

WASHINGTON STATE WIC POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL



Washington State WIC
Nutrition Program

VOLUME 1, CHAPTER 22

WIC Checks



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POLICY: WIC Check Issuance: Monthly or Multi-Monthly

Clinic staff shall have the option to issue WIC checks to clients either monthly or multi-monthly. The term “checks” refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks.

Clients are eligible to receive one, two or three sets of checks at each visit (as appropriate based on the client’s category). Clients shall have the option to request and receive monthly check issuance, even if the local WIC agency has decided to schedule multi-month check issuance for all clients.

Tri-monthly check issuance is recommended as the best method for providing optimal benefits for WIC clients and making the most efficient use of local agency resources.

Note: The state WIC office has the option to direct local agency staff to issue monthly checks to a client, for example, if the client is under investigation for noncompliance.

The local agency has the option to limit certain categories of clients to monthly or bi-monthly check issuance. In these cases, documenting in each client’s file in Client Services is not required. If the local agency decides to limit certain categories of clients, the local WIC agency shall develop a written policy to include:

1. A statement authorizing the Competent Professional Authority (CPA) or nutritionist as the person responsible for determining client eligibility for monthly, bi-monthly or tri-monthly checks.
2. A list of client characteristics which would require the client to receive monthly or bi-monthly check issuance. List distinctions between a client’s eligibility to receive monthly versus bi-monthly checks.
3. A statement describing the reason why a type of client is limited to monthly or bi-monthly issuance.

The policy shall be kept on file at the local agency prior to implementation.

PROCEDURE:

Clinic staff:

- A. Develop the local agency’s written policy regarding monthly versus multi-monthly check issuance.
- B. Assure the local agency’s policy is applied uniformly to all clients.

- C. Document in the client's file in Client Services the reason why he/she is denied bi-monthly or tri-monthly check issuance when the client would normally have received multi-monthly checks according to the agency's written policy.

Note: This procedure does not apply to clients who receive only one month of checks when given a grace period in order to provide documentation for WIC eligibility.

Information:

1. The choice of monthly, bi-monthly or tri-monthly check issuance provides flexibility for clients and for clinic staffing. Multi-month issuance can enhance clinic resources, client satisfaction and nutrition services because each check pick-up is associated with nutrition education.
2. Rationale for limiting check issuance to monthly or bi-monthly will vary across the state. When writing the local agency policy regarding check issuance, clinic staff may want to consider the following issues:
 - a. Nutrition high risk clients. These clients may require more than one high risk nutrition education contact per certification period. The Registered Dietitian (RD) may want to determine multi-month issuance for these clients on a case-by-case basis.
 - b. Pregnant women. Pregnant women receiving Maternity Support Services (MSS) from the clinic may need to be scheduled on a monthly basis to coordinate services. Pregnant women who do not participate in a comprehensive prenatal program may need to be seen monthly for better monitoring and follow-up of referral needs.
 - c. Breastfeeding women and their infants. The breastfeeding pair may need further assistance to ensure breastfeeding is well established and supported.
 - d. Infants or children of pregnant and breastfeeding women who are receiving monthly checks. It is recommended to schedule family members according to the same issuance schedule.
 - e. Clients who missed their second nutrition education appointment or infants who missed the infant health assessment. Reschedule the missed appointment as soon as possible and try to keep the client on the same issuance schedule. If the appointment must be scheduled for the following month, the client may need to change to a different issuance schedule, e.g. bi-monthly or monthly.
 - f. Homeless clients. The CPA may want to assess these clients on a case-by-case basis.

- g. Foster children in short term care. It may be beneficial to schedule these clients on a monthly or bi-monthly basis.
- h. Clients on a prescribed WIC formula. Check issuance intervals may need to be adjusted to coincide with the WIC Formulas and Foods Prescription Form due dates.
- i. Potential difficulty of client/caregiver to manage multiple sets of checks, such as the possibility of losing checks or cashing checks out of the valid dates.
- j. Clients who are under investigation or may be facing disqualification for noncompliance or program violation. The WIC Integrity Unit will instruct the agency regarding these clients.

POLICY: Issuing WIC Checks from Client Services

Clinic staff shall issue WIC checks (as appropriate based on the client’s category) to each client at the time he/she is determined WIC eligible and throughout the current eligibility period, unless the client is suspended or is disqualified due to program noncompliance. The term “checks” refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks

Clinic staff shall issue checks monthly or multi-monthly according to the local agency policy. Tri-monthly check issuance is recommended whenever possible to increase client satisfaction and maximize agency resources.

Computer check stubs shall be kept for four years. The stubs shall remain on site for six months and are then allowed to be kept off site; i.e. archived.

PROCEDURE:

Clinic staff:

- A. Review the client’s file for information regarding issues that would prevent check issuance to the client, i.e. missing documentation such as income, identification or residency; suspension; or disqualification due to program noncompliance.

Note: Lost and stolen check information may be documented in the client’s Flowsheet or Check Notes. Client Services (CIMS) will prompt staff for additional information when documentation is required or check issuance is not allowed.

- B. Review the client, caregiver and alternate endorser names on the Demographics tab to assure the correct name(s) will be printed on the checks. Update this information as needed prior to printing checks.
- C. Issue checks to each eligible client/caregiver/alternate endorser:
 - 1. In sets of one, two or three months according to the local agency’s policy and the client’s needs.
 - 2. In intervals of approximately 30, 60, or 90 days based on the issuance schedule.
 - 3. Separate each month’s checks, as appropriate. Provide reminders, such as highlighting in yellow or another light color the printed dates on the checks, to the client/caregiver in order to use checks within the correct dates.
 - 4. Inform the client/caregiver/alternate endorser of the importance of the following issues: keeping WIC appointments, using WIC checks correctly, and using

checks within the correct dates. Refer to the “Education on Using WIC Checks” policy in this chapter for more information.

- D. View the client’s/caregiver’s/alternate endorser’s identification before checks are issued. Identification is reviewed, but not documented, at the check pick-up. Refer to the “Identification for Receiving WIC Checks” policy in this chapter for information.
- E. Review the checks with the client/caregiver/alternate endorser as appropriate, e.g. correct names are printed on the checks, review any changes made to the food package, and provide check education. Refer to the “Education on Using WIC Checks” policy in this chapter for more information.
- F. Have the client/caregiver/alternate endorser sign the check stub on the signature line.
- G. Document “Forgot to sign” on the check stub if the client/caregiver/alternate endorser did not sign the stub. Staff initial the check stub.
- H. Ensure the separation of duties between staff determining client eligibility and those issuing checks. Refer to the “Separation of Duties” policy in this chapter for more information.
- I. Ensure that staff do not issue checks to themselves, family members or friends. Refer to Volume 1, Chapter 18 – Certification Issues for more information about staff not certifying and/or issuing checks to themselves, family members or friends.
- J. Separate the signed check stub from the checks.
 - 1. Store the check stubs by the Issue Date (not the First Day to Use).
 - 2. Keep the check stubs for a total of four years. The stubs are kept on site for the first six months and can then be archived off site.
- K. Issue the checks to the client/caregiver/alternate endorser.
- L. Destroy any blank check stock from a page of printed checks by shredding or tearing into pieces no larger than 1 square inch.

POLICY: Identification for Receiving WIC Checks

Clients, caregivers and alternate endorsers shall provide appropriate personal identification as described in procedures below before receiving WIC checks. The term “checks” refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks.

The local agency shall be allowed to accept other documents for personal identification in addition to those listed under “A” below. In that case, the local agency shall develop a written policy for the types of documents it considers adequate and ensure the policy is applied uniformly to all applicants, clients, caregivers and alternate endorsers.

Note: The types of identification allowed for receiving checks in the clinic differs from the types of identification allowed for using checks at the store. Refer to the “Identification for Using WIC Checks” policy in this chapter for more information.

The agency shall develop a written policy describing what steps will be taken when a client does not bring the necessary identification to the clinic when receiving checks.

