

<p style="text-align: center;">Nutrition Services Department of State Health Services</p>

Effective: April 1, 2012

Policy No. CS: 16.0

WIC Certification Specialist

Purpose

To provide local agencies (LAs) the ability to train staff by offering a paraprofessional training program for WIC Certification Specialists (WCS). The program may be implemented with State Agency (SA) approval.

Authority

7 CFR Part 246.2, 246.7

Policy

The WIC Certification Specialist (WCS) Training Program is available through the SA. A formal application for the WCS program must be completed and approved prior to implementing the training. Upon successful completion of the program the candidate is State Certified as a WCS. The WCS Certificate may be used at any local agency within the State of Texas at the discretion of the LA Director. It does not guarantee employment at another LA, and the credentials do not guarantee the holder will be offered a position as a WCS. A WCS has the credentials to certify applicants/participants for the WIC program.

The LA shall have either a Registered Dietitian (R.D.) or Licensed Dietitian (L.D.) on staff or working as a consultant for a minimum 25 hours per month, or a full-time degreed Nutritionist. S/he shall provide adequate hours to function as a WCS Preceptor for the candidate(s) and provide oversight of the LA's WCS Program.

A local agency may request a waiver for the required minimum hours, submitted with justification for consideration by the state.

Procedure

LA Director and WCS Preceptor

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- I. The LA Director shall complete a WCS Program application. Applications may be obtained from the SA WCS Program Specialist. Once the application is approved, the LA may implement its WCS plan.
 - A. Candidates shall be nominated by their LA Director. LA Directors and WCS Preceptors may develop additional criteria that are over and above the state minimum requirements. The existence of a WCS program at a local agency does not automatically qualify all staff to take the program.
 - B. The LA Director or WCS Preceptor shall notify the SA of the date when training of the candidate(s) will begin.
 - C. The WCS Preceptors' signature is required to sign off upon the candidate's successful completion of the training.
 - D. LA's shall acquire candidate approval from the SA when adding additional WCS candidates to their existing WCS plan prior to beginning their training by completing Attachment C of the application and Attachment A (as needed).
 - E. LA's who do not have an existing state approved WCS plan and want to hire a "certified" WCS, may do so by completing an application waiver. A waiver may be obtained from the SA WCS Program Specialist.
 - 1. The application waiver will allow one Certified WCS to be hired without having an existing WCS plan in place.
 - 2. Additional hires will require a SA approved WCS plan/application.
- II. LAs shall provide the WCS candidate with dedicated time during their work day to study in an appropriate work space.
- III. The WCS preceptor shall complete observations of the candidate(s) performing competencies and shall submit the dates of completion along with the exam scores to the SA WCS Program Specialist.
- IV. LA's shall have the option to have their WCS's complete formula approval certification training offered by the SA.

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- A. New WCS candidates or existing certified WCS's are eligible.
- B. The LA director will select the appropriate candidates.

Candidates

- I. Candidates shall have a minimum of a high school diploma or equivalent.
- II. Candidates shall have a minimum 3 months working experience in a WIC clinic before s/he may be considered as a candidate. LA Directors may set higher minimum requirements based on their agency's needs.
 - 1. LA Directors may request a work experience waiver for direct hires from outside WIC with accompanying justification.
- III. WCS candidates shall complete the training course, including passing the WCS written and competency based exams, within 9 months. Extensions may be granted by the SA with appropriate justification from the LA Director and WCS Preceptor.
- IV. Once a candidate becomes a certified WCS, s/he shall complete a minimum 5 hours of continuing education trainings every fiscal year beginning the fiscal year after initial certification to maintain WCS certification.
 - A. Trainings may include SA trainings, LA trainings or subject appropriate trainings offered by outside entities.
 - 1. Each training will count towards one hour of credit, unless otherwise specified.
 - B. LA's shall submit verification of completion to the SA WCS Program Specialist.
- V. A certified WCS may add formula approval to their certification after successful completion of the Basic Infant Formula module and the WCS Formula Training module. Requests are made to the SA WCS Program Specialist.

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- A. A WCS may not contact a participant's Health Care Provider (HCP) for formula approvals except to obtain a missing date, signature or length of issuance for the Medical Request Form for Formula/Food. ([see policy FD: 16.0](#))
 - B. A WCS certified for formula approval shall complete a minimum of one formula training per fiscal year to maintain formula certification and may count towards their continuing education.
 - 1. Trainings may include, but are not limited to new/revised formula IDL's or on-line trainings, formula conference calls, state conference formula training sessions, subject appropriate trainings offered by outside entities or the LA, or any other related state offered formula training.
 - 2. LA's shall submit verification of completion to the SA WCS Program Specialist.
 - C. The SA shall add the letter "F" to the certificate number (e.g. 1234F) to identify a WCS who has completed the formula training modules and is authorized to approve formula ([see policy FD: 16.0](#)).
- VI. Upon a candidate's successful completion of the WCS Certification Training Program, the SA will issue a signed certificate of completion. The candidate may then function as a Certified WCS after the local agency Director signs the certificate.