

WASHINGTON STATE WIC

POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL



VOLUME 1, CHAPTER 17

WIC Eligibility

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section 1 - Overview1
 Table of Eligibility Time Periods 1

Section 2 - Pregnant Women.....3
 Eligibility Period for Pregnant Women3

Section 3 - Breastfeeding Women.....4
 Eligibility Period for Breastfeeding Women4

Section 4 - Postpartum Women5
 Eligibility Period for Postpartum Women5

Section 5 - Infants.....6
 Eligibility Period for Infants6

Section 6 - Children7
 Eligibility Period for Children7

Section 7 – Providing WIC Services to Clients in the Expired Status8
 Providing WIC Services to Clients in the Expired Status8

CHAPTER 17 WIC ELIGIBILITY

Section 1

Overview

POLICY: Table of Eligibility Time Periods

A CPA (competent professional authority) must complete an assessment to determine eligibility for WIC.

The amount of time a client is eligible for WIC depends on the client's category.

Client Services sets the client's eligibility period based on federal regulation.

Category	Priority	Eligibility Begins	Eligibility Ends
Pregnant Women	1, 4	Date of Certification	Last day of the month woman turns 6 weeks postpartum.
Breastfeeding Women	1, 2, 4	Date of Certification	Last day of the month woman turns 12 months postpartum.
Infants	1, 4	Date of Certification	If certified less than 7 months of age, last day of the month infant turns 12 months old. If certified 7 months or older, last day of the month of a 6 month period.
	2*	Date of Certification	Last day of the month infant turns 12 months of age.
Children	3, 5	Date of Certification	Last day of the month of a 12 month period until the last day of the month the child turns 5 years old.
Postpartum Women	6	Date of Certification	Last day of the month woman turns 6 months postpartum.

*Infants 6 months and older and new to WIC must be Priority 1 or Priority 4 to qualify for WIC.

Note: Staff enroll an infant of a WIC mom as Priority 2.

PROCEDURE:

The CPA:

- A. Pushes the Calculate Eligibility button in Client Services to document the eligibility begins and ends dates.

Note: WIC has a priority system. Priority 1 is the highest priority. When funds and caseload are limited, the priority system makes sure clients with the greatest risk receive WIC benefits before those with lower risk. See Volume 1, Chapter 5 - Priority System and Waiting Lists for more information.

POLICY: Eligibility Period for Pregnant Women

The eligibility period for a pregnant woman begins on the day of the WIC certification and ends on the last day of the month she turns 6 weeks postpartum. Pregnant women are Priority 1 or 4.

Information:

The pregnant woman is eligible for the “Pregnant” Food Package through the end of the month the woman turns six weeks postpartum. The end of a pregnancy includes a:

- Live birth
- Miscarriage
- Termination
- Fetal death

Example: Staff certify a pregnant woman on January 5th. Her due date is July 2nd. Her pregnancy eligibility period begins January 5th (the date of certification) and ends August 31st (the last day of the month the woman turns 6 weeks postpartum).

When staff enroll the breastfeeding infant of a woman, the woman receives the Fully Breastfeeding Food Package even though she is in the “Pregnant” category.

Example: Staff certify a pregnant woman on January 5th. Her due date is July 2nd. Staff enroll her breastfeeding infant on July 6th. The woman receives her Fully Breastfeeding Food Package on July 6th. Staff schedule her breastfeeding recertification appointment the following month.

POLICY: Eligibility Period for Breastfeeding Women

The eligibility period for a breastfeeding woman begins on the day of the WIC certification and ends on the last day of the month she turns 12 months postpartum. Breastfeeding women are Priority 1, 2, or 4.

Note: In the month the infant turns 12 months old, a breastfeeding woman doesn't get checks if her baby has reached the first birthday. Refer to Volume 1, Chapter 23 – WIC Foods. See the table in “Food for Infants in the Month They Turn One Year Old” policy.

Example: On January 15th, staff certify a fully breastfeeding woman (baby born on January 3rd). Her eligibility period ends January 31st (one year postpartum).

1. If she picks up checks on January 2nd (before her baby's first birthday) of the following year (one year postpartum), she receives her Fully BF Food Package checks. Her baby receives the infant Fully BF 6 to 12 Months Food Package.
2. If she picks up checks on January 3rd or 4th (on or after her baby's first birthday) of the following year (one year postpartum), she doesn't receive checks. Her baby receives the Child 1 year Food Package.

