WASHINGTON STATE WIC

POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

VOLUME 1, CHAPTER 22

WIC Checks

DOH 960-105 September 2013

PUBLIC HEALTH
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HEALTHIER WASHINGTON

Washington State Department of
Health

DOH 960-105 September 2013

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POLICY: Monthly or Multi-Monthly Check Issuance

Staff must issue one (monthly), two (bi-monthly), or three (tri-monthly) sets of WIC checks at each visit as appropriate based on the client's category and eligibility period.

Note: "Checks" refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks.

- Tri-monthly check issuance is the best way to provide benefits for clients and make the most efficient use of local agency resources.
- Clients can ask for and receive monthly check issuance, even if the agency has decided to schedule multi-month check issuance for all clients.
- State WIC staff may have clinic staff issue monthly checks to a client, for example, if the client is under investigation for noncompliance.

The local agency can limit certain categories of clients (for example pregnant or breastfeeding women) to monthly or bi-monthly check issuance. When the agency chooses to limit certain categories of clients to monthly or bi-monthly check issuance, the local WIC agency must write a policy to include:

1. A list of client categories or characteristics (see "Information" below) that require monthly or bi-monthly checks.
2. The reason(s) for limiting certain clients to monthly or bi-monthly issuance.
3. List specific reasons a client would get monthly checks instead of bi-monthly checks.

Note: When the Competent Professional Authority (CPA) or nutritionist is following the local agency policy for limiting check issuance to certain categories of clients, he or she doesn't need to document in each client's file why issuance is limited.

The local agency policy doesn't have to list when checks are limited to monthly issuance due to state policy. For example:

- Monthly check issuance is required because of a grace period to bring in documentation for WIC eligibility. See Volume 1, Chapter 6 – Income for more information.
- When staff don't perform or receive iron test values at the certification appointment, staff must give monthly checks until staff perform the test or receive the value. See Volume 1, Chapter 10 – Hematology for more information.

The policy must be on file at the local agency before implementation.

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

A. Write the local agency's policy about monthly versus multi-monthly check issuance.

B. Apply the local agency's policy equally and fairly to all clients.

C. Document in Client Services why the client is denied bi-monthly or tri-monthly checks when the client would normally get multi-monthly checks according to state policy and the agency's written policy.

Information:

1. The choice of monthly, bi-monthly or tri-monthly check issuance gives 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. Reasons for limiting check issuance to monthly or bi-monthly varies across the state. When writing the local agency policy about check issuance, staff may want to consider the following issues:
   a. High risk clients may need more than one high risk nutrition education contact per certification period. The Registered Dietitian (RD) may want to determine check issuance for these clients on a case-by-case basis.

   b. Pregnant women receiving Maternity Support Services (MSS) from the clinic may need monthly appointments to coordinate services. You may need to see pregnant women who aren't in a comprehensive prenatal program monthly for better monitoring and follow-up on referrals.

   c. Breastfeeding women and their infants may need help to make sure breastfeeding is well established and supported.

   d. Infants or children of pregnant and breastfeeding women who are receiving monthly checks may be scheduled for monthly checks to keep the family members on the same check issuance schedule.

   e. Reschedule clients who missed their second nutrition education appointment or infants who missed the infant health assessment for the next month. Change the check issuance as needed.

   f. The CPA should assess check issuance for homeless clients on a case-by-case basis.

g. It may be beneficial to schedule foster children in short term care on a monthly or bi-monthly basis.

h. Staff may need to adjust check issuance for clients on a prescribed WIC formula to match the WIC Formulas and Foods Prescription Form due dates.

i. Staff may need to issue monthly checks for clients or caregivers who are more likely to lose checks or cash them out of the valid dates.

j. The WIC Integrity Unit will instruct staff about check issuance for clients who are under investigation for noncompliance or program violation and may be facing disqualification.

k. Clients issued electric breast pumps in the clinic may need monthly checks until they return the pump. This allows staff to offer support for breastfeeding and use of the pump.

POLICY: Issue WIC Checks from Client Services

Staff must issue WIC checks based on the client's category when the client is determined WIC eligible and throughout the current eligibility period, unless the client is suspended or is disqualified due to program noncompliance.

Note: "Checks" refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks.

Clinic staff must issue checks monthly or multi-monthly according to the local agency policy. Issue tri-monthly checks whenever possible to increase client satisfaction and maximize agency resources.

Staff must view the client's, caregiver's or alternate's identification before issuing checks.

Staff must keep computer check stubs for a total of four years. Keep the check stubs on site for the first six months.

Staff follow procedures listed below when issuing checks.

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

A. View the client's, caregiver's, or alternate's identification before issuing checks. Documenting identification at the check pick-up isn't required. See the "Identification for Receiving WIC Checks" policy in this chapter for information.

B. Make sure the client, caregiver and alternate names and contact information on the Demographics tab are correct. Make changes before printing checks.

C. Assign monthly, bi-monthly or tri-monthly checks for each client.

    1. Review the client's file for reasons that would prevent check issuance, for example missing documentation for income, identification or residency; suspension; or disqualification for program noncompliance.

D. Review the food package to make sure it is correct.

E. Print checks.

    1. Give one, two or three months of checks according to the local agency's policy and the client's needs.

2. Schedule client appointments every 30, 60, or 90 days based on the local agency's policy.

F. Review the checks with the client, caregiver, or alternate as needed. Make sure the checks have the correct names and food package.

G. Talk about using WIC checks correctly and within the correct dates. See the "Education on Using WIC Checks" policy in this chapter.

1. Separate each month's checks and help clients and caregivers use checks within the correct dates by using a light colored marker to highlight the printed dates on the checks.

H. Have the client, caregiver, or alternate sign the check stub on the signature line.

I. Write "Forgot to sign" on the check stub if the client, caregiver, or alternate didn't sign the stub. Initial the check stub.

J. Make sure the staff person determining client eligibility isn't the same person who issues checks. See the "Separation of Duties" policy in this chapter for more information.

K. Make sure staff don't issue checks to themselves, family members, or friends. See Volume 1, Chapter 18 – Certification Issues for more information.

L. Separate the signed check stub from the checks and store them.

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. Keep the stubs on site for the first six months. Staff can archive them off site after the first six months.

M. Issue checks to the client, caregiver, or alternate.

N. Destroy any blank check stock from a page of printed checks by shredding or tearing into pieces no larger than 1 square inch.

POLICY: Checks for Milk in Quarts

Staff must talk about milk container size options with all clients or caregivers as part of the food package, nutrition assessment or check education conversation as appropriate.

Issue checks that specify “quarts” of milk to clients or caregivers who ask for WIC approved milk in quart containers.

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

A. Talk with the client or caregiver about the size of milk container that is appropriate for the client. During the conversation, let the person know that:

1. Milk in quart containers costs more than milk in gallons and half-gallons.

2. Clients may buy milk in quarts <u>only</u> when printed on WIC checks, and they can’t buy milk in any other container size.

