

3.09 Remotely Issuing Electronic Benefits and E-Mailing the Shopping List

POLICY:

Food benefits may be issued to the eWIC benefit card without the participant's presence in the WIC clinic for situations outlined in this policy and should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Food benefits will not be issued to the eWIC benefit card without the participant's presence in the clinic for certification, sub-certification and high-risk follow-up appointments without adequate documentation excluding them from their appointment, provided by the participant's healthcare provider (**See Policy 2.01, Certification of WIC Participants**).

PROCEDURE:

A. Remotely Issuing eWIC Benefits and E-Mailing the Shopping List to an Individual Participant or Family

Staff may issue eWIC benefits without the participant's, parent/guardian's or caretaker's presence in clinic as outlined below:

1. Completion of West Virginia (WV) WIC web-based nutrition education module (**see policy 5.05, Nutrition Education Contacts and Documentation**).
 - a. The local WIC office receives proof of completion of the WV WIC web-based nutrition education contact (**see policy 5.05, Nutrition Education Contacts and Documentation**);
 - b. Staff will document completion of the nutrition education contact in Crossroads and load benefits to the eWIC benefit card. Staff will sign their name with the notation "NE" for "Nutrition Education", as the reason for signing.
 - c. Staff will contact the participant to notify that the benefits have been loaded to the eWIC benefit card and confirm contact information and set up their next appointment.
 - d. If requested, an appointment letter and Shopping List will be sent to the participant via mail, or email if an email address has been provided.
2. Completion of a one-on-one nutrition education contact via telephone (**see policy 5.05, Nutrition Education Contacts and Documentation**).
 - a. Staff will document completion of the nutrition education contact in Crossroads and load benefits to the eWIC benefit card. Staff will sign their name with the notation "NE" for "Nutrition Education", as the reason for signing.
 - b. An appointment letter will be sent to the participant via mail, or emailed if an email address has been provided; if requested.

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3. For minor food package changes that would not require the return of any contract infant formula, exempt infant formula or WIC-eligible nutritionals.
 - a. Food package changes must be requested by the parent/guardian or caretaker and prescribed by a Competent Professional Authority (CPA).
 - b. Staff who issued the benefits will sign their name for benefit issuance and note reason for signing.
4. Other reasons that staff may issue eWIC benefits without the participant's, parent/guardian's or caretaker's presence in clinic include, but are not limited to:
 - Physical disability or family with children with special health care needs
 - Illness
 - Imminent childbirth
 - Quarantine, communicable disease, and/or immune disorder
 - Inclement weather conditions
 - Distance to travel, other travel challenges or transportation
 - Education requirement met and participant will not be eligible for re-certification
 - Participant unable to keep appointment which would result in missing an entire month of benefits
 - a. The local WIC office receives proof of completion of the WV WIC web-based nutrition education contact (see policy 5.05, Nutrition Education Contacts and Documentation);
 - b. Staff will document completion of the nutrition education contact in Crossroads and load benefits to the eWIC benefit card. Staff will sign their name with the notation "NE" for "Nutrition Education", as the reason for signing.
 - c. Staff will contact the participant to notify that the benefits have been loaded to the eWIC benefit card and confirm contact information and set up their next appointment.
 - d. If requested, an appointment letter and Shopping List will be sent to the participant via mail, or email if an email address has been provided.
5. Requests for food benefit issuance to the eWIC benefit card without participant signature will be approved by the Local Agency CPA.
6. Staff who issued the benefits will sign their name for receipt of benefits and note reason for signing. Staff will then notify the parent/guardian or caretaker that benefits have been loaded on the eWIC benefit card.

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7. If requested, an appointment letter will be sent to the participant via mail, or emailed if an email address has been provided.
8. Remotely issuing food benefits is to be discontinued as soon as the family's hardship is resolved.

B. Group Electronic Benefits Issuance

1. In situations where it is necessary for staff to do group electronic benefits issuance, one (1) month of benefits will be issued and the appointment will be rescheduled. Justification for group benefit issuance includes, but is not limited to:
 - Seasonally inclement weather or site closure;
 - Extreme hardship that may be encountered by the target population;
 - Event of a natural disaster, environmental hazard or destructive incident (i.e. gas line explosion, water main break); and
 - Automated system failure, internet disruption or electrical problems that prohibit the issuance of food benefits on a given day.
2. Staff who issued the benefits will sign their name for receipt of benefits and note reason for signing and will notify the parent/guardian or caretaker that benefits have been loaded on the eWIC benefit card; unless remotely issuing to a group nutrition education class.
3. If requested, an appointment letter will be sent to the participant via mail, or emailed if an email address has been provided.
4. Group food benefits issuance will be discontinued as soon as the reason for the group benefit issuance is resolved.
5. When emailing the appointment letter and the Shopping List, the email shall contain the confidentiality notice and the USDA Nondiscrimination Statement:

“This message, including any attachments, is for the sole use of the individual or entity named above. The message may contain confidential health and/or legally privileged information. If you are not the above-named recipient, you are hereby notified that any disclosure, copying, distribution, or action taken in reliance on the contents of this message is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender immediately and destroy all copies of the original message”.

“This institution is an equal opportunity provider.”

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6. Staff will verify the correct mailing address and email address in Crossroads before mailing or emailing appointment letters or the Shopping List.

REFERENCES:

1. WIC Regulations 246.12, Food Delivery Systems
2. WIC Regulations 246.14, Program Costs