



SECTION: Local Program Operations
SUBJECT: **FOOD BENEFIT ISSUANCE**
DATE: June 1, 2016 (*revised*)

511

POLICY: Local programs shall implement a food benefit issuance procedure to ensure WIC participants receive food benefits at their initial certification and at subsequent nutrition education and follow up appointments.

PURPOSE: To provide guidance for local WIC program staff on when to appropriately issue food benefits.

RELEVANT REGULATIONS: §246.12 ¶(r)—Issuance of food instruments, cash value vouchers and authorized supplemental foods.
§246.7 ¶(f)(2)(iv) – Processing Standards: Time frames for processing applicants

OREGON WIC PPM REFERENCES:

- ◆451—Change in Guardianship
- ◆501e—Ordering and Securing eWIC cards
- ◆510e—eWIC Cardholder Requirements
- ◆561e—Program Integrity: Replacement of Food Benefits
- ◆595e—Program Integrity: Separation of Duties
- ◆610e—Required Proofs: Identity, Residency, Income
- ◆616—Unavailable Proofs
- ◆620—Certification and Issuing Benefits to Relatives, Friends and Co-workers
- ◆635e—Participant Notification: Eligibility and Rights & Responsibilities
- ◆640e—Documentation Requirements in TWIST
- ◆641e—Documentation Requirements in the Absence of TWIST
- ◆646—Mid-Certification Health Assessment
- ◆655—Homeless Applicants
- ◆712—Breastfeeding: Breast Pump Ordering, Distribution and Tracking Guidelines
- ◆735—Exchange and Handling of Returned Formula
- ◆769—Assigning WIC Food Packages
- ◆821—Nutrition Education: Telephone Contact for High Risk Participants with the RD
- ◆823—Nutrition Education: Second Nutrition Education Using Online Education
- ◆835—Nutrition Education: Attendance or Refusal

TWIST TRAINING MANUAL REFERENCES: Chapter 3, Lesson 1100 —Family Summary Screen

DEFINITIONS:

<i>Food Benefits</i>	The foods a participant receives on WIC for a selected month. Depending on the participant category, food benefits provide specific amounts of WIC authorized foods, formulas, and/or a fixed-dollar amount for participants to obtain WIC authorized fruits and vegetables (referred to as a “Cash Value Benefit” or “CVB”).
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FOOD BENEFIT ISSUANCE, cont.

<i>Electronic Benefit Account (EBA)</i>	An account established for each WIC family administered by the Oregon’s eWIC banking contractor. Accounts are identified by the WIC family ID number assigned to that family. Food benefits for all participants in the family are aggregated into a single account.
<i>Food Benefit Balance</i>	Unspent issued food benefits which are available for purchase by a cardholder during authorized benefit timeframe.
<i>eWIC Card</i>	Magnetic stripe card used to purchase WIC authorized foods or formulas from a WIC family’s Electronic Benefit Account (EBA). Each card has a 16-digit Primary Account Number (PAN).
<i>First cardholder</i>	The required cardholder for a WIC family Electronic Benefit Account (EBA). The first cardholder is either the woman participant or the parent or caretaker from the same household as the infant or child participant(s), therefore sharing the same address.
<i>Second cardholder</i>	The optional cardholder who has been issued the second eWIC card with the permission of the first cardholder. The second cardholder may attend nutrition education appointments, bring in a child for certification appointments and purchase WIC food benefits using an eWIC card.
<i>Single issuance</i>	When a participant is issued Food Benefits for one month (also referred to as “one month issuance”).
<i>Double issuance</i>	When a participant is issued Food Benefits for two months (also referred to as “two month issuance”).
<i>Triple issuance</i>	When a participant is issued Food Benefits for three months (also referred to as “three month issuance”).

PROCEDURE:

When to issue food benefits

- 1.0 Food benefits issuance should be coordinated with regularly scheduled WIC appointments whenever possible. Once the CPA has assigned the appropriate food package, food benefits shall be issued for participants for the following reasons:
 - 1.1 Initial program enrollment for new WIC participants.
 - 1.2 The next three months of food benefits are available to issue at a nutrition education contact.
 - 1.3 Recertification of WIC participants.
 - 1.4 To replace food benefits as allowed by ♦561–Program Integrity: Replacing Food Benefits

FOOD BENEFIT ISSUANCE, cont.

