# Chapter 6A
# Certification/Participation - Application Process

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**Required Local Agency Written Policies and Procedures**

- Local agencies must have a written policy for handling applications within processing standards when an applicant contacts the agency, and specific appointments are not given such as in open access scheduling or walk-ins allowed. (Section 2, page 4)

- Local agencies must have a written policy guiding the clear expectations for secure communication when using a texting or digital platform in the provision of WIC and Breastfeeding Peer Counseling (BFPC) Program services and conversation between staff and applicants/participants. (Section 2, page 5)

- Local agencies must have a written policy that identifies the staff position and alternate staff position who will be the Local NVRA Point Person. This point person is responsible for the management of "NVRA Agency Transmittal Forms" and retention of the "Board of Elections Voter Registration Preference Forms". (Section 7, page 18)

# Eligibility Criteria

An individual must fulfill four requirements to be eligible to participate in the North Carolina WIC program. Eligibility must be determined at each certification. Refer to Section 8 for information on the WIC certification schedule.

- **Categorical Eligibility**
  An individual must belong to one of the following categories of people:

  - **Pregnant Woman** (proof of pregnancy is not required)

  - **Breastfeeding Woman (up to one year postpartum)**
    A woman up to one year postpartum who breastfeeds or expresses her breastmilk with the intention to feed to her infant on the average of at least once a day.

    A non-birth woman who breastfeeds a WIC infant is eligible for up to the infant's first birthday. A non-birth breastfeeding woman must be an adoptive mother of the WIC infant and/or living in the same household as the WIC infant that is receiving her breastmilk and she must meet all eligibility requirements of residency, income, and nutrition risk.

  - **Postpartum Women (up to 6 months postpartum)**
    A woman who has been pregnant within the past 6 months is categorically eligible to participate in WIC, regardless of the length of the pregnancy or its outcome (i.e. live term birth, fetal death, miscarriage or neonatal death).

  - **Infants (birth to under one year of age)**

  - **Children (one year of age up to their fifth birthday)**

- **Residential Eligibility**
  An individual must reside within the state of North Carolina. Length of residency within North Carolina is not a factor impacting eligibility for WIC. Refer to Section 5 of this chapter for additional guidance on residential eligibility.

- **Income Eligibility**
  An individual must provide documentation of adjunctive eligibility or a gross household income at or below 185% of the current federal poverty income guidelines. Refer to Chapter 6B for additional guidance on income eligibility.

- **Nutrition Risk Eligibility**
  An individual must be at nutritional risk, as determined by a competent professional authority (CPA) using North Carolina's nutrition risk criteria. Refer to Chapter 6C for additional guidance on completing a nutrition assessment and determining nutrition risk eligibility.

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# Application Process

Local agencies must accept applications whenever the agency is open. An application for WIC Program certification must be started whenever an individual/parent/guardian/caretaker contacts (by phone, via text, digital format or in-person) the local agency and asks for WIC services. The application process must be provided at no cost to the applicant.

Local agencies must address the needs of ***all*** applicants but are required to make program services more accessible for applicants who live in rural areas, have transportation problems, and/or are employed or attend school. Time specific appointments should be made available to individuals who are in school or who work to minimize time spent away from work and school. Refer to Chapter 10 Caseload Management for additional information about program access.

- **Processing Standards**
  Local agencies must inform applicants whether they are eligible (or ineligible) for the WIC Program within the required time frames. These time frames are called "Application Processing Standards" and they become effective whenever an individual contacts the local agency and asks for WIC services. The time intervals shown below must be used to meet processing standards.

| WIC Program Processing Standards | |
|---|---|
| **Type of applicant** | **Time interval in which applicant must be notified of eligibility/ineligibility** |
| ▪ Pregnant women eligible as Priority I participants<br>▪ Infants younger than six months<br>▪ Migrant farmworkers* and their family members who soon plan to leave the agency's service area<br>▪ Homeless individuals** | 10 calendar days from contact |
| ▪ All other applicants | 20 calendar days from contact |

*** Migrant Farmworkers**
Migrant farmworkers and their family members are defined by federal regulation as individuals whose principal employment (over 50 percent) is in agriculture on a seasonal basis, who have been so employed within the last 24 months, and who establish a temporary residence for the purpose of such employment.

