

# WIC Certification Overview Module

UPDATED JANUARY 2025

## WIC Appointments- Section 1

### Objectives

**After this section, you will be able to:**

- Understand the layout and purpose of the Minnesota Operations Manual.
- List the 4 main types of WIC appointments/visits that WIC staff perform in clinic
- Describe what happens during each appointment type
- State the certification period for each participant category
- Observe the 4 main types of appointments

### Overview

There are four basic appointment/visit types that staff perform in the WIC clinic. Understanding these will help you better understand day-to-day WIC operations. It will also help you understand the frequency in which a WIC participant is expected to come to WIC and the purpose for each of these visits. The activities that occur within these appointments are outlined by USDA regulations.

### Minnesota Operations Manual (MOM)

Federal regulations outline “rules” for the WIC program. The policies and procedures Minnesota WIC has developed to meet these regulations are found in the Minnesota Operations Manual (MOM). MOM is on the MDH WIC website under the section [WIC Local Agencies /Minnesota Operations Manual \(MOM\)](#). MOM is arranged into chapters, and under each chapter are various sections. When a policy is referred to, it’s usually listed as numbers, i.e., MOM [Section 5.2.1 Category](#) refers to Chapter 5, Section 2, and Part 1 of MOM. Charts, forms, or other references related to a Section of MOM are found in the Exhibit section under each Chapter to which it pertains.

MOM is referenced throughout these training modules. As you go through your training, you are encouraged to become familiar with the information contained in MOM. Refer to MOM if you need more detail than is contained in the overview modules or to research a question.

### Certification Appointments

A certification appointment is the very first WIC appointment for a WIC applicant. This appointment is often referred to as a Certification/*Cert* and is the appointment during which eligibility for the WIC Program is determined.

### Applicant Prescreening:

Prescreening occurs before the certification process actually begins. Prescreening is used to determine if a person interested in WIC is likely eligible to receive the services, based on federal program guidelines. Applicants can submit an online application or call the WIC office. A WIC staff member will prescreen the applicant's information for potential eligibility.

### Prescreening Procedure:

To perform the prescreening, a staff person will connect with the participant to determine/verify the following information:

Does the applicant:

- Live in Minnesota?
- Is the category served by WIC?
  - Pregnant woman
  - Postpartum woman within 6 months of delivery
  - Breastfeeding woman within 12 months after delivery
  - Infant under 12 months
  - Child age 1 through his/her 5th birthday
- Are they eligible or participating in an adjunct program?
- If not, does income appear to fall within WIC Income Guidelines?

If the prescreen reveals that the person is likely eligible for WIC, staff will create a "record" in the WIC Information System (WINNIE) and then schedule a certification appointment. *A prescreening does not guarantee eligibility.* Eligibility is determined at the certification appointment.

HINT: An appointment cannot be scheduled in WINNIE until after a "record" is created and prescreening is performed. (Refer to [WINNIE Training Modules- Prescreen \(1 & 2\)](#) for more information)

### Processing Standards:

There are federal regulations that specify how quickly a new WIC applicant must be offered an appointment.

- Pregnant women, infants less than six months of age and migrant families must be offered an appointment within 10 calendar days.
- Other applicants must be offered an appointment within 20 calendar days.

(MOM [Section 3.2 Processing Standards-Timeframes for Scheduling Certification Appointments](#))

The **initial contact date** and the **first appointment offered date** must be accurately recorded in WINNIE to document compliance with this regulation. (Refer to [WINNIE Training: Initial Contacts \(1A & 1B\) for Meeting Processing Standards](#))

## Certification Procedure

At the certification appointment, staff will open the record that was created during the prescreening in WINNIE and click on the Certification Guided Script (CGS) to start the appointment. Detailed information about each part of the certification procedures will be covered later. (MOM [Section 5.2 Certification Procedures](#))

