

MI-WIC POLICY

Administration

1.0 Administration

Effective Date: 04-15-15

1.02 Overview of the WIC Program

Purpose: The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) contracts with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services WIC Division (MDHHS/WIC) to administer the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Woman, Infants and Children (WIC) in Michigan. The following provides an overview of the components of Michigan WIC.

1. Mission and Vision of the Michigan WIC Program

a. Mission Statement – The mission of the Michigan WIC Program is to improve health outcomes and quality of life for eligible women, infants and children by providing nutritious food, nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion and support, and referrals to health and other services. To this end:

- Delivery of services and supports are to be provided in a caring, respectful, efficient and cost effective manner.
- Delivery of services shall be provided in a culturally competent and confidential manner.
- The WIC Program shall assure the broadest possible access to services, supports and food.”

b. Vision Statement

“The vision of the Michigan WIC Program is to have a major impact on improving health outcomes for clients, be recognized as a national leader, and achieve excellent satisfaction as viewed by the clients and the general public.”

2. Direct services - MDHHS/WIC contracts with local agencies that have responsibility for providing direct program services to clients. Clients are screened for eligibility and provided nutrition education, food benefits, breastfeeding support and referrals through local health departments or other community agencies. Local agencies must provide an accessible, culturally competent environment for WIC services, as well as trained staff and mandated services. (See Michigan MI-WIC Policy Manual.)

3. Program benefits provided to clients through WIC are described below.

a. Nutritious foods are provided by Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) that clients redeem at authorized vendors. Foods provided by WIC are designed to assist clients in meeting the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and infant feeding practice guidelines of the American Academy of Pediatrics as allowed by the Code of Federal Regulations. Supplemental foods promote the health of the population served by WIC as indicated by relevant nutrition science, public health concerns and cultural eating practices. (See Chapter 7–Food Package Policies.)

- b. Nutrition education represents at least one-sixth of the funds expended for administration and program services in WIC. MDHHS/WIC performs an annual time study to assess expenditures. Client-centered nutrition education is provided to clients on an individual basis, in a group, or in self-directed sessions. Nutrition education encounters equivalent to one per quarter must be offered to clients during each certification period. Clients identified as “high risk” must be offered nutrition counseling with a Registered Dietitian for development of an individual care plan. (See Chapter 5-Nutrition Services Policies.)
 - c. Breastfeeding promotion, education and support must be provided to all pregnant and breastfeeding women and their infants and children enrolled in WIC. WIC supplies breast pumps, breastfeeding aids and materials to local agencies for distribution or loan to clients. Local agencies are mandated to provide routine training to staff that provide breastfeeding promotion and support with assistance from MDHHS/WIC. (See Chapter 4-Breastfeeding Policies.)
 - d. Referrals to health care and community resources are an additional benefit for Michigan WIC clients. Local agencies refer clients based on individual needs and federal requirements. WIC encourages the use of existing health care and refers clients to other health and community services. (See Policy 6.02 Referrals, and 6.05 Maternal Child Outreach and Coordination.)
 - e. Project FRESH provides benefits to some clients to purchase fresh, Michigan-grown fruits and vegetables from farmer’s markets and farm stands through the Farmer’s Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), a USDA program that serves WIC clients. These benefits, along with education on fresh food selection, preparation, and storage, are offered during summer months to a limited number of WIC clients. (See Project FRESH Local Agency Guidebook.)
4. Criteria for Eligibility - To qualify for WIC benefits, individuals must meet the following criteria:
- a. Status - Pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women, infants and children up to five years of age. (See Policy 2.01 Eligibility/Certification of Clients)
 - b. Residence - Resident of Michigan, a family member of a migrant farmworker, or a transferring individual with a current Identification/Verification of Certification (ID/VOC) card from another WIC Program or WIC Overseas. (See Policy 2.02 Residency)
 - c. Income - At or below the current income guidelines, equal to 185% of Federal Poverty Level, or adjunctively eligible as evidenced by enrollment in Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP/Food Stamps), or Family Independence Program (FIP)/Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). (See Policy 2.04 Income Determination, 2.05 Income Guidelines, 2.06 Adjunct Income Eligibility, 2.07 Declaration of No Income)

- d. Nutrition risk - A nutrition risk is identified by a medical and/or nutrition assessment as specified through the guidelines provided by MDHHS/WIC and USDA/Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) risk criteria. (See Policy 2.13 Nutritional Risk Determination)
5. Food Delivery System uses retail purchases to provide nutritious foods for Michigan WIC clients through an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) system. Michigan WIC contracts with grocery stores and pharmacies (vendors) to redeem WIC benefits issued to clients at their local clinic. Training on benefit redemption procedures is provided to clients at their clinics and to all vendors by MDHHS/WIC staff. (See Chapter 8 Policies-Food Benefits Issuance/EBT Card Security.)
 - a. MDHHS/WIC Division monitors vendor compliance with WIC policies and procedures, applying sanctions if warranted. (See WIC Vendor Manual.)
 - b. Local agency staff provides education to clients regarding WIC foods and the use of the EBT card, and assists in identification of client fraud and abuse. (See Policy 8.06 Client Education on Using Food Benefits, Policy 9.01 Client Compliance)
6. The MDHHS/WIC Division is made up of the WIC Director and administrative staff who oversee Project FRESH (FMNP) and three sections described below:
 - a. Vendor Management and Operations Section (VMO), includes the Operations Unit which is responsible for Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) database maintenance, vendor payment, payment monitoring, and program integrity. The Vendor Unit contracts with, provides training to, monitors, provides technical assistance to, and investigates approximately 2,000 WIC vendors throughout the state. The unit is also responsible for vendor policy development and the application of vendor sanctions as warranted. The vendor unit assists in development of the WIC authorized Food Guide and system development and evaluation.
 - b. Data and System Management Section (DSM) is responsible for the collection and analysis of WIC data and the use and development of the WIC Management Information System known as MI-WIC. The Section provides leadership of research activities, report development, administration of system access, equipment and technical expertise and monitoring, system related policy development and training, management of system requirements and testing, and collaboration with all interface partners including EBT/Xerox, Michigan Care Improvement Registry (MCIR) and Community Health Automated Medicaid Processing System (CHAMPS), the Michigan Medicaid verification system.
 - c. Nutrition and Program Evaluation Section (NPE) provides a liaison to the local agencies with consultation, training, nutrition and breastfeeding education and support and WIC Management Evaluation/Accreditation services. The Section is also responsible for local agency policy development, authorizing WIC foods and infant formulas, managing food packages, and assists in system development and evaluation.

Reference:

Federal Regulations Part 246
Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2009 (P.L. 101-147)
WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Act of 1992 (PL 102-314)

Cross Reference:

Project FRESH Local Agency Guidebook
WIC Vendor Manual
MI-WIC Policy and Procedure Manual
 2.02 Residency
 2.04-Income Determination
 2.05-Income Guidelines
 2.06-Adjunct Income Eligibility
 2.07-Declaration of No Income
 2.14-Risk Determination
Chapter 4-Breastfeeding Policies
Chapter 5-Nutrition Education Policies
 6.02-Referrals
 6.05-Maternal Child Outreach and Coordination
Chapter 7–Food Package Policies
Chapter 8-Food Benefit Issuance/EBT Card Security
 8.06-Client Education on Using Food Benefits
9.01-Client Compliance