PROCEDURE:

Clinic staff:

- A. View the client’s/caregiver’s/alternate endorser’s identification before issuing checks. The following items are allowed as proof of identification for receiving checks:
1. WIC Appointment/ID Folder.
 2. Staff identification, e.g. personal knowledge/recognition of the client/caregiver/alternate endorser.
 3. Photo identification such as driver’s license, state identification card, or military identification.
 4. Passport.
 5. Work or school identification.
 6. Health insurance or social services card.
 7. Medicaid card, medical coupons, or military medical card.
 8. Voter registration card.
 9. Birth certificate.

10. Tribal ID.
11. Mexican Consular ID.
12. Other records the local agency considers adequate.

Note: Staff view the client's/caregiver's/alternate endorser's identification before issuing checks, but are not required to document it in Client Services. Refer to Volume 1, Chapter 3 - Application and Processing Standards for identification requirements when determining eligibility for certification or recertification.

- B. Issue checks to the client, caregiver or alternate endorser.

Note: When issuing checks to a client's alternate, refer to the "Alternate Endorser" policy in this chapter for information about additional requirements to verify his/her permission to pick-up and use the client's checks.

- C. Develop a written agency policy describing what to do when a client does not bring the required identification to the check pickup appointment. Examples should include:

1. Staff may determine if another staff person is available in the clinic who recognizes the client, caregiver or alternate endorser.
2. A policy about how soon the client will be allowed to return with the appropriate identification (i.e. same day whenever possible).

- D. Do not issue checks when a client, caregiver or alternate endorser does not have appropriate identification at check pickup, as described in this section, and staff do not recognize the person.

Information:

WIC policy allows for staff recognition at check pickup. Staff should consider, whenever possible, whether another staff person in the clinic is available who does recognize the client, caregiver, or alternate endorser if another form of ID is not available.

POLICY: Separation of Duties for Determining Eligibility and Issuing WIC Checks

The local agency shall ensure the separation of duties of staff who are responsible for eligibility determination and check issuance. Determining WIC eligibility and issuing WIC checks and Farmers Market Nutrition Program checks shall be done by at least two different clinic staff persons for each certification appointment. The term “checks” in this section refers to both regular WIC checks, WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks and Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) checks. Certification appointments include the following:

1. Presume eligible (PE)
2. Enroll infant (EN)
3. New certification (NC)
4. Complete certification (CC) and
5. Recertification (RC)

When unable to meet this policy requirement, local agency staff shall notify the state WIC office in writing, including the reason why the agency cannot comply and a plan for monitoring of program integrity. When the local agency lacks the staff necessary to split certification and check issuance functions, a local agency administrator (for example, the WIC coordinator, a clinic coordinator or supervisor) shall monitor the clinic to assure program integrity.

When separation of duties cannot be performed on a given day due to unusual circumstances (i.e. the clinic has only two staff and one is unexpectedly out) and the clinic normally meets the separation of duties requirement, the agency shall ensure that the day’s check issuance activities are monitored appropriately.

PROCEDURE:

Clinic staff:

- A. Assess procedures at each clinic site to confirm that staff determining eligibility for a client are not the same persons as those who issue checks.
- B. Establish staff responsibilities in accordance with policy. For example, if the certifier completes the certification, determines the food package and presses the button to print checks, then the clerk (or another staff person) issues the checks to the client. Having the clerk (or another staff person) initial the checks prior to issuance by the certifier does not meet the intent of the separation of duties requirement. Having the clerk actually print the checks and hand them to the client/caregiver is best practice.

- C. Notify the state WIC office in writing of each clinic location that cannot comply with the separation of duties requirement, including the reason why the clinic cannot comply and the plan for monitoring for program integrity.
- D. Monitor for program integrity according to your plan when the agency lacks the staff necessary to split certification and check issuance functions. The following are examples of ways staff can monitor for integrity:
1. Reconcile the Appointment Summary report (print at the beginning of the day) with the Check Reconciliation report.
 2. Review the Clinic Action by Staff report. Note inappropriate staff actions and/or excessive number of appointment types by staff members.
 3. Check to see that Presumed Eligible clients have a Complete Certification done within 3 months.
 4. Rotate staff going to the site.
 5. Batch print checks by one staff person at the main site, issue checks by another staff person at the remote site.
 6. Review check stubs to see if all are accounted for by noting that all check numbers are present.
 7. Review check stub signatures and/or signatures on the Rights and Responsibilities to see if they match.
 8. Look for client and/or caregiver names that seem to stand out as unusual (i.e nonsense series of letters, or repetitive name types).
 9. If a tribal organization, compare names and birthdates to a membership list.
 10. Have FMNP check pick-up days that are separate from certification appointments.
- Note:** It is recommended that a local agency combine several of the above tasks for monitoring a site to provide the best assurance of program integrity.
- E. Monitor for program integrity when separation of duties cannot be performed on a given day due to unusual circumstances by reviewing check issuance activities.

Information:

The following is taken from a USDA statement regarding the separation of duties:

“In general, separation of duties is a standard accountability/security practice used in any operation in which cash or other valuable benefits change hands. The goal is to split benefit issuance activities between more than one person if possible. In WIC, this generally means splitting participant certification and check issuance functions to ensure that the entire cycle of issuance does not rest with any one person. A common model for achieving proper separation in the WIC clinic is to have the Competent Professional Authority (CPA) determine a participant’s eligibility while a clerical or equivalent staff person actually issues the checks. An obvious exception to this principle is the small satellite clinic where only one staff member may be available for all clinic functions. Our approach has been to advocate separation of duties to the extent practicable, given the existing clinic setup and staffing patterns.”

POLICY: Washington WIC Approved Stores

Clients, caregivers and alternate endorsers shall redeem WIC checks only at stores or pharmacies that are approved by the Washington WIC Nutrition Program. The term “checks” refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks.

Clinic staff shall inform clients/caregivers/alternate endorsers of the stores and pharmacies that are approved by the Washington WIC Nutrition Program either verbally or in writing.

PROCEDURE:

Clinic staff:

- A. Inform the client/caregiver/alternate endorser that the checks can only be used at stores or pharmacies that are approved by the Washington WIC Nutrition Program.
- B. Inform the client/caregiver/alternate endorser of the stores and pharmacies that are approved by the Washington WIC Nutrition Program. Staff can inform clients/caregivers of approved stores by:
 - 1. Verbally informing the them about the stores and pharmacies that are approved in the area, or
 - 2. Providing a list of approved stores, or
 - 3. Referring to the Washington WIC Web site for a list of approved stores.
- C. Assist the client/caregiver/alternate endorser in verifying the availability of therapeutic formula by calling the store or pharmacy when the client receives checks for this type of formula. Refer to Volume 1, Chapter 24 – WIC Prescriptions for more information about formulas.

Information:

- 1. The following questions may be used to help define a “shopping area” for the client in order to inform the client of the approved stores and pharmacies in the area:
 - a. Where do you usually shop for groceries?
 - b. Do you usually shop at a large chain store or a neighborhood market?
 - c. In what city (or county) do you usually shop for groceries?

2. A list of WIC approved stores can be generated in Client Services and given to the client/caregiver/alternate endorser based on zip code, county, city or store name. A list of all Washington approved stores and pharmacies is also available.

POLICY: Education on Using WIC Checks

Clinic staff shall ensure that clients, caregivers and alternate endorsers have the information needed to use WIC checks at the grocery store. The term “checks” refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks.

PROCEDURE:

A. At the initial certification, clinic staff:

1. Explain how to use the checks to the client/caregiver/alternate endorser. See # 4 below for additional information about using WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks:

- a. Use the checks on or after the “First Day to Use”.
- b. Use the checks on or before the “Last Day to Use”.

Note: It is okay to use the checks after midnight on the first day to use and before midnight on the last day to use listed on the check.

- c. Shop only at Washington WIC approved stores.
- d. Checks within the current first and last day to use may be cashed in any order or all at the same time.
- e. Do **not** make any changes to the check.
- f. Only a person whose name appears below the signature box of the check may use and sign the check at the store.
- g. The checks are not transferable; they cannot be signed over or given to anyone else.
- h. Check stubs are signed to verify that the client/caregiver/alternate endorser received checks.

2. Discuss the WIC foods the client/caregiver/alternate endorser is able to purchase:

- a. The foods on the check are prescribed for the client.
- b. Select only the foods that are WIC approved and only in the amounts listed on the check(s).

Note: The client/caregiver/alternate endorser can purchase less than the amounts listed on the check(s), but not more.

