



## **Procedure: Client Abuse**

Functional Area: VIII Certification, Eligibility & Coordination of Services

Section: G 3 g

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<b>Purpose</b>	To define client abuse and list accompanying sanction points and duration times to be used in implementation of the Nebraska client sanction system.
<b>Definition of Client Abuse (Violation)</b>	Any intentional action of a client, responsible party of a child or infant who is a client, or a proxy or alternate shopper that violates Federal or State statutes, regulations, policies, or procedures governing the Program.
<b>About the Sanction Point Table</b>	The Sanction Point Table displays sanctionable actions in order of severity from the least to the most severe.
<b>Determining Client Abuse</b>	<p>An incident of abuse is defined by the action of a WIC client, responsible party or alternate shopper that occurred at a single point in time.</p> <p>Client abuse should be determined and sanction points assigned when appropriate (e.g. abuse is intentional), following the steps outlined in the Local Agency Responsibilities and State Agency Responsibilities procedures in this section.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use the Sanction Point table in this procedure to determine client actions defined as abuse.</li><li>• The Nebraska WIC Program “Program Integrity Follow Up Form” should be used to document the information substantiating abuse and the issuance of sanction points to a WIC client.</li></ul>
<b>Assessing Sanction Points</b>	<p>Sanction points are assigned to an individual as warranted, for each incident of abuse as defined in this procedure. Points will be applied to all members of a family. A family includes all individuals linked through the same WIC family ID number.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The number of sanction points assessed is determined by the abusive action of a client, responsible party or their alternate shopper.</li><li>• The number of checks involved during the incident does not determine the number of points to assess.</li><li>• An assessment of 20 points through a single incident or multiple incidents should be forwarded to the State WIC Office for follow-up.</li></ul>

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**Assessing  
Sanction  
Points (cont)**

- An assessment of 10 or fewer points through a single incident, or an accumulation of less than 20 points through multiple incidents is assigned by the local agency.

Local agency staff should complete appropriate follow up and education with the client or responsible party as outlined in the Local Agency Responsibilities procedure in this section.

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**Duration of Sanction  
Points**

Sanction points will be retained on a record for 12 months. Sanction points are retained on both active and inactive records.

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**Client Suspension**

An accumulation of 20 points substantiated through the review process will result in suspension from the program for twelve months.

After the 12-month suspension period:

- If an additional sanctionable action occurs following the end of the suspension period, which results in a total of 20 points, the client(s) will receive an additional suspension period.
  - The client(s) would be required to reapply for WIC benefits.
  - In this situation a TT3--Re-enroll would be used to complete the certification process.
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**Definitions**

WIC Category Foods are defined as those foods in the following categories: milk & milk substitutes, juice, eggs, cheese, cereal, peanut butter, canned fish, dried & canned beans, fresh fruits & vegetables, bread & bread substitutes, baby food, infant formula, and infant cereal.

Non-WIC Category Foods are defined as foods such as, but not limited to: soda, candy, meat, chips, snack foods, and any other food not approved for use in the Nebraska WIC program.

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**CLIENT VIOLATIONS & SANCTION TABLES**

<b>TYPE ONE VIOLATIONS: EDUCATE</b>		
<b>CLIENT VIOLATION</b>	<b>LOCAL AGENCY ACTION</b>	<b>STATE AGENCY ACTION</b>
<b>C</b> -Signing a WIC check before presenting it to the vendor for purchase of WIC foods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Document</b> client follow-up on Client Integrity Follow-up Form</li> <li>- <b>Educate</b> for 1<sup>st</sup> occurrence</li> </ul>	Monitoring, Enforcement, and Support of Local Staff
<b>D</b> -Failure to sign a WIC check.		
<b>A</b> -Using a check before the first date to use or after the last date to use.		

