

**Mailing WIC Food Benefits****Policy No. FD-940.01**

---

Effective Date: October 1, 2016

No. of Pages: 4

**Policy**

Mailing of food benefits to participants within a valid certification period shall be permitted by a local agency (LA) when the nutrition education requirement is met. LAs must document the reason for mailing food benefits and verify the participants address prior to mailing. Verification of the participant's address must be confirmed prior to mailing food benefits.

Upon completion of nutrition education requirements, a maximum of three (3) months of food benefits can be issued and mailed. Nutrition education for high and low risk contacts can be completed by phone and/or online via Georgia WIC online. Reference Policy No. [NS-200.03 Participant Nutrition Education](#) and Policy No. [NS-200.11 Nutrition Education Phone Contact](#).

The WIC Identification Folder (WIF) and food benefits must be mailed separately in a security envelope marked "Confidential". Printed food benefits must be mailed within one business day of printing. Food benefits must remain secured at all times, whether it is during the transporting of mailed food benefits to the post office or given directly to a postal carrier.

To ensure program integrity and maintain separation of duties, staff mailing the food benefits must not be the same person printing the vouchers. Staff designated to mail food benefits must sign the food benefits receipt with their initials.

[Mailed Voucher Activity reports](#) must be completed daily by designated staff and must be maintained with printed food benefits receipts, by the report date. The Mailed Voucher Activity report must record the initials of whomever verified the address, and the signature of the staff who mailed the report. [Mailed Voucher Redemption reports](#) must be printed daily, complete redemption reconciliation and attach to the corresponding Mailed Voucher Activity report.

**Purpose**

To provide an alternate means for eligible WIC participants to have access to food benefits, while maintaining program integrity and accountability standards.

**Procedures**

- I. Local agencies that elect to mail food benefits will follow the below procedures:
  - A. Establish a system that ensures separation of duties are followed and food benefits are returned to the local agency, by utilizing a post office box or a district office return address label, for all mailed food benefits deemed undeliverable.

**Mailing WIC Food Benefits****Policy No. FD-940.01**

Effective Date: October 1, 2016

No. of Pages: 4

- B. Contact the participant to confirm the need for mailing the food benefits and verify his/her mailing address prior to initiating food benefits to be printed.
  - C. Inquire if the participant needs a new WIF and ensure the participant is knowledgeable of signature requirements for self and/or alternate-proxy.
  - D. Explain to the participant that the WIF must be present for all food benefit transactions at the store.
  - E. Designate one staff person to print the food benefits.
  - F. Staff must print and complete the address verification of the Mailed Voucher Activity Report. If the address verifier is different from the person printing the food benefits, the verifier must submit documentation of address verification and attach the verification document to the Mailed Voucher Activity Report.
  - G. Indicate in the front-end system (FES) if the food benefits were mailed by placing a "Y" for yes, or "N" for no, on the indicated data element. If Yes, is chosen, select the reason food benefits are being mailed.
  - H. Initial or sign the WIC food benefits signature line on the food benefit receipt and write "mailed".
  - I. Label security envelopes with participant's address and ensure "Return Service Requested" is on the envelope.
  - J. Stamp "Confidential" on all envelopes.
  - K. Ensure the "return to sender" name on the mailing envelope is the local agency clinic address.
  - L. Have a supervisor or designated staff verify that the printed food benefits are placed in the correct envelopes and that the participant's name on the envelope matches the participant's name on the food benefits. Note the verifier must be different from the person printing the food benefits.
  - M. Seal the security envelopes, verify the number of prepared envelopes with the number of participants listed on the Mailed Voucher Activity Report, and sign and date the report.
  - N. Ensure printed food benefits are securely stored until mailed.
  - O. Transport food benefits to the post office in a locked briefcase, lockbox, locked bag, etc.
- II. Mail FIs under the following circumstances:
- A. Closure of a clinic due to structural damage, relocation, system failure, etc.
  - B. Participant or his/her parent/guardian/caretaker has a health-related illnesses that requires bed rest or that makes it difficult for them to come the clinic, and there is no alternate-proxy or proxy available to pick up food benefits at the clinic.
  - C. Participant or his/her parent/guardian/caretaker has a physical disability or special health care needs that limit the ability to come into the clinic.
  - D. Environmental crisis as a result of a natural disaster or pandemic (e.g. tornado, ice storm, hurricane, flood, coronavirus, influenza, quarantine, communicable