3. The food package will print out on 14 – 25 checks each month in order to buy milk in quarts.

B. Increase the number of checks so one or two quarts of milk print on each check when the client needs or asks for milk in quarts.

Example: A client says she has a small refrigerator that doesn’t have room for large containers of milk. Staff increase the number of checks in Client Services to specify “quarts” of milk on her checks.

C. Ask the client or caregiver to let staff know when quarts of milk are no longer needed. Staff will change the size of the milk container printed on WIC checks.

Information:

Each WIC check has a “behind the scenes” not to exceed amount. Banks compare this amount to the purchase price the retailer filled in on the check. Banks reject a check when the purchase price is more than WIC’s maximum allowed amount and will charge the store a fee. Milk in quarts is more expensive than milk in gallons and half-gallons, which can cause the check to go over the allowed amount. Checks printed with quarts of milk will have a different maximum allowed value that will cover the higher cost. The only way to print quarts of milk on WIC checks is to increase the number of checks issued.

POLICY: Checks for Lactose Free Milk

The CPA must talk about the option of lactose free milk to meet the nutritional needs of a WIC client, when appropriate, and as part of the food package and nutrition assessment conversation.

Issue checks that specify “lactose free” milk to all clients who say they need or want to buy lactose free milk.

PROCEDURE:

The CPA:

A. Talks with the client or caregiver about the types of milk that are appropriate for the client.

1. Lactose free milk is more expensive than regular milk.

2. Clients can only buy lactose free milk when it is printed on the checks.

3. When the check lists lactose free milk, it is the only type of milk the client or caregiver can purchase.

4. The client can buy the milk in gallon or half-gallon containers.

B. Substitutes lactose free milk for all clients or caregivers who ask for it instead of regular milk.

Note: Clients aren’t required to have the lactose intolerance nutrition risk selected or a WIC prescription to get lactose free milk.

C. Ask the client or caregiver to let staff know when lactose free milk is no longer needed. Staff will change the type of milk the client receives.

Information:

Each WIC check has a “behind the scenes” not to exceed amount. Banks compare this amount to the purchase price the retailer has filled in on the check. Banks reject a check when the purchase price is more than WIC’s maximum allowed amount and will charge the store a fee. Lactose free milk is more expensive than regular milk, which causes the check to go over the allowed amount. Checks printed for lactose free milk will have a different maximum allowed value that will cover the higher cost.

POLICY: Identification to Receive WIC Checks

Clients, caregivers or alternates must show personal identification (ID) to receive WIC checks.

Note: "Checks" refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks.

The local agency can accept other documents as identification in addition to those listed in procedure below.

When accepting other types of identification, local agency staff must:

1. Develop a written policy listing what types of documents it considers adequate.

2. Apply the policy equally.

Note: The types of ID allowed for receiving checks in the clinic may be different from the types of ID allowed for using checks at the store. See the "Identification for Using WIC Checks" policy in this chapter for more information.

The local agency must develop a written policy describing the steps to take when a client, caregiver, or alternate doesn't bring ID to the clinic when receiving checks. Assure staff apply the policy equally.

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

A. View the client's, caregiver's, or alternate's ID before issuing checks.

B. Accept the following items as proof of ID for receiving checks:

   1. WIC Appointment/ID Folder.

   2. Staff personal knowledge or recognition of the person.

   3. Photo ID such as driver's license, state identification card, or military identification.

   4. Passport.

   5. Work or school ID.

   6. Health insurance or social services card.

7. ProviderOne card 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 are required to see the person’s ID before issuing checks. Staff don’t have to document ID in Client Services at a check pick-up. See Volume 1, Chapter 3 - Application and Processing Standards for ID requirements when determining eligibility for certification or recertification.

C. Issue checks to the client, caregiver, or alternate.

Note: When issuing checks to a client’s alternate, verify the person’s permission to pick-up and use the checks. See the “Alternates” policy in this chapter for information.

D. Make sure all staff understand agency policy about what to do when a client, caregiver, or alternate doesn’t bring the required ID to the check pickup appointment. For example:

1. Check if another staff person is available in the clinic who recognizes the client, caregiver, or alternate.

2. Allow the person to return with the appropriate ID as soon as possible, the same day whenever possible.

E. Don’t issue checks when a client, caregiver, or alternate doesn’t have appropriate ID at check pickup and staff don’t recognize the person.

POLICY: Separation of Duties to Determine Eligibility and Issue WIC Checks

The local agency must ensure the separation of duties of staff responsible for determining eligibility and check issuance. One staff person must determine WIC eligibility. A second staff person must issue WIC checks and Farmers Market Nutrition Program checks at each certification appointment.

Note: "Checks" refers to 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)
5. Recertification (RC)

Staff must notify state WIC staff in writing when they aren't able to meet this policy requirement. The notification must include the reason why the agency can't meet the requirement and a plan for monitoring program integrity. When the local agency doesn't have enough staff to split certification and check issuance functions, a local agency administrator (for example, the WIC coordinator, a clinic coordinator, or supervisor) must monitor the clinic to assure program integrity.

If the clinic normally meets the separation of duties requirement but can't on a given day due to unusual circumstances (for example the clinic has two staff and one is unexpectedly out), the agency must ensure the day's check issuance is monitored appropriately. Keep documentation on file for six months.

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

A. Assess procedures at each clinic site to confirm that the person who determines eligibility for a client isn't the same person who issues checks.

B. Establish staff responsibilities in order to follow policy.

Note: To meet the separation of duties requirement the certifier completes the certification, assigns the food package, and presses the button to print checks, then the clerk (or another staff person) gives the checks to the client. Having the clerk actually print the checks and hand them to the client or caregiver is best practice.

It doesn’t meet the separation of duties requirement when the certifier prints checks and has the clerk (or another staff person) initial the check stubs and then the certifier gives the checks to the client or caregiver.

C. Notify state WIC staff in writing when a clinic location can’t meet the separation of duties requirement. Include the reason why the clinic can’t meet the requirement and the plan for monitoring for program integrity.

D. Monitor for program integrity according to your plan when the agency doesn't have enough staff to split certification and check issuance functions. Examples of ways staff can monitor for integrity:

1. Compare the client names on the Appointment Summary report (print at the beginning of the day) with the Check Reconciliation report.

2. Review the Clinic Action by Staff report. Watch for inappropriate staff actions or an 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, but issue checks by another staff person at the remote site.

6. Account for all check stubs and all check numbers.

7. Review signatures on check stubs and Rights and Responsibilities forms to see if they match.

8. Look for client or caregiver names that seem to stand out as unusual (for example 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: Using a combination of the suggestions listed above can provide the best assurance of program integrity.

E. Review check issuance activities when staff can’t meet separation of duties requirements on a given day due to unusual circumstances. Use any of the methods described above.

