# Chapter 6D
Certification/Participation - Participant Notifications

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This chapter describes the process of informing participants about the WIC Program and their rights and responsibilities and the notifications that are used to inform participants about their eligibility and participation.

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## ATTACHMENTS

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Participant Rights And Responsibilities

Participants in the WIC Program are both entitled to certain rights and information and are expected to accept certain responsibilities of participation.

- **Rights And Responsibilities**

  At the initial certification and every subsequent certification, the applicant/participant/parent/guardian/caretaker must read, or have read to them in their language of preference, the statements of rights and responsibilities under the WIC Program. These statements are as follows:

  1. Standards for eligibility and participation in the WIC Program are the same for everyone, regardless of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

  2. I have applied to receive WIC benefits from the Federal Government. Program officials may check the truth of the information I have provided. I certify that the information I have provided to decide my eligibility is correct.

  3. The local agency will decide whether I may receive WIC benefits. To appeal the decision, I must ask for a fair hearing no more than 60 days after the local agency tells me the decision.

  4. The local agency will offer me health services and nutrition education and will encourage me to participate in these services.

  5. Lying and hiding or withholding facts may mean that I will have to repay, in cash, the State Agency for the value of foods that I should not have received. I may be charged with breaking state and federal law. I certify that I do not receive benefits from another WIC clinic and/or the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP).

  6. Exchanging WIC foods and/or formula, for cash, credit, non-food items, or non-WIC food, is a violation subject to federal and state sanctions.

  7. The WIC program may give information to other public organizations designated by the state health officer to enhance the health, education, or well-being of WIC applicants and participants. I understand that the organizations may contact me, but they may not give my information to anyone else without asking my permission.

After reading (or having read to them), the applicant/participant/parent/guardian/caretaker must indicate by signing the signature pad, that s/he has provided accurate information; understands his/her rights and responsibilities as related to the WIC Program; and understands his/her right to a fair hearing.

- **Explanation Of The WIC Program**

  At a minimum, staff should assure that the participant/parent/guardian/caretaker understands the following about the WIC Program.
The purpose of the WIC Program is to provide nutrition education, supplemental foods, referrals to health and social service programs and breastfeeding promotion and support to achieve positive health outcomes.

The purpose of the nutrition assessment is to identify each participant’s nutrition needs and interests so that staff can develop a plan of nutrition care and provide program benefits and make appropriate referrals to other health and social service programs in response to the participant’s needs and interests.

That WIC staff hopes their relationship with them is seen as a partnership – with two-way communication – working to achieve positive health outcomes.

WIC food benefits are prescribed for the individual to promote and support the nutritional well-being of the participant, but are not intended to provide all of the participant’s daily food requirements. If the food benefits provided are in excess of what the participant can use, the participant/parent/guardian/caretaker should discuss this with the CPA so the food package can be tailored to better meet the needs. The sale or intent to sell or trade verbally, in print or online any WIC Program benefits is strictly prohibited. See Chapter 6F for more information regarding participant violations and sanctions.

Each participant must reapply at the end of the certification period and be reassessed for WIC Program eligibility.
Participant Notices

Notice of WIC eligibility status must be provided at any initial certification or subsequent certification and whenever an applicant is found to be ineligible, or a participant becomes ineligible during a certification period. Participants must also be notified when they miss a subsequent certification appointment and when an infant, breastfeeding woman or child is due for a mid-certification assessment. Pregnant applicants who miss an initial certification appointment must be notified within 10 days. A missed food benefit issuance appointment notice should be sent by any agency that schedules food benefit issuance appointments. All notices must be given in writing (e.g., by letter, email or text message). Attachment 1 provides a summary of the required participant notices.

The Crossroads system is able to generate participant notices in both English and Spanish based on Language Read selection. Other languages are not currently supported. If a language other than English or Spanish is selected for Language Read, an English version of the notice will be generated.

- **Notices**

  - **Application Ineligibility.** This notice must be used at initial certification or subsequent certification when an applicant/participant is found to be ineligible. Local agencies should ensure that the applicant/participant/parent/guardian/caretaker reads, or has the notification read to them in their language of preference. If the applicant/participant/parent/guardian/caretaker leaves the agency before receiving the written notice of ineligibility, the notice must be mailed to the applicant/participant/parent/guardian/caretaker’s address of record.

  The Crossroads system has the following list of reasons for a user to select in order to generate “certification ineligibility” notifications.

  - Not categorically eligible
  - Not residentially eligible
  - Income ineligible – Income is above guidelines

  **North Carolina WIC Program Notice** This multi-purpose notice must be provided at each visit and customized as applicable to the participant. Provision of this notice at each visit will fulfill the federal requirement of providing a written “no longer eligible” notice at least 15 days before taking the participant/family off the Program. See Attachment 2

  - **No Longer Eligible/Termination Due.** Staff must generate the North Carolina WIC Program Notice and customize as applicable to the participant. Staff should use the following list of reasons and manually generate the notification. The notification must be customized as applicable to the participant.

    - You have reached 5 years of age.
    - Your baby has reached one year of age
    - You have stopped breastfeeding and are more than six-months postpartum
- It has been six months since your pregnancy ended
- You no longer live in our service area
- You are no longer income eligible
- Your 60 day presumptive eligibility period has expire
- You are being suspended or removed from the program because you have not used your program benefits in the right way.
- You are being suspended or removed from the program because you have not treated WIC staff or WIC vendors in the right way.
- You reside in an institution/homeless facility that does not follow conditions necessary for you to participate in WIC.

