225.50

Issuing Food Instruments (FIs)

Overview

Introduction

This policy provides information about issuing food instruments (FIs).

FI issuance

Three months of FIs are generally issued to each participant. However, clinic personnel can adjust the issuance cycle to one or two months based on individual needs.

Note: The data system does not allow the issuance of retroactive benefits.

Who may issue FIs

A WIC staff person who has also been certified eligible to receive WIC benefits may not issue food instruments (FIs) for his/her household. Another staff person must issue the FIs to avoid any opportunity for, or appearance of, program fraud or abuse.

Separation of duties

One person must determine eligibility and a second person must issue the FIs. There are two options to accomplish this:

1. A CPA determines eligibility (Certification Tab); a support staff member prints and hands the FIs to the participant and obtains signature on the receipt.
2. A CPA determines eligibility (Certification Tab) and prints the FIs; a support staff member hands the FIs to the participant and obtains a signature on the receipt.

The first option is preferable because the separation of duties will be evident through the two electronic signatures in the WIC data system. However, the second option is also acceptable and may be more realistic in some clinic settings.

In this policy

This policy contains the following topics.

Topic	See Page
Issuing Procedure	2
Handling Unspent Food Instruments (FIs)	4
Reissuing Food Instruments (FIs)	5

Issuing Procedure

Introduction

This section of policy describes the procedure for issuing FIs at different types of WIC appointments.

Using the plastic folders

Use the plastic folder to hold FIs, the WIC Identification Card, a current approved foods flyer, the How to Use Your WIC Checks brochure, a current vendor list, and any other information distributed by the contract agency.

Shred unused check stock

Since the FIs are printed by page rather than individually, there will sometimes be unused (unprinted) check stock after the FI receipt. This check stock cannot be put through the printer again so tear it apart from the FI receipt and shred it.

At certification

Follow the steps in the table below to print checks after a participant has been successfully certified.

Step	Action
1	Print the FIs.
2	Carefully review the FIs to verify the correct items printed.
3	Ask the parent/guardian/participant to sign the FI receipt.
4	Tear apart the FIs for the first month.
5	Put each month of FIs into a separate pocket in the folder.
6	Schedule the next appointment(s).

Note: Provide a list of local vendors who will accept WIC FIs to new participants.

Nutrition classes

Follow the steps in the table below to issue FIs for those attending classes.

Step	Action
1	Ask for the WIC Identification Card.
2	Open the class appointment and record status as “Attended.”
3	Direct individuals to the waiting area until the class begins.
4	When class begins, open the class appointment and print FIs. Note: FIs will be printed for all individuals in the class and their family members.
5	Carefully review the FIs to verify the correct items printed.
6	Ask the parent/guardian/participant to sign the FI receipt.
7	Tear apart the FIs for the first month.
8	Put each month of FIs into a separate pocket in the folder.
9	Schedule the next appointment(s).

Continued on next page

Issuing Procedure, Continued

At other appointments

Follow the steps in the table below to issue FIs at other appointments.

Step	Action
1	Ask for the WIC Identification Card.
2	Mark the appointment as kept.
3	Direct the individual to the waiting area until they are called for their appointment.
4	Open the family and go to their clinic services record.
5	Print the FIs.
6	Carefully review the FIs to verify the correct items printed.
7	Ask the parent/guardian/participant to sign the FI receipt.
8	Tear apart the FIs for the first month.
9	Put each month of FIs into a separate pocket in the folder.
10	Schedule the next appointment(s).

Instate transfer:
Disconnected clinic & new agency

In this situation, the family's record is not available and you cannot print FIs. Follow the steps in the table below to issue FIs to these participants

Step	Action
1	Explain that FIs cannot be printed until the record is transferred.
2	View the family's record to determine the FI Issuance Period and whether the family has already received FIs for the current month.

IF the family …	THEN …
Already claimed FIs for current month	Schedule their next appointment. Note: You can't record this in IWIN until after synchronization.
Did not claim FIs for current month	• Schedule an appointment as soon as possible. • Remind the parent/guardian or participant about the option to designate a proxy and how to do so. • If neither step is feasible or reasonable, mail one month of FIs and schedule an appointment for the following month to issue the remaining FIs. Do not reduce the size of the food package. Note: If the transfer request is on the last working day of the month, you must complete the transfer and print FIs that evening so that the family receives benefits for the month.

Handling Unspent Food Instruments (FIs)

Handling unspent FIs

A participant may come to a nutrition education appointment with unspent FIs from the previous month. Follow these guidelines:

IF the FIs are...	AND…	THEN...
still valid	food package has not changed	instruct the participant to use those FIs first.
still valid	food package has changed	• create the new food package; and • reissue the FIs using the new food package.
no longer valid	—	• void the FIs using the void code, Returned unused; and • shred the FIs.

Note: If the FIs are from the WIC Overseas Program, stamp "VOID" on each one and mail them to Choctaw Management/Services Enterprise, 2161 NW Military Drive, Suite 308, San Antonio, Texas 78213.

Policy reference

MPSF: WC-01-26-P: WIC Overseas Food Instrument Procedures

Reissuing Food Instruments (FIs)

Introduction

FIs may need to be reissued in the following situations:
- A food package change,
- Damage by the printer,
- Lost or stolen FIs (see Policy 225.65 for more information), and
- When a foster parent cannot retrieve the initial FIs from the birth family.

Note: If the birth family will not give the initial FIs to the foster parent, select Lost or Stolen as the void code. Contact the birth family and tell them that they will be asked to repay the value of the FIs if they spend them since they do not have custody of the child for whom the FIs were intended.

Policy

FIs can be reissued with the same food package or with a new food package.
- When the checkbox for Use Old Package is selected, the replacement FIs will have the same food package as the original FIs.
- When a new food package has been created, the replacement FIs will have the new food package instead of the food package printed on the original FIs.

Procedure: Old food package

Follow the steps in the table below to reissue FIs with the old food package.

Step	Action
1	Click on Reissue radio button.
2	Check the box for Use old package.
3	Select the FIs to be reissued by checking the boxes for each FI.
4	Click on the Reissue link, record the appropriate void codes in the pop-up table, and close the pop-up.
5	Print the FIs.
6	Carefully review the FIs to verify the correct items were reissued.
7	Ask the parent/guardian/participant to sign the FI receipt.

Procedure: New food package

Follow the steps in the table below to reissue FIs with a new food package.

Step	Action
1	Create the new food package and verify it.
2	Click on the Reissue radio button.
3	Select the FIs to be reissued by checking the boxes for each FI.
4	Print the FIs.
5	Carefully review the FIs to verify the correct items were reissued.
6	Ask the parent/guardian/participant to sign the FI receipt.

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