

1.0 Administration

Effective Date: 09-01-2022

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 (the Department) 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 pregnant, post-partum and breastfeeding people, infants, and children up to five years of age 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 participants, be recognized as a national leader, and achieve excellent satisfaction as viewed by the participants and the general public.

2. Direct services

- a. MDHHS/WIC contracts with local agencies that have responsibility for providing direct program services to participants. Participants are screened for eligibility and provided nutrition education, food benefits, breastfeeding support and referrals through local health departments or other community agencies. (See MI-WIC Policy and Procedure Manual.)

3. Program benefits provided to participants through WIC are described below:

- a. Nutritious foods are provided by Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards that participants redeem at authorized Vendors. Foods provided by WIC are designed to assist participants 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 MI-WIC Policy and Procedure Manual, Chapter 7-Food Package Policies.)

- b. Nutrition education represents at least one-sixth of the funds expended for administration and program services in WIC. The Department performs an annual time study to assess expenditures. Participant-centered nutrition education is provided to participants on an individual basis, in a group, or in self-directed sessions. Nutrition education encounters equivalent to one per quarter must be offered to participants during each certification period. Participants identified as “high risk” must be offered nutrition counseling with a Registered Dietitian for development of an individual care plan. (See MI-WIC Policy and Procedure Manual, Chapter 5-Nutrition Services Policies.)
 - c. Breastfeeding promotion, education and support must be provided to all pregnant and breastfeeding people and their infants and children enrolled in WIC. WIC supplies breast pumps, breastfeeding aids and materials to local agencies for distribution or loan to participants. Local agencies are mandated to provide routine training to staff that provide breastfeeding promotion and support with assistance from MDHHS/WIC. (See MI-WIC Policy and Procedure Manual, Chapter 4-Breastfeeding Policies.)
 - d. Referrals to health care and community resources are an additional benefit for Michigan WIC participants. Local agencies refer participants based on individual needs and federal requirements. WIC encourages the use of existing health care and refers participants to other health and community services. (See MI-WIC Policy and Procedure Manual, Policy 6.02 Referrals and 6.05 Maternal Child Outreach and Coordination.)
 - e. Project FRESH provides benefits to eligible participants 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 participants. These benefits, along with education on fresh food selection, preparation, and storage, are offered during summer months to a limited number of WIC participants. (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 persons, infants and children up to five years of age. Parents/caregivers of infants and children up to five years of age, such as grandparents and foster parents, may also apply for WIC benefits on their behalf. (See MI-WIC Policy and Procedure Manual, 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 MI-WIC Policy and Procedure Manual, 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), or Family Independence Program (FIP)/Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). (See MI-WIC Policy and Procedure Manual, Policy 2.04 Income Determination, 2.05 Income Guidelines, 2.06 Adjunct Income Eligibility and 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 MI-WIC Policy and Procedure Manual, Policy 2.13 Nutritional Risk Determination.)
5. Food Delivery System uses retail purchases to provide nutritious foods for Michigan WIC participants through an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) system.
 - a. Michigan WIC contracts with authorized WIC Vendors (grocery stores and pharmacies) to redeem WIC benefits issued to participants at their local clinic. Authorized Vendors ensure that participants can access their prescribed foods and receive only the items indicated on their WIC EBT card. WIC participants may redeem their benefits at any authorized Vendor throughout the state.
 - b. The Department trains Vendors on benefit redemption procedures and monitors Vendor compliance with WIC policies and procedures, applying sanctions if warranted. (See MI-WIC Vendor Policy Manual.)
 - c. Local agency staff provides education to participants regarding WIC foods and the use of the EBT card for benefit redemption and assists in identification of participant fraud and abuse. (See MI-WIC Policy and Procedure Manual, Policy 8.06 Client Education on Using Food Benefits and 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 Relations and Program Integrity Section includes the Program Integrity Unit, which is responsible for Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) database maintenance, Vendor payment, payment monitoring, compliance investigations and complaints. The Vendor Relations Unit contracts with, provides training to, monitors, and provides technical assistance to approximately 1,500 WIC Vendors throughout the state. The section is also responsible for Vendor policy development and the application of Vendor sanctions, as warranted. The Vendor Section assists in development of the Michigan WIC 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/FIS, 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.

References:

7 CFR Part 246
Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 1989 (P.L. 101-147)
WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Act of 1992 (PL 102-314)

Cross-References:

Project FRESH Local Agency Guidebook WIC Vendor Manual
MI-WIC Vendor Policy 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

- 8.06 Client Education on Using Food Benefits
- 9.01 Client Compliance