Information:

The following is taken from a USDA statement about 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 alternates must use WIC checks only at Washington WIC approved stores or pharmacies.

Note: "Checks" refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks.

Staff must let clients, caregivers, and alternates know about approved stores and pharmacies that accept WIC checks.

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

A. Let the person know that checks can only be used at Washington WIC approved stores or pharmacies.

B. Let the person know which stores and pharmacies are Washington WIC approved. You can do this by:

   1. Telling the person which stores and pharmacies in the area are approved.

   2. Giving the person a list of approved stores in the area. You can print the list from Client Services.

   3. Referring the person to the Washington WIC web site for a list of approved stores.

C. Help the person find therapeutic formula by calling the store or pharmacy when the client receives checks for this type of formula. See Volume 1, Chapter 24 – WIC Prescriptions for more information about formulas.

Information:

1. The following questions may be used to help the person find 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. Staff can print a list of WIC approved stores from Client Services based on zip code, county, city, or store name. A list of all Washington approved stores and pharmacies is also available.

POLICY: WIC Check Education

Staff must ensure that clients, caregivers, and alternates have the information they need to use WIC checks at the grocery store.

Note: “Checks” refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks.

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

A. Explain how to use checks at the initial certification.

1. Use the checks on or after the “First Day to Use.”

2. Use the checks on or before the “Last Day to Use.”

   Note: Clients may use the checks after midnight on the first day to use and before midnight on the last day to use listed on the check.

3. Shop only at Washington WIC approved stores.

4. Checks within the current first and last day to use may be used in any order or all at the same time.

5. Don’t make any changes to the check.

6. Only a person whose name appears below the signature box of the check may use and sign the check at the store.

7. The checks aren’t transferable; they can’t be signed over or given to anyone else.

8. The client, caregiver, or alternate signs check stubs to verify he or she received checks.

9. Keep the checks in a safe location. Washington WIC doesn’t replace lost checks.

B. Review WIC foods with the client, caregiver, or alternate:

1. The foods on the check are for the client.

2. Choose only the foods that are WIC approved and only in the amounts listed on the check(s).

   Note: The person can buy less than the amounts listed on the check(s), but not more.

3. The WIC Shopping Guide and WIC website list specific brands of WIC approved foods.

4. Don’t substitute WIC foods for anything else.

5. “Rain checks” for WIC foods aren’t allowed.

C. Explain how to shop at the store:

1. Keep WIC foods separate from other groceries.

2. Separate foods by check when using more than one check at a time.

3. Tell the checker that it is a WIC purchase before he or she begins to ring up any items.

4. The checker will ask for ID. Only people listed below the signature box and have ID can sign the check at the store. See the “Identification for Using WIC Checks” policy in this chapter for information about the types of ID allowed for using checks at the store.

5. The checker will total the WIC foods and enter the amount on the check.

6. Make sure the checker writes the correct amount on the check before signing in the “Customer Signature” box.

7. The checker can’t ask the client, caregiver, or alternate to pay for any of the purchase amount of regular WIC checks. See information below about WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks.

8. The client, caregiver, or alternate can’t ask for any change or money back when using checks.

9. The client, caregiver or alternate can’t return WIC foods to the store for cash, credit, or any other items.

10. You can use coupons with the checks. See the policy “Use of Manufacturer’s Specials with WIC Checks” in this chapter.

D. Explain how to use the WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks:

1. If more than one person in the family gets WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks, you can use them together if the store allows it. Ask the store clerk first. For example,

you can combine a $6 WIC Fruit and Vegetable check with one for $10 to pay for $16 worth of fresh fruits and vegetables.

2. If the purchase costs more than the amount the WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks cover, you can pay the extra amount. This is different from the checks for other WIC foods. For example, if the fruits and vegetables cost $7 and you are using a $6 WIC Fruit and Vegetable check, you can pay the extra $1 to cover the cost.

3. If the fruits and vegetables cost <u>less</u> than the amount the WIC Fruits and Vegetable checks cover, you can't get money back.

4. Select only WIC approved fresh fruits and vegetables.

E. Explain where to get help:

1. Report stolen checks to WIC staff as soon as possible.

2. Return any unused, expired checks to the clinic.

3. Tell WIC staff if there are any problems at the store.

F. Staff can use a modified version of check education called the "10 Key Points Method" when you have limited time. Provide as much information from the complete check education list as possible. The 10 key 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 can pay the extra amount.

10. If your purchase costs less than the amount WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks cover, you can't receive money back.

Note: The Appointment/ID Folder lists the 10 key points.

G. Ask about WIC foods and using checks at later appointments and recertifications to see if the person needs more education, 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 a person uses checks at a store checkers ask the person for ID and witness the signature. Stores can't accept checks when:

1. The person doesn't provide adequate ID as described in this section.

2. The person using the checks isn't listed on the check.

3. The person signed the check before giving it to the store clerk.

POLICY: Identification to Use WIC Checks

A client, caregiver or alternate can show the following types of identification when using WIC checks at a Washington WIC approved store.

Note: “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, military ID card, tribe enrollment card, passport, etc.

3. Other forms of identification the store would normally accept from a customer.

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

A. Let the person know about the requirement to show ID when using checks at any Washington WIC approved store.

B. Explain the types of ID accepted at WIC approved stores.

C. Give the Washington State WIC Nutrition Program Appointment and ID Folder. See Volume 1, Chapter 13 – Basic Contact for information about the Appointment and ID Folder.

POLICY: Use Coupons or Manufacturer's Specials with WIC Checks

WIC clients, caregivers, and alternates can use coupons or manufacturer's specials with WIC checks.

Note: "Checks" refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks.

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

A. Let the person know that coupons and manufacturer's specials can be used with WIC checks when the store normally accepts coupons or honors manufacturer's specials.

B. Ask the person to call the WIC toll-free number (1-800-841-1410) and talk to state WIC Retailer Management staff if he or she has any questions, or if questions come up at the store.

Information:

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

1. "Free additional ounces" - If the food product minus the free ounces meets WIC guidelines, the client can purchase it with WIC checks. Free ounces don't count toward the amount listed on the check.

2. "Buy one, get one free" - The free item doesn't have to be WIC approved.

   Example: A store has a buy one, get one free special on milk. The person can buy the WIC approved milk listed on the check and get another kind of milk of the same or a lesser price for free.

3. "Cents off" coupons - The checker deducts the "cents off" amount before entering the purchase price on the check. The "cents off" amount saves the WIC program money.

4. Non-WIC foods offered with the purchase of a WIC food.

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

   A store will give the person a coupon for a free turkey when he or she spends a total of $100.00. WIC purchases count toward the $100.00 amount.

POLICY: Alternates

A client or caregiver can name an alternate to pick up WIC checks and use them at the store. The alternate can use WIC checks when his or her name is printed on the check.

Note: "Checks" refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks.

A client or caregiver can name more than one alternate. See procedures below for how to document more than one alternate.

