

## Section 5.2 Certification Procedures

6/2024

### 5.2.2 Residency

**References:** 7 CFR 246.7, Local Agency Grant Agreement

**Policy:** An applicant must reside in Minnesota to be eligible to receive Minnesota WIC services. Applicants must provide proof of residency (including a physical address) at certification.

- Participants must reside in the state at the time of benefit issuance and during the time for which benefits are intended.
- Participants who are (or intend to be) out of the state, or out of the country, are not eligible to receive Minnesota WIC benefits until they return to Minnesota.
- Benefits may not be given to a proxy for the purpose of mailing food benefits to members of a family who are out of Minnesota.

**Purpose:** To ensure that applicants are eligible to receive WIC benefits in Minnesota, and that eligible applicants are served at whatever local agency or clinic they choose.

### Procedures

#### Assessing Residency Eligibility

- At the certification, review documentation of residency (i.e., location or address where the applicant/participant routinely lives or spends the night). Either paper or electronic documentation (such as a proof viewed on the participant's phone), is acceptable. Examples of acceptable proof of residency include:
  - Bill, with the billing address included
  - Driver's license
  - Immunization Record/Registry
  - Mail addressed to applicant
  - Pay stub (paper or electronic)
  - Phone/Online system such as MA
  - Rental or lease agreement, or rent receipt

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- Signed statement verifying residency from a landlord, employer, shelter worker, staff engaged in public or private social services, legal services, law enforcement, or health services.
- Safe at Home participation card (see information below)
- Even if applicants are known to staff, they must still provide documentation of residency at *the initial certification*. “Known to Staff” may not be used for anyone at the initial certification. Staff should routinely ask, “Did you bring something with your name and address on it, such as a driver’s license or paystub?”
- If the information is adequate, document the source in the WIC Information System.
- For infants and children, proof of the parent or guardian’s residency may be used.
- A **post office box may not be used as the physical residence** address except for participants enrolled in the *Safe at Home* program. A post office box *may be used for the mailing address*.
- *Safe at Home*: Below are procedures for working with families enrolled in the [Safe at Home](#) program, a statewide Address Confidentiality Service administered by the Office of the Secretary of State for victims of abuse.
  - Minnesota Statutes Chapter 5B and [Minnesota Rules Chapter 8290](#) mandate that all public and private entities must accept a participant’s assigned Safe at Home address (PO Box) as their actual address of residence.
  - Use the participant’s Safe at Home program participation card to verify enrollment in the program.
  - Use the participant’s Safe at Home PO Box address for both the physical residence and mailing addresses. All Safe at Home participants have the same PO Box number, but each will have an individual “lot number” that goes with it.
  - Write a brief note in the participant record explaining that the participant is enrolled in Safe at Home.
- Proceed with certification.

### Temporary Eligibility – if documentation is not available

If required documentation for residency is not available at the certification appointment, the CPA should complete the certification process and notify the participant that his/her eligibility is *temporary*, pending receipt of the required documentation within 30 days.

- Finish the certification using “*Pending Proof*” in the drop-down menu for documentation of residency.
- Issue only **one month** of food benefits.
- Explain their options for providing documentation and give them a reminder to:
  - Submit the pending proof electronically (email, text, etc.), or

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- Return the following month (or sooner) with the required documentation for additional benefits.
- Review the pending documentation when received, and make a determination of eligibility.
  - Enter the information (i.e., what documentation was provided) into the participant record. Delete/destroy any electronic documents received.
  - Issue food benefits if appropriate, or
  - Initiate ineligibility procedures if documentation is not provided or is not acceptable. See Section 5.4: Notification of Ineligibility/ Disqualification.
- Under no circumstances may a second 30-day temporary eligibility period be allowed.

### **Waiver - limited situations when a waiver may be used for lack of residency documentation**

In limited circumstances, staff may determine that the applicant is in a situation in which written documents are not available. Examples include:

- Fire
  - Theft
  - Disaster
  - Migrant farmworker families  
(Individuals whose principal employment is in agriculture on a seasonal basis and who establish, for the purposes of such employment, a temporary abode.)
  - Homeless individual or family
  - Landlord who refuses to provide a written statement documenting residency
1. Complete the certification using “*Waiver Signed*” in the drop down menu for the documentation of residency.
  2. Generate and complete the appropriate form from the Information system, obtain signature, and import/scan the document into the Information System for all applicable household members.
  3. Assess the individual situation and issue the appropriate set(s) of benefits that best meets the needs of the applicant.

### **Guidance**

- While most applicants/participants will request services from a local WIC provider in their county of residence, some may prefer to receive services from a WIC provider in another service area (e.g., the county in which they work).

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- For these requests, explore whether the participant is aware of services available in the area in which they reside or work, in case that option might work better for them.
- Assist participants to find a WIC agency/clinic that best meets their needs.
- Personal knowledge of the participant's residence by WIC staff at subsequent certifications may be allowed once initial proof of residency has been established.
- If residency has been documented for one family member within the last 3 months, it can be used for other family members being certified within that 3-month period.
- Staff should assist applicants by suggesting ways to meet the residency requirement, such as bringing in an envelope mailed to them at their current address.
- One document can be used as proof for multiple areas of eligibility including identity, residency, and income. For example, a current pay stub or Phone/Online Medical Assistance verification could potentially serve as proof of identity, income and residency if it includes all those areas and is up-to-date.
- Applicants do not need to be U.S. citizens to receive WIC services.
- Contact your State Consultant with any questions or concerns regarding residency.

### Reference – Complete Listing of Hyperlinks

Safe at Home (<http://www.sos.state.mn.us/safe-at-home/>)

Minnesota Rules Chapter 8290 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/8290/>)

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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