- c. Specific brands of WIC approved foods are listed in the WIC Food Brochure and on the WIC website.
 - d. No substitutions of WIC foods are allowed.
 - e. No “rainchecks” for WIC foods are allowed.
3. Explain how to shop at the store:
- a. Keep WIC foods separate from other groceries.
 - b. If using more than one check at a time, separate foods by check.
 - c. Tell the checker that it is a WIC purchase before he/she begins to ring up any items.
 - d. The checker will total the WIC foods and enter the amount on the check.
 - e. Make sure the checker writes the correct amount on the check before signing in the “Customer Signature” box.
 - f. The checker will ask for ID. Only people who are listed below the signature box and have ID can sign the check at the store. Refer to the “Identification for Using WIC Checks” policy in this chapter for information about the types of identification allowed for using checks at the store.
 - g. The checker cannot ask the client/caregiver/alternate endorser to pay for any of the purchase amount.
 - h. The client/caregiver/alternate endorser cannot ask for any change or money back when using checks.
 - i. WIC foods cannot be returned to the store for cash, credit or any other items.
 - j. Coupons may be used with the checks. Refer to the policy “Use of Manufacturer’s Specials with WIC Checks” in this chapter.
4. Explain how to use the WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks:
- a. If more than one person in your family gets WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks, you can use them together. For example, you can combine a \$6

WIC Fruit and Vegetable check with one for \$8 to pay for \$14 worth of fresh fruits and vegetables.

- b. If your purchase costs more than the amount the WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks cover, you are allowed to pay the extra amount. This is different from the checks for other WIC foods. For example, if the purchase costs \$7 and you are using a \$6 WIC Fruit and Vegetable check, you can pay the extra \$1 to cover the cost.
 - c. If your purchase costs less than the amount the WIC Fruits and Vegetable checks cover, you are not allowed to receive money back.
 - d. Select only fresh fruits and vegetables.
5. Explain where to get help:
- a. Report lost or stolen checks to WIC staff as soon as possible.
 - b. Return any unused, expired checks to the clinic.
 - c. Tell WIC staff if there are any problems at the store.
- B. When time with the client is limited, staff are allowed to use a modified version of check education referred to as the “10 Key Points Method.” It is recommended staff provide as much information from the complete check education list whenever possible. The 10 keys points include:
- 1. Use your WIC checks on or between the first and last day to use.
 - 2. Use a WIC check only if your name is printed below the signature box.
 - 3. Shop only at WIC approved stores. Look for “WIC Checks Accepted Here” signs.
 - 4. Buy the amounts and types of foods listed on your WIC checks.
 - 5. Separate your WIC foods by check and from other items you are buying.
 - 6. Let the checker know you are using a WIC check before you begin your purchase.
 - 7. Sign the check after the checker sees your ID and writes in the amount.
 - 8. If more than one person in your family gets WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks, you can use them together.

9. If your purchase costs more than the amount WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks cover, you are allowed to pay the extra amount.
10. If your purchase costs less than the amount WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks cover, you are not allowed to receive money back.

Note: The 10 key points are printed on the WIC Appointment/ID Folder.

- C. At subsequent appointments and recertifications, clinic staff ask the client/caregiver/alternate endorser questions about WIC foods and using checks to determine if additional education is needed, or if there were any problems getting the foods at the store. Example: “Tell me about any problems or questions you had when doing your WIC shopping last month.”

Information:

When the client/caregiver/alternate endorser presents checks at a store, store staff have been instructed to ask the person for identification and witness the signature. Stores cannot accept checks when:

1. Clients do not provide adequate identification as described in this section.
2. The person using the checks is not listed on the check.
3. The check is signed prior to presenting it to the store clerk.

POLICY: Identification for Using WIC Checks

The following types of identification shall be allowed for using WIC checks at any Washington WIC approved store. The term “checks” refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks:

1. Washington State WIC Nutrition Program Appointment and ID Folder with the person’s name and signature.
2. Photo identification – examples include driver’s license, state ID card, armed forces ID card, tribe enrollment card, passport, etc.
3. Other forms of identification the store would normally accept when identification is needed from a customer.

PROCEDURE:

Clinic staff:

- A. Inform the client/caregiver/alternate endorser of the requirement to show identification when using checks at any Washington WIC approved store.
- B. Inform the client/caregiver/alternate endorser of the types of identification accepted at any Washington WIC approved store as listed in policy above.
- C. Provide the client/caregiver/alternate endorser with the Washington State WIC Nutrition Program Appointment and ID Folder. Refer to Volume 1, Chapter 13 – Basic Contact for information about the Appointment and ID Folder.

POLICY: Using Coupons or Manufacturer’s Specials with WIC Checks

WIC clients/caregivers/alternate endorsers shall have the option to use coupons and/or manufacturer’s specials in conjunction with WIC checks. The term “checks” refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks.

PROCEDURE:

Clinic staff:

- A. Inform clients/caregivers/alternate endorsers they have the option to use coupons and manufacturer’s specials with their checks if the store normally accepts coupons or honors manufacturer’s specials.
- B. Inform clients/caregivers/alternate endorsers if they have any questions, or if questions arise at the store to call the WIC toll-free number (1-800-841-1410) and talk to state WIC Food Delivery and Retailer Management staff.

Information:

Examples of manufacturer’s specials and coupons which may be used are:

- a. “Free additional ounces” - If the food product minus the free ounces meets the WIC guidelines, it may be purchased with checks. Free ounces do not count toward the amount specified on the check.
- b. “Buy one, get one free” - The WIC Nutrition Program is charged for only the WIC approved item. The free item does not need to be WIC approved.

Example: A store has a buy one, get one free special on milk. The client/caregiver/alternate endorser can purchase the WIC approved milk listed on the check and receive chocolate milk as the free item.

- c. “Cents off” coupons - The checker deducts the “cents off” amount before entering the purchase price on the check. The “cents off” amount is a cost savings to the WIC program.
- d. Non-WIC foods offered upon purchase of a WIC food.

Examples: A coupon for free bananas is available with a cereal purchase. The cereal must be WIC approved.

A store will give the client/caregiver/alternate endorser a coupon for a free turkey when the client/caregiver/alternate endorser spends a total of \$100.00. WIC purchases count toward the \$100.00 amount.

POLICY: Alternate Endorser

A client or caregiver shall have the option to allow an alternate endorser to pick up WIC checks at the clinic and/or use them at the store. The term “checks” refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks. The alternate endorser’s name shall be printed on the checks authorizing that person to use them with appropriate identification at any Washington WIC approved store.

A client/caregiver shall have the option to name more than one alternate endorser. Client Services has space for only one name in the alternate field on checks. Staff shall list additional alternates in Client Services when requested by the client/caregiver and assure the appropriate alternate is listed on the client’s checks each time they are printed.

The alternate endorser shall be informed of procedures for using checks and WIC program rules. Clinic staff shall provide this information to the alternate endorser when he/she is physically present in the clinic. When the alternate endorser is not physically present in the clinic, the client/caregiver shall agree to provide this information to the alternate endorser before allowing him/her to use the checks.

The alternate endorser shall meet the following requirements to receive, sign and use the checks.

1. The alternate endorser has permission from the client/caregiver to receive and use the checks. Permission is verified by one of the following methods:
 - a. The client or caregiver designates the alternate endorser at a WIC appointment. Clinic staff enter the alternate’s name on the Demographics tab in Client Services designating the client’s or caregiver’s authorization for the alternate endorser to receive and use checks on their behalf.
 - b. The client or caregiver provides a note to the alternate endorser authorizing the alternate endorser to pick up and use the checks. Staff shall enter the alternate endorser’s name on the Demographics tab in Client Services. This method is used when the client or caregiver did not designate an alternate endorser in person at a WIC appointment.
 - c. The client or caregiver telephones the WIC clinic and gives permission for the alternate endorser to pick up and use checks. Staff shall enter the alternate endorser’s name on the Demographics tab in Client Services. This method is used when the client or caregiver did not designate an alternate endorser in person at a WIC appointment.

Note: Clinic staff shall take reasonable precautions to verify the client’s/caregiver’s identity when accepting permission over the phone, e.g. voice recognition, verifying the client’s date of birth,

etc. Telephone permission is documented in the client's file in Client Services.

