

SECTION: FOOD DELIVERY SYSTEM

SUBJECT: Food Instrument Receipt and Distribution

ITEM: Mailing Food Instruments

Purpose

To permit eligible individuals to participate in WIC, who due to one of the conditions listed below, would otherwise be unable to participate in the program.

Policy

Mailing of food instruments (FIs) to participants shall be permitted by a local agency (LA) under extenuating circumstances. The required minimum number of nutrition education contacts during a certification period shall not be affected. Mailing of FIs shall be discontinued when the initial condition is resolved. In no case shall mailing be continued for a period greater than 90 days without being reassessed and documented. Prior to mailing FIs, LAs are required to contact participants and verify their address and the reason for mailing. Additionally, LAs are to use the "VN" (void no reissue) reason code in ISIS to void FIs that have been returned in the mail or are not picked up by the participant.

Authority

7CFR246.12(r)(4),(5)
WRO 803-BE, 07-09
Title 22 CCR 40749 (c)

Required Procedure

- I. The LA that chooses to mail FIs must:
 - A. establish a system that ensures the return of FIs if the participant no longer resides or receives mail at the address to which the food instruments were mailed;
 - B. ensure program integrity and accountability standards are met; and
 - C. ensure that the required minimum nutrition education contacts for each participant category within the certification period are met.
- II. The LA may approve mailing of FIs under the following circumstances:
 - A. automated system failure or site closure;

- B. education requirement met and participant will not be eligible for re-certification;
 - C. illness;
 - D. imminent childbirth;
 - E. physical disability or family with special health care needs;
 - F. weather;
 - G. participant unable to keep appointment which would result in missing an entire month's FIs;
 - H. quarantine, communicable disease, and/or immune disorder; or
 - I. transportation.
- III. The LA may single, double or triple issue mailed FIs.
- IV. When mailing FIs, the LA staff shall:
- A. contact the participant to confirm the reason for mailing the FIs, and verify their address;
 - B. enter an "M" in the select field of the "Prepare Family Packages" screen and choose the authorization code; this creates an automatic note in family comments which includes the last modification user, date, and the message.
 - C. initial or sign the WIC Food Issuance Signature Log and write "mailed" next to the appropriate serial numbers;
 - D. label envelopes "Return Service Requested" and mail the FIs first class. "Return Service Requested" is a free-of-charge postal service that provides you with the new address or reason for non-delivery when mailed FIs are returned to your agency.
 - E. if it is necessary to mail the WIC Identification Folder (WIF), put it in a separate envelope labeled, "Return Service Requested."
- V. If a participant reports that they did not receive their mailed FIs, the LA shall replace undelivered mailed FIs, using the following procedure:
- A. Access the participant's information in ISIS to determine whether the mailed FIs have been redeemed.
 - B. If the FIs have not been redeemed and less than 5 working days have passed since the FIs were mailed, inform the participant that there will be a 5 working day waiting period before the FIs can be replaced to allow sufficient delivery time.
 - C. If the FIs have not been redeemed after 5 working days:
 - 1. advise the participant that receiving and redeeming two sets of food instruments for the same month may result in disqualification from the program;

2. void and replace the food instruments by using the Reason Code "VD" on the Void Food Instruments screen;
3. inform the participant that if the first food instruments arrive in the mail, they must be returned to the local agency because they are invalid and cannot be cashed; and
4. advise the State Agency's Program Integrity Unit (PIU) via e-mail or in writing, that the mailed food instruments were not received and have been voided.

D. If the FIs have been redeemed within 5 working days, then:

1. advise the participant that the FIs have been cashed, are assumed to have been stolen, and cannot be reissued prior to an investigation; and
2. report the incident to the State Agency's PIU and request that PIU advise the LA staff how to proceed.

VI. The LA shall void all FIs returned in the mail or not picked up by the participant, using the reason code "VN" on the Void Food Instrument screen by close of business each day.

Reference:

Refer to the ISIS Downtime Management Plan for more information.