<b>TYPE TWO VIOLATIONS: SANCTION -- 5 Points</b>		
<b>CLIENT VIOLATION</b>	<b>LOCAL AGENCY ACTION</b>	<b>STATE AGENCY ACTION</b>
<b>F</b> - Redeeming a WIC check at a non-authorized WIC store or redeeming a WIC check for food or primary contract infant formula at a special purchase store.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Document</b> client follow-up on Client Integrity Follow-up Form</li> <li>- <b>Evaluate</b></li> <li>- <b>Educate</b></li> <li>- <b>Assess</b> 5 sanction points, if warranted, for 12 months duration</li> </ul>	Monitoring, Enforcement, and Support of Local Staff
<b>T</b> -Accepting WIC foods or formula from a person other than the WIC program.		
<b>E</b> - Purchasing WIC approved foods or formula in amounts greater than that listed on the WIC check.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Document</b> client follow-up on Client Integrity Follow-up Form</li> <li>- <b>Evaluate</b></li> <li>- <b>Educate</b></li> <li>- <b>Assess</b> 5 sanction points, if warranted for 12 months</li> </ul>	Monitoring, Enforcement, and Support of Local Staff
<b>G</b> -Exchanging WIC formula at the store without approval by WIC staff.		
<b>H</b> -Purchasing foods in a WIC category not specified on the WIC check.		

<b>TYPE TWO VIOLATIONS: SANCTION -- 10 Points</b>		
<b>CLIENT VIOLATION</b>	<b>LOCAL AGENCY ACTION</b>	<b>STATE AGENCY ACTION</b>
<b>R</b> -Giving away WIC clients' WIC food or formula to someone else outside the immediate family for the second party's personal use, exchange or sale.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Document</b> client follow-up on Client Integrity Follow-up Form</li> <li>- <b>Evaluate</b></li> <li>- <b>Educate</b></li> <li>- <b>Assess</b> 10 Sanction points, if warranted, for 12 months duration</li> </ul>	Monitoring, Enforcement, and Support of Local Staff
<b>I</b> -Verbal abuse or threat of physical abuse to any of the following: 1) WIC Local Agency Staff 2) Other WIC clients or Responsible parties, 5) Alternate Shoppers or Proxies, 6) Vendor employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Document</b> client follow-up on Client Integrity Follow-up Form</li> <li>- <b>Evaluate</b></li> <li>- <b>Educate</b></li> <li>- <b>Assess</b> 10 Sanction points, if warranted, for 12 months duration</li> </ul>	Monitoring, Enforcement, and Support of Local Staff
<b>J</b> -Changing any information on the front of the check and /or redeeming a WIC check that has been altered.		Information forwarded to State for assessment of claims
<b>K</b> -Redeeming a WIC check reported as lost or stolen.		
<b>S</b> -Purchasing a non-WIC category food or a non-food item with a WIC check.		
<b>V</b> – Purchasing formula in a type or form not specified on the WIC check		
<b>Z</b> - Allowing someone else to post WIC items using your information. Posting/listing WIC items for sale (inconclusive evidence).		

TYPE THREE VIOLATIONS: STATE MANDATED SANCTION		
CLIENT VIOLATION	LOCAL AGENCY ACTION	STATE AGENCY ACTION
<b>L</b> -Sale, exchange or posting/listing of WIC food, formula or checks for cash, exchange or credit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Document</b> client follow-up on Client Integrity Follow-up Form</li> <li>- <b>Forward</b> documentation to State</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Evaluate</b></li> <li>- <b>Assess</b> claim if warranted</li> <li>- <b>Track</b> follow-up</li> <li>- <b>Evaluate</b></li> <li>- <b>Assess</b> 20 sanction points, if warranted for 12 months duration</li> <li>- <b>Disqualify</b> for 12 months</li> </ul>
<b>M</b> -Receiving Program benefits from 2 or more local WIC agencies or from both WIC and CSFP.		
<b>N</b> -Misrepresenting information, concealing or withholding facts, or making false or misleading statements to receive more WIC foods than eligible to receive or to become eligible for the Program.		
<b>P</b> -Using WIC checks to purchase alcohol or tobacco.		
<b>Q</b> -Intentional receipt of cash or credit for WIC checks from a WIC vendor or unauthorized party (selling WIC checks)		
<b>O</b> -Physical abuse to any of the following: 1) WIC staff; 2) Other WIC clients, proxies, responsible parties; 3) Vendor's employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Document</b> client follow-up on Client Integrity Follow-up Form</li> <li>- <b>Forward</b> documentation to State</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Evaluate</b></li> <li>- <b>Assess</b> 20 sanction points, if warranted for 12 months duration</li> <li>- <b>Disqualify</b> for 12 months</li> </ul>
<b>U</b> -Buying WIC foods or formula from another person outside the immediate family.		

A total of:

**5, 10 or 15 points** = Notification Letter of Sanction Points Being Assessed Sent by Local Agency WIC Staff

**20 or more points** = Notification Letter of Disqualification Sent By State Agency WIC Staff