Staff must inform the alternate about program rules and how to use WIC checks when the person is physically present in the clinic. When the alternate isn't physically present in the clinic, the client or caregiver must agree to provide this information to the alternate before allowing him or her to use the checks.

Alternates must show ID when receiving WIC checks. See the policy "Identification for Receiving WIC Checks" in this chapter.

The alternate must meet the following requirements to receive, sign and use WIC checks.

1. The alternate has permission to receive and use the checks. Permission is given in one of the following ways:

   a. The client or caregiver names the alternate at a WIC appointment. Staff enter the alternate's name on the Demographics tab in Client Services.

   b. The client or caregiver gives a note to the alternate authorizing him or her to pick up and use the checks. Staff enter the alternate's name on the Demographics tab in Client Services. Staff use this option when the client or caregiver didn't name an alternate in person at a WIC appointment.

   c. The client or caregiver calls the WIC clinic and gives permission for the alternate to pick up and use checks. Staff enter the alternate's name on the Demographics tab in Client Services. This is an option when the client or caregiver didn't name an alternate in person at a WIC appointment.

      Note: Staff take reasonable precautions to verify the client's or caregiver's identity when accepting permission over the phone. Examples include voice recognition, verifying the client's date of birth, etc. Document telephone permission in the client's file in Client Services.

2. The alternate is at least 18 years old. When the alternate is the client's or caregiver's spouse, partner, parent or caregiver, the age requirement doesn't apply.

3. The alternate must show identification at the clinic to receive checks and at the store to use the checks.

4. The alternate knows the procedures for using checks and agrees to follow them.

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

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

A. Ask the client or caregiver if he or she would like to name an alternate to pick up and use checks.

   1. Let the client or caregiver know that he or she is required to instruct the alternate about using checks and WIC Program rules before the alternate uses the checks.

   2. Enter the alternate's name on the client's Demographics tab in Client Services.

   3. Ask the client or caregiver to let WIC staff know when the alternate is no longer authorized to pick up and use the client's checks. Take the alternate's name off the client's Demographics tab so the person's name won't print on the client's checks.

   4. The client or caregiver can change the alternate at any time. Staff update the alternate's name as needed on the Demographics tab in Client Services. Staff verify the correct alternate is listed before printing checks.

B. List additional alternates in the client's file when the client or caregiver names more than one.

   1. Client Services has space for only one name in the alternate field on checks. List additional alternates somewhere in the client's file to show they have permission to pick-up and use WIC checks.

   2. Staff make sure the correct alternate is listed in the alternate field each time they print checks.

C. When an alternate hasn't been entered on the client's Demographics tab, or the person requesting checks is different from the alternate listed on the client's Demographics tab:

   1. Get permission from the client or caregiver. Ask for a written note from the client or caregiver or get permission over the phone.

2. Document permission in the client's file in Client Services and keep the written note at the clinic.

3. Enter the alternate's name on the client's Demographics tab in Client Services.

Note: These options apply when the client or caregiver didn't name an alternate in person at a WIC appointment or wants to change the alternate at a time other than a WIC appointment.

D. Ask the alternate for ID when he or she comes to the clinic to pick up checks. Follow the "Identification for Receiving WIC Checks" policy in this chapter.

E. Tell the person how to choose WIC approved foods and how to use checks at WIC approved stores.

Information:

The alternate doesn't need to sign the Rights and Responsibilities form to pick and use WIC checks. Federal regulations refer to the Rights and Responsibilities form as the participant agreement.

- See Volume 1, Chapter 7 – Rights and Responsibilities for more information about the Rights and Responsibilities form.

- See Volume 1, Chapter 18 – Certification Issues for more information about alternates at certification and other WIC appointments.

It's important for the client or caregiver to let clinic staff know when he or she would like to remove an alternate. Staff remove the alternate's name from the client's Demographics tab in Client Services so the person's name won't print on the WIC checks.

Assuring the alternate listed is correct decreases the number of reprinted checks. It also prevents clients from having to bring checks back for corrections.

POLICY: WIC Check Options for Clients Who Move Out of the Area or Go on Vacation

Staff can provide WIC checks to eligible clients who are in an active, enrolled, presumed or expired status who are moving or plan to be out of the area temporarily.

Note: "Checks" refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks.

Staff follow transfer policies and procedures when the client is moving to another area. See Volume 1, Chapter 21 – Transfers/Verification of Certification for more information.

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

A. Assess if the client is eligible for checks.

1. The client is eligible for checks when in an active, enrolled, presumed, or expired status in Client Services.

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

B. Help the client or caregiver choose <u>one</u> of the following options when taking an in-state vacation or when moving to another area in Washington state:

1. Get checks from the current clinic before they leave. Staff help the client or caregiver find a Washington WIC approved store in the new area by giving the information verbally or in writing with a list of stores.

2. Receive a transfer card or other transfer documents and get checks at the new clinic.

    a. The transfer card lists the last date checks were issued.

    b. Clients in an active, enrolled, or presumed status can receive a transfer card. Clients with an expired status can't receive a transfer card.

    c. Clients may receive both a transfer card and checks for the current month.

    d. A client with an expired status can receive checks when issued according to policies in Volume 1, Chapter 17 – WIC Eligibility, but they can't receive a transfer card.

Note: Let the client or caregiver know that using WIC checks issued by more than one local agency for the same time period is dual participation and is a program violation.

e. Terminate the client's file as appropriate.

C. Give transfer information as appropriate when the client or caregiver is moving or vacationing out of state.

1. Make sure the transfer card lists the most recent check issuance.

2. Client Services will automatically terminate a client's file when a transfer card is printed.

D. Document in Client Services that the client will be out of the area temporarily.

Information:

See 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.

1. Staff can give a Certification History Report to clients who are in an expired status in Client Services and are moving to another area.

2. The Certification History Report isn't a transfer card, but it lists the client's check history and provides other important information.

3. Let the client or caregiver know that receiving and using more than one set of WIC checks in a month is dual participation and is a program violation.

POLICY: Print and Reconcile Batch WIC Checks

Staff can batch print WIC checks.

Note: "Checks" refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks.

Staff must not batch print checks more than two business days before the client's appointment. See the "Separation of Duties for Determining Eligibility and Issuing WIC Checks" policy in this chapter when staff who batch print checks will be the same staff giving checks to clients.

Staff must reconcile batch checks as soon as possible, but no later than two business days after the client's appointment.

Staff must ask for permission in writing from the clinic's Local Program Consultant to print batch checks more than two business days before issuance. The local agency can ask for this option when the clinic is closing for remodeling, moving, etc.

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

A. Batch print checks no more than two business days before issuing checks to clients.

B. Reconcile batch-printed checks within two business days of issuance.

Note: Reconciling batch checks for clients who didn't receive them automatically voids the checks in Client Services.

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

Information:

Staff issue batch checks at mobile WIC sites with no printer or for a nutrition class held off-site.