2. The alternate endorser is 18 years or older. When the alternate endorser is the client's/caregiver's spouse, partner, parent or caregiver, the age requirement is waived.
3. The alternate endorser has been informed of procedures for using checks and agrees to follow them.

Refer to Volume 1, Chapter 2 - Program Compliance for more information when a substitute caregiver is used as an alternative to disqualification from the program.

PROCEDURE:

Clinic staff:

- A. Ask the client/caregiver if he or she would like to designate an alternate endorser to pick up and use checks.
 1. Notify the client or caregiver that he/she is required to instruct the alternate endorser on procedures for using checks and WIC Program rules prior to the alternate endorser using the checks.
 2. Document the alternate endorser's name on the client's Demographics tab in Client Services.
 3. Ask the client/caregiver to notify WIC staff when the alternate endorser is no longer authorized to pick up and use the client's checks. When the alternate endorser is no longer authorized to receive and use checks, the alternate endorser's name is removed from the client's Demographics tab and will no longer print on the client's checks.
 4. An alternate endorser may be changed at any time by the client or caregiver. Clinic staff shall change the alternate's name on the client's Demographics tab in Client Services after permission has been established as noted in the policy above. Once documented on the Demographics tab, the alternate's name will print on the client's checks.
- B. Ask the client or caregiver to provide a permission note or obtain telephone permission from the client/caregiver when an alternate endorser has not been documented on the client's Demographics tab, or the person is different from the alternate designated on the client's Demographics tab.

Note: This method is used when the client or caregiver did not designate an alternate endorser in person at a WIC appointment.

1. Document permission in the client's file in Client Services and retain the written note at the clinic.
 2. Document the alternate endorser's name on the client's Demographics tab in Client Services.
- C. Ask the alternate endorser for identification when he or she comes to the clinic to pick up checks. Follow the "Identification for Receiving WIC Checks" policy in this chapter.
- D. Provide check education and information about WIC approved store locations.

Information:

The alternate endorser's role is limited to purchasing WIC foods and following clinic instructions for delivery of foods to the client/caregiver and therefore the alternate endorser does not need to sign the Rights and Responsibilities form. The Rights and Responsibilities form is referred to as the "participant agreement" in federal regulation. Refer to Volume 1, Chapter 7 – Rights and Responsibilities for more information.

It is important for the client or caregiver to notify clinic staff when he/she would like to remove an alternate endorser. Clinic staff shall remove the alternate endorser's name from the client's Demographics tab in Client Services so that it will no longer print on the WIC checks.

In order to limit the number of checks that have to be reprinted in the clinic and prevent clients from having to bring checks back for corrections, clinic staff make every effort to verify that the alternate endorser in the client's file is correct before printing checks.

POLICY: WIC Check Options for Clients Moving Out of the Area or on Vacation

Clinic staff shall be allowed to provide WIC checks, when eligible, for clients who are in an active, enrolled, or presumed status and are moving or plan to be out of the area temporarily. The term “checks” refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks.

When the client is moving to another area, clinic staff shall follow appropriate transfer policies and procedures. Refer to Volume 1, Chapter 21 – Transfers/Verification of Certification for more information.

When a client is in expired status, clinic staff shall follow appropriate policies and procedures for allowing check issuance to clients in this status, for example when the eligibility has been extended due to difficulty in clinic scheduling. Refer to Volume 1, Chapter 17 – WIC Eligibility for more information.

PROCEDURE:

Clinic staff:

- A. Assess if the client is eligible for checks.
 - 1. The client is eligible for checks when he/she is in an active, enrolled, presumed or expired status in Client Services.

Note: Refer to Volume 1, Chapter 17 – WIC Eligibility for more information about providing checks when the client is in an expired status in Client Services.

- B. Assist the client/caregiver in choosing one of the following options regarding their checks when taking an in-state vacation or when moving to another area in Washington state:
 - 1. Receive checks for any Washington WIC approved store. Staff shall assist the client/caregiver to locate a Washington WIC approved store in the new area by providing the information verbally or in writing with a list of stores.
 - 2. Receive a transfer card or other transfer documents and receive checks at the new clinic.
 - a. Client Services will assure that the last date checks were issued is documented on the transfer card. However, electronic transfer information must be replicated daily and may not be available to the receiving clinic until the next day.
 - b. Transfer cards can only be provided to clients in an active, enrolled or presumed status. Transfer cards cannot be provided for expired clients.

- c. Clients may receive both a transfer card and checks for the current month.
 - d. A client in expired status can be issued checks according to policies in Volume 1, Chapter 17 – WIC Eligibility, but a transfer card cannot be issued.
 - i. Provide a Certification History Report which lists the client’s check history if the client is going to apply for WIC services in their new area.
 - ii. Inform the client/caregiver to provide this information to the next clinic. It is not a transfer card, but it provides important information.
 - iii. Inform the client/caregiver that receiving more than one set of WIC checks in a month is considered dual participation and is a program violation.
 - e. Terminate the client’s file as appropriate.
- C. Provide transfer information as appropriate when the client/caregiver is moving or vacationing out of state.
- 1. Assure the last date checks were issued is documented on the transfer card.
 - 2. Terminate the client file if not issuing checks for the current month. When a transfer card is printed in Client Services, the file is automatically terminated.
- D. Document in the client’s file in Client Services that he/she will be out of the area temporarily.

Information:

Refer to Volume 1, Chapter 21 – Transfer/Verification of Certification and the “Replacing Checks for In-State and Out-of-State Visiting WIC Clients” policy in this chapter for more information.

POLICY: Printing and Reconciling Batch WIC Checks

Clinic staff are authorized to batch print WIC checks for clients. The term “checks” refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks. Batch checks shall not be printed more than two business days before the client’s appointment. Refer to the “Separation of Duties for Determining Eligibility and Issuing WIC Checks” policy in this chapter when staff batch printing checks will be the same staff giving checks to clients.

Clinic staff shall reconcile batch checks as soon as possible, but no later than two business days after the client’s appointment.

Clinic staff shall request in writing from the Local Program Consultant at the state WIC office permission to print batch checks in excess of two business days before issuance. The local agency can request this option when the clinic will be closed for remodeling, moving, etc.

PROCEDURE:

Clinic staff:

- A. Batch print checks following procedures listed in the Client Services User Guide, which is available from the Department of Printing General Store.
- B. Assure batch checks are printed no more than two business days in advance of the day of issuance.
- C. Reconcile batch-printed checks no later than two business days after the checks were issued.

Note: Reconciling batch checks for clients who did not receive them automatically voids those checks in Client Services.

- D. Destroy all un-issued batch checks by shredding or tearing into pieces no larger than one square inch.

Information:

Batch checks may be used for some mobile WIC sites with no printer on location, or when conducting a WIC nutrition education class off-site.

Refer to the policy “Issuing WIC Checks from Client Services” in this chapter for further guidance. For questions about issuing batch checks, call CIMS support at the state office.

POLICY: Mailing WIC Checks

Clinic staff shall be authorized to mail one month of WIC checks to a client/caregiver when the following circumstances prevent the client/caregiver from receiving WIC benefits for that month. The term “checks” refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks:

1. When natural disasters or inclement weather prohibit normal clinic operation or hinder client/caregiver mobility.
2. When the client/caregiver experiences a rare, insurmountable problem or personal crisis and an alternate endorser is not available to come in to the clinic to pick up checks.
3. When the client/caregiver is unable to pick up the checks due to personal illness or imminent childbirth and an alternate endorser is not available.
4. When the client/caregiver lives in a rural area and has no access to transportation and an alternate endorser is not available.
5. When employment prevents the client/caregiver from picking up checks during normal clinic hours and an alternate endorser is not available.
6. When the clinic’s computer system is down and checks cannot be printed.

The local agency shall contact the state WIC office in writing to request permission to mail checks to large numbers of clients in times of caseload building or when clinic restraints would not enable staff to issue checks, e.g. relocation of the clinic, severe clinic staff limitations, etc. The local agency shall receive approval from the state WIC office before beginning the practice.

Clinic staff shall use regular mail unless there is a concern about the potential for stolen checks. In those cases staff shall use certified, registered mail delivery.

