

New Hampshire WIC Policy & Procedure Manual

Chapter 9. FOOD DELIVERY/FOOD INSTRUMENT/CVB ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTROL

C. Special Food Instrument and Benefit Issuance Accommodations

Remote Benefits Issuance

Purpose To allow for remote benefit issuance for participants meeting specific circumstances and prevent loss of benefits.

Policy WIC food benefits may be issued remotely in allowed situations.

Authority CFR 246.11(e) and CFR 246.12(r)(4)(5), SFY19 Policy Memo#5 American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (P.L. 117-2; ARPA) Section 1106 USDA/FNS Memo February 1, 2023 "Additional WIC Flexibilities to Support Outreach, Innovation, and Modernization Efforts through ARPA Nationwide Waivers – Supporting Remote WIC Operations

Procedure Food benefits may be issued to the eWIC benefit card without the participant's, parent/guardian's or caretaker's presence in the WIC clinic for the following situations:

1. For minor food package changes such as:
 - Formula changes that do not require the physical return of any contract infant formula, exempt infant formula or WIC-eligible nutritionals.
 - Breastfed infant needing to increase formula amount or changing to a fully formula fed package.

NOTE: Food package changes are only possible in the current benefit month without redemptions. Food package change for a future month(s) may be made regardless of current month redemptions.

- a. Food package changes must be requested by the parent/guardian or caretaker and assigned by a Competent Professional Authority (CPA) in StarLINC.
 - b. The CPA must document in StarLINC according to nutrition education documentation requirements.
 - c. Staff shall document in the Admin Notes the reason benefits were remotely loaded.
2. Other reasons that staff may issue eWIC benefits without the participant's, parent/guardian's or caretaker's presence in clinic include, but are not limited to:
 - Physical disability or family with children with special health care needs;
 - Illness;
 - Imminent childbirth;

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- Quarantine, communicable disease, and/or immune disorder;
- Distance to travel, other travel challenges or transportation;
- Participant unable to keep appointment which would result in missing significant benefits;
- Inclement weather conditions (participant or local agency determined);
- Clinic is canceled for reasons out of a local agency's control;

LA shall track on "Clinic Closure log" all cancelled clinics and send notification by phone or email to the SA immediately with the following details—i.e. clinic location canceled, date and reason for cancelation; the log shall also include LA staff who contacted the SA and if contacted by phone or email. The tracking log will be reviewed at LA Management Evaluations. See "Clinic Closure log" attachment.

Or

- To facilitate a remote appointment when this option is used.
 - a. Staff shall make every effort to provide an appointment that is reasonable and convenient for the participant before offering to remotely load benefits.
 - b. The staff shall remotely issue up to three (3) months of benefits and check the "not present" check box for a participant meeting any of the above listed conditions.
 - c. Staff shall provide FUN contact/nutrition education as needed/required.
 - d. Staff shall document in Admin Notes the reason benefits were remotely loaded.

Staff shall for all remotely loaded benefits:

- Use the 3-point verification for services provided over the phone when contacted by the family/parent/caregiver (participant/caller must be able to verify three of the following: caregiver name, caregiver's date of birth (DOB), child's name, client DOB, or zip code);
- Document on the Issue Benefits Screen "not present" check box.
- Inform the participant that benefits are loaded.
- Confirm contact information and set up their next appointment. (offer to mail appointment notice.)
- Determine when the current certification period is to expire

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and shall provide the 15-day notice of end of certification as appropriate. Depending on number of months loaded on the eWIC card and its sequence in a certification, staff must determine and notify the participant when they must come to the next appointment for a mid-certification or a (re)certification.

- Inform the participant how to access their Benefit balance/list. (Offer to mail their Benefit balance list.)
- Inform the participant about WIC Shopper for WIC authorized foods and stores. If requested, a Shopping List shall be sent to the participant.

3. Follow-up Nutrition Education—Alternative Modes—see related policy in Chapter 2

Food benefits shall not be issued remotely for certification/recertification/mid-certification and high-risk follow-up appointments requiring in person appointment for previously waived anthropometric measurements or deferred bloodwork measurements or when identified as PDHR needing an in-person appointment.

See –related NH PPM Policies: Ch 8E Mid-certification and Ch 8B High Priority Participants and Requirements.

Exception

Food benefits may be issued to the eWIC benefit card without the participant's presence in the clinic for certification when meeting physical presence exemption. (Refer to NH PPM, Policy: Physical Presence).

Best Practice

It is best practice to only offer this option of remotely loading benefits one time during a six (6)-month period, however, it can be evaluated on a case by case basis, to prevent a significant loss of benefits due to any of the above stated reasons.