1. View **documents** to verify
  - a. Identity
  - b. Residency
  - c. Income (or adjunctive eligibility)
2. Collect **health information**
  - a. Anthropometric data (height and weight)
  - b. Hemoglobin (through a finger stick)
  - c. Health History--Past and current medical conditions to assess for health risks.
3. Complete the **Nutrition Assessment**. Together with the health information, nutrition and eating behaviors are considered to assess for nutrition risks.
4. Assign **risk codes** based on the health information and the Nutrition Assessment. At least one nutrition risk code must be identified to be eligible for WIC.
5. Provide **Nutrition Education** based on the health and nutrition assessment and the participant's concerns, interests and priorities. The CPA and participant collaboratively decide on a nutrition or health area to discuss. The CPA encourages the participant to determine a specific, attainable nutrition or health goal that's right for them to make progress towards improving health habits. Information and education on the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol and referral resources must be provided at the first WIC visit for a WIC family. (MOM [Section 6.4: Drug and Harmful Substance Use Education](#))
6. Make **referrals** as appropriate, to other community and health programs. Ask your WIC Coordinator about referrals available in your area. Referrals are documented in WINNIE to allow follow-up on whether the participant was able to connect with the organization, etc. It also allows each agency to track referral information.
7. Assign the **Food Package** based on the participant's category and tailor it to their individual nutrition need. For example, if a participant has a food allergy, that food item must be removed from the package. If a participant states that they do not want a food, it can also be removed.
  - **Food Benefit Issuance.** One, two or three months of food benefits may be issued. The number of food benefits issued should be based on the need for follow up. Three months of benefits is appropriate for many participants. High risk

participants may need to be seen in one or two months, so issuance should correspond. It will be one month if proof of identity, residency, and/or income was not provided at the certification.

- **Benefit Education.** Explain the food benefits for the family. Use the Shopping Guide and Food Pictorials to illustrate the WIC allowed foods and quantities. Explain how and where to shop for WIC foods if the family is new to WIC. (See MOM [Section 7.2: Allowed WIC Foods](#))
  - If a family has not participated in WIC for a while, remember to update them on any food package changes that may have occurred.
  - Routinely check in to ask how the shopping experience has been and whether the family was able to purchase the WIC foods that they wanted.
  - Answer any questions a family may have about their benefits or shopping for WIC foods at each contact.
- 8. Give the **WIC Card** to the participant. Write the participant's Household ID on the backside. This card will be used at the store and should be brought to their subsequent WIC visits. **Explain how to use the WIC card.**
- 9. Encourage the participant to download the My MN WIC app and register the household. Instruct the participant on how to find their benefit balance on the app and to how to use the Food Finder to help identify WIC allowed foods.
- 10. Obtain **signatures**. The participant must read the [Rights and Responsibilities](#) Form (or read the R&R to them) and sign the signature pad, acknowledging acceptance. The staff person who determined eligibility must also sign the signature pad verifying that they determined this person to be eligible for WIC.
  - If a signature pad is not available or not functioning, other options for obtaining the signature are found in [Section 5.2, Certification Procedures](#), under Guidance
- 11. **Provide materials or direct the participant to these materials on the My MN WIC app.** New WIC participants will need:
  - a. [Welcome to WIC Brochure](#)
  - b. [WIC Shopping Guide](#)
  - c. [Information on how to find WIC authorized Vendors](#) (WIC Grocery Stores)
- 12. Schedule the next **WIC appointment/visit** (usually an Additional Nutrition Education Visit). If the next visit will be a walk-in visit, be sure to indicate the week in which the participant should return to clinic or contact their local WIC agency by phone.

### Certification Periods

When a person is determined eligible for WIC, they are certified for a specific period of time (generally 6 months – 1 year). This is referred to as the **certification period**. At the end of the certification period, a participant's eligibility must be re-evaluated and this is called a "recertification".

- **Pregnant woman** – From certification appointment to the last day of the month in which the infant is 6 weeks old or the pregnancy ends; may be recertified as a breastfeeding or non-breastfeeding woman.
- **Breastfeeding woman** – From certification appointment following delivery until the last day of the month in which the infant turns one year old or the woman stops breastfeeding, whichever comes first.
- **Non-breastfeeding, postpartum woman** – From certification appointment following delivery until the last day of the 6th month after the baby was born.
- **Infants under 6 months** – From their first certification appointment until the last day of the month in which the infant turns 1 year old.
- **Infants 6 months and older** – Certified for 6 months; then may be recertified for one year.
- **Children** – Certified for one year at a time. Final eligibility ends on the last day of the month in which the child turns 5 years old.

## Recertification Appointments

When the participant's initial certification period ends, they must be recertified to continue receiving WIC services. This is called a recertification appointment, referred to as a "recert".