****Homeless Individuals**
Homeless individuals are defined by federal regulations as a woman, infant or child who lacks a fixed and regular nighttime residence, or who have a primary nighttime residence that is a supervised public or private shelter, including an emergency shelter, a congregate shelter, a shelter for victims of domestic violence designated to provide temporary living accommodation; an institution that provides temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; a temporary accommodation of not more than 365 days in the residence of another individual; or a public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as a regular accommodation for human beings.

- **Local Agency Processing Standards Policy**
  When an applicant contacts the local agency, and the agency does not routinely give specific appointments, such as in open access scheduling systems or allow walk-ins, a written policy must be in place detailing how applications will be handled within processing standards.

- **Requests for WIC Program Services**
  When someone contacts the local agency and asks for WIC services, staff should take the following actions:

  - **Conduct a State-wide Crossroads Search**
    Local agency staff should conduct a state-wide Crossroads search to locate an existing Crossroads record or establish a new Crossroads record for the family for whom the caller is inquiring.

  - **Explain Eligibility Requirements**
    Staff should explain categorical, income, residential, and nutrition eligibility requirements and the types of documents that will be needed to complete the eligibility determination, including proof of identity, proof of residence, and proof of income. The caller should be informed they must visit the local WIC agency in person to be determined for WIC eligibility.

  - **Schedule a WIC Initial Certification Appointment within Processing Standards**
    When an applicant contacts the local WIC agency by phone or comes in and asks for WIC services, the applicant must be given an appointment within processing standards. Refer to WIC Program Processing Standards table on page 3.
    - **Applicant Request.** An appointment may only be scheduled outside of processing standards due to applicant request. Staff must document the reason the appointment was made outside of processing standards in the applicant's record. Acceptable reasons include:
      – the applicant prefers an appointment outside of the applicable processing standard
      – the applicant wishes to coordinate the appointment with another family member that causes the appointment to be outside of the applicable processing standard.

      *Note: If "Other" is selected in the dropdown, the reason the appointment is made outside of processing standards must also be documented in the applicant's record.*
    - **Local Agency Request.** If an appointment is scheduled outside of processing standards due to the local agency's request, the agency must document the reason in the participant's record.

    The "Detail Initial Certification Appointments Made Outside of Processing Standards" report can be used to identify trends and details and evaluate ways to decrease appointments made outside of processing standards within the local agency's control.

  - **Follow-up**
    Local agencies can use the Crossroads "Daily Appointments to be Rescheduled Detail" report to identify and follow-up with applicants who do not keep their appointment for WIC eligibility determination. Required follow-up is within ten days of the date of the

missed appointment for pregnant women and within fifteen days for all other WIC categories.

- **Local Agency Texting/Digital Platform Policy**
  Each local agency engaging in conversation with program applicants or participants via text or digital platform must have a Local Agency Texting/Digital Platform Policy to guide clear expectations for secure communication between staff and applicants/participants in addition to use in the provision of WIC and Breastfeeding Peer Counseling (BFPC Program services. The local agency policy must address the following components:

  - **Handling Protected Health Information (PHI).** Protected health information includes any personal identifying data that are private/confidential such as the name of an applicant or participant, address, telephone number, health data for the individual and application status for and/or participation status in the WIC Program. To protect participant information, the local agency must:
    - Ensure the security of the utilized digital platform
    - Use only agency-issued technology and user accounts (no personal devices or personal user account)
    - Determine a process to offer the applicant/participant the chance to opt-in or out of each technology platform and document the participant's acceptance/refusal

  - **Use in WIC Program Services.** To provide secure and accurate information plus adhere to consistent documentation expectations, there are limits to texting/digital platforms for the provision of WIC program services.
    - A digital platform is appropriate for scheduling, appointment reminders and invitation to nutrition education classes.
    - WIC appointments must not be conducted by text.
      - Messages should be short and straightforward with attention to the use of proper punctuation, spaces, only easily understood abbreviations included on the local agency's approved abbreviation list, and not using images or icons (i.e., emojis).
      - Any situation that requires a more complex or nuanced discussion must happen in person, over the phone, or an alternative communication route such as video, chat or portal.
    - Document conversations in Crossroads within the participant Care Plan for continuity of care.