Information:

If a breastfeeding woman stops breastfeeding and is within the 6 months postpartum, she may qualify as a postpartum woman. If a breastfeeding woman stops breastfeeding and is more than 6 months postpartum, her eligibility ends.

Example: On April 7th, staff certify a breastfeeding woman (baby born on March 3rd). Her eligibility period begins April 7th (the day of certification) and ends on March 31st (one year postpartum) as long as she continues breastfeeding.

If she stops breastfeeding before 6 months postpartum (for example in July) she would be eligible for WIC as a postpartum woman (through the end of September). Staff take her off the program if it is after 6 months postpartum.

POLICY: Eligibility Period for Postpartum Women

The eligibility period for a postpartum woman begins on the day of the WIC certification and ends on the last day of the month she turns six months postpartum. Postpartum women are Priority 6.

Information:

Postpartum refers to the 6 month period following the end of pregnancy. The end of pregnancy includes a:

- Live birth
- Miscarriage
- Termination
- Fetal death

A woman on WIC during pregnancy, who doesn't breastfeed, receives the Pregnant Food Package through the end of the month she turns six weeks postpartum. She may be recertified as Postpartum and receive the Pregnant Food Package through the end of the month.

Example: A WIC client has her baby on June 17th. Staff recertify her from pregnant to postpartum on July 25th. As a pregnant woman, her eligibility extends through the end of the month she turns six weeks postpartum, July 31st. On July 25th, she is eligible for the Pregnant Food Package even though staff recertified her as a postpartum woman. In August she receives a Postpartum Food Package. Her postpartum eligibility period begins July 25th and ends December 31st (the end of the month she turns 6 months postpartum).

POLICY: Eligibility Period for Infants

The eligibility period for infants entering the WIC program from birth through 6 months of age (through the end of the month the infant turns 6 months old) begins on the day of WIC certification and ends on the last day of the month the infant turns 12 months old. These infants are Priority 1, 2, or 4.

Note: Most infants are enrolled as a Priority 2 “Infant of a WIC Eligible Mom (<6 months).”

The eligibility period for infants entering the program between 7 and 12 months of age begins on the day of the WIC certification and ends the last day of the month of a six-month period. These infants must be a Priority 1 or 4 to be eligible for WIC.

Information:**Infant under 6 months of age example:**

Staff enroll an infant born February 2nd on February 25th. The infant’s eligibility begins on February 25th (the date enrolled as an infant of a WIC mom) and ends February 28th of the following year (the end of the month the infant turns 12 months old).

Infant over 6 months of age new to WIC example:

Staff complete a new certification for a nine-month old infant on December 11th. The infant’s eligibility begins on December 11th (the date certified eligible for WIC) and ends May 31st (last day of a six month period; the client receives six sets of checks).

Note: The client (with an infant category) receives a Child 1 Year Food Package on the day of the 1 year birthday or later.

CHAPTER 17 WIC ELIGIBILITY**Section 6 Children**

POLICY: Eligibility Period for Children

The eligibility period for children begins on the day of the WIC certification and ends the last day of the month of a 12 month period. A child may participate and receive checks through the end of the month the child turns 5 years old. Children are Priority 3 or 5.

For a new certification, the eligibility begins the day of the WIC certification.

For a recertification, eligibility begins:

1. On the first day of the month following the end of a current certification period

Or

2. On day of the certification when eligibility period has ended.

Staff must not certify or recertify a child on the day of or after the day the child turns 5 years old.

Information:

Examples: Staff certify a 2 year old child on November 20th. The child's eligibility begins November 20th and ends November 30th the following year.

Staff certify a 4 year, 8 month old child on August 17th. The child's eligibility begins August 17th and ends December 31st. This is the last day of the month the child turns age five. She may receive checks until December 31st.

POLICY: Providing WIC Services to Clients in the Expired Status

Staff have the option to provide one month of WIC benefits to clients with an “expired” status when appointments aren’t available for the recertification. Staff must complete the recertification the following month before providing checks or other WIC benefits.

Note: Prescriptions for infants end at midnight on the day before the first birthday. Follow the rules for inactive prescriptions. Refer to Volume 1 Chapter 24 – WIC Prescriptions.

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

- A. Work with the client to find a time for the recertification appointment during the last month of the eligibility period.
- B. Offer WIC benefits to clients with an “expired” status equally.
- C. Issue only one month of WIC checks to the client with an “expired” status.
- D. Tell the client she must complete the recertification to receive additional WIC benefits.
- E. Schedule a recertification appointment for the next month.