- Recertifications follow almost the same procedures as certifications.
- Some participant information is already stored in the WIC Information System; it must be reviewed and updated as necessary.
- Review notes from the previous appointment when doing a recertification appointment in order to follow up on health and nutrition concerns and goals, and to provide continuity of care.
- The participant must provide current documentation of identity, residency and income.
- During the recert appointment assess the participant's health and nutrition status, provide counseling and nutrition education appropriate to the needs and interests of the participant. Assign the appropriate food package.

## Recertification Scheduling Considerations

- The goal is for the recertification appointment to occur during the last month of the current certification so that the participant does not miss out on any food benefits.
- Recertification appointments are ideally scheduled in the calendar month that the previous certification ends. The exception to this rule is infants that are turning one year of age. When an infant turns one, their category in WIC changes from an infant to a child and their food package changes. Schedule the recert on or after the child's first birthday, in the month their certification ends.
  - If their food benefit "first day to use" (FDTU) is after their date of birth (DOB), then schedule the recert in the month their certification ends.

- If their FDTU is before the DOB, then schedule their recertification for the following month.

## Midcertification Appointment

Participants certified for a period greater than six months (infants, breastfeeding women and children) require a midcertification nutrition assessment, referred to as a “midcert”. This appointment focuses on ***nutrition assessment and education***. The administrative components of certification are not required, including: Proof of income, Proof of address, Proof of ID, Rights and Responsibilities. ***This allows more time to focus on nutrition education and the participant’s nutrition goals.***

## Midcertification Scheduling Considerations

In general, midcertifications should occur at:

- Infants – at 9 months of age
- Children – 6<sup>th</sup> month of certification (5-7 month time frame)
- Breastfeeding women – 6<sup>th</sup> month of certification OR at the same time as infant’s mid-certification appointment

## Midcertification Procedure

Open the Midcertification Assessment Guided Script and perform the following:

- **Demographics** — Assess if there are changes in address or phone number; update as necessary.
- **Height/Weight/Blood** – Obtain Ht/Wt measurements and record. Bloodwork may be needed. Refer to MOM [Section 5.3.2: Nutrition Risk Assessment](#) for bloodwork schedule.
- **Health/Nutrition Assessment** – Review and update health and nutrition information as necessary to identify major changes in health status and/or dietary and physical activity. Include:
  - Review of last nutrition/health assessment at certification
  - New concerns raised by the participant
  - New medical diagnoses
  - Changes in eating pattern/food intake/food package
  - Changes in physical activity
- **Immunization screening**- Ask if infant/child immunizations are up to date. If not current, make referrals and document.
- **Nutrition Counseling and Education**- **Provide** based on participant interest and follow up on concerns and goals from the last appointment. *Nutrition Education should be where the majority of time is spent for midcertification appointments.*
- **Referrals/Other Programs**- Provide referrals if needed.

- **Food Package-** Make any changes necessary to the food package. Check in with participant to see if they had any questions/challenges when utilizing their benefits.

## Additional Nutrition Education Contact

Nutrition education must be offered to WIC participants **at least quarterly**. To meet this requirement, WIC participants receive nutrition education at

- Initial certification
- Midcertification
- Recertification
- Two additional times within a one year certification period, usually midway between the cert/recert and midcert appointments.

This appointment may be referred to by different names from agency to agency, such as a *follow-up visit* or a *check-in visit* either in person or by a phone/video contact.

Generally, **Additional Nutrition Education** occurs any time the participant calls or returns to the clinic to renew their food benefits. For participants who are not high risk, this is usually 3 months after their Cert/MidCert/Recert appointment. Clinics may or may not schedule an appointment for **Additional Nutrition Education** but instead, complete these visits when a participant calls or walks in to the WIC clinic. Whether an appointment is scheduled or not, the participant will meet with a CPA for additional nutrition education. Various options are available for the additional education requirement. See MOM [Section 6.7 Additional Education](#).

## Additional Nutrition Education Procedure

At this visit, typically, the CPA will review notes from the participant's previous visit and then will:

1. Discuss with the participant any **important changes**. If pertinent, update health status/reweigh/measure/retest blood.
2. Provide Participant Centered **nutrition education**. Discuss any progress on goals/notes from last visit and address participant concerns and interests. Offer anticipatory guidance if no other concerns or interests emerge (especially applicable during the infant/toddler period).
3. Consider the frequency of food benefit issuance based on health and nutrition factors.