  - **Use in Breastfeeding Peer Counseling (BFPC) Program Services**. Written digital communication (e.g., text messaging, email, or other approved messaging platforms) is permitted as a method of participant communication, when used in accordance with the local agency's BFPC Service Delivery Model Policy (Chapter 9, Section 7). All such communication must comply with the security, privacy, and communication standards outlined in this policy.

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# Physical Presence

All applicants/participants must be physically present at the initial certification and at each subsequent certification, and their presence must be documented. Physical presence can be verified with the incorporation of videoconferencing in the provision of WIC Program services.

- **Documentation of Physical Presence**
  Staff must document whether or not the individual is physically present on the Participant Demographics screen in Crossroads.

  When the applicant/participant is not physically present and the reason for his/her absence meets one of the allowable exceptions; staff must make a selection from the Physical Presence Exception Reason drop down and complete the eligibility determination.

  When the applicant is not physically present and the reason for his/her absence does not meet one of the allowable exceptions, the eligibility determination must be deferred but completed within processing standards (Refer to Section 2 for information on processing standards).

- **Exceptions to the Requirement for Physical Presence at Certification**
  Allowable exceptions to the physical presence requirement are limited to the following situations and must be evaluated for each individual at each certification.

  - **An applicant/participant or parent/guardian/caretaker with a current medical condition** which can be self-reported by the applicant/participant/guardian/caretaker, or documented by a physician or other health care provider in the applicant's/participant's health record, or provided through a medical referral form. **The conditions are limited to:**
    - a medical condition that necessitates the use of medical equipment that is not easily transportable;
    - a contagious illness that may be communicated to others by coming to the agency;
    - a serious illness that may be compromised by coming to the local agency, or a medical condition that requires confinement to bed rest; or
    - a fragile premature infant who may be compromised by coming to the local agency.

  - **An Infant Under Eight Weeks of Age** who cannot be present at certification may be exempt from the physical presence requirement for a reason determined to be appropriate by the local agency. All necessary information that pertains to ongoing healthcare to complete the certification must be provided by the parent/guardian/caretaker.

  - **An Infant or Child Receiving Documented Ongoing Health Care** from any health care provider, including the local agency, may be exempt from the physical presence requirement when being physically present would pose an unreasonable barrier to participation. This exemption may be used if the infant or child was present at his/her initial certification.

- **An Infant or Child Whose Parent(s)' Working Status Presents a Barrier**
  An infant or child who is under the care of one parent who works, or is under the care of two parents who both work, may be exempt from the physical presence requirement when the work schedule of the parent(s) presents a barrier to bringing the infant or child to the WIC clinic. This exemption may be used if the infant or child was present at his/her initial certification *and* was present at his/her certification/subsequent certification within the past twelve months, and this certification period has not expired.

# Proof of Identity

At each certification appointment, proof of identity must be provided by the applicant/participant or by the parent/guardian/caretaker if the applicant/participant is an infant or child.

- **Acceptable Proof of Identity**
  Refer to Attachment 1 for documents that can be used by the applicants/participants to establish proof of identity.

- **Documentation of Proof of Identity**
  Local agency staff must review at least one current form of identification (ID) for each applicant/participant and document the type of identification reviewed in the Crossroads system. It is NOT necessary or required to scan a copy of the proof used to confirm identity. Documents may be provided in an electronic/digital format (laptops, emails, cell phones, tablets, texted pictures, etc.). If there is concern about the authenticity of the document, staff should attempt to verify the documents in every way possible. If the documentation cannot be verified, staff may require the participant/parent/guardian/caretaker provide the original documents.

- **Individual Lacks Proof of Identity**

  - **Failure to Bring Existing Proof of Identity**
    - At a certification appointment when an individual has proof of identity but fails or forgets to bring the proof, the determination of eligibility must be deferred but completed within processing standards (Refer to Section 2 for information on processing standards). Review with the applicant Attachment 1 for documents that may be reviewed to establish proof of identity.
    - At a subsequent certification appointment, eligibility determination cannot be completed until proof of identity is provided. Once the application for subsequent certification is begun in Crossroads, the participant's record status moves to applicant status. No further benefit issuance would be allowed until the subsequent certification is completed. Review with the applicant Attachment 1 for documents that may be reviewed to establish proof of identity.