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

POLICY: Mail WIC Checks

Staff can mail one month of WIC checks to a client or caregiver when one of the following circumstances prevents the client, caregiver or an alternate from receiving WIC checks for that month.

Note: "Checks" refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks.

1. Natural disasters or bad weather limits clinic operation or affects the client's, caregiver's, or alternate's ability to come to the clinic.

2. When the client or caregiver has a rare problem or personal crisis and an alternate isn't available to come to the clinic to pick up checks.

3. When the client or caregiver isn't able to pick up the checks due to severe illness or the birth of a child and an alternate isn't available.

4. When the client or caregiver lives in a rural area and has no transportation and an alternate isn't available.

5. When a person's job prevents him or her from picking up checks during normal clinic hours and an alternate isn't available.

6. When the clinic's computer system is down.

When staff mail checks to a client scheduled for nutrition education, breastfeeding counseling, or a recertification, staff must reschedule the contact for the following month.

The local agency must ask (in writing) and get approval from the state WIC office before mailing checks to large numbers of clients. Reasons for the request may include:

- Building caseload
- The clinic is moving
- Severe clinic staff limitations

Staff send checks using regular mail unless there is a concern about the potential for stolen checks. In those cases staff must use certified, registered mail.

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

A. Determine if the need for mailing checks fits the above criteria.

B. Reschedule nutrition education, breastfeeding counseling, or recertification contacts for the next month.

C. Contact client or caregiver by phone and:

1. Let the client or caregiver know you are mailing checks and to expect them by a certain date.

2. Make sure the mailing address is current.

3. Make sure the client, caregiver, and alternate names are correct.

4. Confirm food package information.

5. Schedule an appointment for next month.

6. Ask the client or caregiver to call the clinic if the check(s) don't arrive by a specific date. See the "Replacing, Stolen, or Destroyed WIC Checks" policy in this chapter.

Note: Staff don't have to contact each client or caregiver when mailing checks to a large number of clients since it is unrealistic to contact each person.

D. Document mailed checks by printing the "Mailed Check Letter" in Client Services. A sample "Mailed Check Letter" is in the Appendix as a reference.

E. Date and write "checks mailed" on the check stub. Tear off the check stub before mailing and file it with the check stubs in the clinic.

F. Mail checks and "Mailed Check Letter" in an opaque (security) envelope. When using a regular or window envelope wrap the "Mailed Check Letter" around the checks.

1. Write or stamp on the envelope, "DO NOT FORWARD, RETURN TO SENDER."

2. Write or stamp the return address of the local WIC clinic on the envelope.

G. 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 return undeliverable.

Information:

See the policy “Replacing WIC Checks That Have Been Mailed and Not Received” in this chapter for guidance when mailed checks become lost.

POLICY: Issue WIC Checks when Computer Systems are Down or During an Emergency

Local agencies attempt to provide services when clinics can't print checks because of computer equipment failure (servers or printers are down), temporary power outages, or natural disasters by following procedures listed below.

Note: "Checks" refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks.

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 won't be able to print checks for clients for more than 3 clinic days, staff must contact the state WIC office. Staff may contact the state WIC office at any time for guidance during an emergency.

Note: WIC is a supplemental nutrition program. It doesn't always meet the emergency needs of clients. However, when clinics can't serve clients due to unusual situations, make every effort to provide WIC checks in a timely manner.

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

A. Determine which option for providing checks is most appropriate when the clinic isn't able to provide them at the client's scheduled appointment.

1. Mail checks when the clinic is able to print again. See the "Mailing WIC Checks" policy in this chapter for more information.

2. Reschedule clients to come back when you expect the clinic to be fully functioning.

3. Refer clients to another WIC clinic to transfer in and receive checks.

   Note: Work with the other clinic to make sure it won't be a burden to the clinic and the staff can transfer the client and provide checks in a timely manner.

B. Contact the state WIC office for guidance when you anticipate being unable to print checks for clients for more than 3 clinic days.

Information:

When staff aren't able to print checks due to computer problems, it's 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: Replace WIC Checks

Staff must replace WIC checks for clients or caregivers for reasons including, but not limited to, the following.

Note: “Checks” refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks.

1. Changes to WIC foods.

2. The client or caregiver isn’t able to do the shopping and would like to have a new or different alternate listed on the checks.

3. The checks are damaged.

   Damaged means the check is worn, torn or marred but key identifying features like client name, client ID number and first and last day to use, or the check number are intact. For example the store won’t accept the check because it went through the wash, but staff can determine who the check belongs to and that it is still valid. Staff can replace damaged checks without documentation.

4. The client, caregiver, or alternate accidentally used bi- or tri-monthly checks out of order. Replace checks for the correct month so the client can receive benefits in that month. In all cases the client, caregiver, or alternate must not receive more benefits than allowed in a month. See Procedure D below for more information and an example.

5. The checks are stolen or destroyed. Refer to the policies “Replacing Stolen or Destroyed WIC Checks” and “Replacing WIC Checks That Have Been Mailed and Not Received” in this chapter for definitions and specific instructions. Staff can replace stolen or destroyed checks with documentation such as a fire or police report.

6. An infant or child who received checks for the current month has moved to a new caregiver and the checks or WIC foods or formula aren’t available to the new caregiver (examples include foster child, change of custody).

7. In the month the infant turns one year, but before the actual birth date, the infant received an infant formula food package. The caregiver asks for the child’s food package after the birth date. The caregiver must return the complete, unused infant food package checks. See Procedure E below for more information.

Note: Sometimes clients or caregivers don’t pick up or use all of their checks for the month. They can’t receive additional checks in a following month to make up for this loss or receive replacements for the unused checks with a new first and last day to use.

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

A. Take back the checks the client or caregiver isn't able to use.

1. If the checks are stolen or destroyed, refer to the "Replacing Stolen or Destroyed WIC Checks" or the "Replacing WIC Checks That Have Been Mailed and Not Received" policy in this chapter for specific instructions.

B. Only replace checks with current "First day and last day to use" dates. Don't replace expired checks.

Note: The only exception allowed for replacing expired checks is when the person used bi-monthly or tri-monthly checks in the wrong order. (See "D" below).

C. Issue replacement checks using the first and last dates to use on the original checks.

D. When the person accidentally used bi-monthly or tri-monthly checks in the wrong order:

1. Take back the checks that weren't used; in some cases these will be expired.

2. Issue checks for the current month.

3. Document in Client Services which month's checks were used out of order and any other important information.

4. Consider changing the person to monthly check issuance if he or she continues to use checks out of order.

E. Replace an infant formula food package with the child's food package after the first birthday, according to the following:

1. Make sure the child has reached the first birthday.

2. Take back and void the complete unused set of infant formula food package checks. The checks must be from the month the child turned one year. Don't replace expired checks.

   a. Replace only full sets of formula checks. Staff can't issue a child's food package if the caregiver used any of the formula checks.