**Note:** Promote Additional Nutrition Education Visits as a valuable WIC benefit. Emphasize that these visits provide participants with dedicated time to discuss personal nutrition progress and concerns with a staff member. Framing the visit this way highlights its purpose beyond "benefit renewal" and reinforces the value of WIC's personalized support.

## High Risk Participants

Participants with more complex or serious health/nutrition concerns are considered "high risk".

They require more specialized care, often provided by CPAs with more advanced nutrition training. To ensure quality, comprehensive care for their condition, the CPA will develop an Individual Nutrition Care Plan (INCP) to specifically address and resolve the high risk condition.

CPAs providing high risk care will review the High Risk Modules as part of their New Staff Training.

## Breastfeeding Support

Breastfeeding is the healthiest feeding choice for both parent and their infants. Breastfeeding education is provided to all prenatal woman. In some cases it may be necessary to only provide one or two months of food benefits in order to better support breastfeeding – for example- if the parent has many breastfeeding questions/concerns, lacks confidence in ability to breastfeed, or if they enrolled late in pregnancy.

Some other types of breastfeeding support offered at WIC clinics include:

- Breastfeeding classes
- Breast pump information
- Lactation specialists to help with breastfeeding challenges
- Breastfeeding peer counselors

Support continues after the baby is born for the mother/infant dyad. The early postpartum period is a critical time to address breastfeeding questions and concerns. The CPA, working with the new parent, should determine how soon and how often they and the baby need to be seen. Factors to consider:

- Infant's age
- Mother's experience
- Other support systems available to the mother
- How well breastfeeding is going

It may be best to schedule a follow up for breastfed infants in a month, either in person or via phone, for additional support and to renew their next month's food benefits. Once the CPA and mother agree that breastfeeding is going well and the mother's questions and concerns are addressed, the family may be switched to tri-monthly food benefit issuance.

CPAs will complete breastfeeding support training as a part of their New Staff Training.

## Transfers

A current WIC participant can transfer their certification to another county or state if they move or request to receive services in a different in-state agency. A participant transferring from another state should bring a Verification of Certification (VOC) form or card. WIC staff can also contact the state WIC program from which the participant is transferring to verify current eligibility. Refer to the [USDA VOC Contacts Map](#) to find contact information for other states and



tribal programs.

Print and sign a VOC for any participant who will be moving out of the state, as well as a copy of the Medical Documentation form for those receiving Food Package 3. Explain how to transfer services to another state.

A VOC is not required for a participant transferring within Minnesota since WIC staff can look up the participant in the WIC Information System. If a transferring participant's certification period has not ended, they are eligible to continue receiving WIC services uninterrupted at your clinic - *staff do not need to reassess income eligibility*, but the participant will need to show current documentation of residency as well as documentation of identity.

Continue to the next page for a practice activity

## Practice Activity - A

1. Locate the [Minnesota Operations Manual \(MOM\)](#) on the MN WIC Website. (Hint: it's under the Local Agency tab) Familiarize yourself with MOM **Chapter 5: Certification**, noting what information is contained within this chapter.
2. Review the form, Your [WIC Rights & Responsibilities](#) in WIC. Ask your preceptor to demonstrate the procedure for signing the signature pad. Also ask for a demonstration of what to do if the form was not signed at the previous appointment and how to scan a signed paper copy into the WIC Information System.
3. Ask your Breastfeeding Coordinator what types of breastfeeding support are offered at your clinic.
4. To what community services or programs does your clinic commonly refer participants? Review any referral information that your clinic may use.
5. Observe a variety of appointments and procedures from start to finish. Note the various steps in the certification process during your observations. Your preceptor can help arrange your observations. (Observe a certification, recertification, and a midcertification.)

## Skills Check - #1

1. What are the four main types of appointments that WIC participants are scheduled for when enrolled in WIC?

2. What is the purpose of prescreening?
3. What is the purpose of the certification and recertification appointments?
4. How do cert/recert appointments differ from mid-certification appointments?
5. How often do participants receive nutrition education?

## Identity, Residency & Income Documentation- Section 2

### Objectives

After completing this section, you will be able to:

- Describe the documentation the participant is required to bring to the certification appointment.

### Overview

For each WIC certification and recertification appointment, the applicant is asked to provide documentation of identity, residency and income. Staff review this information to assess the participant's current eligibility to receive WIC services. Staff are also responsible for documenting the information on identity, residency and income in the participant's electronic record.

- WIC does not require proof of US citizenship.
- WIC does not require proof of pregnancy, unless staff have reason to believe the applicant is not being truthful about the pregnancy.