  - **Proof of Identity Does Not Exist**
    **"**The Affidavit for Identity" must be printed from Crossroads, completed, signed and scanned back into the Crossroads system. Legitimate situations may exist when an individual is unable to provide proof of identity. These include when an individual:
    - is a victim of theft, loss, or disaster,
    - is homeless,
    - is a migrant farm worker, and/or
    - has had to flee from a high risk situation (i.e., battered women/children, evacuee, or refugee) and subsequently left behind all identification.

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# Proof of Residence

At each certification appointment, proof of the place of residence (where the applicant routinely lives or spends the night) must be provided by the applicant/participant or by the parent/caretaker if the applicant/participant is an infant/child. The physical address must be a North Carolina residence. There is no requirement on the length of time an applicant must reside at the location or address before applying for WIC.

- **Acceptable Proof of Residence**
  Refer to Attachment 1 for documents that can be used by applicants/participants to establish proof of residency.

  Any item used for proof must show a current physical address. When the applicant/participant only has documents that lists a post office box, staff must document the physical address as well as the mailing address in the Crossroads system. Documents may be provided in an electronic/digital format (laptops, emails, cell phones, tablets, texted pictures, etc.). If there is concern about the authenticity of the document, staff should attempt to verify the documents in every way possible. If the documentation cannot be verified, staff may require the participant/parent/guardian/caretaker provide the original documents.

  The proof of residence provided may be in the name of a family household member other than the applicant/participant. The document can serve as proof of residence for each applicant/participant in the family household.

- **Documentation of Proof of Residence**
  Local agency staff must review at least one proof of residence for each applicant/participant. Staff must document the type of proof of residence in the Crossroads system. It is NOT necessary or required to scan a copy of the proof used to confirm residency.

- **Individual Lacks Proof of Residence**

  - **Failure to Bring Existing Proof of Residence**
    - At an initial certification appointment when an individual has proof of residence but fails to bring the proof to the certification appointment, the determination of eligibility must be deferred but completed within processing standards unless the applicant prefers to return outside of processing standards.
    - At a subsequent certification appointment, eligibility determination cannot be completed until proof of residence is provided. Inform the participant of the needed documentation and complete the eligibility determination at a subsequent visit as per local agency policy. Once the application for subsequent certification has begun in Crossroads, the participant's record status moves to applicant. No further issuance would be allowed until the subsequent certification is completed. Review with the applicant Attachment 1 for documents that may be reviewed to establish proof of residency.

- **Proof of Residence Does Not Exist**
  When an individual is unable to provide proof of residence, the reason for lack of proof must be documented in the Crossroads system. The Affidavit for Residency must be printed from Crossroads, completed, signed and scanned into the Crossroads system. Legitimate situations where proof of residence may be lacking include when an individual:
  - has moved recently and his/her current address is not yet on any documents;
  - is a victim of theft, loss, or disaster;
  - is homeless;
  - is living in a shelter or institution; (Refer to Chapter 6E for information on WIC Program requirements related to institutions and homeless facilities.)
  - is a migrant farm worker; and/or
  - has had to flee from a high risk situation (i.e. battered women/children or refugee) and subsequently left behind all proof of residence.

Staff should use professional judgment in a consistent manner when evaluating the merit of other situations that may be presented as a reason for lacking proof of residence.

- **When Place of Residence Must be Kept Confidential**
  It is essential to maintain confidentiality of residency for applicants/participants who are living in a shelter or residential facility for battered women and/or children. The physical address is a required field on the Family Demographics screen in Crossroads system. The local agency may choose to use either the agency address, "Confidential" or "See Affidavit" as the entry in this section as a means to protect the at risk woman or family. Proof Provided by Affidavit should be selected as proof of residence. Staff should print from Crossroads, complete, sign and scan the "Affidavit of Residency" into the Crossroads system.

# Representatives for Infants/Children at Certification

Infants and children should be accompanied by their parent/guardian/caretaker at each certification.

- **Parents**
  Parents, natural or by marriage (step-mother or father), can serve as the infant/child's representative when applying for WIC benefits.

- **Guardians**
  Foster parents and other court appointed guardians can serve as the infant/child's representative when applying for WIC benefits.

  A child is considered a family unit of one if he/she is living in foster care designated by the local Department of Social Services (DSS) or is living in a private/public child placement agency licensed by the State of North Carolina/DHHS/DSS. The foster parent must provide proof of identity and residency for the infant/child in foster care.

