

WASHINGTON STATE WIC POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL



Washington State WIC
Nutrition Program

VOLUME 1, CHAPTER 19

Special Clients



For persons with disabilities, this document is available on request in other formats. To submit a request, please call 1-800-525-0127 (TDD/TTY 1-800-833-6388).

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POLICY: Outreach to Homeless Clients

Agency staff shall conduct outreach activities to notify homeless people of the availability of WIC services. Refer to policies and procedures in Volume 2, Chapter 4 – Outreach for more information.

Homeless people include those who reside in vehicles, parks, hallways, doorsteps, abandoned buildings, battered women's shelters, homeless shelters, or other temporary shelters or dwellings including hotels or motels, or persons residing temporarily in someone else's home and expect to have to leave soon.

PROCEDURE:

- A. Clinic staff should consider doing the following activities to help reach homeless people:
1. Identify and target suitable homeless shelters and feeding centers in their service area for outreach activities.
 2. Contact shelter/center personnel to inform them of WIC services.
 - a. Call them by phone and follow up the call by sending them brochures.
 - b. Meet with them in person. Provide an in-service for them and have shelter/center staff provide an in-service to WIC staff.
 3. Evaluate outreach efforts to determine if homeless clients are being reached.
 - a. Review WIC statistics for number of homeless clients served.
 - b. Identify barriers to service and determine solutions if possible (e.g. facility doesn't meet conditions, no transportation).
 - c. Contact community activists and resources to help break down these barriers.

Information:

1. Homeless people represent a high risk population. They have a high incidence of health and nutrition problems and high levels of anxiety and stress.
2. A temporary shelter is one where the client is residing and must find other housing as soon as possible. The temporary status could last from one day to several weeks or even months, but no longer than 365 days.

POLICY: Clients Without a Permanent Address

A **permanent** address shall not be required for WIC eligibility for homeless clients.

Refer to Volume 1, Chapter 3 – Application and Processing Standards for policies and procedures when the client does not have documentation of residency/address.

PROCEDURE:

Clinic staff:

- A. Use the following for an address when the client has no address:
 - 1. Shelter address if the client frequently stays at one shelter.
 - 2. The address of a relative or friend.
 - 3. "General delivery" in the postal zone.
 - 4. The address of the local WIC program when no other address is available.
- B. Mark the Homeless box on the client's Demographics tab when the client is homeless.

POLICY: Providing Foods to Homeless Clients Living in Shelters

Clinic staff shall ensure clients who are living in homeless shelters (including battered women's shelters) are the only ones who benefit from the WIC foods.

PROCEDURE:

Clinic staff:

- A. Evaluate whether the client is the only one to benefit from the WIC foods while living at a shelter.
 1. Ask the client to fill out the "Homeless Facility Information Form" or ask the client the questions on the form and fill in the answers for the client. Have the client sign the form to document the client is aware that the shelter meets the following conditions:
 - a. The shelter will not benefit financially from the WIC foods.
 - b. The foods from WIC will be used only by the client, and the client will have access to these foods.
 - c. The shelter will not interfere with the client receiving WIC services.
 - d. The shelter has adequate and safe storage for WIC foods.
 2. Determine whether the client needs a tailored food package based on the information provided. Provide the appropriate foods in the food package and number of checks which ensures that the client can use the foods. Refer to Volume 1, Chapter 23 - WIC Foods for more information.
 3. Assess the shelter when the client does not know the conditions at the shelter.
 - a. WIC staff have the option to call the facility to determine if they meet the four criteria.
 4. Take the following appropriate action(s) if the client indicates the facility does not meet the conditions listed above:
 - a. Contact the facility staff to determine if they are willing to change procedures to meet the conditions. Share additional information by calling shelter staff, sending information by mail, or sending information with the client.

- b. Refer the client to a different facility that meets the conditions.
- B. Allow the client to receive WIC services for one certification period while living in a facility that does not meet the conditions, if the above actions (4a and 4b) are not immediately possible. Do the following at the first certification:
1. Provide only the foods in the food package or number of checks that ensures the client is the one using the foods.
 2. Provide infant formula, baby cereal and baby food as appropriate, to the eligible infant.
 3. Refer client to a facility meeting the conditions.
- C. Consider the following two issues when the eligibility period ends:
1. Refer client to a facility meeting the conditions.
 2. If there is no way to ensure the client is able to use the food, the client has the option to receive WIC education, follow up and referral, but not receive foods with the exception of infants who can receive infant formula, baby cereal and baby food.
- D. Have the option to take the following actions if the problem is a lack of storage or refrigeration facilities:
1. Provide the client with the appropriate number of checks dividing the food package into smaller quantities per check,
 2. Provide foods with longer shelf life,
 3. Provide infant formula, baby cereal and baby food if appropriate. (Refer to the Homeless Food Package policy in this chapter).

Information:

The Homeless Facility Description Form and the Homeless Facility Information Form that follow have been reduced, and are provided to show what the forms look like. These two forms are in the Appendix and are the ones to be reproduced for use.

HOMELESS FACILITY DESCRIPTION FORM

IF YOU ARE HOMELESS AND ARE APPLYING FOR WIC.....

The WIC Nutrition Program serves eligible women, infants and children who live in homeless shelters.

The foods given to you by WIC are only for the person on WIC. These foods should not be given to others living in the shelter. WIC foods should not be used in group meals. Please fill out the form below:

1. The homeless shelter where I live does not benefit financially from the WIC foods I receive.

YES___ NO___ DON'T KNOW___

2. The food I get from WIC is only for the person on the WIC Nutrition Program.

YES___ NO___ DON'T KNOW___

3. I have a place to store WIC food where it will be safe.

YES___ NO___ DON'T KNOW___

4. The shelter where I live doesn't stop me from getting food or other services from WIC (education, follow up and referral).

