

## Section 5.2: Certification Procedures

4/2020

### 5.2.1 Category

**References:** 7CFR 246.7 (c)

**Policy:** Each applicant must be in a category that is eligible for WIC participation. Eligible categories are: pregnant women, postpartum women, postpartum breastfeeding women, children less than age five, and infants.

**Purpose:** To ensure that applicants are eligible for the WIC program.

### Procedures

Determine if the applicant is one of the following:

- **A pregnant woman** determined to have one or more embryos or fetuses in utero (proof of pregnancy is not required)
- **A post-partum woman** within 12 months of the end of a pregnancy who is breastfeeding or providing breast milk to her infant an average of once per day or more
- **A postpartum non-breastfeeding woman** within six months of termination of a pregnancy. The end of a pregnancy is the date the pregnancy terminates (i.e., date of delivery, abortion, fetal death or miscarriage).
- **An infant** under one year of age
- **A child** who has had her/his first birthday but has not yet reached her/his fifth birthday

### Certification Periods

Services are to be provided to participants throughout their certification period as long as they remain income eligible, unless the participant chooses not to continue, or in cases of participant abuse/fraud.

- **Pregnant Women** are categorically eligible through the duration of their pregnancy and up to six (6) weeks postpartum. Following delivery, women may receive one food package before being certified as a postpartum woman. To continue beyond the 6-week postpartum period, the woman must be certified as either a breastfeeding or non-breastfeeding woman.
- **Breastfeeding women** are categorically eligible for **up to one year**, ending with the last day of the month in which her breastfed infant turns one. A postpartum woman who provides

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breast milk to her infant at least once a day (on average), is considered a “breastfeeding woman.” A mid-certification is required. See [Section 5.10: Mid-Certification](#).

- Breastfeeding women are either *fully* breastfeeding (her infant is fully breastfed, and receives no formula) or *partially* breastfeeding (her infant is breastfed *and* receives some formula; the woman is categorized as *mostly-* or *some-*breastfeeding depending on how much formula her infant receives from WIC). The **certification periods are the same**, but the WIC food package the woman is eligible to receive depends on how much she is breastfeeding, how much formula her infant is taking, and her infant’s age. See [Chapter 7: Food Package](#).
- **Some-Breastfeeding after six months postpartum:** women who continue to provide breastmilk at least daily after six months postpartum remain active participants, and can continue receiving nutrition services (including nutrition education and a mid-certification), but they are no longer eligible to receive WIC food benefits. See [Section 7.12](#). The local agency is reimbursed for these services.
- If a breastfeeding woman becomes pregnant, she should be (re)certified as a *pregnant woman*, and is then eligible through the duration of the pregnancy and up to six (6) weeks postpartum.
- If a breastfeeding woman reduces her breastfeeding to *less than once a day*, the CPA **must change her category** in the participant record to a *non-breastfeeding postpartum woman* (see below).
  - If her infant is less than 6 months old, she is categorically eligible to receive services as a non-breastfeeding postpartum woman until the last day of the month in which her infant turns 6 months old. Nutrition risk codes and priority *are not* changed at this time.
  - If her infant is 6 months or older, she is given 15 days notification of pending ineligibility. If she is due to receive benefits within the 15 days, CPAs may issue a final month of food benefits. See [Section 5.4: Notification of Ineligibility/Disqualification](#).
- **Non-breastfeeding postpartum women** are categorically eligible for up to 6 months from the end of the pregnancy. This includes a woman who had an abortion, a miscarriage, or a fetal death.
- **Infants under 6 months of age** are categorically eligible until the last day of the month in which they turn 1 year old. A mid-certification is required. See [Section 5.10: Mid-Certification](#).
- **Infants 6 months of age and over** are categorically eligible for a six-month period.
- **Children** are categorically eligible at one year intervals, ending with the last day of the month in which the child reaches the 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. A mid-certification is required. See [Section 5.10: Mid-Certification](#).

**Note:** In situations where there is difficulty scheduling the appointment for a pregnant woman, postpartum breastfeeding woman, infant, and child, the certification period may be shortened or lengthened by a period not to exceed 30 days.

## Reference – Complete Listing of Hyperlinks

### Section 5.10: Midcertification

([https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch5/sctn5\\_10.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch5/sctn5_10.pdf))

### Chapter 7: Food Package

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/localagency/mom.html#foodpackage>)

### Section 7.12: Food Package 6 Some-Breastfeeding and Nonbreastfeeding Postpartum Women

([https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch7/sctn7\\_12.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch7/sctn7_12.pdf))

### Section 5.4: Notification of Ineligibility/Disqualification

([https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch5/sctn5\\_4.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch5/sctn5_4.pdf))

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