3. Issue a new set of checks with the child's foods using the Check Pick Up function in Client Services.

    a. Using Void and Replace in this instance will not give you a Child food package.

F. Void the reclaimed checks and destroy them by shredding or tearing them into pieces no larger than one square inch.

G. Document why checks are voided and replaced in Client Services.

H. Report any unusual or frequent patterns of check replacement to state WIC staff.

I. Follow these steps when an infant or child received checks for the current month and has moved to a new caregiver and the checks or WIC formula or foods aren't available to the new caregiver (foster child, change of custody):

1. Contact the previous caregiver who received the checks. If the caregiver doesn't participate in your clinic, call the clinic that issued the checks so staff at that site can contact the previous caregiver.

2. Let the previous caregiver know:

    a. WIC foods are for the client only.

    b. Return unused WIC checks, unopened containers of formula, and unopened non-perishable foods to the clinic where the checks were issued.

    c. Staff will void all checks with a future "First Day to Use" in the computer system. State staff will investigate if these checks are used.

3. Staff from the clinic where the checks were issued void all checks with a "First Day to Use" that is in the future and document information on the client's check Notes tab.

4. Staff who issue checks to the new caregiver document in the client's file on the check Notes tab why checks were issued a second time for the same month.

Note: The state Integrity Unit uses this information to determine the need for an investigation when a client receives two sets of checks for the same month.

POLICY: Replace Stolen or Destroyed WIC Checks

Staff replace stolen or destroyed checks for clients or caregivers with documentation.

Note: “Checks” refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks.

Definitions:

Stolen: Taken unlawfully.

Destroyed: Completely ruined where important information on the check is unreadable. For example the check was destroyed in a house fire or a flood.

See the “Replacing WIC Checks” policy in this chapter for information about replacing damaged checks. Staff can replace damaged checks with intact identifying features without documentation.

To replace stolen or destroyed checks:

1. The client or caregiver must provide a police report, fire report or similar documentation of the incident. Staff can’t replace stolen or destroyed checks without documentation.

2. A police report number is allowed as documentation when the police department doesn’t provide copies of police reports.

3. The client or caregiver must provide documentation of each occurrence of stolen or destroyed checks. Contact state WIC staff if you have concerns about a client who has repeated stolen or destroyed checks.

Staff have the client or caregiver fill out and sign the WIC Check Replacement Form.

1. Keep the WIC Check Replacement Form on file for a total of four years, with the first six months in the clinic.

2. Alternates can’t receive replacement checks for stolen or destroyed checks or sign the WIC Check Replacement Form.

This policy doesn’t cover checks mailed by the clinic and not received by the client. See the policy “Replacing WIC Checks That Have Been Mailed and not Received” in this chapter for more information.

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

A. Only replace stolen or destroyed checks when documentation or a police report number is available.

B. Only replace checks with a current "First Day to Use" and "Last Day to Use." Don't replace expired checks.

C. Ask questions to determine which checks to replace.

D. Complete the WIC Check Replacement Form.

1. Have the client or caregiver document all pertinent information on the form.

2. Make a copy of the documentation provided and attach it to the completed WIC Check Replacement Form.

3. Staff can scan the documentation and keep an electronic copy. Note on the form where the scanned copy is saved.

4. If the clinic doesn't 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 or caregiver.

   Note: If the person doesn't want staff to keep the document until copies can be made (for example he or she needs the document), the person can make the copy then bring it to the clinic and get replacement checks.

5. List the police report number on the form when the police department doesn't provide a written police report.

E. Review the form with the client or caregiver and emphasize the following:

1. Don't use the original checks reported as stolen or destroyed.

2. Bring the original checks back to the clinic if they are found.

3. Use the replacement checks only. The words "Replacement Check" are printed on all checks printed in the Void and Replace wizard to distinguish them from the originals.

4. Using the original checks in addition to the replacements is against WIC rules. The client or caregiver may have to repay WIC and can be taken off the program.

F. Have the client or caregiver sign the form and offer a copy.

1. The copy can be blank, it doesn't have to be a signed copy.

2. It isn't required to give a copy of the form if the client or caregiver doesn't want one.

G. Keep the original form and additional documentation on file for 4 years. Keep at the clinic for six months.

H. Document the checks as stolen or destroyed in the client's file in Client Services.

I. Document the replacement reason in Client Services. List additional information as appropriate.

J. Issue replacement checks to the client or caregiver.

Information:

The WIC Check Replacement Form is in the Appendix. Staff can make copies of the form or download the form from the WIC website at http://www.doh.wa.gov/portals/1/Documents/Pubs/963-012-WICCheckReplacementForm.pdf.

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

Staff must replace mailed WIC checks that the client or caregiver didn't receive.

Note: "Checks" refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks.

The client or caregiver must sign the WIC Check Replacement Form before receiving replacement checks.

Staff must tell the client or caregiver to return the original mailed checks to the clinic if he or she receives them after getting replacement checks.

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

A. Only replace checks that are within the current "First Day to Use" and "Last Day to Use."

B. Verify the checks were mailed by checking for a "Mailed Check (MC)" contact or by reviewing the client's Check Notes.

C. Complete the WIC Check Replacement Form.

1. Document details on the WIC Check Replacement Form. No additional documentation is required from the client or caregiver.

2. Review the WIC Check Replacement Check Form with the client or caregiver and emphasize the following:

   a. Don't use the original checks reported as mailed and not received.

   b. If you find or receive the original checks, bring them to the clinic.

   c. Use the replacement checks only. The words "Replacement Check" are printed on all checks printed in the Void and Replace wizard to distinguish them from the originals.

   d. Using the original checks and the replacements is a program violation. The client or caregiver may have to repay WIC and could be taken off the program.

3. Have the client or caregiver sign the form.

4. Offer the person a copy of the form. Staff can give a blank copy or a photo copy if the client or caregiver would like a copy.

5. Keep the original of the form on file for 4 years and in the clinic for the first six months.

D. Document in Client Services.

1. Note in Client Services when sending replacement checks by certified mail. See the "Mailing WIC Checks" policy in this chapter.

E. Issue replacement checks.

Information:

Staff can make copies of the WIC Check Replacement Form from the Appendix. You can also print copies from the WIC website at http://www.doh.wa.gov/portals/1/Documents/Pubs/963-012-WICCheckReplacementForm.pdf

POLICY: Reclaim Breastfeeding Food Package Checks When Formula is Provided

When a breastfeeding woman asks for infant formula, staff complete the following:

1. Complete a Breastfeeding Review. See Volume 1, Chapter 15 – Breastfeeding for more information. Staff support and promote breastfeeding.

