

# 501 Possibility of Regression

## Definition/Cut-off Value

A participant who has previously been certified eligible for the Program may be considered to be at nutritional risk in the next certification period if the competent professional authority determines there is a possibility of regression in nutritional status without the benefits that the WIC Program provides. The State must limit the use of regression as a nutrition risk criterion to one time following a certification period.

## Participant Category and Priority Level

Category	Priority
Breastfeeding Women	I, IV, or VII
Non-Breastfeeding Women	III, IV, V, VI, or VII
Infants	I, IV, or VII
Children	III, V, or VII

## Justification

On occasion, a participant's nutritional status may be improved, to the point that s/he rises above the cutoff of the initial risk condition by the end of the certification period. This occurs most frequently with those conditions that contain specific cutoffs or thresholds, such as anemia or inappropriate growth. Removal of such individuals from the Program can result in a "revolving-door" situation where the individual's recently improved nutritional status deteriorates quickly, so that s/he then re-enters the Program at equal or greater nutrition risk status than before. Therefore, WIC Program regulations permit State agencies to certify previously certified individuals who do not demonstrate a current nutrition risk condition based on the possibility of their reverting to the prior existing risk condition if they do not continue to receive WIC benefits. This provision may be used only once following a certification period. Such applicants shall not be considered to be at nutrition risk based on the possibility of regression for consecutive certification periods.

This policy is consistent with the preventive nature of the WIC Program, and enables State and local agencies to ensure that their previous efforts to improve a participant's nutrition status, as well as to provide referrals to other health care, social service, and/or public assistance programs are not wasted.

Applicants who are certified based on the possibility of regression should be placed either in the same priority for which they were certified in the previous certification period; a priority level lower than the priority level assigned in the previous certification period, consistent with WIC regulations 246.7(e)(4); or in priority VII, if the State agency uses that priority level.

Competent Professional Authorities and other certifying staff should keep in mind that every nutrition risk condition does not necessarily lead itself to the possibility of regression. For example, gestational diabetes or gingivitis of pregnancy are not conditions to which a new mother could regress, since they are directly associated with pregnancy, and the breastfeeding or non-breastfeeding women cannot regress to being pregnant if she is no longer receiving WIC benefits.



## References

1. WIC Program Regulations, Section 246.7(e)(1)(vi).

