October 2026
Replaces: January 2026

Certification Forms and Program Explanation

Policy

USDA Federal Regulations:
Required data to be documented during certifications
246.7(i)(1-10) Certification forms. All certification data for each person certified shall be recorded on a form (or forms) which are provided by the State agency. The information on the forms shall include:

(1) Name and address;

(2) Date of initial visit to apply for participation;

(3) An indication of whether the applicant was physically present at certification and, if not, the reason why an exception was granted or a copy of the document(s) in the file which explains the reason for the exception;

(4) A description of the document(s) used to determine residency and identity or a copy of the document(s) used or the applicant's written statement when no documentation exists;

(5) Information regarding income eligibility for the Program as specified in paragraph (d) of this section as follows:

(i) A description of the document(s) used to determine income eligibility or a copy of the document(s) in the file;

(ii) An indication that no documentation is available and the reason(s) why or a copy of the applicant's written statement explaining such circumstances; or

(iii) An indication that the applicant has no income.

(6) The date of certification and the date nutritional risk data were taken if different from the date of certification;

(7) Height or length, weight, and hematological test results;

(8) The specific nutritional risk conditions which established eligibility for the supplemental foods. Documentation should include health history when appropriate to the nutritional risk condition, with the applicant's or applicant's parent's or caretaker's consent;

(9) The signature and title of the competent professional authority making the nutritional risk determination, and, if different, the signature and title of the administrative person responsible for determining income eligibility under the Program; and

(10) A statement of the rights and obligations under the Program. The statement must contain a signature space, and must be read by or to the applicant, parent, or caretaker. It must contain the following language or alternate language as approved by FNS. (see §246.4(a)(11)(i)), This statement must be signed by the applicant, parent, or caretaker after the statement is read:

I have been advised of my rights and obligations under the Program. I certify that the information I have provided for my eligibility determination is correct, to the best of my knowledge. This certification form is being submitted in connection with the receipt of Federal assistance. Program officials may verify information on this form. I understand that intentionally making a false or misleading statement or intentionally misrepresenting, concealing, or withholding facts may result in paying the State agency, in cash, the value of the food benefits improperly issued to me and may subject me to civil or criminal prosecution under State and Federal law.

Required information to be shared at certifications

246.7(j)(1) During the certification procedure, every Program applicant, parent or caretaker shall be informed of the illegality of dual participation.

(4) At least during the initial certification visit, each participant, parent or caretaker shall receive an explanation of how the local food delivery system operates and shall be advised of the types of health services available, where they are located, how they may be obtained and why they may be useful.

(10) During the certification procedure, every Program applicant, parent or caretaker shall be informed that selling or offering to sell WIC benefits, cash value vouchers, paper food instruments, EBT cards, supplemental foods, or breast pumps in person, in print, or on-line is a participant violation.

246.10(b)(2)(ii)(D) Advise participants or their caretaker, when appropriate, that the supplemental foods issued are only for their personal use.

246.11(a)(2) At the time of certification, the local agency shall stress the positive, long-term benefits of nutrition education and encourage the participant to attend and participate in nutrition education activities.

246.12(r)(3) Instructions. Ensure that participants, parents or caretakers of infant and child participants, and proxies receive instructions on the proper use of food instruments and cash-value vouchers, or on the procedures for obtaining authorized supplemental foods when food instruments or cash-value vouchers are not used.

WIC Policy Memo: The following information must be provided to each participant:

- The purpose of the WIC program is to provide nutritional support, i.e., education and strategies for a healthy diet, supplemental foods, referrals and breastfeeding promotion and support, during critical times of growth and development, to improve health and achieve positive health outcomes.
- The nutrition assessment process is necessary to identify nutrition needs (e.g., medical conditions, dietary practices) and interests so that WIC can provide benefits that are responsive to the participant's wants and needs.

- The relationship between WIC staff and the participant is a partnership – with open dialogue and two-way communication – working to achieve positive health outcomes.
- WIC food benefits are prescribed for the individual, to promote and support the nutritional well-being of the participant and to help meet the recommended intake of important nutrients or foods.
- The food provided by the program is supplemental, i.e., it is not intended to provide all of the participant's daily food requirements.
- Each participant must reapply at the end of the certification period and be reassessed for program eligibility.
- The nature of the WIC priority system and the priority designation for the individual, if the local agency is not serving all priorities.

Authority

7 CFR Part 246.7(i)(1-10)
7 CFR Part 246.7 (j)(1, 4, 10)
7 CFR Part 246.10 (b)(2)(ii)(D)*excerpt*
7 CFR Part 246.11 (a)(2)*excerpt*
7 CFR Part 246.12 (r)(3)
WIC Policy Memo 2008-1 WIC Program Explanation for Participants

Procedures

The state provided data system must be used for documentation.

What if the data system is not available?
If the state provided data system is not available (e.g. power outages), paper copies of the electronic system must be used and the information recorded in the MIS system once it is available again. Paper copies containing participation information will be shredded immediately after this is done.

Providing required information
Information that is required to be provided to participants (listed in the Policy section above) that is not listed in the participant's Rights and Responsibilities document must be reviewed and discussed during the first appointment and upon return following any gap in service (defined as no one in the family receiving food benefits) of six months or more.

Separation of duties
Separation of duties must be maintained at every certification/recertification appointment. If separation of duties cannot be maintained, the Separation of Duties in Extreme Circumstances policy must be followed.

CPA requirements

The tasks of using a standardized health and nutrition assessment tool, assigning nutrition risk, determining certification eligibility and prescribing food packages must be completed by a CPA with the proper qualifications and/or credentials.

Best Practices

Reinforcing messages

WIC contractors are encouraged to include the above required messages from WIC Policy Memo 2008-1 listed on page 2-3 in new participant education materials and/or participant newsletters as a way to reinforce the information and provide a reference for participants to turn to. These messages may be presented in simpler language to enhance comprehension.

Plan for new families and families returning after a gap in service

In order to reduce duplicative services, maximize resources and ensure participants receive all of the information required, the local agency should have written documentation mapping out staff responsibilities for new and returning families. This will ensure staff know who will be responsible for explaining what and when during the course of an appointment.