



Policy 511 – Food Benefit Issuance

Revised April 01, 2026

Policy

Local programs must implement a food benefit issuance procedure to ensure WIC participants receive food benefits at their initial certification and at subsequent nutrition education and follow up appointments.

Purpose

To provide guidance for local WIC program staff on when to appropriately issue food benefits.

Relevant Regulations

§246.12(r)—Issuance of food instruments, cash value vouchers and authorized supplemental foods

§246.7(f)(2)(iv)—Processing Standards: Time frames for processing applicants

Oregon WIC PPM References

- ◆ [451—Change in Guardianship](#)
- ◆ [561—Program Integrity: Replacement of Food Benefits](#)
- ◆ [590—Program integrity: Participant Violations](#)
- ◆ [610—Required Proofs: Identity, Residency, Income](#)

- ◆ [620—Certification and Issuing Benefits to Relatives, Friends and Co-workers](#)
- ◆ [641—Documentation Requirements in the Absence of TWIST](#)
- ◆ [646—Mid-Certification Health Assessment](#)
- ◆ [650—WIC Transfers/VOC and WIC Overseas Program](#)
- ◆ [655—Homeless Applicants](#)
- ◆ [713—Breastfeeding: Use of Supplemental Formula](#)
- ◆ [810—Nutrition-Focused Education and Counseling](#)
- ◆ [820—Quarterly Nutrition Education Contacts](#)

TWIST Training Manual References

[Chapter 3, Lesson 1100 – Family Summary Screen](#)

Definitions

Food benefits: The foods a participant receives on WIC for a selected month. Depending on the participant category, food benefits provide specific amounts of WIC authorized foods, formulas, and/or a fixed-dollar amount for participants to obtain WIC authorized fruits and vegetables (referred to as a “Cash Value Benefit” or “CVB”).

Electronic Benefit Account (EBA): An account established for each WIC family administered by the Oregon’s eWIC banking contractor. Accounts are identified by the WIC family ID number assigned to that family. Food benefits for all participants in the family are aggregated into a single account.

Food benefit balance: The unspent issued food benefits which are available for purchase by a cardholder during the designated time period.

eWIC card: Magnetic stripe card used to purchase WIC authorized foods or formulas from a WIC family's Electronic Benefit Account (EBA). Each card has a 16-digit Primary Account Number (PAN).

First cardholder: The required cardholder for a WIC family Electronic Benefit Account (EBA). The first cardholder is either the adult participant or the parent or caregiver from the same household as the infant or child participant(s), therefore sharing the same address.

Second cardholder: The optional cardholder who has been issued the second eWIC card with the permission of the first cardholder. The second cardholder may attend nutrition education appointments, bring in a child for certification appointments and purchase WIC food benefits using an eWIC card.

Single issuance: When a participant is issued Food Benefits for one month (also referred to as "one-month issuance").

Double issuance: When a participant is issued Food Benefits for two months (also referred to as "two-month issuance").

Triple issuance: When a participant is issued Food Benefits for three months (also referred to as "three-month issuance").

Procedure

1. When to issue food benefits

- 1.1 Food benefits issuance should be coordinated with regularly scheduled WIC appointments when possible. Once the Competent Professional Authority (CPA) has assigned the appropriate food package, food benefits shall be issued for participants for the following reasons:

- 1.1.1 Initial program enrollment for new WIC participants.

- 1.1.2 The next three months of food benefits are available to issue at a nutrition education contact.
- 1.1.3 Recertification of WIC participants.
- 1.1.4 To replace food benefits as allowed by ♦ [561–Program Integrity: Replacement of Food Benefits](#)
- 1.1.5 If a participant transfers from another state, Oregon food benefits can be issued if they did not receive food benefits for the current month from the other state, or when any food benefits they received are brought in for replacement with Oregon food benefits. See ♦ [650 – WIC Transfers/VOC and WIC Overseas Program](#)

2. Last month to issue food benefits

- 2.1 Participants are eligible to receive food benefits through the last month of their certification period.
 - 2.1.1 A **child** may receive food benefits through the month of their fifth birthday.
 - 2.1.2 A **non-breastfeeding** or **some breastfeeding postpartum participant** may receive food benefits through the sixth month after the pregnancy ends. A **some breastfeeding** participant may continue to receive all other program benefits through the month of the child's first birthday.
 - 2.1.3 An **exclusively or mostly breastfeeding** participant may receive food benefits through the month of the child's first birthday.
 - 2.1.4 A **pregnant participant** may receive food benefits for six weeks after the end of pregnancy rounded to the end of the month.