- **Caretakers**
  A caretaker may be an extended family member such as a grandparent, aunt, uncle, or other family member 18 years of age or older. A caretaker may also be a neighbor or friend in whose care the child is routinely placed.

  When an infant/child is left in the care of an adult for reasons such as child abandonment, incarceration of the parent, or death of the parent, the adult may be considered a caretaker. The circumstance that requires the use of an emergency caretaker must be documented in the infant/child’s Crossroads record. The emergency caretaker can serve in the place of the absent parent as the infant/child’s representative when applying for WIC benefits. Once the requirements for certification are met, staff should issue food benefits for an appropriate time based on the nutrition care plan and schedule the next appointment.

- **Offer the Option of Naming a Parent/Guardian 2 and/or Caretaker**
  Staff should explain the role of the parent/guardian 2 and caretaker as being able to perform all the functions of the parent/guardian 1 as the representative for an infant or child. Naming a second or third representative provides convenience to the parent/guardian 1 by allowing them to bring the infant/child to mid-certification and subsequent certification appointments, as well as signing for food benefits.

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# National Voter Registration Act (NVRA)

The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) of 1993 requires a number of benefit programs, including the WIC Program, to offer program applicants/participants/parents/guardians/caretakers the opportunity to register to vote.

For the WIC Program, the requirements of the NVRA are effective whenever an individual applies for WIC Program services, is subsequently certified for Program services, or notifies staff of a change in address or name. For infants/children, the NVRA requirements apply to their parents/guardians/caretakers.

■ **Requirements of the NVRA for WIC Programs**
At the time of application for program benefits, subsequent certification, or a change in residential address or name, local agency WIC staff must:

- Offer the opportunity to register to vote by asking the following question using the exact wording stated: "If you are not registered to vote where you live now, would you like to apply to register to vote here today?"
  - The above question must be asked to all present applicants/participants/parents/guardians/caretakers 18 years or older, or be at least 16 years old with the understanding that the individual must be at least 18 years old on election day of the general election to vote or to update their address or name information with the local Board of Elections.
    *NOTE: The voter registration area in Crossroads will not be active for anyone under 18 years of age at the time of the visit. Local agency staff must remember to ask the question of participants/parent or guardians who are 16 or older and proceed with providing voter registration materials and assistance in completing the forms as needed*.
  - It must be clarified that the applicant/participant/parent/guardian/caretaker's decision to accept or decline the opportunity to register to vote will in no way affect any decision regarding their eligibility for the WIC Program.
  - Document in Crossroads the response to the voter registration question by selecting the applicable dropdown box option.

- Provide the applicant/participant/parent/guardian/caretaker a Voter Registration Preference Form (available in English and Spanish) to complete and sign.
  - Form completion includes checking the appropriate box to document that they have been offered the opportunity to register to vote. If an individual declines to sign, the individual will be considered to have decided not to register to vote at this time.

- Offer the NC Voter Registration Application (available in English and Spanish) to all applicants/participants/parents/guardians/caretakers and offer assistance in completing the application upon request.

*NOTE: It is the responsibility of the boards of elections and not Local Agency staff to determine the eligibility of participants to register and vote in North Carolina.*

- Maintain a copy of the original Voter Registration Preference Form in a confidential manner on site for a period of four years. Forms must be available for review upon request.
  *NOTE: WIC confidentiality requirements do not allow the release of WIC applicant/ participant information beyond the completed NC Voter Registration Application to parties outside the WIC Program.*

There may be instances when a participant reports to LA staff a change in residential and/or name over the phone or videoconferencing. The requirements of the NVRA remain and LA staff must:

- Offer the opportunity to register to vote by asking the following question using the exact wording stated: "If you are not registered to vote where you live now, would you like to apply to register to vote here today?"

- Document the response to the voter registration question by selecting the applicable dropdown box option that is provided in the Crossroads system.

- Complete the Voter Registration Preference Form by documenting the response of the applicant/participant and include the name in the signature field. The LA staff providing the service must also include their initials and document "transaction conducted via telephone" on the form.

- Staff must mail a Voter Registration Application to the individual regardless of their response to the NVRA question.

- Advise the individual that assistance is available by contacting the North Carolina State Board of Elections at:
  - Phone: 919.814.0700 or 866.522.4723
  - E-Mail: elections.sboe@ncsbe.gov.

