

Administration Volume
Management Section

Disaster/Emergency Preparedness Plan (3.00500)

ER# 3.00500

Authority 2008 7CFR 246.7(c)(2)(i); 246.7(d)(2)(v); & WC-95-14-P
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POLICY: The local WIC provider (LWP) shall ensure accessibility of WIC services during community disaster/emergency situations for WIC participants and those who qualify for the WIC Program.

LWPs will be guided by these procedures and local agency procedures for emergency response/disaster preparedness developed by their parent agency. LWPs must ensure that continuity of WIC services is addressed in their local agency Emergency Response/Disaster Preparedness (ERDP) plan. The ERDP will reflect the purpose, authority and responsibilities developed locally. LWPs shall include in their plan communications/arrangements made with their local WIC vendors to assess availability of WIC foods for participants.

WIC is not designed or funded to meet the basic nutritional needs of disaster victims who would not otherwise be eligible for the program. There is no legislatively mandated role for WIC in disaster relief, nor is there legislative authority for using WIC food funds for purposes other than providing allowable food benefits to categorically eligible participants. WIC is not to be considered a first-line defense to respond to the nutritional needs of disaster victims, including the provision of infant formula.

LWPs should contact the State WIC office, 1-800-392-8209, to determine if the WIC Disaster/Emergency Plan should be implemented. If no one is available at that number, the LWP should contact the Department of Health and Senior Services Disaster Situation Room (DSR) at 573-522-8697.

Definition of disasters:

Natural Disasters: major snow and/or ice storms, freezes, floods, tornadoes, severe weather, earthquakes, landslides, mudslides, dam failures, fires, heat, thunderstorms.

Manmade Disasters -technological, hazardous materials incidents, nuclear power plant accidents, radiological hazards, chemical, and terrorism.

Other Disasters: Pandemic flu, outbreak of highly contagious, deadly communicable disease.

PROCEDURES:

A. Proof of Eligibility

1. Proof of income:

- a. During a disaster, the income documentation requirement does not apply to an individual for whom the necessary documentation is not available.
 - b. The applicant shall sign a statement specifying why he/she cannot provide documentation of income.
 2. Proof of residency:
 - a. During a disaster, length of residency cannot be a prerequisite to receiving WIC benefits.
 - b. During a disaster, the applicant shall confirm in writing his/her residency if acceptable proof of residency has been destroyed due to the disaster.
 3. Proof of identity:
 - a. During a disaster, proof of identity shall be confirmed in writing by the applicant.
 4. All signed statements must be scanned and saved in the participant folder in MOWINS. A brief notation explaining why the applicant could not produce proof of income, residency and/or identify shall be documented in MOWINS.
- B. Certification/Recertification of WIC participants
 1. Due to the disaster, if the LWP is experiencing a shortage of competent professional authorities to perform certification functions required by a CPA, the LWP is approved to extend the certification period.
 - a. Contact the State WIC office who will grant temporary MOWINS authority to specified LWP staff to provide WIC benefits to participants during the disaster.
 - b. In such cases, one month of food benefits can be issued to those participants until an appointment can be rescheduled.
 2. Height and weight measurements and blood test for anemia may be deferred for up to 90 days for persons with a documented risk factor.
 - a. Homelessness is a nutritional risk factor, Risk Factor 801.
 - b. Risk Factor 503, Presumptive Eligibility for Pregnant Women, may be assigned to a pregnant woman who meets WIC income standards but has not yet been evaluated for nutritional risk, up to 60 days.
- C. Food Instruments
 1. Replacing destroyed Food Instruments due to a community disaster:
 - a. The local WIC provider shall determine if the destruction of FI's occurred during the community disaster.
 - b. Verification of the community disaster shall be documented in general notes in MOWINS.
 - c. After the above has been done, the LWP shall provide food instruments to replace lost food instruments following guidelines:

- i. Provide for replacement of foods in the actual amount of the loss, but not to exceed one month's food package.
 - ii. MOWINS will automatically prorate food benefits dependent upon date of certification.
 - iii. If necessary, tailor the food package based upon participant's present circumstances.
 2. During power outages due to community disasters, FI's may be issued to replace the following: (this should be done on a case by case basis).
 - a. Ready to Feed Formula that has been opened and spoiled.
 - b. Concentrated Formula that has been opened and spoiled.
 - c. Cheese, juice, eggs and milk that has spoiled.
 3. Document in general notes in MOWINS, that issuance was due to power outage from storm during the week of (date of power outage).
 4. Mailing WIC food instruments to persons who are not scheduled for nutrition education and/or recertification is allowed during a community disaster. Refer to [ER# 3.05500](#). Before mailing FIs, contact the Postal Service to verify that mail delivery will occur in effected area.

D. Breastfeeding

1. LWP staff will encourage mothers to continue breastfeeding their infants during emergency situations.
2. The LWPs will encourage and offer assistance to WIC women who had previously weaned to relactate or to induce lactation if they have never breastfed.
3. Basic strategies for relactation and induced lactation education should be a cooperative effort by the State **WIC** Breastfeeding Coordinator, the LWP Breastfeeding Coordinator and the community/area IBCLC.

E. Formula Availability

1. The LWP should assess their needs for infant formula and contact the state WIC office if formula is not available via the WIC vendors.
2. The LWP will be required to provide information to the state WIC office specifying what formulas are needed with the understanding that not all types of infant formulas will be available.
3. If services are disrupted and formula is not available through the normal contract retail vendor/pharmacy route, the state WIC office will contact the rebate formula manufacturer company to have formula direct shipped to the LWPs.
4. Local storage and security of infant formula will be the responsibility of the local WIC provider. LWPs should work with their parent agency to identify other community entities such as their local Red Cross, schools, etc. for storage of supplies of formula if the local WIC vendors are unable to provide services.
5. When formula is shipped directly to the LWPs, the LWP will be required to

submit documentation to the state WIC office on the following: name of formula, form (concentrate, powder, ready to feed), quantity and date of delivery.

- a. The LWP will document:
 - i. Name, date and signature of WIC participants receiving the direct shipment.
 - ii. Formula name and amount of formula the participant receives.

6. All formula issuances shall be entered into MOWINS.

7. Formulas paid with WIC funds shall be provided to WIC participants only.

F. Medical Documentation for Exempt WIC Formulas and WIC Eligible Medical Food (as defined in the WOM Definitions).

1. Medical documentation may be provided as an original written document, electronically or a facsimile.

- a. May be provided by telephone to a CPA.
 - i. Written confirmation shall be obtained from the health care provider within two (2) weeks of the telephone call and shall be scanned and saved in the participant folder in MOWINS with the telephone call documentation.

b. Shall be documented in the general notes in MOWINS.

G. Education

1. Two (2) education contacts are required during the six (6) month certification period.

- a. Special attention should be given to counseling participants on food preparation and food safety.
- b. The title of the counseling topic must be documented in the general notes in MOWINS.
- c. Nutrition education "No Show or Refused" must be documented in MOWINS when nutrition education contact is missed or refused.

H. Notification

1. Lines of communication during a disaster will be dependent on whether the state WIC office is affected and the number of local WIC agencies affected. These are delineated as follows:

- a. State Office Closure - If the state WIC office closes in Jefferson City because of an emergency situation or if their WIC services are curtailed, LWPs will be notified by e-mail and telephone contact from the DHSS District office technical assistance staff where available. The specific affected services will be noted and the approximate length of time for the closure.
- b. Local WIC Agency Closure - It is the responsibility of the LWP to notify

the state WIC office by calling the 800 number or e-mailing the Help Desk if they have an emergency and to specify which services will not be provided (e.g., certifications, regular clinic services, food instrument pick-up, etc.). The state WIC office disaster plan will be implemented following notification from the local WIC provider, who has cleared plans with his or her Emergency Response/Disaster Coordinator. The state WIC office will contact WIC vendors as necessary depending on the extent of the disaster. If the disaster is localized, the affected LWP(s) has primary responsibility to coordinate emergency response efforts. If state WIC office technical assistance is needed, the LWP will contact the state WIC office.

