

Section 8.4: Issuing Food Benefits

6/2024

References: 7CFR 246.12 (r)

Policy: Issue food benefits to certified participants when nutrition service requirements are met.

Purpose: To provide supplemental food to help meet a participant's nutrition needs.

Procedures

1. Ensure that a WIC Card has been issued to the household. If a card has not yet been issued, refer to [Section 8.3: Issuing WIC Cards](#).
2. Verify identification of the adult participant, authorized representative (e.g., parent, guardian), or proxy requesting WIC food benefits. See Guidance below.
3. Ensure that the individual presenting identification is listed as an authorized or alternative representative in the participant record.

Verbal verification of identity: If identification is unavailable *and* the WIC card has previously been issued, WIC staff may verbally verify that the person is authorized to obtain the WIC benefits; to do this, WIC staff must:

- a) Confirm the person's identity by cross-referencing their name with that of an adult participant, authorized representative, or proxy listed in participant record, and
- b) Request validation of at least two of the following details:
 - o The Primary Card Holder's (PCH's) date-of-birth,
 - o The zip code of the household's mailing address, and/or
 - o The names of household members participating in WIC.

If it is determined (or suspected) that the person is not authorized to obtain food benefits (i.e., they are neither the Authorized nor Alternate Representative) inform them that benefits cannot be issued and advise them to have the Authorized Representative or an Alternate Representative/proxy contact the WIC office so that benefits can be provided.

Do not disclose any information from the participant record, including details about authorized or alternate representatives.

4. Complete all nutrition service requirements for the contact. See [Section 5.3: Nutrition Risk Assessment](#) and [Chapter 6: Nutrition Education](#).
 - Certification requirements (for initial-, re-, and/or mid-certification)

SECTION 8.4: ISSUING FOOD BENEFITS

- Nutrition education and/or high risk follow-up
 - Verifying certification status of transfers
 - Moving a child to a new household due to a change in guardianship - including both informal arrangements and placement in foster care.
5. Prescribe or change food package, as needed- this step must be completed by a Competent Professional Authority (CPA).
 6. Issue one to three months of food benefits at a time, if appropriate. See Guidance below.
 - The food benefits for each WIC participant in the household are aggregated and accessible with the WIC Card once a PIN has been set.
 - Participants are eligible for monthly food benefits through their certification period.

Guidance

- CPA or non-CPA staff person may issue food benefits once a food package has been prescribed/adjusted by the CPA.
- See Exhibit 5-C: [Identification Requirements by WIC Contact](#) for acceptable forms of parent/guardian or proxy identification.
- Identity of an Adult Participant may be verified during certification according to the ID requirements in [Section 5.2.3 - Identity](#).
- Use an InfoView report to identify and contact participants who have not received food benefits.
- If there is an outstanding participant violation, the family might not be eligible for food benefits. See [Section 1.12: Termination or Suspension of Program Services](#)
- Participants may designate a proxy by phone. If a Participant/Parent/Guardian (PPG) calls the Local Agency to request that a particular person be designated their proxy, staff must verify the identity of the person calling and making the request by following the steps outlined above for *Verbal Verification of Identity*.

Section 8.4.2: Replacing Food Benefits

References: 7CFR246.12

Policy: Redeemed and/or expired formula and food benefits may not be replaced except in very limited situations described below.

Purpose: To provide food benefits to eligible participants, while maintaining program integrity.

Redeemed formula may be replaced if:

- Cans of redeemed and unused formula are *returned to clinic*; OR
- Redeemed formula is no longer available due to extraordinary circumstances listed below *and* documented (see procedures):
 - Formula was lost or destroyed in a natural disaster (e.g., flood or tornado) or other tragedy such as a house fire or theft (see Guidance).
 - An infant or child is moved to a new household (e.g., foster care) and the redeemed formula does not accompany the child in the move, and the new guardian cannot safely retrieve it from the former household. See [Section 5.5: Change in Guardianship](#)

Redeemed food benefits may be replaced *only* if the food was lost or destroyed in a natural disaster (e.g., flood or tornado) or other tragedy (such as a house fire or theft).

