

## Section 8.4: Issuing Food Benefits

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**References:** 7CFR 246.12 (r), 246.7 (b) 4

**Policy:** Issue food benefits to certified participants when nutrition service requirements are met.

**Purpose:** To provide supplemental food to help meet a participant's nutrition needs.

### Procedures

- To issue benefits, a Card must be issued to the household. See [Section 8.3: Issuing WIC Cards](#).
- The food benefits for each WIC participant in the household are aggregated and accessible with the WIC Card once a PIN has been set.
- Participants are eligible for monthly food benefits through their certification period.
- Food benefits may be issued only after nutrition service requirements are met. (See [Section 5.3: Nutrition Risk Assessment](#) and [Chapter 6: Nutrition Education](#))
  - Certification requirements (for initial-, subsequent-, and/or mid-certification)
  - Nutrition education and/or high risk follow-up
  - Verifying certification status of transfers
  - Moving a child to a new household due to a change in guardianship - including both informal arrangements and placement in foster care.
- Only a CPA may prescribe or change food packages, but either a CPA or non-CPA staff person *may issue food benefits* once a food package has been prescribed.
- If the participant is not present in clinic (e.g., because nutrition education was provided by phone or online), or the person at clinic to receive food benefits doesn't have their WIC Card (or other valid form of identification such as a driver's license, tribal ID, MN State Identity Card, etc.), staff must **verify the identity** of that individual by requesting from them **at least two of the following**:
  - The identity of the Primary Card Holder (PCH), the Authorized Representative, or an Alternate Rep./proxy listed in the participant's record.
  - The PCH's date-of-birth.

## SECTION 8.4: ISSUING FOOD BENEFITS

- The zip code of the household's mailing address.
- The names of household members participating in WIC.

If you determine (or suspect) that the person is not authorized to obtain food benefits (i.e., they are neither the Authorized nor Alternate Rep.), tell them that you are unable to issue benefits and ask them to have the Authorized Representative or an Alternate Rep./proxy contact the WIC office so that benefits can be provided.

### Guidance

- Use an Infoview report to identify and contact participants who have not received food benefits.
- If there is an outstanding participant violation, the family might not be eligible for food benefits. See [Section 1.12: Termination or Suspension of Program Services](#)

### Section 8.4.2: Replacing Food Benefits

**References:** 7CFR246.12

**Policy:** Redeemed and/or expired formula and food benefits may not be replaced except in very limited situations described below.

**Purpose:** To provide food benefits to eligible participants, while maintaining program integrity.

Redeemed formula may be replaced if:

- Cans of redeemed and unused formula are *returned to clinic*; OR
- Redeemed formula is no longer available due to extraordinary circumstances listed below *and* documented (see procedures):
  - Formula was lost or destroyed in a natural disaster (e.g., flood or tornado) or other tragedy such as a house fire or theft (see Guidance).
  - An infant or child is moved to a new household (e.g., foster care) and the redeemed formula does not accompany the child in the move, and the new guardian cannot safely retrieve it from the former household. See [Section 5.5: Change in Guardianship](#)

**Redeemed food benefits may be replaced *only* if** the food was lost or destroyed in a natural disaster (e.g., flood or tornado) or other tragedy (such as a house fire or theft).

## Procedures

### Returned Formula

- A participant may be “reissued” formula (on a can-by-can basis) if they return redeemed, but unused cans to clinic *within the current benefit month*.
  - Document the returned cans on the Returned Formula Tracking form (see [Exhibit 7-1: Returned Formula Log](#))
  - Document in the participant’s record the reason redeemed formula was replaced.
  - Note: Returned cans may not be reissued to another participant (see [Section 7.5.5: Returned Formula](#)).
- If formula is not returned, or is returned after the end of the benefit month, it may not be replaced/reissued.

### Lost Formula and/or Food Benefits

To replace redeemed food and/or formula that were lost in extraordinary circumstances, you must:

- Review the situation to determine whether replacement is appropriate:
  - Known event in the area such as fire, flood, tornado, etc.
  - Documentation of household’s loss as indicated by a police report or insurance claim
  - Official documentation of a change in custody
- If replacement meets criteria, staff must:
  - Change the Household ID *for all members* of the household; and
  - Reissue the lost food benefits.
- Document in the participant’s record the reason redeemed food/formula was replaced.

## Guidance

### ▪ Theft/Stolen Benefits

Replacing food or formula benefits reported by a parent/participant/guardian (PPG) as “stolen” **does not apply** to contested possession between family members.

- To replace stolen food or formula, the LA *must see documentation* that a theft occurred (e.g., a police report or insurance claim).
- In situations in which food items were taken by another family member, the benefits *are not considered “stolen”* for purposes of this policy, and LAs *may not replace* them.
- Situations in which a child changes households are handled differently. See [Section 5.5: Change in Guardianship](#)

- Remind participants that they can purchase 1 or 2 cans of formula at a time (rather than full amount), to ensure the infant's tolerance and minimize waste and/or inconvenience.
- If there is an outstanding program violations issue, the family might not be eligible for formula replacement. See [Section 1.12: Termination or Suspension of Program Benefits](#)
- Provide participant a list of local resources to assist them in meeting other needs related to their situation.

## Section 8.4.3: Food Benefits Management for Out of State Transfers

**Policy:** Ensure WIC participants who move between state WIC programs continue to receive food benefits during their certification period.

**Purpose:** To ensure certified participants continue to receive WIC benefits.

### Procedures

#### Transferring from Minnesota to Another State

1. Provide participant a Verification of Certification (VOC). See [Section 3.3: Transferring Participants](#)  
*Do not terminate certification, void benefits, or deactivate the WIC Card.* This information may be requested by the receiving state WIC program to determine a participant's eligibility and remaining food benefits.
2. Instruct the participant to keep their MN WIC Card to access food benefits until they move.
3. Inform participant to bring VOC, WIC Card, and other document(s), such as Medical Formula Documentation, to a local WIC agency in the state to which they are moving, to complete the transfer.
4. If a MN WIC Card is returned to a MN WIC local agency from another state, *deactivate the WIC Card.*

#### Transferring to Minnesota from Another State WIC program

1. Verify certification status and initiate a transfer in the WIC Information System. If unable to verify status, or if certification will end soon, complete a certification. See [Section 3.3: Transferring Participants](#)
2. Collect, review, and destroy any food benefits the participant has brought from another state WIC program.

3. Issue a WIC Card, provide additional education or high risk follow-up, and food benefits for the unredeemed foods in the current month.

## Reference – Complete Listing of Hyperlinks

### Section 8.3: Issuing WIC Cards

([https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch8/sctn8\\_3.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch8/sctn8_3.pdf))

### Section 5.3: 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))

### Chapter 6: Nutrition Education

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

### Section 1.12: Termination or Suspension of Program Services

([https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch1/sctn1\\_12.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch1/sctn1_12.pdf))

### Section 5.5: Change in Guardianship

([https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch5/sctn5\\_5.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch5/sctn5_5.pdf))

### Exhibit 7-I: Returned Formula Log

([https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/exhbts/ex7/7i\\_fill.docx](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/exhbts/ex7/7i_fill.docx))

### Section 7.5: WIC Formulas

([https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch7/sctn7\\_5.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch7/sctn7_5.pdf))

### Section 3.3: Transferring Participants

([https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch3/sctn3\\_3.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch3/sctn3_3.pdf))

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