### Identity

Each time a person is certified for WIC, **documentation of identity** (ID) is required. This requirement is established by the federal government to help prevent fraud.

WIC staff must verify identity at the first certification, recertification appointments, and upon issuing a food benefits. Identity of the Authorized Representative (e.g., parent/guardian) or proxy must also be verified during an infant or child certification prior to issuing a WIC card and/or food benefits.

Staff may want to routinely ask each participant, *"Did you bring something with your name and current address on it, such as a driver's license or paystub?"*

Some examples of acceptable forms for documentation of identity include:

- Birth certificate, baptismal certificate, crib card, driver's license, passport, phone/online system such as MA, photo ID issued by an employer or school, or a Health Benefits card.

See MOM [Section 5.2.3 Identity](#) for a full listing of possible ID's. See list of examples in Exhibit 5-C: [Identification Requirements by WIC Contact Type](#).

**NOTE:** "Known to staff" and "the WIC Card" are acceptable documentation at recertifications and issuance of food benefits.

### Residency

Each time a person is certified/recertified for WIC, they must show documentation of residency. This requirement is established by the federal government to help prevent people from receiving WIC benefits at more than one WIC clinic.

Documentation of residency is used to determine if the applicant actually lives in Minnesota. WIC staff must ask to see a document that shows the participant's name and current address. While most applicants/participants will request services from the 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). A listing of local agencies is available on the WIC website at [WIC Agency Directory](#).

Examples of acceptable forms of documentation of residency include: a bill, driver's license, lease agreement or rent receipt, mail addressed to applicant, or pay stub. For a complete listing, refer to MOM [Section 5.2.2 Residency](#)

**NOTE:** Residency refers to the place that the person normally sleeps at night.

## Income

Each time a person is certified for WIC, **documentation of income** is required. This will determine if household income falls within the WIC Income Guidelines.

Detailed information on how to determine income eligibility is found in MOM [Section 5.2.4: Income](#).

## Missing Documentation

If a person does not provide documentation of **identity, residency or income** for their WIC appointment, and prescreening indicates they are likely eligible for WIC services, they can be certified on that day, provided with one month of food benefits, and asked to provide the documentation within 30 days. ***If the participant does not provide the missing documentation within 30 days, they will no longer be eligible to receive WIC benefits until this documentation is provided.***

If a person cannot provide documentation of identity, residency or income due to special circumstances (such as theft, disaster, homelessness or migrant status), they can fill out and sign the *Multipurpose Affidavit* form (generated in the Information System) indicating that they are unable to provide this information and why. This information is scanned and saved in the participant record.

Continue to the next page for a practice activity

## Skill Check - #2

1. Review MOM [Section 5.2 Certification Procedures](#)
2. What are three acceptable forms of documentation of residency?
3. List three acceptable forms of ID for children.
4. List three acceptable forms of ID for women.
5. Practice what you would tell a participant about what documentation they must provide for certification. It may be helpful to practice aloud with a co-worker.

## Income Eligibility- Section 3

### Objectives:

After completing this section you will be able to:

- Correctly screen for income eligibility
- Correctly follow separation of duties procedures

### Overview:

Each time a person is certified for WIC, income eligibility must be determined. There are two ways to determine income eligibility: **adjunctive eligibility** and by calculating **household income**.

### Income Eligibility:

#### Adjunctive Eligibility

Adjunctive eligibility is a term used to describe “automatic” income eligibility for WIC, based on current income eligibility for another program.

#### Household Adjunctive Eligibility:

If anyone in the household has been determined eligible for one of the following programs, other members of the household are income-eligible for WIC. Enrollment in one of the programs must be verified for adjunctive eligibility. On-line or telephone access to verify Medical Assistance/Minnesota Care enrollment is the most common method of verifying adjunctive eligibility. For other adjunct programs, the applicant may need to provide written documentation.

- Medical Assistance
- Minnesota Care
- Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)
- Food Stamps/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Free or Reduced Price Meal Eligibility for School Lunch (Federal program)
- Head Start
- Fuel Assistance

#### Applicant Only Adjunctive Eligibility:

For some programs, adjunctive eligibility applies only to the *applicant currently eligible to receive benefits*, not the whole family. Other family members are **not** adjunctively eligible. These programs are:

- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act (TEFRA)

See MOM [Section 5.2.4 Income](#) for more details on Adjunctive Eligibility.