Procedures

Returned Formula

- A participant may be “reissued” formula (on a can-by-can basis) if they return redeemed, but unused cans to clinic *within the current benefit month*.
 - Document the returned cans on the Returned Formula Tracking form (see [Exhibit 7-1: Returned Formula Log](#))
 - Document in the participant’s record the reason redeemed formula was replaced.
 - Note: Returned cans may not be reissued to another participant (see [Section 7.5.5: Returned Formula](#)).
- If formula is not returned, or is returned after the end of the benefit month, it may not be replaced/reissued.

Lost Formula and/or Food Benefits

To replace redeemed food and/or formula that were lost in extraordinary circumstances, you must:

- Review the situation to determine whether replacement is appropriate:
 - Known event in the area such as fire, flood, tornado, etc.
 - Documentation of household’s loss as indicated by a police report or insurance claim
 - Official documentation of a change in custody
- If replacement meets criteria, staff must:
 - Change the Household ID *for all members* of the household; and
 - Reissue the lost food benefits.

- Document in the participant’s record the reason redeemed food/formula was replaced.

Guidance-Replacing Food Benefits

▪ Theft/Stolen Benefits

Replacing food or formula benefits reported by a parent/participant/guardian (PPG) as “stolen” **does not apply** to contested possession between family members.

- To replace stolen food or formula, the LA *must see documentation* that a theft occurred (e.g., a police report or insurance claim).
- In situations in which food items were taken by another family member, the benefits *are not considered “stolen”* for purposes of this policy, and LAs *may not replace* them.
- Situations in which a child changes households are handled differently. See [Section 5.5: Change in Guardianship](#)
- Remind participants that they can purchase 1 or 2 cans of formula at a time (rather than full amount), to ensure the infant’s tolerance and minimize waste and/or inconvenience.
- If there is an outstanding program violations issue, the family might not be eligible for formula replacement. See [Section 1.12: Termination or Suspension of Program Benefits](#)
- Provide participant a list of local resources to assist them in meeting other needs related to their situation.

Section 8.4.3: Food Benefits Management for Out of State Transfers

Policy: Ensure WIC participants who move between state WIC programs continue to receive food benefits during their certification period.

Purpose: To ensure certified participants continue to receive WIC benefits.

Procedures

Transferring from Minnesota to Another State

1. Provide participant a Verification of Certification (VOC). See [Section 3.3: Transferring Participants](#)

Do not terminate certification, void benefits, or deactivate the WIC Card. This information may be requested by the receiving state WIC program to determine a participant’s eligibility and remaining food benefits.

2. Instruct the participant to keep their MN WIC Card to access food benefits until they move.

SECTION 8.4: ISSUING FOOD BENEFITS

3. Inform participant to bring VOC, WIC Card, and other document(s), such as Medical Formula Documentation, to a local WIC agency in the state to which they are moving, to complete the transfer.
4. If a MN WIC Card is returned to a MN WIC local agency from another state, *deactivate the WIC Card*.

Transferring to Minnesota from Another State WIC program

1. Verify certification status and initiate a transfer in the WIC Information System. If unable to verify status, or if certification will end soon, complete a certification. See [Section 3.3: Transferring Participants](#)
2. Collect, review, and destroy any food benefits the participant has brought from another state WIC program.
3. Issue a WIC Card according to [Section 8.3: Issuing WIC Cards](#). Provide additional education or high risk follow-up, and food benefits for the unredeemed foods in the current month.

Reference – Complete Listing of Hyperlinks

[Section 8.3: Issuing WIC Cards](#)

(https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch8/sctn8_3.pdf)

[Section 5.3: Nutrition Risk Assessment](#)

(https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch5/sctn5_3.pdf)

[Chapter 6: Nutrition Education](#)

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/localagency/mom.html#education>)

[Section 1.12: Termination or Suspension of Program Services](#)

(https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch1/sctn1_12.pdf)

[Section 5.5: Change in Guardianship](#)

(https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch5/sctn5_5.pdf)

[Exhibit 5-C Identification Requirements by WIC Contact](#)

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/exhbts/ex5/5c.pdf>)

[Exhibit 7-I: Returned Formula Log](#)

(https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/exhbts/ex7/7i_fill.docx)

SECTION 8.4: ISSUING FOOD BENEFITS

Section 7.5.5: Returned Formula

(https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch7/sctn7_5.pdf)

Section 1.12: Termination or Suspension of Program Benefits

(https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch1/sctn1_12.pdf)

Section 3.3: Transferring Participants

(https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch3/sctn3_3.pdf)

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