



**4 FOOD PACKAGE/FI ISSUANCE**

*Effective: 3/1/98*

**4.30 Food Instrument Issuance – Overview and Timeframes**

*Revised: 1/4/10*

**Changes in bold**

**POLICY:** Once an applicant has satisfied all of the requirements for eligibility and enrolled in WIC, they are considered a “participant” and may receive monthly food benefit packages that are tailored to their nutritional needs, participant type (P, B, N, I, C), and timeframes associated with issuance. Food packages shall be prescribed by a CPA. WIC food benefits must be available to the participant on the day they are certified (and recertified). Exceptions to full monthly packages are explained below and in subsequent policies.

One Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) package shall be issued to each eligible family each season, unless it is determined that the family will not use the FIs.

**PROCEDURE:**

**A. WIC FOOD INSTRUMENT (FI) ISSUANCE OVERVIEW**

1. The FI issuance process includes determining the appropriate food prescription, updating the ROSIE system as applicable, providing and documenting secondary education, printing FIs, documenting issuance and next appointments in the WIC folder, and obtaining the guardian/proxy signature on the check register. The check register is maintained per project procedures and retention requirements.
2. FIs must be issued at the initial certification appointments, and food benefits must be available at a recertification appointment at the time final eligibility is determined. In other words, if the participant already has benefits from the previous certification (i.e., recertified early), FIs aren’t necessarily issued at the recertification appointment. Catch-up Issuance Policy 4.33 is used to tailor the food benefits according to the next First Date to Use (FDU).
3. Each family is assigned a First Date to Use (FDU) so that the same calendar day will print on the FIs, (e.g. the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month). Participants are also assigned a “pick-up day” to indicate what day of the month to come to the clinic to pick up FIs, (e.g. second Thursday). These days will likely be different from each other; a participant may be assigned to come in on the 14<sup>th</sup> of the month and their FIs may be dated for the 10<sup>th</sup>, making them already 4 days late according to ROSIE’s calculation of “days late”.
4. FIs are issued on assigned pickup days throughout the certification period, either monthly, bimonthly or trimonthly. If the participant is late for this assigned pick-up, ROSIE will automatically check the appropriate FIs not to print based on the



current date and the FI pickup day for the participant. Projects may override this by un-checking an FI that ROSIE selected not to print. See Policy 4.31 Late Issuance.

5. First-Date-to-Use on FIs: Projects will determine the FDU dates. ROSIE will print the assigned FDU on the FIs. Projects may change a family's assigned FDU for permanent changes, (e.g., transfers, family changes clinic) but not to accommodate printing a one-time package.

## **B. ISSUANCE DURING FARMERS' MARKET SEASON**

1. Additional FIs are available during the farmers' market season to WIC families through the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. This is in addition to the WIC fruit and vegetable checks.
2. FMNP FIs can be used only at approved farmers' markets and roadside stands. FMNP FIs are to be issued to families if they are interested in shopping at farmers' markets. Not all families will be able to use FMNP FIs because they may not have access to approved farmers' markets.
3. One FMNP package per family, per year is issued.
4. At least one participant within the family must meet one or more of the following criteria before ROSIE will load FMNP FIs during the FMNP season:
  - a) Pregnant, Breastfeeding or Postpartum woman, or
  - b) Child (including 11½ month old infants that have been certified as a child)
5. The same procedures for issuing WIC FIs apply to FMNP FIs, and are printed on the same paper stock as WIC FIs. The distribution period for FMNP is between June 1 – September 30. However, the project may use discretion to begin issuing FIs after June 1 and/or end issuance before September 30. The State WIC Office may end issuance before September 30 if necessary.
6. If a foster child transfers to a new family, it is possible that ROSIE will prevent the new family from receiving FMNP FIs if the transferring foster child received FMNP FIs with the former family. In this event, projects may issue a FMNP package to the new family BEFORE transferring the foster child in.

## **C. ISSUANCE AT CERTIFICATIONS**

1. The CPA determines final eligibility (assuming all required documentation has been presented) at each certification appointment and prescribes the food benefits.



