

## Competent Professional Authority (CPA)

### Policy

#### USDA Federal Regulations:

7 CFR 246.2 *Competent professional authority* means an individual on the staff of the local agency authorized to determine nutritional risk and prescribe supplemental foods. The following persons are the only persons the State agency may authorize to serve as a competent professional authority: Physicians, nutritionists (bachelor's or master's degree in Nutritional Sciences, Community Nutrition, Clinical Nutrition, Dietetics, Public Health Nutrition or Home Economics with emphasis in Nutrition), dietitians, registered nurses, physician's assistants (certified by the National Committee on Certification of Physician's Assistants or certified by the State medical certifying authority), or State or local medically trained health officials. This definition also applies to an individual who is not on the staff of the local agency but who is qualified to provide data upon which nutritional risk determinations are made by a competent professional authority on the staff of the local agency.

#### USDA Federal Regulations:

(b) *Provisions of agreement.* The agreement between the State agency and each local agency shall ensure that the local agency— (2) Has a competent professional authority on the staff of the local agency and the capabilities necessary to perform the certification procedures.

#### USDA Federal Regulations:

(e) *Nutritional Risk.* To be certified as eligible for the Program, applicants who meet the Program's eligibility standards specified in paragraph (c) of this section must be determined to be at nutritional risk. A competent professional authority on the staff of the local agency shall determine if a person is at nutritional risk through a medical and/or nutritional assessment. This determination may be based on referral data submitted by a competent professional authority not on the staff of the local agency.

#### Iowa Administrative Code:

“Competent professional authority” or “CPA” means an individual on the staff of the contract agency who, using standardized WIC screening tools and eligibility criteria provided by the department, determines whether an applicant for WIC services is eligible to receive those services. A CPA shall be a member of one of the following categories:

1. A dietitian licensed by the Iowa board of dietetics;
2. A nutrition educator as defined in the Iowa WIC Policy and Procedure Manual;
3. A physician, registered nurse, or licensed physician assistant.

#### Iowa Administrative Code:

The competent professional authority (CPA) shall conduct the nutrition interview and shall attest to the applicant's eligibility for services after the certification process is completed.

**Iowa Administrative Code:**

Contract agencies shall maintain on file documentation of qualifications for any individual employed or under contract as a CPA.

**Iowa Administrative Code:**

“The authorized supplemental foods shall be prescribed for participants by a CPA in the contract agency from food packages outlined in 7 CFR 246.10 and in accordance with the following:...”

## Authority

**USDA Federal Regulations:** 7 CFR Part 246.2, excerpt

**USDA Federal Regulations:** 7 CFR Part 246.6 (b)(2)

**USDA Federal Regulations:** 7 CFR 246.7 (e), excerpt

**Iowa Administrative Code** 641 – 73.4(135) Definitions, excerpt

**Iowa Administrative Code** 641 – 73.5(135)(1)

**Iowa Administrative Code** 641 – 73.5(135)(2)

**Iowa Administrative Code** 631- 73.8(135), excerpt

## Procedures

### Qualifications

A Competent Professional Authority (CPA) must be one of the following:

- Licensed Dietitian (See Policy “Licensed Dietitian”)
- Registered Nurse (See Policy “Registered Nurse”)
- Physician
- Physician Assistant (certified by the National Committee on Certification of Physician’s Assistants or certified by the State medical certifying authority)
- Nutrition Educator which include the following:
  - Registered Dietitians, but not licensed in Iowa
  - Successful completion of an undergraduate degree in Dietetics from an accredited institution, but has not completed a dietetic internship
  - Successful completion of an undergraduate degree in Dietetics and a dietetic internship from an accredited institution, but not completed or passed the dietetic registration exam
  - Successful completion of an undergraduate or graduate degree in Nutrition, Nutritional Sciences, Community Nutrition, Clinical Nutrition, Public Health Nutrition, or Home Economics with emphasis in Nutrition from an accredited institution
  - State or local medically trained health official
    - Licensed Practical Nurses
    - Completion of an undergraduate or graduate degree in a health related field
    - WIC Nutrition Assistants (See Policy “WIC Nutrition Assistants”)

**Responsibilities**

Competent Professional Authorities are authorized to:

- Assess and document a participant's nutrition risk(s).
- Prescribe food packages.
- Provide nutrition education, including breastfeeding promotion and support that is responsive to the participant's needs and interests.
- Identifies and documents care plans for low risk participants.
- Complete and follow up on referrals to other health and social services.
- Documents screening and referrals for lead testing and immunizations.

**High Risk Participants**

If a licensed dietitian certifies a high-risk participant and writes the nutrition care plan, this contact meets the policy requirement for one individual contact by a licensed dietitian. The dietitian should determine the appropriate level of service for the second education contact (licensed dietitian or another CPA) and schedule it accordingly.

If a non-Licensed Dietitian CPA certifies the high-risk participant, this CPA can

- Write the initial care plan identifying the participant as high-risk
- Provide nutrition education
- Schedule a second education contact with a licensed dietitian

**Training**

CPAs must complete training requirements as outlined in the policies "Local Agency Personnel Training", "Training and Education Record", and "New Employee Training Checklist".