

2.02 Priority System

POLICY:

Each WIC participant will be assigned a priority based on their category and condition(s) of nutritional risk to assure the delivery of WIC benefits to persons with the greatest nutritional need.

PROCEDURE:

A. Eligibility for WIC Program Participation

Applicants who meet categorical eligibility, income, residency and nutritional risk criteria (see **Policy 2.01, Certification of WIC Participants**) are eligible for WIC Program participation.

B. Determination of a Priority

The WIC applicant's priority will be determined during the initial certification and subsequent certifications by the Competent Professional Authority (CPA).

1. The first digit of the three (3) digit nutrition risk code reflects the priority assigned to the WIC applicant.
2. If a Local Agency is maintaining a waiting list (see **Policy 1.09, Waiting List Management**), the highest priority applicants (those at greatest nutritional risk) will be the first to receive WIC Program benefits.

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1. **Priority I** includes pregnant women, breastfeeding women and infants at nutritional risk as demonstrated by hematological or anthropometric measurements or other documented nutritionally related medical conditions which demonstrate the need for supplemental foods.
2. **Priority II** includes infants up to six (6) months of age (**except** those infants who qualify as Priority I) of women who participated in the WIC Program during pregnancy, and infants up to six (6) months of age born to women who did not participate in the WIC Program during pregnancy, but whose medical records document that they were at nutritional risk during pregnancy because of nutritional conditions detectable by biochemical or anthropometric measurements or other documented nutritionally related medical conditions which demonstrate the need for supplemental foods (see **Policy 2.15, Certification of Priority II Infants**).
3. **Priority III** includes children and postpartum women at nutritional risk as demonstrated by hematological or anthropometric measurements or other documented nutritionally related medical conditions which demonstrate the need for supplemental foods.

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4. **Priority VI** includes pregnant women, breastfeeding women and infants at nutritional risk because of an inadequate dietary pattern, or who are at nutritional risk solely because of homelessness or migrancy.
5. **Priority V** includes children at nutritional risk because of an inadequate dietary pattern, or who are at nutritional risk solely because of homelessness or migrancy.
6. **Priority VI** includes postpartum women at nutritional risk, including those who are at nutritional risk solely because of homelessness or migrancy.
7. **Priority VIII** includes participants with a valid Verification of Certification (VOC) card (see Policy 2.14, Verification of Certification Cards).
 - a) When the Local Agency has a waiting list, but is enrolling some new participants, a person with a VOC card will be enrolled and allowed to finish their certification period, even if the Local Agency is not serving their priority level.
 - b) If the Local Agency is not serving any new persons, the VOC card holder must be placed on the list ahead of all waiting applicants, regardless of the priority level under which he/she was certified, and regardless of whether the Local Agency is currently serving that category.
 - c) When the participant reapplies at the end of the certification period, he/she will be treated as any other applicant, placed in the appropriate priority level and, when necessary, put on the waiting list.

REFERENCES:

1. WIC Regulations 246.7, Certification of Participants
2. SFP 95-110, Implementation Date for Provisions of Homelessness/Migrancy as Nutritional Risk Conditions Final Rule