PROCEDURE:

Clinic staff:

- A. Determine if the need for mailing checks fits the above criteria.
- B. Contact client/caregiver by phone and:
 1. Confirm mailing address.
 2. Confirm client, caregiver and alternate endorser name (if applicable).

3. Confirm food package information.
4. Schedule an appointment for next month.
5. Inform client/caregiver that checks are being mailed.
6. Ask the client/caregiver to contact the clinic by a specified date, if the check(s) are not received. Refer to the “Replacing Lost, Stolen or Destroyed WIC Checks” policy.

Note: Staff are not required to contact each client/caregiver when a large number of checks must be mailed and it is unrealistic/unreasonable to do so.

- C. Document in the client’s file in Client Services that checks were mailed by printing the “Mailed Check Letter” in Client Services. A sample “Mailed Check Letter” is provided in the Appendix as a reference.
- D. Document on the check stub that the checks were mailed. Detach the check stub before mailing and file it with the check stubs in the clinic.
- E. Mail checks and “Mailed Check Letter” in an opaque (security) envelope, in a regular envelope or a window envelope with the letter wrapped around the checks, as follows:
 1. Mark or stamp the envelope “DO NOT FORWARD, RETURN TO SENDER”.
 2. Display the return address of the local WIC clinic on the envelope.
- F. Void and destroy any returned checks immediately. Destroy checks by shredding or tearing into pieces no larger than one square inch.
 1. Void the checks in Client Services.
 2. Document in the client’s check notes in Client Services when checks are returned undeliverable.

Information:

Refer to the policy “Replacing WIC Checks that have been Mailed and not Received” in this chapter for guidance when mailed checks become lost.

POLICY: Issuing WIC Checks when Computer Systems are down or During an Emergency

When clinics cannot print WIC checks for scheduled clients due to failure of computer equipment (i.e. servers, printers), temporary power outages, or natural disasters that render the clinic inoperable, the following options shall be allowed. The term “checks” refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks:

1. Mail checks when the clinic is able to print again. See the policy “Mailing WIC Checks” in this chapter for further guidance.
2. Reschedule clients to come back when the clinic is expected to be fully functioning.
3. Give formula to clients from the clinic stock of returned formula if available and when allowed according to clinic policy. See Volume 1, Chapter 23 – WIC Foods for guidance around returned formula and developing an agency policy.
4. In special situations, transfer client to another WIC clinic. This option is suggested only when a client cannot wait for checks (i.e. special formula needed soon) and is willing to travel to another clinic.
 - a. Contact the other WIC clinic to obtain agreement for this option.
 - b. Coordinate transfer for client with the other WIC clinic and ensure client receives adequate information about this special process (e.g. transferring back, etc.).

Most incidents causing a clinic computer system to temporarily shut down will last for only a day or two. If a WIC clinic determines it will be unable to print checks for clients for more than 3 clinic days, staff shall contact the state WIC office for guidance. Staff may contact the state WIC office at any time for guidance during an emergency.

Note: WIC is a supplemental nutrition program that is not intended to meet the emergency needs of clients. However, when clinics cannot serve clients as scheduled due to unusual situations, every effort shall be made to provide WIC checks in a timely manner.

PROCEDURE:

Clinic staff:

- A. Determine which of the options for providing checks is most appropriate when the clinic is unable to provide them at the client’s scheduled appointment.

1. Mail checks when the clinic is able to print again. Refer to the “Mailing WIC Checks” policy in this chapter for more information.
 - a. Verify the client’s address and assure the client does not have issues/risks with receiving checks at their mailing address prior to mailing the checks.
 2. Reschedule clients to come back when the clinic is expected to be fully functioning.
 3. Refer clients to another WIC clinic to transfer in and receive checks. This option is suggested only when a client cannot wait for checks (i.e. special formula needed soon) and is willing to travel to another clinic.
 - a. Coordination with the other WIC clinic should be arranged ahead of time in order to assure it will not be an undue burden to the clinic and they can transfer in the client and provide checks in a timely manner.
- B. Contact the state WIC office for guidance when staff anticipate being unable to print checks for clients for more than 3 clinic days.

Information:

When staff are unable to print checks due to computer problems, it is recommended that staff contact clients who are scheduled for appointments as soon as possible and offer to reschedule them or mail checks, whichever works best for the client. The state WIC office can provide a faxed copy of the clinic schedule showing client names and phone numbers if requested.

POLICY: Replacing WIC Checks

Clinic staff shall replace WIC checks for clients/caregivers for reasons including, but not limited to, the following. The term “checks” refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks:

1. Food selection changes.
2. The client/caregiver is unable to do the shopping and has requested an alternate endorser who was not already listed on the checks.
3. The checks are damaged.
4. The client/caregiver/alternate endorser accidentally used bi- or tri-monthly checks out of the correct month sequence. Checks shall be replaced for the correct month in order for the client to receive benefits in that month. In all cases the client/caregiver/ alternate shall not be allowed to receive more benefits than allowed in a month. Refer to Procedure C for more information and an example.
5. The checks are lost, stolen or destroyed. Refer to the policies “Replacing Lost Stolen or Destroyed WIC Checks” and “Replacing WIC Checks that have been Mailed and not Received” in this chapter for specific instructions.
6. An infant or child who received checks for the current month has moved to a new caregiver and the checks or WIC foods/formula are not available to the new caregiver (i.e. foster child, change of custody).
7. The infant received an infant formula food package in the month the infant turns one year old, prior to the birth date; and after the birth date the caregiver requests the complete infant food package to be replaced with the child’s food package. Refer to Procedure E for more information and an example.

A client/caregiver who does not receive checks in a given month shall not be eligible to receive retroactive benefits in a subsequent month.

A client/caregiver who receives, but does not use all of the checks in a month cannot receive additional benefits the next month or receive replacements for the unused checks with a new first and last day to use.

PROCEDURE:

Clinic staff:

- A. Reclaim the checks the client/caregiver is unable to use.

1. If the checks are lost, stolen or destroyed refer to the “Replacing Lost, Stolen or Destroyed WIC Checks” or the “Replacing WIC Checks that have been Mailed and not Received” policy in this chapter for specific instructions.
 2. Document in the client’s file in Client Services when the checks being replaced were lost, stolen, destroyed, or mailed but not received.
- B. Verify the checks being replaced are still valid. Do not replace expired checks.
- Note:** The only exception allowed for replacing expired checks is when the client/caregiver/alternate endorser used bi-monthly or tri-monthly checks in the wrong order. In this case staff:
- C. When the client/caregiver/alternate endorser accidentally used bi-monthly or tri-monthly checks in the wrong order, clinic staff:
1. Reclaim the checks that were not used, in some cases these will be expired.
 2. Issue checks for the current month.
 3. Document in Client Services the circumstances regarding which month’s checks were used out of order, etc.
 4. Consider changing the client/caregiver to a monthly issuance schedule if the he or she continues to use checks out of order.
- Example:** A client was issued checks for April, May and June and accidentally used the May checks in April. In May the client realized what happened when she only has her expired April checks and her future dated June checks. Staff reclaim the unused April checks, then issue checks for May and document in Client Services the circumstances for the issuance. The client is only allowed to receive the allowed amount of WIC foods per month.
- D. Issue replacement checks using the first and last dates to use on the original checks.
- E. Replace an infant formula food package with the child’s food package after the first birthday has occurred, according to the following:
1. Assure the child has reached the first birthday.
 2. Reclaim and void the complete unused set of infant formula food package checks. The checks must be from the month the child turned one year.

- a. Only a full set of formula checks can be replaced with the child's food package. If any of the formula checks have been used, the child's food package can't be issued.
3. Issue a new set of checks with the child's foods using the Check Pick Up function in Client Services.
 - a. Using the Void and Replace function in this instance will not give you the children's food package.
- F. Destroy the reclaimed checks after they are voided by shredding or tearing into pieces no larger than one square inch.
- G. Document in Client Services the reason why checks are being voided and replaced.
- H. Report any unusual or frequent patterns of check replacement to the state WIC office.
- I. An infant or child who received checks for the current month has moved to a new caregiver and the checks or WIC formula/foods are not available to the new caregiver (i.e. foster child, change of custody).
 1. Contact state staff to receive permission to issue a second set of checks for a participant in the same month.
 2. Document in the client's file in Client Services why checks were issued and that permission from state staff was received. The state Integrity Unit uses this information to determine if an investigation is needed when a client receives double issuance of benefits.

