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**380.25****Nutrition Services for Special Populations****Overview**

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**Introduction** Special populations are participants who are migrant, homeless, or members of minority groups. All policies and procedures regarding participant instruction apply to nutrition services provided to special populations. However, consideration should be given to special needs these participants might have.

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## Considerations for Homeless Participants

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### Providing services on-site

At the contract agency's discretion, certifications and nutrition education contacts may be offered on-site at a homeless facility. This option may be desirable if several participants reside at a given facility or address.

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### Setting for second nutrition education contacts

Nutrition education contacts may be provided in a one-to-one setting, group settings, or online through [wichealth.org](http://wichealth.org). Nutrition education can be provided by group settings or online through [wichealth.org](http://wichealth.org) if the participant does not have a high-risk condition. However, contract agencies are strongly encouraged to provide one-to-one contacts for homeless participants because they:

- Provide more opportunity to individually tailor nutrition education messages to each participant's needs and circumstances, and
- Reduce the transportation burden for homeless participants, especially if completed on a walk-in basis.

See Policy 240.55 for more information on nutrition education contacts.

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### Nutrition education needs

Homeless participants may have unique nutrition education needs because they lack a permanent nighttime residence. The table below identifies potential problems and suggests appropriate actions for WIC staff.

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Suggested Action</b>
Limited or no food storage options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information about safe food storage based on the participant's circumstances.</li> <li>• Tailor the food package to maintain quality and safety of the WIC foods (see Policy 235.01 for more information).</li> </ul>
Minimal or no cooking facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss meals and snacks that require minimal or no cooking facilities.</li> <li>• Suggest non-traditional foods or meal plans in order to use available foods and facilities.</li> </ul>
Food insecurity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and refer to other community resources such as food banks, food pantries, soup kitchens, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Food Assistance), etc.</li> <li>• Identify transportation needed to access food resources, and assistance available for obtaining transportation.</li> </ul>
Limited intake of fruits, vegetables and grains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information about buying low-cost foods from these food groups.</li> <li>• Discuss how to store these foods safely.</li> </ul>

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## Considerations for Migrant, Refugee, and Minority Populations

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### Resources

Culturally-appropriate nutrition education materials are available through a variety of sources. State WIC staff will relay information about specific resources to local agencies as they become available. Such sources include:

- WIC materials available at the ISAIC Clearinghouse (see Policy 340.15), and
  - Internet sites such as state extension, government, and commodity organizations.
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### Educational materials

The state WIC office makes several key printed and audiovisual education materials available in languages other than English. Other visual aids may be helpful in obtaining information about food intake or providing nutrition education. Examples of materials available in contract agencies may include:

- Three-dimensional food models,
  - Paper food models,
  - Posters of Asian foods,
  - A pictorial notebook including pictures of foods from various cultures, and
  - WIC Spanish dictionary and language training materials.
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### Interpretive services

Whenever possible, nutrition services should be provided by bilingual staff or through the use of volunteer or paid interpreters.

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