YES___ NO___ DON'T KNOW___

5. If you checked NO on any of the above, please answer the following:

- a. I would like WIC to talk to the shelter.

YES___ NO___

- b. I would like my foods given to me so that I don't need storage where I live.

YES___ NO___

6. If you checked **DON'T KNOW** on any of the above, please ask at the shelter, and let WIC know at your next visit. At that time you can discuss with WIC staff which food package would be the best for you.

Client Signature _____ Date: _____

(Rev. 8/2010)

HOMELESS FACILITY INFORMATION FORM

The Washington State Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) promotes good nutrition and healthy growth for pregnant women, breastfeeding women, postpartum women and children up to age 5. This is achieved by providing nutritious foods, nutrition education and referral to health care.

Homeless women and children stand to benefit greatly from WIC services and are encouraged to apply for benefits. Homeless women, infants and young children staying in homeless/safe women's shelters can participate in WIC as long as the facility meets the following four criteria:

1. The shelter does not benefit financially from individuals participating in WIC.
2. The WIC foods provided are available only to the WIC client.
3. The facility does not restrict a client's ability to receive the education and food benefits of WIC.
4. There are adequate and safe storage facilities for the WIC foods.

I am signing this to let you know that our facility meets the above criteria.

Signature _____

Print Name _____

Homeless Facility _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

Send to the local WIC agency listed below (fill in or stamp):

Clinic Staff Signature _____

Print Name _____

Homeless Facility _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

(Rev. 8/2010)

POLICY: Clients in Institutions

A client living in an institution shall not be provided WIC checks if the institution provides all of the client's meals.

A WIC client living in an institution shall receive other Program benefits, such as nutrition education, health assessment and referrals. The client shall receive WIC checks when released from the institution if within a current eligibility period.

PROCEDURE:

Clinic staff:

- A. Determine if the institution pays for, or provides all the client's meals.
1. When the client is in a group living arrangement, where meals are not paid or provided for/to the client, clinic staff determine income and nutrition risk eligibility based on current WIC policies and procedures. If eligible, staff provide all WIC benefits including checks to the client.
 2. When the institution provides all the meals, clinic staff determine income and nutrition risk eligibility as per procedure. If the client is eligible, she receives other WIC benefits, but not checks.

Note: Drug and alcohol treatment centers may be considered similar to an institution. Staff need to determine if the client lives there during treatment and if all meals are provided. If treatment is on an outpatient basis or the client provides her own food and the client would be the only one benefiting from WIC foods, the client would be eligible to receive WIC checks. The Homeless Facility Description Form may be helpful in determining if the facility complies with WIC regulations regarding WIC foods.
 3. When the institution provides all the meals to an adult, but no meals to an infant, clinic staff determine income and nutrition risk for both mom and infant. If both clients are eligible, provide all WIC benefits, including checks, to the infant, and provide other WIC benefits, but no checks, to the mom.
- B. Provide WIC checks to the client if within a current eligibility period when released from an institution which provided all meals.

Information:

Examples of institutions include jail, correctional facilities, mental institutions, long term care facilities, drug and alcohol treatment centers, etc.

APPENDIX

HOMELESS FACILITY DESCRIPTION FORM

IF YOU ARE HOMELESS AND ARE APPLYING FOR WIC.....

The WIC Nutrition Program serves eligible women, infants and children who live in homeless shelters.

The foods given to you by WIC are only for the person on WIC. These foods should not be given to others living in the shelter. WIC foods should not be used in group meals. Please fill out the form below:

1. The homeless shelter where I live does not benefit financially from the WIC foods I receive.
YES___ NO___ DON'T KNOW___

2. The foods I get from WIC are only for the person on the WIC Nutrition Program.
YES___ NO___ DON'T KNOW___

3. I have a place to store WIC foods where it will be safe.
YES___ NO___ DON'T KNOW___

4. The shelter where I live doesn't stop me from getting food or other services from WIC (education, follow up and referral).
YES___ NO___ DON'T KNOW___

5. If you checked NO on any of the above, please answer the following:
 - a. I would like WIC to talk to the shelter.
YES___ NO___

 - b. I would like my foods given to me so that I don't need storage where I live.
YES___ NO___

6. If you checked **DON'T KNOW** on any of the above, please ask at the shelter, and let WIC know at your next visit. At that time you can discuss with WIC staff which food package would be the best for you.

Client Signature: _____ Date: _____

(Rev. 12/2009)

HOMELESS FACILITY INFORMATION FORM

The Washington State Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) promotes good nutrition and healthy growth for pregnant women, nursing women, and your children up to age 5. This is achieved by providing nutritious foods, nutrition education and referral to health care.

Homeless women and children stand to benefit greatly from WIC participation and are encouraged to apply for benefits. Homeless women, infants and young children staying in homeless/ safe women's shelters can participate in WIC as long as the facility meets the following four criteria:

1. The shelter does not benefit financially from individuals participating in WIC.
2. The WIC foods provided are available only to the WIC client, and the client will have access to these foods.
3. The facility does not restrict a participant's ability to receive the education and food benefits of WIC.
4. There is adequate and safe storage facilities for the WIC foods.

I am signing this to let you know that our facility meets the above criteria.

Signature _____

Print Name _____

Homeless Facility _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

Send to the local WIC agency listed below (fill in or stamp):

Clinic Staff Signature _____

Print Name _____

Homeless Facility _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____