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WIC Eligibility

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Section 1: Overview

**POLICY: Table of Eligibility Time Periods**

A Competent Professional Authority (CPA) must complete an assessment to determine eligibility for WIC.

The amount of time a participant is eligible for WIC depends on the participant’s category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Category (Abbreviation)</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Eligibility Begins</th>
<th>Eligibility Ends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant (P)</td>
<td>1, 4</td>
<td>Date of Certification</td>
<td>Last day of the month the participant turns 6 weeks postpartum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breastfeeding (B)</td>
<td>1, 2, 4</td>
<td>Date of Certification</td>
<td>Last day of the month the participant turns 12 months postpartum or until the participant stops breastfeeding, whichever comes first. <strong>Note:</strong> If the participant stops breastfeeding before 6 months postpartum, she is served as a non-breastfeeding postpartum participant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-breastfeeding Postpartum (N)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Date of Certification</td>
<td>Last day of the month participant turns 6 months postpartum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infants (I)</td>
<td>1, 4</td>
<td>Date of Certification</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2*</td>
<td>Date of Certification</td>
<td>Last day of the month infant turns 12 months of age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children (C)</td>
<td>3, 5</td>
<td>Date of Certification</td>
<td>Last day of the month of a 12 month period. Cascades ends eligibility the day before the child turns 5 years old.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

The CPA:

A. Assesses the participant for WIC eligibility.

B. Pushes the Certify button in Cascades 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 participants 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.
Section 2: Pregnant Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLICY: Eligibility Period for Pregnant Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The eligibility period for a pregnant participant:

- Begins on the day of the WIC certification.
- Ends on the last day of the month the participant turns 6 weeks postpartum.

Pregnant participants are Priority 1 or 4.

Information:

The pregnant participant is eligible for a pregnant participant’s food benefits through the end of the month of the sixth week postpartum. The end of a pregnancy includes a:

- Live birth
- Miscarriage
- Termination
- Fetal death

Example: Staff certify a pregnant participant on January 5th. The due date is July 2nd.

- The pregnancy eligibility period begins January 5th (the date of certification)
- The pregnancy eligibility ends August 31st (the last day of the month the participant turns 6 weeks postpartum).
Section 3: Breastfeeding Participants

**POLICY: Eligibility Period for Breastfeeding Participants**

The breastfeeding participant’s eligibility:

- Begins when the participant is certified.
- Ends on the last day of the month in which the infant turns 1 year old, or when the participant stops breastfeeding, whichever comes first.

If a breastfeeding participant reduces breastfeeding so it’s less often than once a day on average, for example 4 times a week:

a. Update breastfeeding information to change the category to non-breastfeeding postpartum if the infant is less than six months old.

b. Take the participant off the program if the infant is more than six months old.

Breastfeeding participants are Priority 1, 2, or 4.

**Note:** In the month the infant turns 12 months old, a breastfeeding participant doesn’t get food benefits if the baby has reached the first birthday. See the “Food for Infants in the Month They Turn One Year Old” table in Volume 1, Chapter 23 – WIC Foods.

**Example:** Staff certify a fully breastfeeding participant on January 9th (the baby was born on January 3rd). The participant’s eligibility period ends January 31st (one year postpartum).

1. If the breastfeeding participant comes to the clinic to receive food benefits on January 2nd (the day before the infant’s first birthday) of the following year (one year postpartum):
   - The breastfeeding participant receives food benefits.
   - The infant receives the appropriate infant food benefits.

2. If the breastfeeding participant comes to the clinic to receive food benefits on January 3rd or 4th (on or after the child’s first birthday) of the following year (one year postpartum):
   - The breastfeeding participant doesn’t receive food benefits.
   - The child receives the appropriate child food benefits.
Information:

- If a breastfeeding participant stops breastfeeding and is within 6 months postpartum, the participant may qualify as non-breastfeeding postpartum.
- If a breastfeeding participant stops breastfeeding and is more than 6 months postpartum, WIC eligibility ends.

Example: Staff certify a breastfeeding participant on March 7th (child born on March 3rd).

- The eligibility period begins March 7th (the day of certification)
- The eligibility ends on March 31st (one year postpartum) as long as the participant continues breastfeeding.

If the participant stops breastfeeding before 6 months postpartum (for example in July) the participant would be eligible for WIC as a non-breastfeeding postpartum participant (through the end of September).

Staff take the participant off the program if the participant stops breastfeeding after 6 months postpartum.
Section 4: Non-Breastfeeding Postpartum Participants

**POLICY: Eligibility Period for Non-breastfeeding Postpartum Participants**

The eligibility period for a non-breastfeeding postpartum participant:

- Begins on the day of the WIC certification
- Ends on the last day of the month the participant turns six months postpartum.

Non-breastfeeding postpartum participants 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 participant on WIC during pregnancy, who doesn’t breastfeed, receives pregnant participant food benefits through the end of the month of the sixth week postpartum.

- Staff issue one month of benefits **before** completing the subsequent certification as a Non-breastfeeding postpartum participant for the participant to receive pregnant food benefits through the end of the month.
- When staff complete the subsequent certification Cascades automatically assigns a non-breastfeeding postpartum food prescription.

**Example:** A WIC participant has the baby on June 17th. Staff recertify from pregnant to non-breastfeeding postpartum on July 25th.

- As a pregnant participant, the eligibility extends through the first month postpartum.
- On July 25th, the participant is eligible for pregnant participant food benefits if staff issue benefits **before** completing a subsequent certification as a non-breastfeeding postpartum participant.

The following month the participant receives non-breastfeeding postpartum food benefits.
Section 5: Infants

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.
- Ends on the last day of the month the infant turns 12 months old.

These infants are Priority 1, 2, or 4.

The eligibility period for infants entering the program between 7 and 12 months of age:

- Begins on the day of the WIC certification.
- 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.

Note: Staff can extend the certification for infants for 30 days in limited situations.

- See Volume 1, Chapter 18 – Certification.

Information:

Infant under 6 months of age example:
Staff certify an infant born February 2nd on February 5th.

- The infant’s eligibility begins on February 5th (the date certified eligible for WIC).
- The eligibility period 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 certify a nine-month old infant on December 11th.

- The infant’s eligibility begins on December 11th (the date certified eligible for WIC).
- The eligibility period ends May 31st (last day of a six month period; the participant receives six months of benefits).

Note: The participant receives child food benefits on the day of the 1 year birthday or later.
Section 6: Children

POLICY: Eligibility Period for Children

The eligibility period for children:

- Begins on the day of WIC certification.
- Ends the last day of the month of a 12 month period. A child may participate and receive food benefits until the day before 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 subsequent certification, 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.

Note: Staff can extend the certification for infants for 30 days in limited situations.

- See Volume 1, Chapter 18 – Certification.

Information:

Examples: Staff certify a 2 year old child on November 20th.
- The child’s eligibility begins November 20th.
- The eligibility period 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.
- The child’s eligibility ends the day before the child turns 5 years old.