**Mailing WIC Food Benefits****Policy No. FD-940.01**

---

Effective Date: October 1, 2016

No. of Pages: 4

- diseases, immune disorder, etc.).
- E. Participant is unable to keep the appointment, resulting in missing an entire month's food benefits.
  - F. Participant lacks transportation.
  - G. Other special circumstances approved by the Nutrition Services Director.
- III. Complete the Mailed Voucher Activity Report using the below procedures:
- A. Print the Mailed Voucher Activity Report from the front-end system (FES) for each day food benefits are mailed.
  - B. Record the mailing date and include the signature of the staff who mailed the food benefits.
  - C. Attach the Mailed Voucher Activity report to the Daily Activity report.
- IV. Print the Mailed Voucher Redemption report and complete the redemption reconciliation process by verifying if food benefits mailed have been redeemed. Attach the corresponding Mailed Voucher Activity report to the Mailed Voucher Redemption Report located in the Voucher Management and Reporting System (VMARS) dashboard, approximately 30 days after the voucher print date, to allow time for the food benefits to be used.
- A. All lost, stolen, destroyed food benefits appearing on the Mailed Voucher Redemption report must be reported to the Operations Program Specialist.
  - B. Follow up with participants if no redemption information is listed on the Mailed Voucher Redemption report, to ensure food benefits were received.
- V. Sign, date, and maintain printed copies of all reports at the clinic and/or district offices for the purpose of monitoring.
- IV. Complete the following procedures when the participant/parent, guardian, caretaker reports FIs were not delivered:
- A. Access the participant's information in GWIS.net to determine whether the mailed food benefits have been redeemed or run the Mailed Voucher Redemption Report.
  - B. If the food benefits have not been redeemed and less than seven (7) working days have passed since the food benefits were mailed, inform the participant that there will be a waiting period of seven (7) business days before the food benefits can be replaced, allowing sufficient time for delivery.
  - C. If the food benefits have not been redeemed and more than seven (7) working days have passed:
    - 1. Advise the participant that receiving and redeeming two sets of food

**Mailing WIC Food Benefits****Policy No. FD-940.01**

---

Effective Date: October 1, 2016

No. of Pages: 4

- instruments for the same month is a violation of his/her Rights and Responsibilities and may result in disqualification and/or a claim assessment for the value of the redeemed food benefits from the program
2. Record food benefits on the [Lost/Stolen/Destroyed Voucher Report](#) and replace the food instruments and follow lost/stolen/destroyed voucher procedures, reference [FD-920.01 Lost, Stolen, Damaged Food benefits](#).  
Note: Do not void food benefits in the front-end system.
  3. Inform the participant that if the first set of mailed food instruments arrive, the instruments must be returned to the local agency. The food instruments are invalid and cannot be cashed.
  4. Advise the State Agency's Program Operations Unit via e-mail that the mailed food instruments were not received and have been flagged by DXC when submitting the [Lost/ Stolen/Destroyed Voucher Report](#).
- D. If the food benefits have been redeemed within seven (7) working days, then:
1. Advise the participant that the food benefits have been cashed and cannot be reissued prior to an investigation
  2. Report the incident to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) on the [Request for Investigation Form](#).

**Authority**

7 C.F.R. 246 § 246.7(f)(2)(iv)

7 C.F.R. 246 § 246.12(r)(4)

**Definitions/Supporting Information**

**Food Benefits-** means a voucher, check, electronic benefits transfer card (EBT), coupon or other document which is used by a participant to obtain supplemental foods.

**Security Envelope** – paper product designed for sending sensitive information through the mail. Envelope exterior makes it hard to see the envelopes contents.