**Certification of Homeless and Those Living in Shelters and Institutions**

**Purpose**

To ensure the eligible homeless applicants have access to WIC services. WIC services shall benefit the WIC participant and not the homeless facility, as required by federal regulation.

**Policy**

The local agency (LA) staff shall check the identification, income, and residency of each applicant/participant and parent/guardian applying on behalf of an infant and/or child at each certification and when issuing benefits.

**Authority**

7 CFR Part 246.7

**Definitions**

Homeless individual - a woman, infant, or child who lacks a fixed and regular nighttime residence; or whose primary nighttime residence is:

- a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter (including a hotel, a congregate shelter, or a shelter for victims of domestic violence) designated to provide temporary living accommodation
- an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized
- a temporary accommodation in the residence of another individual not exceeding 365 days
- a public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including those who reside in vehicles, parks, hallways, doorsteps, buildings
Homeless facility - the following types of facilities which may provide meal service:
- a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter (including a hotel or congregate shelter) designed to provide temporary living accommodations
- a facility that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized
- a public or private place not designed for, nor normally used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings

Institution - any residential accommodation which provides meal service, except private residences and homeless facilities.

Procedures

I. Enrolling homeless persons or those living in shelters
   A. Identification - applicants shall provide proof of Identification with:
      1. acceptable proof as outlined in Policy CS 5.0, or
      2. by completing a Self-Declaration Form (stock no. E-13-06-13567), if no proof exists. Staff shall scan and attach to Participant Page in the MIS.
   B. Residency –
      1. Applicants shall provide proof of residency with acceptable proof as outlined in Policy CS 6.0, or
         a. a signed statement from shelter verifying residency, or
         b. by completing a WIC Self-Declaration Form, if no proof exists. Staff shall scan and attach to Family Page in the MIS
      2. If applicant resides in a shelter, staff shall evaluate whether the shelter meets the following conditions:
         a. it does not accrue financial or in-kind benefit from the applicant's participation in WIC, and
         b. it does not place constraints on the ability of the applicant to partake of the WIC food instruments, and
         c. WIC foods are not used in communal feedings.
3. The LA shall ensure that the shelter meets the requirements. This may be done by:
   a. having a signed letter of agreement from the shelter, or
   b. by calling the shelter and verifying the information.
   c. staff shall scan and attach letter or document in notes in Family Page of the MIS.

4. The local agency shall inform the participant who resides in a homeless facility, shelter or institution that:
   a. WIC foods must be consumed only by the client to whom the food was issued, and
   b. WIC foods must not be shared with any other facility residents, and
   c. The facility must not place restrictions on the client’s access to or consumption of WIC foods or their ability to receive other WIC services.

5. If family lives in an institution, the institution shall meet the same requirements as participants living in shelters.
   a. Proxies of participants residing in a shelter/institution may pick up and redeem food benefits in bulk for multiple participants residing in the facility.
   b. The LA shall ensure that adult participants are allowed to participate in the process of picking up and transacting food instruments to the greatest extent possible.
   c. Shelter shall make participants aware of the foods prescribed for them as well as the intended benefits of such foods.

C. Income - Applicant shall provide proof of income:
   1. as outlined in Policy CS 7.0, or
   2. by completing Self-Declaration Form, if no proof is available.
   3. Staff shall scan and attach to Family Page in the MIS.

II. Applicants meeting the criteria of this policy are eligible to receive benefits for the full certification period.
III. LA shall **annually** contact each facility where current WIC participants reside to verify that required conditions are still being met (See OR 1.0).