Texas WIC
Health and Human Services Commission

Effective March 1, 2012 Policy No. CS: 24.0

Certification Periods

Purpose

To identify the length of time program participants are eligible for WIC benefits.

Authority

7 CFR Part 246.7; 25 TAC §31.25

Policy

WIC benefits will be provided to participants in accordance with the timeframes defined by federal regulations for each category.

Definition

Certification expiration date is the last day of the certification period and the last day the participant shall receive benefits.

Procedures

I.   Begin certification periods on the date the applicant is determined eligible for benefits.

II.   A pregnant woman shall be certified to receive benefits for the duration of her pregnancy, and between delivery and up to six weeks postpartum.

        EXAMPLE: Expected delivery date: 11/22/yy
                   Date infant is six weeks old: 01/03/yy
                   Certification expiration date: 01/03/yy

The benefits issued between delivery and six weeks postpartum may be issued before OR at the time of the postpartum screening.

III.   A postpartum woman who is not breastfeeding shall be certified only until she is six months postpartum. Certification shall expire on the day her infant is six months old.

   EXAMPLE: Delivery date: 11/22/yy
                     Certification action date: 12/01/yy
                     Certification expiration date: 05/22/yy

IV.   A breastfeeding woman (exclusively, mostly or some breastfeeding) shall be certified for a 12 month period or until breastfeeding is discontinued. The woman's certification shall expire the day before the infant's first birthday, or the day the woman stops breastfeeding. See Policy BF: 01.0 for definition of breastfeeding woman.

   EXAMPLE: Delivery date: 11/22/yy
                     Certification action date: 01/05/yy
                     Certification expiration date: 11/21/yy

   A.   If a woman discontinues breastfeeding before six months postpartum, for continuation of certification, her category, risk conditions (if applicable) and food package code need to be changed in the Texas WIC Information Network (WIN) system so she may participate as a postpartum woman. If her eligibility was based solely on breastfeeding risk conditions, risk code 501, Regression, may be applicable based on her pregnancy risk conditions. If risk code 501 is not applicable, staff shall assign risk code 401, Failure to Meet Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and the woman shall be issued postpartum benefits.

   B.   If a woman discontinues breastfeeding after six months postpartum, she is no longer categorically eligible. Utilizing Void Benefits, staff shall void any remaining benefits for which she is

not eligible to receive and she shall be terminated in the WIN system.

V.   A child, up to age 5, shall be certified for a 12-month period ending on the last day of the twelfth month.

EXAMPLE: <u>Certification action date</u>
                     Certification action date: 12/14/yy
                     Certification expiration date: 12/31/yy

For a child turning five years of age, their eligibility will expire at the end of the month in which the child reaches his/her fifth birthday.

EXAMPLE: <u>Child's fifth birthday</u>
                     Certification action date: 01/25/yy
                     Child's fifth birthday: 03/19/yy
                     Certification expiration date: 03/31/yy

If a child is certified in the month of his/her fifth birthday, the certification must occur before the birth date in order for the child to be eligible for benefits. This includes initial and subsequent certifications.

EXAMPLE: <u>Child certification in fifth birthday month</u>
                     Child's fifth birthday: 03/19/yy
                     Certification action date: 03/18/yy
                     Certification expiration date: 03/31/yy

VI.   An infant, younger than six months at the time of initial enrollment, shall be certified up to his/ her first birthday. Certification shall expire on the day prior to the infant's first birthday.

EXAMPLE: Date of birth: 11/22/yy
                     Certification action date: 04/10/yy
                     Certification expiration date: 11/21/yy

VII.   An infant, six months or older at the time of initial enrollment, shall be certified for a six-month period ending on the last day of the sixth month.

EXAMPLE: Date of birth: 11/22/yy
Certification action date: 07/11/yy
Certification expiration date: 12/31/yy