■ **Required NVRA Forms – North Carolina State Board of Elections**
There are three required forms the NC WIC Program must utilize to implement the WIC Program NVRA policy, the forms are listed below:

1. NC Voter Registration Application
2. Voter Registration Preference Form
3. NVRA Agency Transmittal Form

■ **NC Voter Registration Application**
All local agencies must maintain a supply of Voter Registration Applications on site to implement the requirements of the NVRA. This form is available for ordering from the NC

State Board of Elections (SBOE), https://www.ncsbe.gov/registering/national-voter-registration-act-nvra/request-voter-registration-applications-nvra-agencies-and-county-boards. Voter Registration Application Forms for use by local agencies are numbered with a specific source code and local agencies should not photocopy other registration forms with a different blank source codes for convenience.

- **Voter Registration Preference Form**
  Voter Registration Preference Forms may be ordered directly from Community Nutrition Services Section (CNSS) using the CNSS Requisition Form.

- **NVRA Agency Transmittal Form**
  The NVRA Agency Transmittal form is a summary of completed Voter Registration Applications. The preference form count is also included on the transmittal form.

  - The completed packet along with the transmittal form is submitted by designated local agency staff to their county Board of Elections office by the delivery method options listed on the form: In person, Mail, Courier or County Mail.

  - In the event an agency has no NC Voter Registration Applications to submit, the NVRA Transmittal Form must be completed with the preference form count included. This completed form must be submitted within five (5) business days of obtaining Preference forms. The completed form may be emailed to the local Board of Elections (BOE), after confirmation with the local BOE that this is acceptable.

  - NVRA Transmittal Forms are specifically customized for local WIC agencies and are available for order on the CNSS Materials Requisition Form or from the CNSS website https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/child-and-family-well-being/community-nutrition-services-section/wic/staff/wic-local-agency-resources.

  - Forms must be available for review upon request.

  *NOTE*: *The completed NVRA Agency Transmittal Form and completed Voter Registration Applications must be submitted to the county BOE by local agency designated staff within five business days. Local agency designated staff must maintain a copy of the original Voter Registration Preference Form and the NVRA Transmittal Form in a confidential manner on site for a period of four years.*

- **NVRA Training**
  The State Board of Elections provides a minimum of one (1) annual NVRA training for all WIC program staff. NVRA training is encouraged to be included as part of new employee orientation.

- Documentation of staff participation in annual NVRA training should be maintained on file in the local agency. The documentation should at a minimum include the date and names of persons trained and an outline or agenda of the topics covered in the training

- **Display of the NVRA Poster**
  The NVRA poster must be on display where it may be read by those who receive WIC services. It may also be displayed in group or individual nutrition education areas. The poster is created by the State Board of elections and shared with the CNSS. A local agency can order the poster using the CNSS requisition form.

- **Local Agency Protocol**
  Each local agency must have a written policy that identifies the Local NVRA Point Person position and alternate Local NVRA Point Person position responsible for the management and retention of the NVRA Agency Transmittal Forms, Voter Registration Preference Forms, and Voter Registration Applications.

  When the staff position changes, the WIC Director or local agency designated staff must update the policy and immediately notify the Regional Nutrition Consultant (RNC).

# Certification Periods

Individuals are initially certified for a defined period of time depending on their participant category. At the end of each certification period, individuals must "reapply" and be subsequently certified for program benefits to continue.

- **Initial Certification Periods**
  The length of the initial certification period is outlined below. At the end of the initial certification period, eligible participants must be subsequently certified according to the below defined schedule in order for WIC Program benefits to continue.

| Category of Participant | Length of Certification Period |
|---|---|
| ***Women*** | |
| Pregnant Women | duration of pregnancy and until 6 weeks postpartum |
| Breastfeeding Women | until the breastfed infant turns 1 year or when breastfeeding stops, if infant is greater than 6 months |
| Postpartum Women | until 6 months postpartum, regardless of pregnancy outcome |
| ***Infants*** | |
| Infants certified before 6 months of age | until first birthday with the local agency ensuring that the infant receives the required health and nutrition assessments |
| Infants certified between 6 months of age and one year* | 6 months |
| ***Children*** | |
| 1 to 4 years of age (certified until the day before their fifth birthday) | 1 year with the local agency ensuring that the child receives the required health and nutrition assessments |

**Note: In Crossroads, there are times that an infant initially certified in their 11th month will have a certification period of one year. Users are encouraged to create a plan of care reflective of the length of the certification period.*

- **Subsequent Certification Period Start Date**
  A subsequent certification can be performed up to 30 days prior to the end of the current

certification period. The subsequent certification period for a child begins the day following the end of the initial/prior certification period. The subsequent certification period for a woman begins on the day she is certified in a new participant category.