### Traditional Income Determination:

If the participant or household is not income-eligible based on adjunctive eligibility, staff must calculate total household income. Staff must document all sources of income for the household. The household size and total income are compared to the [WIC Income Guidelines](#) to determine if the household is eligible for WIC.

## WIC Income Guidelines

Each year, the federal government updates the federal poverty guidelines which are used to determine eligibility in many programs. WIC Income Guidelines are based on the “Federal Poverty Guidelines”, but are set at **185% of the federal poverty level**. If a household’s income is less than or equal to WIC Income Guidelines, they would meet the income requirement for WIC qualification.

The most current income guidelines are in [Exhibit 5-A Minnesota WIC Income Eligibility Guidelines](#).

### What is a Household?

For the purposes of WIC, a **household is defined as:**

A person or group of people, related or not, who usually (though not necessarily) live together and who share income and the consumption of goods and services.

#### Specific Situations for Determining Household size:

- A **pregnant woman** should be counted as two or more, taking into account the number of unborn fetus(es).
- **Active military duty:** If the household includes a parent or stepparent who is on active military duty, the absent member may be considered a member of the household. If the child is living with others such as grandparents because the parent(s) is on active military duty, the child(ren) may be considered a separate household unit, if the unit has its own sustainable source of income.
- **Split or joint custody:** When the custody of the child is split, the child shall be considered a member of the household in which they live the majority of the time. If the parents share custody 50/50, the child can only qualify for WIC in one parent’s household. Parents can be encouraged to share the food or have the other parent as a proxy for the child. If custody papers are available, staff should consider custody arrangements when issuing food benefits.
- If an adult in the household is making **child support** payments for a child not living in this household and who is not receiving WIC food benefits in another household, this child



may be counted as a member of the household. Child support payments do not reduce family income.

- **A foster child**, who is living with a family but remains the legal responsibility of a social service or other agency, should be considered a family of one. These children are usually eligible for Medicaid (MA). If siblings enter the same foster care home, the number of siblings can be considered the household size and one household ID number assigned to them.

### Household Size Examples:

- Sophie lives alone in an apartment, is pregnant with twins, and has Medicaid. Sophie's household size would be three (3).
- Josefina lives with her boyfriend. They have a 2 month-old baby who lives with them. Josefina receives MFIP payments, the boyfriend works part-time, and they share expenses. Josefina's household size would be counted as three (3).
- Candy has a 3 year-old son and lives with a roommate. She works and so does the roommate. The two roommates split the rent and utilities evenly, each paying half. Candy and her son buy their food separately and eat separately from the roommate. Candy's household size would be two (2).

### Income Calculation

For WIC purposes, income is calculated by adding the income of all household members. Generally, the most common documentation of income used for calculating income includes:

- Gross income from current pay stubs (this is the amount BEFORE deductions)
- Unemployment award letter
- W-2 forms or income tax return (for self-employed individuals)
- Foster child payment statement
- Signed letter from employer stating gross earnings
- Benefits or earnings statements
- Letter of alimony or child support payments

Refer to MOM [Section 5.2.4 Income](#) for additional sources of income.

Enter all relevant sources of income for each household member into the Information System. WIC staff must **select the correct payment frequency and rate** for each source of income. The Information System will assist in calculating household income.

### Income Determination Examples:

- Jordan is paid \$300 once a week. \$300 is entered with a "weekly" payment frequency. The Information System calculates the annualized amount to be \$15,600.
- Jayme has three jobs. This is the information entered in the Information system:

\$100 – weekly  
 \$200 – biweekly  
 \$500 – monthly

The Information System calculates the annualized amount to be \$16,400.

\$100 per week = \$5200 a year  
 \$200 biweekly = \$5200 a year  
 \$500 monthly = \$6000 a year  
 Total..... \$16,400 annual income

### Specific Situations when Determining Income

- **Foster children** are **counted as a household size of one** (1). Income is the payment the foster family receives for the child, or verification of MA may be used.
- **Pregnant teens and teen mothers** who live with their parents should be counted as **their own household** when they have income and provide some payment for their care (paying rent, buying food, etc.) or provide in-kind services such as housekeeping or child care. Otherwise, the household income, *including the parent's income*, should be counted.

