

WIC WORDS



Certification Update

January 29, 2008

Topics Today:

- Income requirements
- Adjunct Income Eligible clients
- Acceptable proof of income documents
- Not acceptable proof of income documents
- Recording proof of income
- Current income or annual income
- Forgot or didn't bring proof of income
- In kind benefits
- Negative income
- If can't provide proof of income
- Zero Income

RECORDING PROOF OF INCOME:

Signature Form: The type of documentation you saw as proof should be written on the income line of the Signature Form at each certification visit.



INCOME REQUIREMENT

- The income limits for WIC are set by USDA and are revised each year.
- Applicants must show documentation that they meet these income guidelines or else that they qualify through other programs that make them income eligible.
- WIC uses **Gross Income** before any deductions are taken out when determining income eligibility.

ADJUNCT INCOME ELIGIBLE CLIENTS:

- A large portion of WIC applicants will be automatically income eligible for WIC. Those who bring current documentation of Medicaid, ADC, or Food Stamps are considered Adjunct Income Eligible for WIC, based on their participation in one of those programs. Even though WIC staff are not required to see actual income paystubs/documents for adjunct eligible clients, they are still required to "ask" about household income and record that figure in the computer.

THOSE THAT ARE NOT ADJUNCT INCOME ELIGIBLE:

- Applicants that are not adjunct income eligible (or cannot provide documentation that they are participating in Medicaid, ADC, or Food Stamps) must show *written* "proof" of income for everyone living in the household.

ACCEPTABLE PROOF OF INCOME DOCUMENTATION



- * Current pay stub(s) noting the pay timeframe (weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, etc.)
- * Signed statement from employer with gross cash earnings for specified period
- * Recent Leave and Earnings Statement, including CONUS COLA (Continental U.S. Cost of Living Allowance)
- * W-2 forms
- * Income tax return for the most recent calendar year
- * Accounting records for the self-employed
- * Award letter from Social Security
- * Bank statements
- * Foster child placement letter/foster parent award letter
- * Unemployment letter/notice
- * Divorce decree
- * Award Letter

UNACCEPTABLE PROOF OF INCOME



- Verbal Statement of Income except in very limited situations
- Documentation more than 30 days old
- Proof from previous employer
- Bank statement – it is not proof of regular gross earnings (only shows net)

CURRENT INCOME OR ANNUAL INCOME

- **Current Income:** Current income is income received by a household during the month prior to the individual's application.
- **Annual Income:** Annual income is income received by the family/household during the past 12 months.

Staff assigned to determining income eligibility shall consider both the annual and current income of the family to determine which is the better indicator of income the family is receiving at this point in time.



FORGOT PROOF OF INCOME

- If an applicant forgets to bring proof of income, you may initially obtain the information verbally. Record the income they verbally tell you in the income field. Flag the chart that proof of this information is missing by highlighting the income documentation section on the signature form.
- Provide a 30 day extension to bring in documentation of proof of income.
- Issue checks for *only one month*, until client brings proof of income.
- If client brings proof of income within 30 days, document proof seen on the signature form & date seen.
- If they don't bring in proof within 30 days, the grace period is over, and no additional checks should be given until proof is brought in.

IN KIND

A benefit (other than cash) received by employees as part of their total compensation package
Examples included: housing, utilities, vehicles, food and gas provided or paid by employer.

In Kind benefits **ARE NOT COUNTED AS INCOME**

NEGATIVE INCOME

When an applicant shows no profit or a loss for the year (i.e. farmers, self-employed), be sure to document on the WIC Signature Form an explanation of the individual's income (i.e. individual shows loss of \$5,000, farm family).

IF CAN'T PROVIDE PROOF OF INCOME:

There will be times when applicants are unable to provide proof of income to WIC staff. Examples of these situations are homeless families, persons who are paid with cash, migrant farm workers, and undocumented workers.

See if someone who has knowledge of the applicant's income (i.e. caseworker, employer, or pastor) will complete an Income Letter for the applicant.

When staff feels that requiring the applicant to provide income documentation would present an unreasonable barrier to participation, the applicant may self declare their income.

When an applicant has absolutely no way of providing proof they may self declare their income.

When it has been determined that no proof of income exists or that providing proof would be a barrier to services a **No Proof Form** should be completed by the applicant and placed in the file. The form should specify why the applicant could not provide documentation of income.

The situation should be reevaluated each certification visit.

ZERO INCOME....

Except in very rare cases, zero income is not an acceptable statement of income. If the individual is homeless or unemployed, they may have no source of income or support. If this is the case, document on the WIC Signature Form using the income line why income is being reported as zero.

When zero income is reported, the applicant should be asked to describe in detail their living circumstances and how they obtain basic living necessities such as food, shelter, medical care and clothing.

Leading questions such as where are you getting food, where are you living, who is paying the rent or mortgage payments, and how long has the family been without income will give insight into how the applicant is supported.