If a participant is determined ineligible for a subsequent certification prior to the expiration of the current certification period, local agency staff must provide food benefits for the remainder of the current certification period.

- **Certification Period Extension**
  A 30-day certification extension is an option when an infant or child needs a subsequent certification and scheduling difficulties occur. A one-time maximum 30-day extension is allowed when the current date is within 30-days of the end of the certification period. Refer to Chapter 8 for additional guidance on food benefits issuance during an extended certification period.

**ALLOWABLE PROOFS FOR IDENTITY AND RESIDENCE****

| **Integrity Document** **(must be original documents, not copies)** | ***Proof of Identity** *(Must be in applicant's name)* | ***Proof of Residence** *(Must include current physical address)* |
|---|---|---|
| Affidavit (unmarried mothers) | *(only for infants)* | ✓ |
| Bill, account statement, or receipt less than 60 days old (e.g., bank, credit card, loan papers, mortgage/ rental, utility) | ✓ | ✓ |
| Birth Certificate | ✓ | *(only for infants)* |
| Blank Check | ✓ | ✓ |
| Check cashing, credit, or bank ATM card | ✓ | |
| Letterhead correspondence < 60 days old (with address and telephone number of source. (Note: postmarked forwarded mail and WIC generated correspondence is acceptable) | ✓ | ✓ *(only if in applicant's name)* |
| Food and Nutrition Services certification letter | ✓ | ✓ |
| Foster Child placement letter | ✓ | ✓ |
| Hospital crib card or discharge papers | ✓ | ✓ |
| Hospital ID Card or Bracelet | ✓ | ✓ |
| Immunization Record | *(only for Infants & children)* | ✓ |
| Income tax filing for the most recent tax year | ✓ | ✓ |
| Insurance Card or Insurance Policy | ✓ | ✓ |
| LES (military Leave and Earnings Statement) | ✓ | ✓ |
| Marriage License less than 60 days old | ✓ | ✓ |
| Medicaid or Medicaid Presumptive Eligibility (*Must first verify current eligibility)* | ✓ | ✓ |
| Medicaid or NC Health Choice Approval Notice (DMA-5003) | ✓ | ✓ |
| Mother's Verification of Facts (MVF) signed and dated' less than 12 months old | *(only for infants)* | ✓ |
| NCDHHS Vital Records Working Copy Document | *(only for infants born after 12/31/2023)* | ✓ |
| Paycheck stub or direct deposit notification <60 days old * | ✓ | ✓ |
| Permanent Residence Card ("green card") | ✓ | ✓ |
| Photo ID (current): DMV, US governmental agency, US passport, military, school | ✓ | ✓ |
| Property tax statement | ✓ | ✓ |
| Proof of birth letter | *(only for infants)* | |
| Social Security card | ✓ | |
| Unemployment letter/notice | ✓ | ✓ |
| Verification of certification (VOC) (for current certification period) | ✓ | |
| Voter registration card for NC | ✓ | ✓ |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Work ID card | ✓ | ✓ |
| **Only at Recertification** | | |
| Visual Recognition | ✓ | |
| **NC eWIC Card | ✓ | |

* In some cases, the allowable document may be provided in a digital format. If there is concern about the authenticity of the document, staff should attempt to verify the documents in every way possible. If the documentation cannot be verified, staff may require the participant/parent/guardian/caretaker provide the original documents.

** NC eWIC card can be used as identification after initial certification has been established. Local agency staff must ask participant/parent/guardian/caretaker their name, address and date of birth and confirm this information in Crossroads system. When an individual present is the proxy, identification must be established before food benefits can be issued according to allowable proof of identity.

When the applicant/participant only has items that list a post office box, staff must document the physical address as well as the mailing address in the Crossroads system.