

Release and Requests of Information

Policy

USDA Federal Regulations: 4) Release forms. Except in the case of subpoenas or search warrants (see paragraph (i) of this section), the State agency and its local agencies may disclose confidential applicant and participant information to individuals or entities not listed in this section only if the affected applicant or participant signs a release form authorizing the disclosure and specifying the parties to which the information may be disclosed. The State or local agency must permit applicants and participants to refuse to sign the release form and must notify the applicants and participants that signing the form is not a condition of eligibility and refusing to sign the form will not affect the applicant's or participant's application or participation in the WIC Program. Release forms authorizing disclosure to private physicians or other health care providers may be included as part of the WIC application or certification process. All other requests for applicants or participants to sign voluntary release forms must occur after the application and certification process is completed.

Authority

7 CFR Part 246.26(d)(4)

Procedures

A release form that can be used with any entity including primary health care providers can be found in the Certification, Eligibility and Coordination of Service forms folder and is called the Referral from the WIC Program form.

A request for information form that can be used with any entity including primary health care providers can be found in the Certification, Eligibility and Coordination of Service forms folder and is called the Authorization for Release of Information form.

Best Practices

Dialogue and communication with a participant's primary health care provider is essential for continuity of care. Contract agencies are particularly encouraged to share nutrition care plans for Priority I and III participants.

Send pertinent nutrition information to the participant's primary health care provider whenever appropriate. Focus on information that keeps the provider informed about the participant's nutritional status and the participant's response to education and counseling activities.

Request pertinent health and nutrition information from the participant's primary health care

provider or other entities when that information is needed to provide individualized and appropriate nutrition services. CPAs are encouraged to document requests for information in the nutrition care plan and update the plan when the information is received. Examples of information that might be requested follow:

- Bloodwork
- Medical diagnosis and treatment plan
- Preparation and/or feeding instructions for participants receiving formula

Each agency should develop a plan to follow-up on requests for information. (E.g. Print a second copy of the request form and put it in a “tickler file.” The tickler files could be organized by WIC staff members, clinics or counties depending on what best meets the agency’s needs.)