POLICY: Replacing Lost, Stolen or Destroyed WIC Checks

Clinic staff shall replace WIC checks that have been lost, stolen or destroyed at the rate of one incident per client group in a six month time period. The term “checks” refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks. Checks that are lost (misplaced) shall not be replaced if it occurs within 6 months of a first incident.

Note: A second incident in 6 months requires documented proof that would not exist when checks are lost or misplaced, but could be available if checks are stolen or destroyed.

One incident could involve one check or several sets of checks if they were lost, stolen or destroyed at the same time. For the purpose of this policy, a destroyed check is defined as a check that is either completely damaged and cannot be reclaimed, e.g. destroyed in a house fire, or is damaged to the point that key identifying features of the check such as client name, client ID number, and valid dates cannot be determined.

The client/caregiver shall fill out and sign the Lost, Stolen or Destroyed Check Form at the time these checks are replaced. The form shall be kept on file in the clinic for four years. The clinic copy of the form shall remain on site for six months and is then allowed to be kept off-site i.e., archived.

Clinic staff shall replace lost, stolen, or destroyed checks according to the following:

1. First incident:
 - a. Staff replace lost, stolen or destroyed checks.
 - b. Staff document in Client Services the checks as lost, stolen or destroyed, what happened to the checks and why the checks are being replaced.
 - c. Client/caregiver signs the Lost, Stolen or Destroyed Check Form.
 - d. No additional documentation is required from the client/caregiver.
2. Subsequent incident within six months of the first incident:
 - a. Staff shall not replace lost checks the client/caregiver has misplaced.
 - b. Staff shall only replace stolen or destroyed checks when the client/caregiver provides appropriate written documentation as described in procedures below.
 - c. Staff shall document in Client Services what happened to the stolen or destroyed checks and why the checks are being replaced.

- d. Client/caregiver signs the Lost, Stolen or Destroyed Check Form.

When a request for replacement checks is denied as a result of this policy, document in Client Services the date and reason why.

This policy does not pertain to checks mailed by the clinic and not received by the client. Refer to the policy “Replacing WIC Checks that have been Mailed and not Received” in this chapter for more information.

An alternate endorser shall not be allowed to sign the Lost, Stolen or Destroyed Check Form on behalf of the client or caregiver and shall not be allowed to receive replacement checks for lost, stolen or destroyed WIC checks.

PROCEDURE:

Clinic staff:

- A. Verify the checks being replaced are within the current valid use dates, i.e. within a current “First Day to Use” and “Last Day to Use.” Checks that are no longer valid (e.g. checks that have expired) cannot be replaced, with the exception of those situations described in this section.
- B. Determine if the client group had any lost, stolen or destroyed checks replaced in the past six months. Six months refers to six sets of checks.
1. Review each client’s check history if the caregiver has multiple clients on the program.
 - a. Review check history for the past six sets of checks to see if replacements checks have been issued.
 - b. Review Check Notes in the client’s file to see if the replacements were issued for lost, stolen or destroyed checks.
 2. If the client group has not had replacements for lost, stolen or destroyed checks within the past six months this is considered the first incident. Issue replacement checks according to procedures listed in “D” below.
 3. If the client group has had replacement checks for lost, stolen or destroyed checks within the past six months this is considered a subsequent incident. Refer to procedures listed in “C” below.
 4. If the client group has had replacement checks issued for checks that were mailed by the clinic and not received by the client, it does not constitute an incident for

this policy and the checks shall be replaced. Refer to the “Replacing WIC Checks that have been Mailed and not Received” policy in this chapter for more information.

C. Determine if the client group meets the requirements for replacing stolen or destroyed checks when it is the subsequent incident occurring within six months of the first incident.

1. The following two requirements must be met to replace stolen or destroyed checks when it is the subsequent incident occurring within six months of the first incident:

- a. Checks were stolen or destroyed, and
- b. Client/caregiver can provide written documentation such as a police report, insurance document, Red Cross document, or a letter from a reliable third party acting in an official capacity such as a case worker, fire official, etc.

Note: Checks that are lost or misplaced cannot be replaced for the subsequent incident within six months of the first incident.

2. Staff make a copy of the written documentation and attach it to the completed Lost, Stolen or Destroyed Check Form. If the clinic does not have a copier at a mobile site, ask to keep the document to make a copy at the main clinic then mail back the original to the client/caregiver.

Note: If the client/caregiver does not want to give staff the document to keep until copies can be made, i.e. the client needs the document, the client may make the copies then return to the clinic for replacement checks when he/she can provide a copy of the document.

D. Follow these procedures to replace lost, stolen or destroyed checks.

1. Determine which check or checks were lost, stolen or destroyed.

- a. Ask the client/caregiver pertinent questions to help determine which checks need to be replaced.
- b. If the client/caregiver cannot determine which checks were lost, stolen or destroyed, staff replace only the small (lowest value) check for each client.

2. Document all pertinent information on the Lost, Stolen or Destroyed Check Form.

3. Review the Lost, Stolen or Destroyed Check Form with the client/caregiver emphasizing the following information:
 - a. Do not use the original checks reported as lost, stolen or destroyed.
 - b. Bring the original checks back to the clinic if they are found.
 - c. Use the replacement checks only. The words “Replacement Check” will be printed on all checks printed in the Void and Replace wizard to distinguish them from the original.
 - d. Using the original checks in addition to the replacements is a program violation. The client/caregiver may be required to repay WIC and could be taken off the program.
4. Have the client/caregiver sign the form and give him/her the bottom, yellow copy.
5. Keep the top, white copy of the form and additional written documentation when required and retain on file for 4 years. The clinic copy of the form and additional documentation are kept on site for the first six months and can then be archived off site.
6. Document the checks as lost, stolen or destroyed in the client’s file in Client Services plus additional information as appropriate.
7. Document in Client Services the reason why the checks were lost/stolen/destroyed and replaced.
8. Issue replacement checks to the client.

Information:

The Lost, Stolen or Destroyed Check Form is located in the Appendix of this chapter for your information only. The actual form is a two-part carbonless form and is available in multiple languages from the Department of Printing General Store.

POLICY: Replacing WIC Checks That Have Been Mailed and Not Received

Clinic staff shall replace WIC checks that have been mailed to the client or caregiver and not received. The term “checks” refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks. The client/caregiver shall sign the Lost, Stolen or Destroyed Check Form at the time the checks are replaced.

Clinic staff shall not mail future checks to the client/caregiver unless the circumstances qualify in accordance with the “Mailing WIC Checks” policy in this chapter. Staff will use certified mail if checks are mailed to the same client in the future in accordance with the “Mailing WIC Checks” policy.

When checks are mailed by clinic staff and not received by the client or caregiver it does not constitute an “incident” as defined in the “Replacing Lost, Stolen or Destroyed WIC Checks” policy.

Note: The client/caregiver signs the Lost, Stolen or Destroyed Check Form as verification that the checks were not received. If the original mailed checks arrive after the client/caregiver receives replacement checks, inform him/her that the original checks must be returned to the clinic.

PROCEDURE:

Clinic staff:

- A. Verify the checks being replaced are within the current valid dates, i.e. within a current “First Day to Use” and “Last Day to Use.”
- B. Verify the checks were mailed to the client from the clinic by checking the client’s file for the MC, or Mailed Check contact in Client Services, or by reviewing the client’s Check Notes.
- C. Follow these procedures to replace checks mailed to the client and not received.
 1. Document all pertinent information on the Lost, Stolen or Destroyed Check Form. No additional documentation is required of the client/caregiver.
 2. Review the Lost, Stolen or Destroyed Check Form with the client/caregiver emphasizing the following information:
 - a. Do not use the original checks reported as mailed and not received.
 - b. Bring the original checks to the clinic if they are recovered.

