

| |
|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Nutrition Services Department of State Health Services</p> |
|---|

Effective July 1, 2016

Policy No. CS:10.0

Economic Unit for Income

Purpose

To establish a consistent method of determining income eligibility.

Authority

7 CFR Part 246.7; USDA FNS Instruction 803-3; 25 TAC §31.22

Policy

Income eligibility for WIC services shall be based on the total income of the economic unit.

Definitions

Economic Unit means all persons, related and/or unrelated, living together in the same dwelling, with the exception of the following special situations: pregnant woman, infants/children placed through DFPS (foster/kinship), and individuals who qualify as a separate economic unit.

Procedures

- I. When determining an applicant's income eligibility for WIC services:
 - A. Determine economic unit size by counting all persons living in the dwelling, with the following exceptions:
 - 1. pregnant women (see procedure II);
 - 2. individuals who reside in institutions (see procedure III);
 - 2. infants/children placed through DFPS (see procedure IV); and
 - 3. individuals who qualify as a separate economic unit (see procedure VI).

| |
|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Nutrition Services Department of State Health Services</p> |
|---|

Effective July 1, 2016

Policy No. CS:10.0

- B. Determine total economic unit income by counting all incomes of all members of the unit.
 - C. Compare the total economic unit income for the economic unit size with the Texas WIC Income Guidelines (see [Policy CS:12.0](#)).
 - D. Record unit size and income(s) on form WIC-35.
- II. For a pregnant woman, with the exception that she qualifies as a separate economic unit (refer to procedure VI. D.), increase her family size by the number of children she expects to give birth to. If she is expecting one child, count her as two individuals; if she is expecting twins, count her as three individuals. The LA shall allow applicants to waive the increase in family size.
- III. Individuals residing in institutions (e.g., homes for battered women, drug treatment centers, intermediate care facilities for mentally retarded or mentally ill persons, half-way houses, etc.) that meet the conditions specified in [Policy CS:06.0](#) are considered a separate economic unit. In this instance, the economic unit consists of the applicant and family members residing in the institution.
- IV. An infant/child placed through DFPS shall be considered a separate economic unit (a one-person economic unit).
- A. The income of the child shall be the payments made by DFPS or another outside_source for the care of the child. Note: If a child receives income, whether from a job or outside financial resource, it must be counted in the income determination.
 - B. Income reassessment during an active certification is not required for an infant/child who is later adopted since sufficient time does not typically exist to effect the change before the expiration of the certification period.
- V. When determining economic unit size:
-

| |
|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Nutrition Services Department of State Health Services</p> |
|---|

Effective July 1, 2016

Policy No. CS:10.0

- A. Do not include members who have been absent from the economic unit for more than six months, unless the member continues to exercise customary family responsibilities, i.e., contributes to the support of the economic unit.

- B. You may include persons temporarily absent if the following circumstances exist:
 - 1. other members still consider the economic unit to be the principal residence of the absent member; and
 - 2. the absence does not exceed six months (except in the case of school or military service); and
 - 3. the absence is for a purpose such as school, training, employment, hospitalization, institutionalization, military service etc.; and
 - 4. the absent member continues to exercise customary family responsibilities, e.g., a parent continues providing support, physical care, planning, etc.

- VI. On an exception basis, a separate economic unit (SEU) may be identified within a dwelling, if the applicant indicates that he/she shall be counted as a separate group/economic unit.
 - A. Exceptions shall be reviewed on a case by case basis. It is recommended that the Certifying Authority (CA) or WIC Certification Specialist (WCS) approve the SEU; however, LAs shall determine their own procedure on who may approve an SEU.

 - B. To qualify as an SEU, applicants shall meet the following criteria, which shows their independent source of income adequate to provide for their living expenses in their particular environment:
 - 1. The total monthly gross income of the SEU shall be equal to or greater than the amount listed on the Separate Economic Unit Screening Table in this policy and
 - 2. The SEU usually purchases and prepares food separately from the other persons who are not members of the SEU but reside in

| |
|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Nutrition Services Department of State Health Services</p> |
|---|

Effective July 1, 2016

Policy No. CS:10.0

the same dwelling or intends to purchase and prepare food separately after certification.

- B. LA staff shall identify the SEU's household members by placing a checkmark in the SEU column on the Family Certification Form (WIC-35).
- C. LA staff shall compare the SEU's monthly gross income to the SEU Screening Table in this policy to determine if the family qualifies as an SEU.
- D. After determining SEU status, any unborn fetus(es) shall be counted as part of the household size when comparing household income to the WIC Income Guidelines in **Policy CS:12.0** and completing the WIC-35.
- E. Do not certify the following as a Separate Economic Unit:
 - 1. minor children who live with their parents;
 - 2. a child under age 18 who lives with adult household members who serve as managing conservators; That is,
 - a. the household member(s) provides more than half of the child's total support; and
 - b. the family states that the child is under parent or guardian control.
 - 3. spouses: two people who are legally married, which includes two people who live together and represent themselves to the community as husband and wife.
- VII. The Certifying Authority's (CA) signature on the Supplemental Information/NVRA-WIC form constitutes approval of SEU eligibility because the CA must review the WIC-35 as part of his/her certification responsibilities.

| |
|--|
| <p>Nutrition Services Department of State Health Services</p> |
|--|

Effective July 1, 2016

Policy No. CS:10.0

| Separate Economic Unit Screening Table | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Family Size | Monthly Income |
| 1 | \$201 |
| 2 | \$289 |
| 3 | \$385 |
| 4 | \$476 |
| 5 | \$585 |
| 6 | \$736 |
| 7 | \$841 |
| 8 | \$967 |
| Each Additional Member | + \$109 |

Based on Official USDA Food Plans: Cost of Food at Home. US Average-Thrift Plan, February 2016, individual groupings

Compare the total amount of income of the entire group considered in the economic unit to the Separate Economic Unit Screening Table. Use the WIC-35 form for all documentation.

- Is the total income of the group equal to or greater than the amount listed on the **Separate Economic Unit Screening Table** for family size?
- Does the group usually purchase and prepare food separately or intend to purchase and prepare food separately after certification?

If the answer to both of these questions is “**yes**,” the group can qualify as a SEU. Mark the box for SEU on the WIC-35.

If the answer to either of these questions is “**no**,” the group cannot qualify as a SEU. All persons living in the household and their income must be listed and screened for eligibility on the WIC-35.