

**POLICY:**

The Local Agency will improve access to the WIC Program for participants and prospective applicants who are employed or who reside in rural areas, by addressing their special needs through the adoption or revision of procedures and practices to minimize the time participants and applicants must spend away from work and the distances participants and applicants must travel through the following procedures.

**PROCEDURE:**

**A. Scheduling Systems**

The Local Agency will use an appointment scheduling system or an open access system to serve applicants/participants. Nutrition Education appointments and minor food package changes may be completed online or by phone.

1. An appointment system is used to schedule and serve WIC applicants/participants for certification and nutrition education appointments.
  - a. When scheduling the appointment, the WIC applicant/participant will be questioned about the most convenient time of day and day of week to attend WIC clinic.
  - b. Whenever possible, each member of the applicant/participant family will be scheduled to attend WIC clinic at the same appointment time.
  - c. The WIC applicant/participant will be served promptly at their appointment time.
  - d. Whenever possible, each member of the participant family will receive a three (3) month food benefit issuance during each certification and nutrition education appointment.
  - e. Whenever possible, walk-ins will be served.
2. An open access system allows applicants/participants with limited time to be seen at their convenience, without a scheduled appointment.
  - a. The WIC applicant/participant will be served on a first come, first serve basis.
  - b. Whenever possible, each member of the participant family will receive a three (3) month food benefit issuance during each certification and nutrition education appointment.

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**Access for Employed and Rural Persons**

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3. Nutrition Education appointments and food package changes may be completed online or by phone (see **Policy 3.09 Remotely Issuing Electronic Benefits and Emailing the Shopping List**).

**B. Extended Service Hours**

1. WIC clinics which offer extended service hours will give priority for those hours to those who may otherwise not be able to participate in the WIC Program because they would be penalized by their absence from their job or because of their lack of transportation.
2. To improve availability, the Local Agency Director may stagger WIC personnel lunch times, if possible, when a WIC clinic does not offer extended service hours.

**C. Designation of a Parent/Guardian Two and/or Caretaker**

WIC participants will be encouraged to designate a Parent/Guardian Two and/or Caretaker to attend certification and/or nutrition education appointments, or proxies to pick up food benefits when they are not able to attend because of work or lack of transportation (see **Policy 3.12, Parent/Guardian Two, Caretaker and Proxy Authorization**).

**REFERENCES:**

1. WIC Regulations 246.4, State Plan
2. SFP 98-048, GAO Report on Working Women's Access to WIC Benefits