2. Provide the amount of formula determined during the Breastfeeding Review.

3. Let the woman keep the **current** set of breastfeeding checks.

4. Reclaim **future** month checks if the woman's food package changes.

5. Determine and document the correct food packages for the mom and baby in Client Services.

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

A. Complete a Breastfeeding Review. See Volume 1, Chapter 15 – Breastfeeding for more information.

B. Provide the appropriate amount of formula for the baby based on the Breastfeeding Review.

C. Assess when to reclaim breastfeeding food package checks based on the following:

   1. If the woman already received breastfeeding food package checks and then comes back to the clinic and asks for infant formula for her baby, allow the woman to keep the current month's checks.

   2. Reclaim breastfeeding food package checks for the next month and reissue checks for the appropriate food package.

D. Change the client's food package to reflect the appropriate food package for the following month.

   1. Select a Partially BF food package if the woman is receiving one-half of an infant formula package or less.

   2. Select a Some BF food package if she is receiving more than one half an infant formula package and is still breastfeeding. Breastfeeding is defined as breastfeeding once a day on average.

Note: Explain that the Exclusively BF food package is for breastfeeding women who don't receive infant formula from WIC. See Volume 1, Chapter 23 – WIC Foods, for more information about providing formula to a breastfed infant.

Information:

The additional foods given to an exclusively breastfeeding woman, like tuna, carrots, and additional cheese are incorporated into the three checks for the food package. This makes it difficult for staff to reclaim the additional foods when the checks have been issued and some have been cashed. As a result, staff allow the woman to keep the current set of breastfeeding food package checks and reclaim only future month's checks. This policy standardizes clinic practice throughout the State preventing the possibility of discrimination against clients.

Example: An exclusively breastfeeding woman receives June and July checks for the Exclusively BF food package on June 5th. The woman comes in to the clinic on June 17th and asks for formula for her baby. The CPA completes a Breastfeeding Review and determines that the woman needs less than one-half a formula package for her infant on a regular basis and will continue breastfeeding part-time. Staff provide checks for a half package of formula to the infant on June 17th. Staff let the woman keep the June checks for the Exclusively BF food package. Staff reclaim the woman's July checks for the Exclusively BF food package and replace them with the Partially BF food package checks.

POLICY: Replace WIC Checks for Returned Formula

Staff must accept unopened, undamaged, returned containers of formula purchased with WIC checks from the caregiver. In the interest of the infant's health, staff can issue checks to replace the amount of formula returned to the clinic.

Note: Policy doesn't allow the caregiver to exchange or return formula to the store.

- See Volume 1, Chapter 23 – WIC Foods for guidance on developing agency policies for handling returned formula.
- See Volume 1, Chapter 24 – WIC Prescriptions for information about issuing checks for prescribed formulas.
- See the "Replacing WIC Checks" policy in this chapter for guidance when the infant received checks for the current month and has a change in custody and the new caregiver didn't receive the checks or the formula and foods for the infant.

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

A. Accept unopened, undamaged, returned containers of WIC formula and any unused checks from the caregiver.

B. Get a completed WIC Formulas and Foods Prescription Form - Infants when the caregiver asks for a prescribed formula. See Volume 1, Chapter 24 – WIC Prescriptions for more information.

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

Note: Don't void the original checks in Client Services when the caregiver used the formula checks 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. Don't issue replacement checks for checks that have expired.

E. Issue replacement check(s) for the new formula. Don't issue more than the amount of formula returned to the clinic.

F. Document the number of containers returned, type of formula (concentrate, powder, ready-to-feed, etc.), and brand (name) of formula in Client Services. Include the replacement reason.

G. Follow your local agency's written policy about how to handle returned formula. Refer to Volume 1, Chapter 23 – WIC Foods for guidance on developing local agency policies and procedures for returned formula.

Information:

Issuing the returned formula to another infant instead of WIC checks affects participation statistics. An infant who receives containers of formula instead of WIC checks isn't counted as an active participant for statistical purposes. Print checks to count the infant as participating.

POLICY: Replace WIC Checks for Visiting WIC Clients

Staff can replace WIC checks or Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) benefits for visiting WIC clients.

Note: "Checks" refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks.

Clinic staff must transfer in each client prior to replacing checks.

When an out of state client has an EBT card instead of checks, staff determine which foods to replace for the current month. See Procedures below for details.

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

A. Enter the client's transfer information in Client Services. See Volume 1, Chapter 21 – Transfers/Verification of Certification for more information.

B. Ask for ID of the person presenting the check(s) or EBT card. See Volume 1, Chapter 3 – Application and Processing Standards for information about acceptable forms of ID.

C. Have the client or caregiver read the Rights and Responsibilities form and sign. Offer a copy of the form. See Volume 1, Chapter 7 – Rights and Responsibilities for more information.

D. Follow these procedures when the client has checks:

   1. Reclaim checks and void them.

   2. Void and destroy in-state checks.

   3. Write or stamp "void" on out-of-state checks. Mail them to the originating state WIC agency. Refer to the FNS Web site for state agency addresses at http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/.

E. Follow these procedures when the client has an EBT card:

   1. Call the 800 number on the EBT card to get the balance of foods for the current month. The client or caregiver may need to enter a PIN or password.

   2. Call the previous clinic or state WIC office to find out which foods remain for the current month.

3. Ask the client or caregiver which foods were purchased then tailor the food package to give the rest of the foods. Match the foods to the Washington WIC food package as close as possible.

F. Issue checks to replace the reclaimed check(s) or the unused EBT benefits.

1. Only replace checks or benefits within valid use dates. Don't replace expired checks.

2. Replace the check or EBT benefits as close as possible with Washington WIC foods.

3. If checks are being replaced for prescribed WIC formula or prescribed WIC foods, allow the prescribed formula or food **for one month** without requiring a new WIC Formulas and Foods Prescription form. See Volume 1, Chapter 24 – WIC Prescriptions for more information.

G. Explain how to use Washington WIC checks.

H. Print a transfer card if needed. Client Services will automatically terminate the file when a transfer card is printed.

Information:

This policy allows WIC clients who are temporarily in Washington to receive uninterrupted WIC services. Washington WIC clients can use their checks at any authorized WIC store and only need replacement checks if their food choices change.

POLICY: Void and Destroy WIC Checks

Staff must document all voided checks in Client Services.

Note: "Checks" refers to both regular WIC checks and WIC Fruit and Vegetable checks.

Staff must destroy the following types of voided checks:

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

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

A. Document all voided checks in Client Services when appropriate.

   1. Reclaim the checks, if possible. Don't void checks that have been used at a store. See "Replacing WIC Checks for Returned Formula" in this chapter for exceptions. See "Replacing WIC Checks" item # 6 when a foster child changes custody.

   2. For out-of-state checks, stamp or write "void" on the check(s) in the signature box or the amount box. Send back to the originating state agency. Refer to the FNS website for state agency addresses at: http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/

   3. For in-state checks from visiting and transferring clients, destroy the check(s). Client Services will automatically void unused checks are 60 days after the "Last Day to Use."