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The CPA or other issuance staff prints and issues the FIs. The participant/guardian or proxy is provided a *WIC Approved Food List*, a list of approved vendors in the project service area, and an explanation of how to use food instruments, (i.e., view the DVD *WIC, You and the Grocery Store, Too*).

- a) FIs must be available for use (either through issuance that day or from a previous certification) when the initial eligibility is determined. Exceptions might include: fully breastfed infants not using any formula from WIC, mostly breastfed infants during the first month, or if a family does not want the formula, etc. FIs shall provide food for the full issuance month or the remaining portion of the month and, for the initial certification, shall be immediately redeemable. The First Date to Use (FDU) on the FIs are dated by ROSIE for the certification date at the initial certification.
  - b) If the participant has benefits available to use at the time of the recertification date from a previous issuance, staff will not necessarily issue a package on the date of recertification. For example, if a child received their last package on April 1<sup>st</sup>, and then is recertified early on April 7<sup>th</sup> to coordinate with other family members, you would not issue another package to that child at the (re)certification appointment because they already have benefits for April.
2. If the participant does not already have benefits available to them from a previous certification period, the amount of benefits issued at certification or recertification depends on the next FDU. Refer to Policy 4.33 Catch-up Issuance. Catch-up issuance is used *at the beginning of a certification period* if the assigned FDU (i.e., the certification date) is a significant number of days from the next FDU. ROSIE automatically tailors the full benefit amounts based on how many days until the next FDU. No more than three (3) food packages may be issued at one time, i.e., a catch-up package and the tri-monthly issuances may NOT be given at the same time. Catch-up issuance may occur at the initial certification and then the participant will need to return for the three full monthly packages. The FDU on the FIs are dated by ROSIE for the initial certification date.
  3. FIs may not be issued to a postpartum woman who is determined ineligible at the postpartum recertification appointment, (e.g., over income). Even if she was determined ineligible before the end of the 6 week postpartum period, she is terminated from the Program and is not issued a package. Note: a 15 day notice is not required, since it is at the beginning of a new certification period and they would have been verbally informed that they would no longer be eligible if over income. If FIs were issued during pregnancy for the 6 week postpartum period, it is not necessary to retrieve those FIs.



4. Applicants who present themselves at the certification appointment without proof of income, residency and/or identification may be handled through the options in Policies 2.1 and 2.3.

#### **D. ISSUANCE WITHIN THE CERTIFICATION PERIOD**

1. The WIC ID with the signature of the participant/guardian or proxy must be presented at each FI pick-up, unless the WIC staff is able to visually identify the participant or proxy/guardian. Note: Visual identification is not allowed in areas identified by the State WIC Office as high risk. Refer to Policy 4.50 on completion of and signatures on the WIC ID.
2. ROSIE dates the FIs with the assigned First Date to Use (FDU), even if the participant is late picking up FIs. The amount of benefits will be tailored by ROSIE based on the current date and the FI pickup day for the participant.
3. ROSIE will indicate whether proof of income, residency and/or identity is required before issuance.
4. FIs may only be issued in a valid certification period. That is, FIs with an FDU on or after the certification expiration date may not be issued until the participant is recertified. NOTE: This does not imply that FIs MUST be issued if the FDU is prior to the certification expiration date. Staff must consider the amount of benefits available for that participant during the certification period. (See C.1.b).
5. When a pregnant woman does not bring proof of pregnancy to her certification appointment,
  - a) she must receive benefits when all **other** eligibility criteria are met; and
  - b) she must be instructed to bring proof of pregnancy within a reasonable amount of time not to exceed **60** days.
  - c) If the woman does not bring in proof of pregnancy as instructed (due to reasons other than not being able to obtain a test without a charge), and her pregnancy is not apparent, **she must be terminated from WIC.**

#### **E. ISSUANCE AND CATEGORICAL INELIGIBILITY.** FIs may only be issued in a valid certification period. There may be situations when FIs are issued close to the end of the certification period. These include:

1. To a child at the last First Date to Use (FDU) before the child's fifth birthday. The child receives a full package if the FDU is before the fifth birthday, even if



the participant picks up checks late (after the 5<sup>th</sup> birthday) but before the last date to use.

