

**Family, Household, and Economic Unit****Policy No. CT- 800.08**

Effective Date: October 1, 2016

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**Policy**

WIC income eligibility is based on the income and size of the economic unit. Applicant(s) shall be interviewed to determine their family's size.

An individual, or group of individuals, who has a source of income that is separate from that of other persons who reside in the household shall be considered a separate family unit if the local agency determines that their independent source of income is adequate to provide for their living expenses in their particular environment.

**Purpose**

To establish a consistent method for determining the economic unit size of applicants whose income will be assessed to determine WIC eligibility.

**Procedures**

- I. Local agencies (LA) shall exercise discretion when determining the size of a family, or economic unit within the following general framework and examples provided. LA must:
  - A. Count a child in the family of the parent, guardian, alternate-proxy, or other caregiver with whom the child lives, with the exception of a foster child. For example, a child who resides with and is being cared for by a grandparent would be counted in the household of the grandparent.
  - B. Consider a foster child living with a family, the legal responsibility of the welfare agency or placement agency and count the child as a family of one (1).
    1. The payments made by the welfare agency, or another agency for the care of that child is not considered to be the income of that foster child.
    2. All foster care children are adjunctively eligible due to becoming a ward of the state, they received Medicaid.
  - C. Count a child who lives as a member of the family with whom he/she resides, when the family has accepted permanent legal responsibility for him/her.
  - D. Count a child who resides in more than one home as a result of a joint custody situation as a member of the household of the parent who first applies on behalf of the child.
- II. The LA may reassess the family economic unit for a pregnant woman based on a family size increased by one or the number of expected infant(s), when she is determined to not be income eligible based on the current size of her family economic unit.

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- III. LA can consider a household where the spouse is away and maintains a separate residence due to job related assignments as a separate economic unit without the inclusion of the spouse's income. If the absent spouse is contributing to the household, then their contribution is included as income.
- IV. LA must count college students who:
- A. Maintain a separate residence at school but are supported by parents/guardians as a member of their parent/guardian's household.
  - B. Maintain a separate residence **and** are self-supported as a separate household. Any regular cash supplements received from parents or guardians must be included in the student's total income.
- V. LA will count an emancipated minor who is supporting herself without economic support from other persons as a separate family economic unit for purposes of determining income eligibility for WIC services. Therefore, a minor who lives at home but supports herself by providing for her own room, board and medical care is considered a separate "family" or economic unit.
- VI. LA will count military personnel serving overseas or assigned to a military base as a member of the family economic unit, and their income should be included when determining family income.
- VII. LA will count children in the temporary care of others while their parent is on military assignment elsewhere, or if the child(ren) temporarily move in with friends or relatives, choose one of the following options:
- 1. Count absent parents and their income while excluding current caregivers in their income; or,
  - 2. Count children as members of the caregiver's household.
- VIII. LA will count children of Incarcerated Parent/Guardian in the family size of the caregiver with whom they live. A signed note from the parent giving permission to the caregiver (e.g., grandmother) is acceptable and must be placed in the health record. Services shall not be denied if the caregiver does not have a statement from the parent.
- IX. Unemployment - Applicants from families with adult members who are unemployed shall be eligible based on income during the period of unemployment if the loss of income causes the current rate of income to be less than the income guidelines. Persons who are on leave that they requested themselves are not considered unemployed. For example, persons who request maternity leave or a teacher who is not paid during the summer would not be considered unemployed. In these instances, it may be more appropriate to use annual income to determine eligibility. If a woman is on extended

maternity leave [greater than six (6) months], it may be more appropriate to use current income to determine eligibility.

**Authority**

7 CFR § 246.2

7 CFR § 246.7

WIC Final Policy Memorandum #2016-3, *Publication of the 2016-17 WIC Income Eligibility Guidelines*WIC Policy Memorandum #2013-3, *Income Eligibility Guidance***Definitions/Supporting Information**

**Current Income:** Is defined as gross income received by the household during the month (30 days) prior to the date the application for WIC benefits is made.

**Family Economic Unit:** A group of related or nonrelated individuals who live together as one household/economic unit. These individuals share income and consumption of goods or services. This term may be used interchangeably with "**Household**".