   4. Refer to the "Replacing Stolen or Destroyed WIC Checks" policy in this chapter for additional procedures when the voided check has been reported as stolen or destroyed.

B. Destroy reclaimed, voided Washington checks by shredding or tearing into pieces no larger than one square inch.

POLICY: Secure WIC Checks and Check Stock

The local agency must keep all WIC checks in a secure, locked location only accessible to those with authority to issue WIC checks. This includes pre-printed batch checks and computer check stock.

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

A. Keep all checks and check stock 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. Store in a secure, locked location (cabinet, lock box, or filing cabinet).

   1. Keep lock boxes out of public view.

POLICY: Order WIC Check Stock

Staff must order shipments of computer check stock from the contracted check printing company.

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

A. Keep a one-month supply of computer check stock.

1. See the “Conduct and Maintain Check Stock Inventory” policy in this chapter for more information.

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

Note: List “Rush” or “Overnight Shipment” on the form when the clinic needs checks in emergency situations.

C. Keep the original, or a copy, of the WIC Check Stock Order Form for a total of one year, with six months on-site.

Information:

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

Monthly caseload ÷ 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 1200 sheets of checks (an average of 1page~~s~~ per client per month). Each carton of computer check stock contains 400 sheets. This clinic would use 3 cartons of checks per month, not accounting for printing errors, voided checks, and printing transfer cards.

POLICY: Receive WIC Check Stock

Two staff must review shipments of check stock for accuracy and document on the inventory log.

The coordinator assigns and oversees staff who review shipments of check stock. Ideally, it is done by the coordinator, clinic site supervisor or manager and another staff member.

The coordinator must review the check inventory log at least quarterly.

When staff move check stock from one clinic to another, they must note it on the check stock inventory log at both sites.

PROCEDURE:

A. The clinic coordinator reviews the shipments of check stock with another staff person, or assigns two clinic staff to do the check stock shipment review.

B. The coordinator or staff assigned by the coordinator:

1. Compare the check stock order amount to the check stock that arrived.

2. Notify the contracted check printing company immediately if there are discrepancies between what was ordered and what was received.

3. Document checks received on the clinic's check stock inventory log. See the sample check stock inventory log in the Appendix.

4. Follow separation of duties policy 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.

C. The coordinator reviews the check stock inventory log at least quarterly.

Information:

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

POLICY: Conduct and Maintain WIC Check Stock Inventory

Two staff must conduct and maintain WIC check stock inventory.

The coordinator assigns and oversees the staff who conduct and maintain WIC check stock inventory. Ideally, it is done by the coordinator, clinic site supervisor or manager and another staff member.

The coordinator or assigned staff must:

1. Conduct check stock inventory at each clinic location at least once a month.

2. Document the date on the inventory log. See the sample WIC Check Stock – Monthly Inventory Log in the Appendix.

3. Document on the check stock inventory log at both sites when moving check stock from one clinic site to another.

4. Notify the Local Program Consultant at the state WIC office when there are discrepancies in the check stock inventory that can’t be reconciled.

5. Apply separation of duties policy when conducting the check stock inventory, for example, two staff count the check stock and sign the inventory log.

The coordinator must review the check inventory log at least quarterly.

PROCEDURE:

A. The clinic coordinator reviews the shipments of check stock with another staff person, or assigns two clinic staff to do the check stock shipment review.

B. The coordinator or staff assigned by the coordinator 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.

   Note: The coordinator reviews the check stock inventory log at least quarterly.

C. Follow the separation of duties policy by having two staff conduct the inventory or have one staff conduct the inventory and another sign to verify.

D. Document the inventory date and staff signatures on the check stock inventory log.

E. Destroy out-of-date, unused check stock when directed by the state WIC office.

1. 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.

F. Report to the state WIC office any discrepancies between the physical check stock and the inventory log sheet that can’t be reconciled.

POLICY: Complaints Against Retailers

Staff or clients report complaints against retailers or pharmacies through Client Services.

Staff talk with the client or caregiver using participant centered skills to gather information about the incident. Provide as much detail as possible in the electronic complaint sent to the state WIC office for follow-up.

Staff and clients or caregivers may also call the WIC Customer Service line at 1-800-841-1410 to report a complaint.

State staff always keep the client's identity confidential when following-up with retailers.

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

A. Talk with the client or caregiver about the complaint using participant centered skills. Explain that:

1. WIC takes complaints seriously. We report complaints promptly to the state WIC office for follow-up with the store manager.

2. These are opportunities to educate store clerks so they can provide better service to WIC clients.

3. We keep the client or caregiver's identity confidential when contacting the store about complaints.

B. Document in the electronic complaint form in Client Services using the Site dropdown menu.

C. Document as much detail as possible about the complaint, including:

1. When and where the incident happened. Time of day is helpful. Encourage the client to bring in the WIC receipt from the store to provide as much detail as possible to the state (date and time, name of the cashier, etc.).

2. The name of the store and store staff, if known. It is helpful to describe the store staff person when the client or caregiver doesn't know their name.

3. The client's ID number and clinic staff initials. This is not automatically included in the electronic report.

4. A description of the incident in detail. Space in the notes section of the complaint window is limited.

5. Saving the complaint in Client Services will automatically send it to the state WIC office.

D. Cooperate with state WIC staff during complaint follow-up, if requested.

A P P E N D I X

Sample Mailed Check Letter

9/3/2013

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. <u>Sign</u> the WIC check <u>after</u> 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.

WIC CHECK REPLACEMENT FORM

Stolen, Destroyed, Mailed and not Received

Washington State WIC Nutrition Program

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: ☐ Stolen ☐ Destroyed ☐ Mailed, not received

Written documentation such as a police or fire report is required to replace stolen or destroyed checks.

- Destroyed checks are either completely destroyed (as in a fire or flood) or are damaged so that important information on the check is unreadable.
- A copy of the documentation is attached to this form, or
- Police/fire report number____________________________.

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 stolen, destroyed, or mailed and not received.

- I will not use the checks I reported as 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 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: Keep original on file in clinic and offer the client or caregiver a copy.

DOH 963-012 March 2012

Click here to clear page.

KAYE-SMITH

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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 #: (________ **)** ____________________

WIC Check Stock -- Monthly Inventory Log (Sample)

Receipt Date	Check Out Date	Inventory Date	Added to Inventory	Removed from Inventory	Balance On Hand	Print Staff Names (Two required)	Signatures (Two required)	Notes (e.g., location, purpose)

Rev. 12/2008

Instructions for using the WIC 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 check stock vendor, 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 Kaye-Smith, other agency sites, or from an outside WIC agency.
- **Removed from Inventory** – Number of boxes taken from inventory. Log quantity removed (full box, ¾, ½, ¼ 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 <u>at all times</u>. 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. Check stock must always be removed from printers and kept in locked storage during non-clinic hours.

Report any discrepancies in your inventory that can't be reconciled to your Local Program Consultant at the state WIC office immediately.