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## 310.25

### Nutrition Educator Guidelines

#### Qualifications

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**Education or certification**

A WIC nutrition educator must have at least one of the following qualifications:

- A registered dietitian but not licensed in Iowa,
  - Successful completion of an undergraduate degree in dietetics from an accredited institution but not completed a dietetic internship,
  - Successful completion of an undergraduate degree in dietetics and a dietetic internship from an accredited institution but not completed or passed the dietetic registration exam,
  - Successful completion of an undergraduate or graduate degree in nutrition from an accredited institution, or
  - Successful completion of an undergraduate or graduate degree in a health related field and a minor in nutrition both from an accredited institution.
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**Desirable skills**

Desirable skills include the ability to:

- Computer skills, specifically word processing and/or data entry,
  - Work well with a diverse population of low-income persons with possible language/cultural barriers,
  - Work well with community leaders and health professionals, and
  - Lead or facilitate small groups and one-to-one counseling.
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**Physical requirements**

This position may involve lifting up to 50 pounds.

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**Travel requirements**

Travel to outlying clinic sites may be required. Driving responsibilities and transportation scheduling are determined at each agency.

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**Supervision of nutrition educator**

The nutrition educator is responsible to the agency's WIC program coordinator and/or lead WIC dietitian. An agency licensed dietitian must be available for consultation, but is not required to be onsite during clinic. Technical assistance can be received from agency dietitians as well as from staff of the state WIC office.

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## Responsibilities

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**Introduction** The nutrition educator may have all or any combination of the responsibilities in the following areas.

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**Clinic** A nutrition educator's clinic responsibilities may include:

- Conducting the following assessments for determining nutritional risk:
  - Measuring length/height and weight,
  - Performing hematocrit or hemoglobin tests, and
  - Completing the **Nutrition Interview**,
- Functioning as the competent professional authority (CPA) for determination of program eligibility and certification;
- Assessing individual anthropometric, biochemical, and dietary data;
- Certifying or denying participation on the basis of nutrition risk;
- Providing one-to-one counseling and group nutrition education to WIC participants (not high-risk) on topics of food preparation, food selection, food budgeting, family food choices, and life-cycle nutrition issues;
- Promoting and supporting breastfeeding efforts;
- Functioning as a member of the agency quality assurance team; and
- Establishing and tailoring the WIC food package to best meet the dietary needs of each participant.

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**Data system** A nutrition educator's data system responsibilities may include:

- Setting up computers and printers correctly, and preparing for transport;
- Maintaining data system equipment;
- Entering information into the data system; and
- Report data system issues to the WIC HelpDesk

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## Responsibilities, Continued

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### **Nutrition education**

A nutrition educator's nutrition education responsibilities may include providing nutrition education contacts for both high-risk and low-risk participants. If a nutrition educator provided the initial contact to a high-risk participant, then a licensed dietitian must provide the second nutrition education contact. If a licensed dietitian provided the initial contact to a high-risk participant, then a nutrition educator could provide the second nutrition education contact at the discretion of the licensed dietitian.

Note: Nutrition educators are strongly encouraged to work with a WIC dietitian to plan their education contacts, especially group presentations and discussions.

A nutrition educator's nutrition education responsibilities may include:

- Writing or contributing to the participant newsletter on appropriate topics;
  - Promoting and supporting breastfeeding efforts;
  - Selecting, preparing, and evaluating nutrition education materials; and
  - Maintaining the agency supply of nutrition pamphlets and materials.
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### **Training**

The nutrition educator must attend meetings and conferences that enhance training and skills. As a best practice, WIC Coordinators should plan for each nutrition educator to attend at least 9 hours of continuing education events per fiscal year. The number of hours planned for part-time and contract staff should be prorated according to the number of hours worked.

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### **Grant preparation**

A nutrition educator's grant preparation responsibilities may include:

- Assisting in developing the nutrition education goals and objectives for the coming year,
  - Assisting in review of data reports, and
  - Analyzing implications of nutrition education plans.
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## Responsibilities, Continued

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**Interaction  
with various  
programs**

The nutrition educator's position may require communication or interaction with:

- Iowa Department of Public Health
  - Department of Human Services
  - Public Health Nursing
  - Area physicians, HMOs and hospital staff
  - Area Education Agency
  - Family Planning agencies
  - Lead Poisoning Prevention programs
  - Child Health Specialty clinics
  - Maternal Health programs
  - Child Health programs
  - Head Start
  - Staff of other WIC contract agencies, and
  - Other community groups.
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