

WIC Nutrition Assistant

A. Purpose of Procedure

Hiring WIC Nutrition Assistants may be an option for local agencies when attempts in hiring a CPA with professional credentials or a CPA with education in a nutrition or health-related field have been unsuccessful.

B. Scope of the Procedure

Hiring WIC Nutrition Assistants must be approved by the WIC State Office. Specific training and monitoring requirements must be met when hiring WIC Nutrition Assistants.

C. General Procedure

Qualifications

- An individual without extended professional training in health, nutrition, or the clinic management of breastfeeding.
- A high school diploma, or GED equivalent, and a year of employment that includes customer service.
- Upon hire, completes required training, ongoing training and is provided with support and supervision.

Responsibilities

WIC Nutrition Assistants are authorized to complete the following:

- Functioning as the Competent Professional Authority (CPA) for determination of program eligibility and certification,
- Assess and document a participant's nutrition risk(s) including, measuring length/height and weight, performing hematocrit or hemoglobin test, and completing the Nutrition Interview. If determined to be high risk, participants will be seen by a licensed dietitian per policy.
- WIC Nutrition Assistants are best suited to serve low-risk participants. A WIC Nutrition Assistant's nutrition education responsibilities may include providing nutrition education contacts for both high-risk and low-risk participants. If a WIC Nutrition Assistant provided the initial contact to a high-risk participant, then a licensed dietitian must provide the second nutrition education contact. If a licensed dietitian provided the initial contact to a high-risk participant, then the WIC Nutrition Assistant could provide the second education contact at the discretion of the licensed dietitian.
- 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.
- Complete and follow-up on referrals to other health and social services.
- Documents screening and referrals for lead testing and immunizations.

Request to Hire WIC Nutrition Assistant(s)

Local agencies may hire WIC Nutrition Assistant(s) with approval from the State WIC Office. Agencies who are interested in hiring WIC Nutrition Assistant(s) must provide a written request to the State Office through the Correspondence section of IowaGrants.gov that provides the following information:

- Describe the Need
 - Provide data to support the need for a WIC Nutrition Assistant.
 - Document attempts and/or challenges hiring a CPA with professional credentials who can meet the needs of WIC participants.
 - Provide the number of WIC Nutrition Assistant(s) the local agency plans to hire.
 - Provide a plan that describes how high-risk participants will be seen by a licensed dietitian per policy.
- Describe training and supervision plans including:
 - Name and credentials of local agency staff person responsible for initial and ongoing training, mentoring and clinic supervision of the WIC Nutrition Assistant.
 - Describe the initial training plan for the WIC Nutrition Assistant.
 - Describe how the local agency will complete chart audits and provide feedback to the WIC Nutrition Assistant for ongoing training and mentoring.
 - Describe the annual training plan.

The State Office will review the request to hire the WIC Nutrition Assistant(s) and will notify the local agency if the request is approved or not. Approval of a WIC Nutrition Assistant may be revoked for the following reasons:

- The local agency is not adequately training and/or supervising the individual.
- The individual has not adequately attained skills and competencies necessary to function as a CPA.
- The individual is working outside the approved scope of practice.

Training

WIC Nutrition Assistant(s) should at a minimum complete CPA training requirements as outlined in the policies "Contract Agency Personnel Training", Training and Education Record", and "New Employee Training Checklist".

Ongoing training

WIC Nutrition Assistant(s) must at a minimum attend the following:

- Biannual WIC Conference held by the WIC State Office.
- A breastfeeding training on an annual basis.

Completed trainings must be documented in the Focus system.

Monitoring

WIC Nutrition Assistants must receive ongoing monitoring.

- WIC Nutrition Assistants must be supervised by a licensed dietitian. A licensed dietitian must be available for consultation, but is not required to be onsite for all clinics.
- The supervising licensed dietitian must perform 10 chart audits for records completed by the WIC Nutrition Assessment on at least a quarterly basis to monitor work completed and assess competency. The chart audits must be submitted to the State Office via IowaGrants.gov for review.
- The State Office will also complete a chart audit for the Agency Office Visit.