2. To a woman enrolled during her pregnancy (Type P), at the last FDU of her pregnancy but up to 6 weeks after the date the pregnancy ends (delivery, abortion or miscarriage). The food package may cover only up to the six-week postpartum period unless recertified as a breastfeeding or non breastfeeding postpartum woman. Projects may issue 1-2 month full packages to cover until the pregnancy ends and instruct the woman to call the project when she delivers.
3. To a non-breastfeeding postpartum woman (Type N) at the last assigned FDU before six months from the actual delivery date. The woman receives a full package if the FDU is before six months postpartum, even if the participant picks up FIs late (after the 6 month postpartum date) but before the last date to use.
4. FIs may not be issued to a participant when the assigned FDU is on or after the following categorical timeframes:
  - a) A child's fifth birthday;
  - b) A pregnant woman reaches 6 weeks postpartum and has not been recertified;
  - c) After a non-breastfeeding postpartum woman reaches six months from the date the pregnancy ended (actual delivery date, miscarriage or abortion); or
  - d) After a fully or mostly breastfeeding woman reaches one year from the actual delivery date.

**F. ISSUANCE AT AGE/PARTICIPANT TYPE/STATUS CHANGES.** The assigned food benefit must be consistent with the participant type (P,B,N,I,C) and infant feeding category on the First Date to Use (FDU).

1. Infants: ROSIE will generate the appropriate monthly infant model food package based on the infant's age on the FDU and breastfeeding status. Infant feeding categories change at 4 and 6 months of age and the amount of formula is different for each category; baby foods are automatically added at six months for both breastfed and formula fed infants unless otherwise selected; partially breastfed babies will not have an auto-progression for supplemental formula (the amount needed must be assessed by a CPA).
2. Infants and children: Issue an infant food package to infants until they reach one year of age, when the participant type automatically changes to a child. Exceptions are infants that are 11½ months of age who may be considered type C



(child) and receive a child package (for both WIC and Farmers' Market Nutrition Program).

3. Postpartum non-breastfeeding woman at first pickup after delivery but before recertification: Issue the **pregnant** food package FIs that will provide food benefits for the postpartum period up to 6 weeks. Issue FIs that will provide food benefits until the next pick-up day that is closest to the expected delivery date by changing the interval to 1 or 2 month issuance. Keep the Participant Type in ROSIE as P, as it will be changed at the recertification appointment.

Example: If a woman comes to FI issuance at 2 weeks after the pregnancy ended, she should receive a full food package for the remaining 4 weeks and be given an appointment for recertification.

4. Breastfeeding woman at first pickup after delivery but before recertification: Issue **pregnant** food package FIs that will provide food benefits for the period until the certification appointment, but not longer than 6 weeks after delivery. Keep the Participant Type in ROSIE as P, as it will be changed at the recertification appointment. Enter an Infant Feeding Category of Fully or Mostly.
4. A fully, mostly or some breastfeeding woman quit nursing before six months postpartum and is now a non breastfeeding postpartum woman.
  - a) Participant Type must be changed to N in ROSIE on the Participants General tab at the first FI issuance after the change in the woman's type is known;
  - b) Risk criteria do not need to be reassessed. Even though the woman may have been certified only with the breastfeeding dyad code, she would still be eligible with the presumptive dietary risk.
5. A “some” breastfeeding woman reaches six months postpartum and her infant receives more than a half package formula from WIC.
  - a) Participant Type stays B in ROSIE. The woman will no longer receive a food package but will be counted as a breastfeeding woman until she reports breastfeeding cessation to the project.
  - b) When/if the woman reports she quit breastfeeding, terminate the mother as a participant on the Members tab. Change the Breastfeeding tab for the infant to reflect the date the breastfeeding was terminated and at least one reason of breastfeeding termination.
6. A fully or mostly breastfeeding woman quit nursing after six months postpartum.



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- a) Terminate the mother as a participant on the Members tab. Change the Breastfeeding tab for the infant to reflect the date the breastfeeding was terminated and at least one reason of breastfeeding termination.
- b) An Ineligibility Notice is not required, as the mother would have already been verbally notified that she would no longer be eligible if she quit breastfeeding.
- c) Notify the woman to return her FIs with an FDU after the termination date. Void returned FIs in ROSIE. Do not issue the full formula packages until the FIs are returned.