### Presumptive Eligibility

Applicants may be presumptively eligible for WIC if their household income is greater than 185%, but within the income guidelines for the Minnesota Health Care Program (MHCP) (see [Exhibit 5-A Minnesota WIC Income Eligibility Guidelines](#)). The following three conditions must occur:

- Staff must see income documentation; self-declaration is not adequate.
- Income must be within income guidelines for MHCP.
- The applicant must agree to apply for Minnesota Health Care Programs as soon as possible.

**NOTE:** 30-Day temporary eligibility is not allowed if the participant does not have verification of income with them at the time of determining presumptive eligibility.

After verifying income documentation, staff may

- Issue up to 3 months of food benefits pending the determination of eligibility for MHCP.
- An alert and a “Presumptive Eligibility (PE)” note must be written. Include family size, the income, and type of income proof in the note.
- At the next visit, staff must determine current status of the MHCP application and document status in the participant record.
- If verification can be determined that the MHCP application is still pending, an additional 3 months of food benefits may be issued.
- This extension may be provided on a case-by-case basis, but may never be extended beyond the second 3-month period.

## Separation of Duties and Conflicts of Interest

To ensure Program Integrity, agencies implement procedures to ensure Separation of Duties (SOD) and avoid conflicts of interest.

- At a minimum, the staff person who determines a participant's income eligibility cannot also determine that participant's medical/nutrition risk; another person, the CPA, must assess nutrition risk and offer nutrition counseling. Either person may issue food benefits. [Section 1.18: Separation of Duties to Assure Program Integrity](#)
- Each local agency has a written Separation of Duties plan that further outlines the specific procedures that will be followed in order to meet SOD in that agency.
- WIC staff cannot certify or issue food benefits to oneself, one's children or grandchildren, relatives or close friends [Section 1.19: Avoid Conflict of Interest to Assure Program Integrity](#)
- Local agency WIC staff must advise their WIC Coordinator (or supervisor) about any relatives or close friends participating in WIC at their agency. The WIC Coordinator will make arrangements for other staff to do the certifications to avoid a conflict of interest.

Continue to the next page for a practice activity

## Practice Activity - B

1. Use the [Minnesota WIC Income Eligibility Guidelines](#) and answer the questions about each situation.
  - Maria lives with her husband who gets paid \$500 once a month. They have two children under 5. Maria works 20 hours per week during the school year (40 weeks/year) and makes \$10.00 per hour.
    - a. What is their household size?
    - b. What is their household income?
    - c. Is anyone in the household income eligible for WIC?
  - Shondra is pregnant with twins. She lives with her boyfriend and a roommate. The roommate doesn't have a job and Shondra and her boyfriend are paying for his food. Shondra makes \$200 a week (The Information System calculates the annualized amount to be \$10,400), and her boyfriend makes \$1000 a month.
    - a. What is their household size?
    - b. What is their household income?
    - c. Is Shondra income eligible for WIC?
  - Justin has sole custody of his 2-year-old son and is at WIC to request benefits for the child. His ex-wife pays child support of \$700 a month. Justin also receives \$400 a month in unemployment benefits. He and his son live alone.
    - a. What is their household size?
    - b. What is their household income?
    - c. Is Justin's son income eligible for WIC?
2. Answer the income eligibility questions about the following scenario.
  - Alexander Smith is 2 years old and is at WIC for his first certification appointment. He lives with his mom, Jane, in an apartment. Jane receives a \$500 per month from MFIP/TANF). She provided the following proofs for the appointment:
    - Her Minnesota Driver's License
    - Alexander's birth certificate
    - A letter stating her MFIP award
    - An electricity bill with her name and address on it.
    - a. What is the household size?
    - b. How would you determine income eligibility for this household?
    - c. What information is needed to document their income?
    - d. What is Alexander's proof of ID and residency?
    - e. Is Alexander adjunctively eligible?
    - f. Would Jane need to bring back proof later?

3. Review your agency's Separation of Duties written plan. What is your role in your agency and how does it fit with SOD?