- c. Use the replacement checks only. The words “Replacement Check” will be printed on all checks printed in the Void and Replace wizard to distinguish them from the original.
 - d. Using the original checks in addition to the replacements is a program violation. The client/caregiver will be required to repay WIC and could be taken off the program.
 3. Have the client/caregiver sign the form and give him/her the bottom, yellow copy.
 4. Keep the top, white copy of the form and retain on file for 4 years. The clinic copy of the form is kept on site for the first six months and can then be archived off site.
- D. Document additional information in the client’s file in Client Services regarding requiring the client/caregiver to come in to the clinic for all future checks or using certified mail if checks are mailed in the future in accordance with the “Mailing WIC Checks” policy.

Information:

The Lost, Stolen or Destroyed Check Form is located in the Appendix of the chapter for your information only. The actual form is a two-part carbonless form and is available in multiple languages from the Department of Printing General Store.

POLICY: Replacing WIC Checks for Returned Formula

In the interest of the infant's health, clinic staff shall be allowed to replace WIC formula checks for the caregiver after the checks have been used.

Local agencies shall develop a written policy that allows returned formula to be issued to another infant or that directs staff to dispose of formula in another manner. Refer to Volume 1, Chapter 23 – WIC Foods for guidance on developing agency policies for handling returned formula.

Clinic staff shall reclaim the unopened cans of formula from the caregiver and issue checks to replace only the amount returned to the clinic. The caregiver shall not exchange formula or return formula to the store where it was purchased, or at any other store.

Note: Refer to policies and procedures for issuing checks for prescribed formulas in Volume 1, Chapter 24 – WIC Prescriptions.

When an infant who received checks for the current month has a change in custody and the new caregiver did not receive either the checks or the WIC formula, see “Replacing WIC Checks” policy in this chapter for guidance.

PROCEDURE:

Clinic staff:

- A. Reclaim unopened cans of formula and any unused checks from the caregiver.
- B. Request and obtain a completed WIC Formulas and Foods Prescription Form - Infants from the caregiver when a prescribed formula is requested. Refer to Volume 1, Chapter 24 – WIC Prescriptions for more information. Clients have a one month grace period to return to the clinic with the completed form. Issue only one set of checks.

- C. Issue checks to replace the amount of formula returned to the clinic.

Note: The original checks should not be voided in Client Services since they have been used at the store.

- D. Use the “First Day to Use” from the original check(s).
 - 1. Staff may need to view the client's check history to determine the original “First Day to Use.”
 - 2. The “First Day to Use” may not be greater than 31 days in the past. Replacement checks cannot be issued for checks that have expired.

- E. Issue replacement check(s) for the new formula equal to, but not to exceed, the amount of formula returned to the clinic.
- F. Document in Client Services the number of cans returned, type of formula (liquid, powder, etc.), brand (name) of formula, and the reason for replacing formula checks that have been used.
- G. Store the returned unopened formula out of sight in the clinic or dispose of formula according to the local agency's written policy. Refer to Volume 1, Chapter 23 – WIC Foods for guidance on developing local agency policies and procedures for returned formula.

Information:

Issuing the returned, unopened cans of formula to the next infant who uses the same formula instead of WIC checks adversely affects the clinic's participation statistics. An infant who receives cans of formula instead of WIC checks is not counted as an active participant for statistical purposes due to the lack of documented check issuance in Client Services.

POLICY: Replacing WIC Checks for In-State and Out-of-State Visiting WIC Clients

Clinic staff shall be allowed to replace WIC checks for visiting WIC clients. The term “checks” refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks. Clinic staff shall transfer in each client prior to replacing checks.

PROCEDURE:

Clinic staff:

- A. Obtain transfer information and transfer eligible clients into Client Services. Refer to Volume 1, Chapter 21 – Transfers/Verification of Certification for more information.
- B. Ask for identification which verifies the identity of the person presenting the check(s). Refer to Volume 1, Chapter 3 – Application and Processing Standards for information about acceptable forms of identification.
- C. Have the client/caregiver read the Rights and Responsibilities form and sign. Give the client/caregiver a copy. Refer to Volume 1, Chapter 7 – Rights and Responsibilities for more information.
- D. Reclaim the in-state or out-of-state checks and void them. Follow instructions listed in “G” below.
- E. Issue checks to replace the reclaimed check(s).
 1. Verify that the checks being replaced are from the current issuance period. Do not replace expired checks.
 2. Select the Washington State WIC foods closest to those being replaced.
 3. If checks are being replaced for prescribed WIC formula and/or prescribed WIC foods, honor the prescribed formula and/or food without requiring a WIC Formulas and Foods Prescription form or a written prescription for one month of WIC benefits. Refer to Volume 1, Chapter 24 – WIC Prescriptions for more information.
- F. Educate the client/caregiver on how to use the checks.
- G. Follow check handling procedures.
 1. Write or stamp “void” on out-of-state checks and send them directly to the originating state WIC agency. Refer to the FNS Web site for state agency addresses at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/Contacts/statealpha.HTM>.

2. Destroy voided in-state checks. The checks will automatically be voided in Client Services within 60 days of the last day to use if they are not used.
- H. Provide the client/caregiver with a transfer card if he/she will not be staying in the area. Client Services will automatically terminate the file when a transfer card is printed.

Information:

The purpose of this policy is to allow WIC clients who are temporarily in Washington to receive uninterrupted WIC services. Most Washington WIC clients have the ability to use their checks at any authorized WIC store and therefore would only need replacement checks if their food choices change.

POLICY: Voiding and Destroying WIC Checks

Clinic staff shall document all voided checks in Client Services. The term “checks” refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks.

Clinic staff shall destroy the following types of voided checks:

1. Reclaimed voided checks
2. Unused checks returned by client/caregiver to the clinic
3. Checks mailed and returned as undeliverable
4. Unissued batch checks
5. Blank checks from a sheet of computer checks, e.g. the third check on a sheet of check stock when a food package prints on two checks
6. Unused out-of-date computer check stock when directed by the state WIC office

PROCEDURE:

Clinic staff:

- A. Document all voided checks in Client Services when appropriate.
 1. Reclaim checks to be voided, if possible. Do not void checks that may have already been used at a store.
 2. For out-of-state checks, stamp or write “void” on the check(s) in the signature box or the amount box, and send back to the originating state agency. Refer to the FNS website for state agency addresses at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/Contacts/statealpha.HTM>.
 3. For in-state checks from visiting and transferring clients, destroy the check(s). These checks will be automatically voided in Client Services 60 days after the “Last Day to Use”.
 4. Refer to the “Replacing Lost, Stolen or Destroyed WIC Checks” policy in this chapter for additional procedures for when the voided check has been reported as lost, stolen or destroyed.
- B. Destroy reclaimed, voided Washington checks by shredding, tearing into pieces no larger than one square inch, or another comparable means of destruction.

Information:

Unused checks that have been issued to a client and not used will be automatically voided by Client Services 60 days after the “Last Day to Use”.

POLICY: Security of WIC Checks and Check Stock

All WIC checks, including pre-printed batch checks, and computer check stock shall be maintained in a securely locked location and only accessible to those with authority to issue WIC checks. The term “checks” refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks.

PROCEDURE:

Clinic staff:

- A. Ensure all checks and check stock are always maintained in a locked location during normal clinic hours, even when attended by authorized personnel.
- B. Remove all computer check stock from the printer at the end of the day and store in a securely locked location.
- C. Lock the checks and check stock in a secure location (i.e. cabinet, lock box, or filing cabinet) during non-clinic hours.

Information:

When locking the WIC checks and check stock in a location such as a fireproof lock box, ensure the box is not placed in an area where it may be removed by someone other than those with authority.

The lock box should be in an area away from general public view.

POLICY: Ordering WIC Check Stock

Clinic staff shall order shipments of computer check stock from the contracted check printing company.

PROCEDURE:

Clinic staff:

- A. Perform a monthly inventory of check supplies and order appropriate amounts. Refer to the “Conducting and Maintaining Check Stock Inventory” policy in this chapter for more information.

1. Maintain a one-month supply of computer check stock.

- B. Complete the WIC Check Stock Order Form and fax or mail it to the contracted check printing company. Refer to the order form in the Appendix.

Note: Designate “Rush” or “Overnight Shipment” on the form when checks are needed in emergency situations.

- C. Retain the original, or a copy, of the WIC Check Stock Order Form on file in the clinic for one year. The order form is kept on site for six months and can then be archived off site.

