

Certification Period**Policy No. CT- 840.01**

Effective Date: October 1, 2016

No. of Pages: 3

Policy

The duration of a certification period is based on the participant's category. The local agency (LA) must notify the participant either verbally or in writing of the length of their certification period and provide notification to each participant not less than 15 days before the expiration of each certification period (30 days for a homeless participant) that their eligibility to receive program benefits is about to expire. The certification period always begins with the date of certification and ends on the termination date for the participant category (see [Certification Period Guidelines](#)). WIC benefits will be provided to participants in accordance with the timeframes defined by federal regulations for each category.

The certification period may be shortened or extended by a period not to exceed thirty days for infants and children. A breastfeeding woman's certification period may be shortened only if breastfeeding ceases, at which time the participant must be transitioned to a postpartum non-breastfeeding certification if less than six-months postpartum or terminated from the program if more than six-months postpartum.

Purpose

To identify the length of time program participants are eligible for WIC benefits. To define WIC certification periods based on participant category and require client notification prior to expiration of the participant's certification period.

Procedures

- I. Begin certification periods on the date the applicant is determined eligible for benefits. Designate certification periods for eligible participants for the full allowable period.
- II. Shorten the certification period if a participant is later disqualified from the program (e.g., increased income) prior to expiration of the certification period.
- III. Ensure that participants are placed in the correct WIC type and receive recertification/renewal at the correct interval.
- IV. Certify a pregnant woman for the duration of her pregnancy and/or up to six weeks postpartum.

EXAMPLE:

Expected delivery date: 11/22/18

Date infant is six weeks old: 01/03/19

Certification expiration date: 01/03/19

The benefits issued between delivery and six weeks postpartum may be issued before OR at the time of the postpartum screening.

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- V. Certify postpartum woman who is not breastfeeding through six months postpartum. Certification shall expire on the day her infant is six months old.
EXAMPLE: Delivery date: 11/22/18
Certification action date: 12/01/19
Certification expiration date: 05/22/19
- VI. Certify a breastfeeding woman (exclusively, mostly or some breastfeeding) for a 12-month period or until breastfeeding is discontinued. The woman's certification shall expire the day before the infant's first birthday, or the day the woman stops breastfeeding.
EXAMPLE: Delivery date: 11/22/18
Certification action date: 01/05/19
Certification expiration date: 11/21/19
- A. If a woman discontinues breastfeeding before six months postpartum, for continuation of certification, her category, risk conditions (if applicable) and food package code need to be changed in the front end system so she may participate as a postpartum woman. If her eligibility was based solely on breastfeeding risk conditions, staff shall assign risk code 401, Failure to Meet Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and the woman shall be issued postpartum benefits.
- B. If a woman discontinues breastfeeding after six months postpartum, she is no longer categorically eligible. Staff shall void any remaining benefits for which she is not eligible to receive, and she shall be terminated in the frontend system.
- VII. Certify a child, up to age five, for a 12-month period ending on the last day of the twelfth month.
EXAMPLE:
Certification action date: 12/14/18
Certification expiration date: 12/31/19
For a child turning five years of age, their eligibility will expire at the end of the month in which the child reaches his/her fifth birthday.
EXAMPLE: Child's fifth birthday
Certification action date: 01/25/19
Child's fifth birthday: 03/19/19
Certification expiration date: 03/31/19
If a child is certified in the month of his/her fifth birthday, the certification must occur before the birth date in order for the child to be eligible for benefits. This includes initial and subsequent certifications.
EXAMPLE: Child certification in fifth birthday month
Child's fifth birthday: 03/19/19
Certification action date: 03/18/19
Certification expiration date: 03/31/19

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- VIII. Certify an infant, younger than six months at the time of initial enrollment, up to his/ her first birthday. Certification shall expire on the day prior to the infant's first birthday.
EXAMPLE: Date of birth: 11/22/18
Certification action date: 04/10/19
Certification expiration date: 11/21/19
- IX. Certify an infant, six months or older at the time of initial enrollment, for a six-month period ending on the last day of the sixth month.
EXAMPLE: Date of birth: 11/22/18
Certification action date: 07/11/19
Certification expiration date: 12/31/19
- X. Revise the participant's priority ranking when the participant's category changes at mid-certification.

Authority

7 C.F.R. § 246.7(g) and (j)(8)

Definitions/Supporting Information

Certification - The use of criteria and procedures to assess and document each applicant's eligibility for the program.

Certification Date - Date that client was certified or recertified into the WIC Program and eligible to receive checks and nutrition education.

Certification Expiration Date - The last day of the certification period and the last day the participant shall receive benefits.

Certification Period - The period of time during which a participant is eligible to receive program benefits.