

## New Hampshire WIC Policy & Procedure Manual

### Chapter 2. NUTRITION SERVICES & BREASTFEEDING SERVICES

#### A. Nutrition Education

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##### Nutrition Education for Homeless Individuals

**Purpose** To provide nutrition education for homeless women, infants and children to assure a nutritionally adequate and safe diet to make a positive difference in their overall health.

**Policy** The nutritionist/Competent Professional Authority (CPA) shall provide nutrition education to assure that the supplemental foods provided by WIC, both the type and amount of food, can be safely stored and utilized when a participant/family is homeless.

**Authority** **CFR 246.4 (9), 246.4 (11) (F) (ii), 246.7 (m)(1)(i)(A)-(C)**

**Procedure** The Nutritionist/Competent Professional Authority (CPA) shall provide and document nutrition education and appropriate referrals to meet the specific needs of the participant's living situation. Although the aim of any food package is to provide the supplemental foods required by the participant to best meet individual nutritional needs, when a participant/family is homeless nutrition education concerning use and storage of foods includes:

- Encouraging the redemption of benefits over the 4-week period.
- Nutrition information on food storage and sanitation, depending on the participant's availability of refrigeration and cooking facilities.
- The use of UHT or powdered milk.
- Maximizing the use of the Cash Value benefit with selection of fruits and vegetables that may last the month.
- Preparing single feedings of infant formula for non-breastfed infants.
- Using bottled water to prepare powdered or concentrated infant formula and evaporated or dry milk.

All women are encouraged to breastfeed, as this is the easiest and healthiest way to feed the infant, given the possible lack of refrigeration and facilities for proper sterilization of bottles.

Local agencies are also responsible for educating homeless individuals who indicate their place of residence is a shelter or homeless facility of the need to assure the shelter allows them to keep their WIC foods separate and to partake in WIC services.

For participants living in homeless shelters, staff shall ask:

- Is the shelter accruing financial or in-kind benefit from your participation in WIC, by reducing its expenditures for food service because its residents are receiving WIC foods? ;
- Are your WIC foods subsumed into a communal food service; are they available exclusively for you/your family?; and

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- Are you free to partake of the supplemental foods, nutrition education and breastfeeding support available by WIC?

If a participant indicates this is not allowed at the facility, the local agency staff shall contact the State Agency Nutrition Coordinator to develop a plan of correction. If the shelter does not meet the conditions during the participant's initial certification, participants may be certified again, however the WIC Program shall discontinue issuance of all WIC foods except infant formula, until full compliance is achieved.

See related participant Food Package policy, Food Package Tailoring and related Homeless Facilities policy.

#### **Exception**

None

#### **Best Practice**

Homeless WIC Participant shall be identified as "Professional Discretion High Risk (PDHR)" so that the nutritionist/CPA may make any changes to the food package, provide on-going support, referrals and follow-up as needed.