Information:

The calculation for a one-month supply of computer check stock is:

Monthly caseload x 2 ÷ 400 = # of cartons. Keep in mind the effect of bi-monthly and tri-monthly check issuance when calculating the number of checks needed on a monthly basis.

Example: The clinic’s caseload is 1200. To issue checks to each client, staff will use 2400 sheets of checks (an average of 2 pages per client per month). Each carton of computer check stock contains 400 sheets. This clinic would use 6 cartons of checks per month, not accounting for printing errors, voided checks and printing of transfer cards.

Clinic staff are encouraged to keep in mind the effect of bi-monthly and tri-monthly check issuance when calculating the number of checks needed on a monthly basis.

POLICY: Receiving WIC Check Stock

Clinic staff shall review shipments of check stock for accuracy upon receipt.

Check stock moved from one clinic location to another shall be noted on the check stock inventory log at both sites as appropriate.

The local agency shall ensure separation of duties is applied to receiving check stock, e.g. two staff oversee the receiving of check stock and document on the inventory log.

PROCEDURE:

Clinic staff:

- A. Compare shipments of check stock received to what was ordered.
 - 1. Notify the contracted check printing company immediately if there are discrepancies between what was ordered and what was received.
- B. Document checks received on the clinic's check inventory log. Refer to the sample check stock inventory log sheet in the Appendix.
- C. Ensure separation of duties by having two staff members receive shipments of check stock or have one staff receive the shipment and document on the inventory log and another sign to verify.

Information:

Clinic staff may wish to verify the contents of each carton of check stock received by opening the box and then re-taping it closed before storing in a securely locked location.

POLICY: Conducting and Maintaining WIC Check Stock Inventory

Clinic staff shall conduct check stock inventory at each clinic location at least once a month. Staff shall document the date the inventory was done on the inventory log. Refer to the sample WIC Check Stock – Monthly Inventory Log in the Appendix.

Check stock moved from one clinic location to another shall be noted on the check stock inventory log at both sites as appropriate.

Staff shall notify the Local Program Consultant at the state WIC office when there are discrepancies in the check stock inventory that cannot be reconciled.

The local agency shall ensure separation of duties is applied to conducting the check stock inventory, e.g. two staff oversee the monthly inventory and sign the inventory log.

PROCEDURE:

Clinic staff:

- A. Conduct check stock inventory at least once a month.
 1. Compare the number of cartons and partial cartons of check stock at the clinic with the check stock inventory log.
- B. Ensure separation of duties by having two staff conduct the inventory or have one staff conduct the inventory and another sign to verify.
- C. Document the inventory date and staff signatures on the check stock inventory log.
- D. Document on the inventory log when out-of-date, unused check stock has been destroyed as directed by the state WIC office.
 1. Out-of-date, unused computer and/or handwritten check stock will be destroyed as directed by the state WIC office when there are revisions to the check stock.
 2. Two staff members document the number of cartons (or number of checks), the date destroyed and the staff signatures on the check stock inventory log.
- E. Report to the state WIC office any discrepancies between the physical check stock and the inventory log sheet that cannot be reconciled.

A P P E N D I X

Sample Mailed Check Letter

6/9/2009

Wendy Wick
123 Foggy St., Apt. H-6
Pineridge, WA 98000

Dear Wendy Wick,

We don't want you to miss getting WIC foods. Because of special circumstances, we are mailing your WIC checks to you. WIC checks may be enclosed for:

Wick, Wendy W.

Please remember these steps for using your WIC checks:

1. Use your WIC checks on or between the first and last day to use.
2. Use a WIC check only if your name is printed below the signature box.
3. Shop only at WIC approved stores. Look for "WIC Checks Accepted Here" signs.
4. Buy only the amounts and types of foods listed on your WIC checks.
5. Separate your WIC foods by check and from other items you are buying.
6. Let the checker know you are using a WIC check before you begin your purchase.
7. Sign the WIC check after the checker sees your ID and writes in the amount.

Please call clinic staff at the number below for any of the following reasons:

- Questions about your checks or the foods on your checks
- Problems cashing the checks at the store
- You need to make or change your next WIC appointment

WIC Staff
Raintree CHD – Evergreen WIC
529 W 4th Ave
Olympia, WA 98501
(360) 754-2936

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Washington WIC does not discriminate.



Lost, Stolen or Destroyed Check Form



Date: _____ Clinic: _____

Caregiver Name: _____

Client Name: _____ Client ID: _____ # of checks replaced: _____

Client Name: _____ Client ID: _____ # of checks replaced: _____

Client Name: _____ Client ID: _____ # of checks replaced: _____

Reason checks replaced: Lost Stolen Destroyed Mailed, not received

First Incident

Subsequent Incident (occurred within 6 months)

- Only stolen or destroyed checks can be replaced for the subsequent incident.
- Written documentation such as a police or fire report is required.
- A copy of the documentation must be attached to this form.

Describe what happened in your own words:

Please read the information below. (You must sign below before you can receive replacement checks)

I am being given checks to replace the ones that were lost, stolen or destroyed.

- I will not use the checks I reported as lost, stolen, destroyed, or mailed and not received.
- I will bring the original checks back to the clinic if I find them.
- I understand that if I use checks reported lost, stolen, destroyed, or mailed and not received plus the replacement checks, I have broken WIC rules. I will have to pay the money back to WIC and I can be taken off the Program.

“I certify, with my signature below, under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that the foregoing statement is true and correct to the best of my knowledge”.

Signed this _____ day of _____, _____ at _____,
Washington.
(Day) (Month) (Year) (City)

Caregiver/Client Signature: _____

Signed this _____ day of _____, _____ at _____,
Washington.
(Day) (Month) (Year) (City)

Signature of Witness or Interpreter: _____

Form Distribution: White: Clinic copy. Keep on file with any attached documentation for four years.
Yellow: Client copy.

Washington WIC does not discriminate.



WIC Check Stock Order Form

Check stock Vendor: Kaye-Smith
4101 Oakesdale Ave. SW
Renton, WA 98057-4817

Phone: **1-800-822-9987**
FAX: **1-800-929-9488**

Instructions: Complete the following information completely and accurately.

1. WIC-01 - Order full cartons of Computer check stock - (400 sheets/carton).
2. *Use a separate order form for each separate location*, except for check-in/check-out satellite sites.
3. Fax to 1-800-929-9488.

Allow up to 7 days for delivery.

Today's date: _____ **Clinic LASL ID #:** _____

Number of cartons needed: _____ **Cartons - WIC-01 Computer Check Stock**

Ship check stock to: _____

Clinic staff contact name: _____

Phone #: (_____) _____

Instructions for using the Computer Check Stock – Monthly Inventory Log

Note: Use only one line per entry

- **Receipt Date** – Date shipment of check stock is received. Also log check stock brought in from another location. This includes check stock from Covansys, other agency sites, or from an outside WIC agency.
- **Check Out Date** – Date check stock was removed from inventory. Includes movement of check stock within agency, between sites, to another WIC agency, or destroyed.
- **Inventory Date** – Date monthly inventory was conducted. *Required monthly.*
- **Added to Inventory** – Number of boxes of check stock received. Tracking the serial number for each box is not required on this sheet, but is recommended. Keep the original shipping invoice that is received with your check stock. Added to inventory includes stock from Covansys, other agency sites or from an outside WIC agency.
- **Removed from Inventory** – Number of boxes taken from inventory. Log quantity removed (full box, $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{4}$ box). Removed from inventory includes check stock transported to another site within the agency, or to another WIC agency. Record check stock that is destroyed. Including the individual box serial numbers is optional but recommended.
- **Balance on Hand** – Number of boxes remaining after each entry.
- **Staff Names** – Separation of duties requires two persons verify each entry.
- **Signatures** – Separation of duties requires the two persons named above sign for each entry.
- **Notes** – Enter any important notes, such as why and to where check stock has been moved, either within the agency or outside. Record check stock that is destroyed.

Check stock must be secured by lock at all times. Printers containing check stock must be in a locked location when WIC staff are not present, or check stock must be removed from printers and securely locked.

Report any discrepancies in your inventory that cannot be reconciled to your local program consultant at the state WIC office immediately.