## Final Skills Test

1. **T or F** Prescreening helps determine if an applicant appears eligible for WIC benefits.
2. **T or F** An infant who is less than 6 months at the first WIC appointment is certified until their first birthday, but an infant older than 6 months is certified for a period of 6 months.
3. **T or F** The process for recertification of a participant is almost identical to the initial certification.
4. **T or F** WIC participants need to provide documentation of identity, residency and income at all certification visits, not just the initial one.
5. **T or F** Examples of acceptable documentation of identity include: birth certificate, driver's license, crib card, passport, and a Health Benefits card.
6. **T or F** Examples of documentation of residency could include: a bill, driver's license, a lease agreement, mail addressed to the applicant, or pay stubs with an address..
7. **T or F** If an applicant does not bring all the required documentation, they have 45 days to bring the document(s) to the WIC office.
8. **T or F** The only two ways a person can be income eligible is by adjunctive eligibility and/or by meeting WIC Income Guidelines.
9. **T or F** Participation in Medical Assistance or Head Start makes an applicant adjunctively income eligible for WIC services.
10. **T or F** In order to be presumptively eligible for WIC, an applicant must, among other things, be willing to apply for a MHCP.
11. **T or F** A woman with one child living with a roommate would be a household of 2 if she and the roommate split all rent and utilities.
12. **T or F** The standard WIC income guidelines are set at 250% of the federal poverty level.
13. **T or F** A foster child is counted as a member of the foster parent's household, when determining household size.
14. **T or F** If one staff person checks income and does the certification appointment and a different staff person issues the benefits, this meets Separation of Duties requirements because two staff people were involved in the appointment.

## **Module Answer Keys**

### **References- Complete Listing of Hyperlinks**

WIC Local Agencies (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/localagency/index.html>)

Minnesota Operations Manual (MOM)

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

WINNIE Training (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/localagency/winnie/training.html>)

Chapter 5: Certification (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/localagency/mom.html>)

Section 5.2.1 Certification Procedures

([https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch5/sctn5\\_2\\_1.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch5/sctn5_2_1.pdf))

Section 5.2.4: Income

([https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch5/sctn5\\_2\\_4.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch5/sctn5_2_4.pdf))

Section 3.2 Processing Standards-Timeframes for Scheduling Certification Appointments

([http://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch3/sctn3\\_2.pdf](http://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch3/sctn3_2.pdf))

Section 5.2.5 Physical Presence

([https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch5/sctn5\\_2\\_5.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch5/sctn5_2_5.pdf))

Section 5.2 Certification Procedures

([https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch5/sctn5\\_2.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch5/sctn5_2.pdf))

Section 6.4 Drug and Harmful Substances Abuse Education

([https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch6/sctn6\\_4.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch6/sctn6_4.pdf))

Section 7.2 Allowed WIC Foods

([http://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch7/sctn7\\_2.pdf](http://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch7/sctn7_2.pdf))

WIC Rights and Responsibilities (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/rights.html>)

Welcome to WIC (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/ppthome.html>)

WIC Shopping Guide

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/vendor/fpchng/shopguide.pdf>)

WIC Grocery Store Search (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/stores.html>)

Section 5.3.2 Nutrition Risk Assessment

([https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch5/sctn5\\_3.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch5/sctn5_3.pdf))

Section 6.7 Additional Nutrition Education

([https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch6/sctn6\\_7.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch6/sctn6_7.pdf))

Contact Map (USDA Food and Nutrition Services)

(<https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts?f%5B0%5D=program%3A32>)

Section 5.2.3 Identity

([https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch5/sctn5\\_2\\_3.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch5/sctn5_2_3.pdf))

Minnesota WIC Agency Directory

(<http://www.health.state.mn.us/forms/cfh/wicdirectory/index.html>)

Section 5.2.2 Residency

([https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch5/sctn5\\_2\\_2.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch5/sctn5_2_2.pdf))

Section 5.2.4 Income

([https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch5/sctn5\\_2\\_4.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch5/sctn5_2_4.pdf))

Minnesota WIC Income Eligibility Guidelines

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/exhbts/ex5/5a.pdf>)

Section 1.18: Separation of Duties to Assure Program Integrity

([https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch1/sctn1\\_18.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch1/sctn1_18.pdf))

Section 1.19 Avoid Conflict of Interest to Assure Program Integrity

([https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch1/sctn1\\_19.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch1/sctn1_19.pdf))

Module Answer Keys

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/localagency/training/answerkeys.html>)

*Minnesota Department of Health - WIC Program, 625 Robert St N, PO BOX 64975, ST PAUL MN 55164-0975; 1-800-657-3942, [health.wic@state.mn.us](mailto:health.wic@state.mn.us), [www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us); to obtain this information in a different format, call: 1-800-657-3942.*

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*