

## Parent/Guardians and Proxies

- I. Applicants are persons applying to receive WIC benefits or may be persons applying on behalf of a child or an infant (parent/guardian). Parent/Guardians applying on behalf of a child or an infant may be a parent (mother or father), foster parent, legal guardian, or caretaker.
- II. Up to two additional parent/guardians may be designated by the primary parent/guardian.
  - a. Additional parent/guardians must also be a parent (mother or father), foster parent, legal guardian, or caretaker.
  - b. When reasonably possible, both parent/guardians should be present together at the time that the additional parent/guardian is added to the family.
  - c. Any parent/guardian recorded in VISION for the family may bring the children to subsequent certification appointments. All parent/guardians have equal rights to make decisions regarding the participant.
  - d. Additional parent/guardians must read the Rights and Responsibilities form (R&R). All parent/guardians are held accountable for compliance with the Rights and Responsibilities (R&R) regardless of which parent/guardian signed the signature pad for the R&R for that certification period. Parent/guardians are also held responsible for the actions of their proxies (authorized shoppers). By signing the signature pad each time they receive WIC benefits, parents, guardians and proxies are implying continued agreement with the R&R. After additional parent/guardians have read the Rights and Responsibilities form in the clinic, provided an acceptable form of ID, and have been listed in VISION, they may share the eWIC card and PIN number.
  - e. In unusual circumstances such as child abandonment, or the incarceration or incapacitation of the primary parent/guardian, an additional parent/guardian can be approved by the clinic supervisor without the permission of the primary parent/guardian.
    - i. Clinic staff should attempt to acquire the written or verbal permission of the primary parent/guardian.
    - ii. The additional parent/guardian must sign the General Signature Document printed from the system describing the circumstances regarding the primary parent/guardian and why they are not able to provide permission to designate the additional parent/guardian.
  - f. In circumstances where the parents are separated, it is the responsibility of both parent/guardians to share the e-WIC Card and ensure the WIC

foods are given to the children. WIC staff should not get involved in custody disputes.

- III. Proof of Guardianship/Caretaker. Non-parent applicants applying to become the parent/guardian for a child need to provide proof of guardianship or provide proof that they are the caretaker authorized by the parent to certify the child.
- a. Acceptable proofs of guardianship/caretaker include:
    - i. Legal custodial/guardianship agreement,
    - ii. Documentation from another agency listing the applicant as receiving benefits on the child's behalf,
    - iii. Letter from Human Services/DCFS for foster parents,
    - iv. A signed letter from the parent assigning temporary custody of the child to the applicant,
    - v. A signed letter from the parent authorizing the caretaker to certify the child.
  - b. When a non-parent is the guardian for the family this should be noted in the Comment/Alerts so this proof can be reviewed at subsequent certification appointments.
  - c. Unless an expiration date or time frame for custody is listed on the proof of guardianship/caretaker, it does not expire. While this proof is required at each certification, the proof may be the same document that was provided for a previous certification period so long as the document remains current and valid. If the proof will expire, this should be marked as an alert so the need to bring this proof at subsequent certifications is visible on the screen.
  - d. Proof of Guardianship must be scanned into VISION and may be used at subsequent certifications if still valid.
  - e. In the event these proofs are forgotten or are not readily available, the *General Signature Document* may be used. The certification may be completed and the current month's benefits may be issued. This proof will be required to obtain subsequent month's benefits. The system will not automatically restrict to allow only the current month's issuance; for this reason, the food benefits issuance on the family screen must be changed to "1 Month".
  - f. In the event it is unreasonable for the caretaker to bring these proofs:
    - i. The applicant may sign a written statement in the WIC office on the *General Signature Document* declaring they are caring for the child and explaining the circumstances under which they became the caretaker and cannot provide these proofs. This should only be

used in unusual circumstances such as: the parent has abandoned the child, is incarcerated, incapacitated etc.

- ii. The Clinic Director must approve the situation.
- iii. Full benefits may be issued upon clinic director approval.
- g. Parental proof is not required unless custodial rights between the parents or foster parents are in question, or, if clinic staff has reasonable doubts that the applicant is the parent.

- IV. Proxies (Authorized Shopper). Parent/Guardians may choose to designate an alternate person(s) (Proxy) to shop for them if desired. A proxy is a person chosen by the participant or a guardian to pick up and redeem benefits in place of the participant/guardian.
- a. A proxy may be designated by the primary or additional parent/guardian.
  - b. Proxies are not allowed to certify infants or children in place of the parent, legal guardian or caretaker.
  - c. Up to two proxies may be designated per family.
  - d. Proxy designation is accomplished by either the proxy being present with the parent/guardian at the clinic or, a parent/guardian sending a written note with the proxy to the clinic or, sending a text message/phone call to the clinic giving the individual permission to become a proxy and pick up and redeem benefits.
  - e. Proxies must show an approved form of identification prior to being recorded as a proxy in VISION. This may be submitted electronically if the the proxy is not present at the time the proxy is designated by the parent/guardian.
  - f. In unusual circumstances such as child abandonment, or the incarceration or incapacitation of the parent/guardian(s), a proxy can be approved by the clinic supervisor without the presence or written permission of the parent/guardian(s).
    - i. Clinic staff should attempt to contact the parent/guardian(s) if possible.
    - ii. The proxy must sign a General Signature Document printed from the VISION system describing the circumstances regarding the parent/guardian(s).
    - iii. The clinic supervisor should consider if a single month of issuance is appropriate in the situation.
  - g. Proxy designation does not expire at the end of the certification period but may be revoked at any time by a parent/guardian.

- h. Proxies (authorized shoppers) must read the Rights and Responsibilities form (R&R) before being recorded as a proxy in VISION. Proxies can read the R&R at home if they are not in the clinic when they are added in VISION. By signing the signature pad to pick up WIC benefits, proxies are implying agreement with the R&R. All proxies are encouraged to view the WIC Orientation Video.
- i. After proxies have read the Rights and Responsibilities form and have been listed in VISION, they are authorized to use the family's eWIC card and the parent/guardian is allowed to share the PIN number with them.
- j. Parent/Guardians are responsible to ensure that their proxies follow the R&R and that they attend nutrition education classes and individual counseling sessions in place of the parent/guardian when necessary.
- k. Proxies must deliver any written or verbal notifications received at the clinic to the parent/guardian.
- l. If the proxy does not follow all WIC responsibilities, the clinic staff should educate the proxy and/or the participant must select a new proxy.