3. Food benefit issuance

- 3.1 Issue **three months** of food benefits unless there is a situation that warrants less than triple issuance (see ¶3.2 and ¶3.3). Food benefits may be issued to the participant when the first or second eWIC cardholders provide appropriate documentation of identity. See ♦ [610—Required Proofs: Identity, Residency, Income](#).

Partial packages

- 3.2 Issue the partial package assigned by the WIC data system for the current month for new and reinstated participants receiving food benefits on or after the 20th of the month. Food packages maybe tailored after the 20th to meet the needs of the participant for the remainder of the month. See ♦ [769—Assigning WIC Food Packages](#).

Single issuance required

- 3.3 In the following situations, single issuance of food benefits is **required**:
- Health Care Provider verbal authorization of pending medical documentation form; (see ♦ [765—Medical Documentation](#))
 - Eligibility pending (automatic single issuance by the WIC data system).
 - Missed nutrition education appointment (see ♦ [810—Nutrition-Focused Education and Counseling](#) for more information and for exceptions to the single issuance requirement) [ARPA Waiver Guidance in effect until at least 9/30/2026](#);
 - Missed mid-cert health assessment (see ♦ [646—Mid-Certification Health Assessment](#) for more information and for exceptions to the

single issuance requirement); [ARPA Waiver Guidance in effect until at least 9/30/2026](#);

- Custody dispute (see ♦ [451—Change in Guardianship](#));
- Unresolved program integrity issue (program abuse, sanctions, overdue multi-user breast pump, etc.) (see ♦ [590—Program integrity: Participant violations](#))

Single or double issuance optional

3.4 Local program staff **may** issue single or double-month's food benefits on a case-by-case basis. Examples are listed below.

- Foster child
- Multi-user breast pump on loan
- High-risk participant
- Trial of new formula

Nutrition Education (NE) refusal

3.5 Local agencies may issue up to three months of food benefits in the rare situation when a participant refuses all nutrition education (NE), and the refusal is documented in the WIC data system. Refer to ♦ [810—Nutrition-Focused Education and Counseling](#).

4. Issuance of benefits over the phone or texting platform

4.1 Issuance of benefits may be done over the phone or texting platform in the following situations:

- 4.1.1 After proofs of identity, residence, and income have been received and “eligibility pending” status is removed.

- 4.1.2 After changes have been made to the WIC food package by a CPA.
- 4.1.3 Issuance of supplemental formula to a participating infant by a CPA following a full assessment (see ♦ [713—Breastfeeding: Use of Supplemental Formula](#)).
- 4.1.4 Change in the form of formula (for example, from powder to concentrate).
- 4.1.5 Upon completion of online nutrition education and telephone or video conferencing appointments. Refer to ♦ [820—Quarterly Nutrition Education Contacts](#)

5. Timeframe for food benefit issuance following a paper certification

- 5.1 After completing a paper certification, local program staff have **two working days** to enter the information into the WIC data system and issue food benefits for the participant. Refer to ♦ [641—Documentation Requirements in the Absence of TWIST](#) for more information.

6. Issuing food benefits to relatives, friends and co-workers

- 6.1 Local WIC program staff members **may not** issue food benefits for themselves, relatives, friends or co-workers. Refer to ♦ [620—Certification and Issuing Food Benefits to Relatives, Friends and Co-workers](#) for additional guidelines.

7. Hospitalized or institutionalized participants

- 7.1 Benefits may not be issued to a WIC participant who is hospitalized or institutionalized.

- 7.1.1 When a WIC participant is in a hospital, long-term care facility or institution, WIC food benefits cannot be issued until discharge, since the institution is responsible for feeding the patient. See ♦ [769 Assigning WIC Food Packages](#).
- 7.1.2 If an infant is with the mother who is staying in a residential treatment center. See ♦ [655—Homeless Applicants](#) for an exception which allows the infant to receive infant foods and infant formula.

8. Homeless applicant in shelter or institution

- 8.1 Eligible applicants residing in homeless facilities may be eligible for WIC and receive WIC food benefits if the facility meets specific criteria. See ♦ [655—Homeless Applicants](#) for specific eligibility criteria.

Policy History

Policy History Table

Date	Revised, Reviewed, or Released
06/01/2016	Revised
09/23/2019	Major Revision
04/01/2026	Minor Revision

The date at the top of the policy is the date of the most recent release. Policies become effective on the release date. Policy changes become compliance findings 6 months from the release date.

Major Revision: Policies with content changes that impact local agency functions. Please review all policies with major revisions. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) reviewed and approved these changes.

Minor Revision: Changes in policy that have small impacts on local agency functions. Minor edits, grammatical updates, clarifications, and/or formatting changes have occurred in these policies.

Reviewed: The policy was checked for accuracy. Minor formatting changes may have been made.

Date of Origin: Date policy was initially released.

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