

**Mailing/Delivery of WIC Vouchers****Policy No. FD-940.01**

Effective Date: October 1, 2016

No. of Pages: 4

**Policy**

Mailing of food instruments (FIs) to participants within a valid certification period shall be permitted by a local agency (LA) under extenuating circumstances when the education requirement is met. In no case shall mailing be continued for a period greater than 90 days without being reassessed and documented. See [NS-200.03 Participant Nutrition Education](#) and [NS-200.11 Nutrition Education Phone Contact](#).

A maximum of two (2) months of FIs can be issued and mailed at a time.

LA must not mail or deliver FIs to participant's that are due for recertification, participant's that are due for nutrition education, or participant's that are unable to offer a current address (e.g., homeless shelter participant).

If it is necessary to mail the WIC Identification Folder, put it in a separate envelope labeled, "Return Service Requested," and mail separately from the vouchers.

**Purpose**

To permit eligible individuals to participate in WIC, who due to one of the conditions listed below, would otherwise be unable to participate in the program.

**Procedures**

- I. Local agencies that elect to mail and/or deliver FIs must:
  - A. Establish a system that ensures FIs are returned to the local agency if mail is deemed undeliverable.
  - B. Ensure program integrity and accountability standards are met by:
    1. having separation of duties with staff preparing the vouchers and staff mailing the vouchers.
    2. completing the Mail Activity Report accurately
    3. receiving approval for Nutrition Service Director (NSD)
  - C. Ensure that the required minimum nutrition education contacts for each participant category within the certification period are met.
  - D. Document the hardship condition in the participant's health record.
  - E. Have a post office box or a district office appropriate address, as well as a return address for all mailed vouchers.

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- II. Local agencies may approve mailing or delivering FIs under the following circumstances:
  - A. Closure of a clinic due to structural damage, relocation, system failure, etc.
  - B. An illness that makes it difficult for a participant his/her parent/guardian/caretaker alternate-proxy to obtain vouchers
  - C. Imminent or recent childbirth requiring bed rest, and there is no alternate-proxy or proxy available to pick up vouchers at the clinic;
  - D. Physical disability or family with special health care needs;
  - E. Environmental crisis as a result of a natural disaster (e.g. tornado, ice storm, hurricane, flood, etc.);
  - F. Participant unable to keep appointment which would result in missing an entire month's FIs;
  - G. Quarantine, communicable disease, and/or immune disorder;
  - H. Participant's lack of transportation is deemed a barrier
  - I. Participation in the HeadStart Project deems it necessary
  - J. Other special circumstances approved by the Nutrition Services Director
  
- III. Prepare vouchers for mailing FIs by using the following guidance:
  - A. Contact the participant to confirm the reason for mailing the FIs, and verify his/her address.
  - B. Follow the below guidance for preparing FIs to be mailed:
    - 1. Designate one staff person to print the vouchers (maximum of two months) and prepare the [Mailed Voucher Activity Report](#).
    - 2. Initial or sign the WIC FI Signature Line on the receipt and write "mailed" next to the appropriate serial numbers.

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3. Label envelopes with participant's address and ensure "Return Service Requested" is on the envelope.
  4. Ensure the "return to sender name" on the mailing envelope is the local agency clinic address.
  5. Locate the serial number indicated on FIs and match it to the signature log.
  6. Complete the Mailed Voucher Activity Report including the WIC ID number, voucher serial numbers, participant's name, and staff initials.
  7. Have a supervisor or designated staff verify that the printed FIs are placed in the correct envelopes and that the participants name on the envelope matches the participants name on the FIs.
  8. Have the supervisor or lead person seal the envelopes and verify the number of prepared envelopes with the number of participants listed on the mailed voucher activity report.
  9. Ensure the supervisor or designated staff sign the report at the bottom right corner.
- C. Mail all food instruments via first class mail.
- D. Designate a staff person other than the one who prepared and mailed the food I instruments to pick up returned FIs from the post office box, and note on the mailed voucher activity report if FIs were returned.
- E. Void all FIs returned in the mail or not picked up by the participant by close of business each day.
- F. Complete the [Mailed Voucher Activity Report](#) monthly with the redemption information and maintain the form on file at the district office for monitoring purposes. The report must be completed to show if vouchers were returned or reported as lost or stolen. If the vouchers were replaced, the NSD or designee must document the value of the redeemed vouchers that were reported as lost or stolen.
- G. Maintain a copy of the [Mailed Voucher Activity Report](#) in the clinic.
- H. Submit a copy of the report to the district office monthly.
- I. Securely store vouchers if not mailed on the day the vouchers are printed, however they must be mailed within one business day of printing.
- J. Transport FIs to the post office in a locked box, locked clipboard, locked brief case, or locked bag.

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- K. Use the following procedures to reissue FIs reported undelivered:
- a. Access the participant's information in GWIS to determine whether the mailed FIs have been redeemed.
  - b. If the FIs have not been redeemed and less than 5 working days have passed since the FIs were mailed, inform the participant that there will be a 5-working day waiting period before the FIs can be replaced to allow sufficient delivery time.
  - c. If the FIs have not been redeemed after 5 working days:
    1. Advise the participant that receiving and redeeming two sets of food instruments for the same month may result in disqualification from the program;
    2. Place vouchers on the Lost/Stolen/Destroyed Voucher Report and replace the food instruments and follow lost/stolen/destroyed voucher procedures;
    3. Inform the participant that if the first food instruments arrive in the mail, they must be returned to the local agency because they are invalid and cannot be cashed; and,
    4. Advise the State Agency's Program Operations Unit via e-mail or in writing, that the mailed food instruments were not received and have been voided.
  - d. If the FIs have been redeemed within 5 working days, then:
    1. Advise the participant that the FIs have been cashed and cannot be reissued prior to an investigation; and,
    2. Report the incident to the Office of Inspector General (OIG).

**Authority**

7 C.F.R. 246 § 246.7(f)(2)(iv)

7 C.F.R. 246 § 246.12(r)(4)

**Definitions/Supporting Information**

(None)