

Presence at Certification

- I. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Physical Presence Waiver, valid through September 30, 2026, allows state agencies to waive the requirement for physical presence and allows for certification and midcertification appointments to be completed remotely (through video conferencing or telephone).
 - a. The local agency must provide an option for WIC applicants and participants to obtain in-person services if they prefer.
 - b. The approval to waive the physical presence requirement includes the deferral of anthropometric data no later than 60 days and bloodwork data (as required in 7 CFR 246.7(e)(1)) no later than 90 days. However, a nutrition risk assessment must be completed at certification by the Competent Professional Authority (CPA).
 - i. The assigned nutrition risk factor can be determined from referral data or through communication with the WIC participant or their parent/guardian. The assigned nutrition risk factor cannot be based on anthropometric or bloodwork data if this data is not available at certification.
 - ii. To the extent possible, clinic staff must make concerted efforts to obtain referral data for anthropometric and bloodwork in advance of or at the time of the appointment.
 - iii. If required anthropometric and/or bloodwork data has not been obtained for remote certification or midcertification appointments within the deferral period, benefits should only be issued one month at a time while attempting to obtain this data.
 - iv. See 'Anthro and Lab Procedures' policy for acceptable referral data.
- II. Local agencies are authorized to provide all appointment types in either a remote or in-person format. It is expected that all agencies will operate in a hybrid format allowing both methods of conducting appointments. Local agencies may determine, based on local and on participant's circumstances, the appropriate mix of remote and in-person appointments.
- III. When possible, applicants should be encouraged to be present at the clinic site for certification and recertification appointments. This includes women, infants and children to be certified along with the child's parent, legal guardian or caretaker.

- a. In-person visits with the CPA improve the quality of the nutrition assessment.
 - b. Remote certification appointments should be allowed, as a participant option, when requested.
- IV. Outside of the timeframes that the ARPA Physical Presence Waiver is in effect, physical presence can be waived for:
- a. Applicants whose disability makes it impossible or whose medical condition is so severe that coming to WIC could jeopardize their health. Examples may include:
 - i. A medical condition that necessitates the use of medical equipment that is not easily transportable.
 - ii. A medical condition that requires confinement to bed rest.
 - iii. A serious illness that may be exacerbated by coming in to the WIC clinic.
 - b. Those receiving ongoing health care if being physically present would pose an unreasonable barrier.
 - i. The infant or child must have been present at his/her initial certification and has documentation of ongoing health care from a health care provider. Ongoing healthcare for children may be established using referral data, which includes the health visit data documentation from a physician, or someone working under a physician's orders.
 - ii. An infant < 8 weeks of age who is medically high risk, as self reported by applicant/guardian; or documented by a physician. Examples of criteria for the medically high risk infant include hospitalization, physician's orders for the infant to have no public contact, or a serious illness.
 - c. The infant or child who was present at his/her initial certification and was present at a certification within the past 1 year and is under the care of one or more working parents or one or more primary working caretakers whose working status presents a barrier to bringing the infant or child in to the WIC clinic.

- d. The clinic must assess each situation using detailed questions to ensure the need for applying these waivers.
- V. If the applicant is not physically present at the certification visit, select the reason in the drop-down box in the identity screen.
- a. When used for the ARPA Physical Presence Waiver, select the reason “Remote Appointment” within VISION as the not physically present reason.