- **Subsequent Certification Due.** Notification of the upcoming expiration of a participant’s current certification and need for subsequent certification must be given in writing at least 15 days before the expiration of each certification period. Staff must generate the North Carolina WIC Program Notice and customize as applicable to the participant.

- **Reminder Of Nutritional Assessment Visit.** This notice is used to remind participants of the mid-certification visit for infants, children, and breastfeeding women. Staff must generate the North Carolina WIC Program Notice and customize as applicable to the participant.

**Individual Notices.** These notices can be printed on an individual basis or in a batch process based on the family’s preferred method of contact (excluding phone).

- **Initial Certification Appointment**
  - Booked Initial Certification Appointment Notification
  - Cancelled Initial Certification Appointment Notification
  - Missed Initial Certification Appointment Notification
    - **Missed Initial Certification Appointment By A Pregnant Woman.** Local agencies must send a missed initial certification appointment notice within 10 days when a pregnant woman misses her initial certification appointment.
  - Rescheduled Initial Certification Appointment Notification

- **Subsequent Certification Appointment**
  - Booked Subsequent Certification Appointment Notification
  - Cancelled Subsequent Certification Appointment Notification
  - Missed Subsequent Certification Appointment Notification
  - Rescheduled Subsequent Certification Appointment Notification

- **Food Benefit Issuance Appointment.** This notice is used when participants miss a pick-up appointment. This notification can be printed on an individual basis or in batch.
  - Booked Food Benefit Issuance Certification Appointment Notification
  - Cancelled Food Benefit Issuance Certification Appointment Notification
  - Missed Food Benefit Issuance Certification Appointment Notification
  - Rescheduled Food Benefit Issuance Certification Appointment Notification
Section 2: PARTICIPANT NOTICES

- **Nutrition Education – Individual Appointment.**
  - Booked Nutrition Education - Individual Certification Appointment Notification
  - Cancelled Nutrition Education - Individual Certification Appointment Notification
  - Missed Nutrition Education - Individual Certification Appointment Notification
  - Rescheduled Nutrition Education - Individual Certification Appointment Notification

**Required Content Of Notices**
All notices must include a reason for the action being taken, (e.g., the reason a participant is no longer eligible) and the full USDA non-discrimination statement. Notifications that reflect a decision about eligibility and/or termination must also include a statement of the participant’s right to a fair hearing.

Notices printed from the Crossroads system comply with the content requirements.

Refer to Chapter 4 for information on the non-discrimination statement and to Chapter 14 for information on fair hearings.

**Required Documentation Of Notices**
The Crossroads system documents all notices given. Written notification will be provided through the preferred method of contact (excluding phone).

Attachment 1 provides a summary of the required participant notices.
## Summary Of Required Participant Notices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notice</th>
<th>Required For</th>
<th>When Notice Must Be Given</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application Ineligibility</strong></td>
<td>Applicants found to be ineligible at time of certification or subsequent certification.</td>
<td>At time of eligibility assessment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **North Carolina WIC Program Notice** | - Participants who become ineligible within a certification period.  
- Participants whose eligibility is to be terminated due to categorical ineligibility.  
- All participants whose certification is due to expire.  
- Mid-certification assessment for:  
  - infants certified until first birthday  
  - breastfeeding women certified until infant’s first birthday  
  - children | At each visit  
- Manually customized content.  
- Whenever a participant is found to be no longer eligible during a certification  
- At least 15 days before termination  
- Around the mid-point of a certification period for infants, breastfeeding women and children |
| **Missed Initial Certification Appointment** | Applicants who miss the initial certification appointment. | Pregnant women: Within 10 days of the missed initial certification appointment |
| **Missed Subsequent Certification Appointment** | Participants who miss a subsequent certification appointment | No more than 15 days after the missed subsequent certification appointment |
Sample North Carolina WIC Program Notice

North Carolina WIC Program Notice

<Todays Date>

Dear <Individual First Name> <Individual Last Name>:

Thank you for participating on WIC! The box checked below applies to your family:

___ Your current certification for WIC ends on <Certification End Date>. You will need to reapply for WIC in order to continue on the Program. If you do not already have an appointment, please call us to schedule a subsequent certification appointment.

___ We would like to check to see how your baby is growing and eating. Please call to make an appointment for: <Individual First Name> WIC provides good food and good advice. We look forward to seeing you and your baby at this appointment.

___ We would like to check to see how you and your baby are doing. Please call us to make an appointment. We look forward to seeing you and your baby at this appointment.

___ We would like to check to see how your child is growing and eating. Please call us to make an appointment. Your child will need to be present for this assessment unless you have written measures of height, weight, and blood iron (hematocrit or hemoglobin) from the doctor that are not more than sixty days old. We look forward to seeing you and your child at this appointment.

<Individual First Name> will no longer be eligible to receive WIC services effective ___________. The reason is:

___ You have reached five years of age
___ Your baby has reached one year of age
___ You have stopped breastfeeding and are more than six-months postpartum
___ It has been six months since your pregnancy ended
___ You no longer live in our service area
___ You are no longer income eligible
___ Your 60 day presumptive eligibility period has expired
___ You are being suspended or removed from the program because you have not used your program benefits in the right way.
___ You are being suspended or removed from the program because you have not treated WIC staff or WIC vendors in the right way.
___ You reside in an institution/homeless facility that does not follow conditions necessary for you to participate in WIC.

If you do not agree with this decision, you or someone to represent you may ask for a fair hearing within 60 days of this action. You may request a fair hearing at your local WIC office or send a letter asking for a fair hearing to:

State WIC Director
Nutrition Services Branch
1914 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699 - 1914

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Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339, or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish).

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