

Processing Standards

- I. Appointment Times. All WIC clinics must provide appointment times outside normal business hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.), for applicants who need extended hours. If the clinic's regular schedule does not include extended hours, the opportunity for appointments outside of the regular schedule must be visibly posted in the clinic.
- II. Processing Standard Time Frames. Applicants will be notified of their eligibility or ineligibility within 10 or 20 days of contacting the local agency depending on applicant category.
 - a. The following applicants must be offered a certification appointment, must be notified of their eligibility or ineligibility, and must receive food benefits if eligible within **10 calendar days** of contacting the clinic to request WIC benefits:
 - i. Pregnant women
 - ii. Infants under six months of age
 - iii. Homeless individuals
 - iv. Members of migrant farm worker households.
 - b. The following applicants must be offered a certification appointment, must be notified of their eligibility or ineligibility, and must receive food benefits if eligible within **20 calendar days** of contacting the clinic to request WIC benefits:
 - i. Breastfeeding women
 - ii. Postpartum women
 - iii. Infants six months of age or older
 - iv. Children
 - c. Time frames for certifying applicants begin when the applicant contacts the local agency to request program benefits and apply to all applicants regardless of whether they have been certified in the past or not.
 - d. If the applicant chooses to wait longer than the standard 10 or 20 days for personal convenience, document this in the scheduling screen by selecting the appropriate reason. Available reasons are:
 - i. Declined offered appointment – Client preference - to be used when the client chooses not to accept an appointment offered by clinic staff that is within the processing standard time frames and requests a later appointment on a more convenient day or time.
 - ii. Missed/Reschedule - to be used when the reason for exceeding is because the client has missed an earlier appointment or requests an appointment to be rescheduled for a later date.
 - iii. No available appointments within processing standards - to be used when the clinic does not have any appointments that can be offered to the client within the processing standard time frames. Selecting

this option signifies that the clinic is unable to comply with the processing standards due to the clinic schedule, staffing problems or other factors. Use of this reason will be reviewed at Management Evaluations.

- e. If a client must be rescheduled because they failed to bring required proofs, another appointment to bring in the proofs must be offered within the required time frames starting from today's date.
 - f. Staff must complete the "Physical Address" panel prior to scheduling an initial certification appointment. The VISION system will automatically check processing standards only after the "Physical Address" panel has been completed. This includes marking the check boxes for "homeless" or "migrant" if applicable. If a participant is no longer homeless or a migrant then a new address record must be created without these boxes checked.
- III. For clinics operating on a walk-in basis,
- a. Required demographic information must be entered into the computer system documenting the contact. This includes completion of the Physical Address screen. Or;
 - b. A daily list of applicants turned away due to inability to serve the client on that day must be maintained. The daily lists must include the applicant's name, address, phone number and date. Lists must be retained on file and will be reviewed at management evaluations to verify that processing standards were met.
- IV. When funds are not available to serve clients, see the procedures in the section entitled Waiting Lists.
- V. Extensions. Extensions to the 20 day time frame will not be granted. Local agencies may submit a written request to the State WIC Director to extend the 10 day time frame to 15 calendar days. Extensions will only be granted in the following circumstances:
- a. Clinics operating two or fewer days per month; or
 - b. In emergency or other unusual situations. Examples include:
 - i. Clinic moving to a new facility
 - ii. Heavy snow requiring clinic closure
 - iii. Other natural disaster
 - iv. Unexpected increase in unemployment in a clinic area, resulting in increased applications.

- VI. Documenting applications. Participant demographics must be completed for all applicants on the day the applicant first contacts the clinic and an appointment is scheduled. Clinic staff must document the following information in VISION for each participant requesting benefits:
 - a. Today's date,
 - b. Applicant's name, address, and telephone number,
 - c. Category, and
 - d. Date of appointment.

- VII. Clinic wait times and customer service.
 - a. The time that applicants and participants wait in the clinic for their appointments to begin or in between the different stages of the appointment should be reasonably brief. Every effort should be made to provide quick and efficient service.

 - b. WIC applicants and participants must always be treated fairly and respectfully. It is expected that clinic staff will provide great customer service to clients and speak and interact in a friendly manner.