods from other grocery items;
 - B. where and when the purchase price is entered on the FI and by whom;
 - C. when and where the FI must be signed; and
 - D. procedures to report problems with the WIC authorized vendor.

- IV. The LA shall inform the participant that they:
 - A. must only purchase the food specified, and in the specified quantities printed on the FI;
 - B. must not exchange FIs for credit, cash, or unauthorized items;
 - C. must not sell, return or trade foods purchased with FIs for cash or other unauthorized items;
 - D. must not make a verbal offer of sale to another individual or posting WIC foods, benefits and/or EBT cards for sale in print or online, or allowing someone else to do so;
 - E. must only redeem FIs at a WIC authorized vendor;
 - F. must not harm or threaten to harm WIC authorized vendor staff in order to redeem FIs under any of the above conditions; and
 - G. must obtain only the number of FIs for which the participant is eligible as determined by the WIC local agency.

- V. The LA shall inform the participant/parent/caretaker of their rights and responsibilities. At a minimum, the LA shall:
 - A. allow the participant to read, or have read to them, the *Rights and Responsibilities* form and have the participant sign the agency copy for retention in the LA's file;
 - B. inform the participant of possible punitive action for misuse of FIs, selling or trading, or attempts to sell or trade, WIC benefits, or other program abuse, including harming or threatening harm to WIC staff, WIC authorized grocer staff, or farmers, and dual participation. (For more specific information on WIC Program violations and dual participation, see WPM 280-20.);
 - C. inform the participant of the requirement for presence at certification. (For more specific information about presence at certification, see WPM 210-07.);
 - D. explain to the participant that the standards for eligibility and participation in the WIC Program are the same for everyone, regardless of religion, ancestry, political affiliation, medical condition, marital status, sexual orientation, race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex; and
 - E. inform the participant of their right to appeal any decision made by the LA regarding their eligibility for the Program.

- VI. The LA shall assess the participant/parent/caretaker's understanding of WIC authorized foods, FI use, and their rights and responsibilities.

- VII. The LA shall provide referral information as follows:
 - A. Provide each applicant/participant with written information on health-related and public assistance programs. (For more specific information about referrals, see WPM 700-02)
 - B. Provide each adult WIC applicant/participant the opportunity to register to vote at the initial enrollment appointment, at each subsequent certification appointment, and whenever the participant reports a change of address. (For more specific information about voter registration, see WPM 700-06)

Definition

Caretaker: any non-parent adult who is legally responsible for the health and welfare of an infant or child that lives in the caretaker's home. The LA shall exercise professional judgment in situations where the non-parent adult has yet to establish legal responsibility for the infant or child, i.e., court order, foster care placement documents,

etc., and shall document this situation in ISIS Family Comments. 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 the natural or adoptive parent.

NOTE: an individual (i.e., grandmother, other relative, “trusted friend”) residing in the home of the infant or child’s parent/caretaker, and who provides care and support for the infant or child while the parent/caretaker is temporarily out of the home (i.e., at work/school or otherwise absent but expected to return) shall NOT be considered a parent/caretaker. Unless this individual has been granted legal custody, they may act only as an alternate or proxy for purposes of WIC program certification and FI distribution. Refer to WPM 290-10 and 290-10.1 for information regarding the limitations on activities an alternate or proxy may perform on behalf of a participant.

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, Section 40749(a)