- c. Provide the State WIC office a cell phone number(s) of LWP contact person(s) to be used during a disaster or emergency.

I. Issuance of benefits

1. During periods of emergency or disaster, every reasonable effort should be made to continue issuance of food instruments to participants. When adverse circumstances persist (such as the lack of suitable facilities, records or food instrument supplies), the state WIC office will assist to coordinate efforts with the local agency to ensure a minimal supply of food instruments are available.
2. If power at a local WIC provider site is off for more than twenty-four hours, other sites of the same agency that do have power, or arrangements with neighboring agencies should be made to assist certification of participants and printing food instruments for the affected local site(s).
3. The state WIC office may approve delivering printed food instruments directly to participant(s).

J. Pandemic Flu

1. Stop the spread of germs.
 - a. Coordinate with other agencies in health department, hospital, Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), Community Action Center (CAC), etc. to work together coordinating activities to fight the spread of germs. Consider the following:
 - i. Are sufficient phones available to certify participants via the phone if needed?
 - ii. Consider employees working from home. What computer equipment is needed for employees to work from home?
 - iii. Consider working in office at off hours to keep minimal number of employees working at one time.
 - iv. Consider supply needs to control spread of germs: anti-bacterial cream; facemasks; disposable pens; physical glass barrier between client and employee. Supplies necessary to certify WIC participants are a reimbursable expense.

- b. Consider critical staffing in WIC clinic necessary to:
 - i. certify participants via phone
 - ii. educate participants via phone
 - iii. mail WIC checks to all current participants

K. Guidance for LWP Regarding H1N1. LWP should:

1. Actions before emergency:

- a. Immediately inform your TA staff if you have a local outbreak of H1N1 that you believe justifies a change in WIC services. Communication is very important! The State WIC cannot declare an emergency. Emergency declaration will be declared at the national, state or local level.
- b. Refer to [ER# 3.00500](#) for emergency/disaster procedures and [ER# 3.05500](#) for mailing WIC checks. Call district TA staff for additional policy/procedure guidance as needed.
- c. Keep documentation of changes to participant service, with the justification and expected length of time changes will be in place, and date of approval from district/state staff. Emails will suffice.
- d. Emphasize good hygiene—hand washing, sanitizing surfaces, minimizing personal contact and exposure.
- e. Consider the following if a participant comes to the agency and appears to be ill with H1N1 flu (or other communicable disease):
 - i. You should do what you can to minimize their time in the clinic.
 - a) Have them wait in an isolation room, if one is available.
 - b) Offer to mail checks to them so they won't have to stay in clinic.
 - c) Serve them as soon as possible to minimize risk of spreading disease.

2. Options that will be considered when State WIC Office has agreed that the WIC Disaster/Emergency plan should be implemented for your agency:

- a. Certifying high risk participants (prenatal women, infants, immunocompromised) by phone or mailing food instruments to those already certified.
- b. Extending certification period up to 30 days for participants whose certification has expired.
- c. Document in participant's file (general notes/SOAP notes)—mailing of checks, certifications by phone, extensions to certification period etc. Check the "mailing checks" box in MOWINS.
- d. Call Help Desk with questions regarding specific MOWINS processes.

L. Local Community Contact Information (telephone numbers, addresses, emergency

contact information).

1. The following should be completed by each LWP for quick access during emergency situation (list is dependent upon each local community):
 - a. Red Cross
 - b. Salvation Army
 - c. Food Banks
 - d. Schools
 - e. Community Centers
- M. If an emergency occurs and LWP wants to make a change in WIC operations because of the emergency, LWP must provide information on how the emergency has impacted the LWP. See the Emergency Template for all information that is required. LWP may use the Emergency Template to capture this information or an alternate form that has the same information.