



Memorandum

#16-058

TO: WIC Regional Directors
WIC Local Agency Directors

FROM: Amanda Hovis, Director
Nutrition Education/Clinic Services Unit
Nutrition Services Section

DATE: June 30, 2016

SUBJECT: Revisions to Certification Policies, CS:10.0 Economic Unit for Income and CS:12.0 Texas WIC Income Guidelines

This memo announces revisions to policies CS:10.0 and CS 12.0. The policies are effective July 1, 2016 and monitoring will begin immediately. At that time the policies will be posted for Local Agencies to update the *Policy and Procedures Manual*. Revised policies can be accessed at: http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/wichd/policy/table_of_contents.shtm

Summary of Revisions

Texas WIC Policy CS: 10.0 Economic Unit for Income

- Updated the Separate Economic Unit Screening Table to reflect the USDA guideline changes.
- Changed IV.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.

Texas WIC Policy CS: 12.0 Texas WIC Income Guidelines

- Updated the income table to reflect federal income changes. This table will be updated in the Income Calculator Online Tool and Texas WIN (TWIN).
- WIC State agencies should note that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), has set the 2016-2017 poverty guidelines for family sizes greater than six at the 2015 level. Because the HHS poverty guidelines are used to calculate the WIC IEGs, the same adjustment has occurred for WIC.

The TWIN and Income Calculator income guidelines tables will be updated the evening of Thursday, June 30, 2016 to be in place for July 1, 2016. Staff shall continue to use the current income guidelines through Thursday, June 30, 2016. On Friday, July 1, 2016, staff shall use the revised income guidelines in the attached policy when determining income eligibility.

If you have any questions or require additional information regarding *Texas WIC Policy CS: 10.0 Economic Unit for Income and CS:0.12 Texas WIC Income Guidelines*, please contact KeShana Odom, Program Specialist III, Information Response Management Group, at Keshana.odom@dshs.state.tx.us or (512) 341-4569.

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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).

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- 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:
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- 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

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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.

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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.

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Policy No. CS:12.0

Texas WIC Income Guidelines

Purpose

To provide a uniform statewide level of income eligibility for participants in the WIC Program.

Authority

7 CFR Part 246.7; 25 TAC §31.22; 42 USC 1786

Policy

The Texas WIC Program shall use the income guidelines updated annually in the *Federal Register* by the United States Department of Agriculture under authority of 42 USC 1786.

Procedures

- I. To participate in WIC, an applicant's/participant's gross income shall not exceed 185% of the federal income guidelines as updated annually, unless the applicant/participant is found to be adjunctively income eligible for WIC.
- II. Local agencies shall implement the annual guidelines upon notification from the state agency.

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WIC INCOME GUIDELINES

Family Size	Weekly	Bi-Weekly	Twice Monthly	Monthly	Annual
1	423	846	916	1,832	21,978
2	570	1,140	1,235	2,470	29,637
3	718	1,435	1,554	3,108	37,296
4	865	1,730	1,874	3,747	44,955
5	1,012	2,024	2,193	4,385	52,614
6	1,160	2,319	2,512	5,023	60,273
7	1,307	2,614	2,832	5,663	67,951
8	1,455	2,910	3,152	6,304	75,647
9	1,603	3,206	3,473	6,946	83,343
10	1,751	3,502	3,794	7,587	91,039

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11	1,899	3,798	4,114	8,228	98,735
12	2,047	4,094	4,435	8,870	106,431
13	2,195	4,390	4,756	9,511	114,127
14	2,343	4,686	5,076	10,152	121,823
15	2,491	4,982	5,397	10,794	129,519
16	2,639	5,278	5,718	11,435	137,215
EACH ADDITIONAL FAMILY MEMBER	+148	+296	+321	+642	+7,696