- Last month to issue food benefits* 2.0 Participants are eligible to receive food benefits through the last month of their certification period.
- 2.1 A **child** may receive food benefits through the month of his or her fifth birthday.
- 2.2 A **nonbreastfeeding** or **some breastfeeding postpartum woman** may receive food benefits through the sixth month after her pregnancy ends. A **some breastfeeding** woman may continue to receive all other program benefits through the month of her child’s first birthday.
- 2.3 An **exclusively or mostly breastfeeding woman** may receive food benefits through the month of her child’s first birthday.
- 2.4 A **pregnant woman** may receive food benefits for six weeks after the end of pregnancy rounded to the end of the month.
- Food Benefit Issuance* 3.0 Issue **three months** of food benefits, unless there is a situation that warrants less than triple issuance (see ¶3.2 and ¶3.3). Food benefits may be issued to the first or second eWIC cardholders who provide appropriate documentation of identity. See ♦610—Required Proofs: Identity, Residency, Income.
- Partial packages* 3.1 Issue the partial package assigned by TWIST for the current month for new and reinstated participants receiving food benefits on or after the 20th of the month. Partial packages are not required for participants in a current certification period. Food packages may always be tailored after the 20th to meet the needs of the participant for the remainder of the month.
- Single issuance required* 3.2 In the following situations, single issuance of food benefits is **required**:
- RX or HP authorization needed (automatic single issuance in TWIST);
 - Eligibility pending (automatic single issuance in TWIST);
 - Missed nutrition education appointment (see ♦835—Nutrition Education: Attendance or Refusal for more information and for exceptions to the single issuance requirement);
 - Missed mid-point health assessment for infants and children (see ♦646—Mid-Certification Health Assessment for more information and for exceptions to the single issuance requirement);
 - Custody dispute;
 - Unresolved program integrity issue (program abuse, sanctions, overdue multi-user breastpump, etc.).

FOOD BENEFIT ISSUANCE, cont.

- Single or double issuance optional* 3.3 Local program staff **may** issue single or double month’s food benefits on a case by case basis. Examples are listed below.
- Foster child
 - Multi-user breast pump on loan
 - High risk participant
 - Trial of new formula
- NE Refusal* 3.4 Local agencies may issue up to three months of food benefits in the rare situation when a participant refuses all nutrition education (NE) and the refusal is documented in TWIST. Refer to ♦835—Nutrition Education: Attendance or Refusal.
- Issuance of benefits over the phone* 4.0 Issuance of benefits may be done over the phone in the following situations:
- 4.1 After proofs of identity, residence, and income have been received and “eligibility pending” status is removed.
 - 4.2 After changes have been made to the WIC food package, mid-certification, by a competent professional authority (CPA).
 - 4.3 Issuance of supplemental formula, mid-certification, to a participating infant by a CPA following a full assessment (see Policy 713: Breastfeeding: Use of Supplemental Formula).
 - 4.4 Change in the form of formula (for example, from powder to concentrate) in the middle of a certification period.
 - 4.5 Upon completion of online NE & required phone follow-up with a designated WIC staff person or after a high-risk phone appointment with the RD. Refer to ♦823—Second Nutrition Education Using Online Lessons and ♦821—Telephone Contacts for High Risk Clients with the RD.
- Timeframe for food benefit issuance following a paper certification* 5.0 After completing a paper certification, local program staff have **two working days to** enter the data into TWIST and issue food benefits for the participant. Refer to ♦641—Documentation Requirements in the Absence of TWIST for more information.
- Issuing food benefits to relatives, friends and co-workers* 6.0 Local WIC program staff members **may not** issue food benefits for themselves, relatives, friends or co-workers. Refer to ♦620—Certification and Issuing Food Benefits to Relatives, Friends and Co-workers for additional guidelines.

FOOD BENEFIT ISSUANCE, cont.

*Hospitalized or
institutionalized
participants*

- 7.0 Benefits may not be issued to a WIC participant who is hospitalized or institutionalized.
- 7.1 When a WIC participant is in a hospital, long term care facility or institution, WIC food benefits cannot be issued until discharge, since the institution is responsible for feeding the patient.
- 7.2 If an infant is with the mother who is staying in a residential treatment center, See ♦655–Homeless Applicants for an exception which allows the infant to receive infant foods and infant formula. ★

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