

eWIC Frequently Asked Questions for Local Agencies

1. Can WIC participants use eWIC with online grocery ordering?

No, WIC participants cannot use eWIC with online grocery ordering.

2. Is eWIC still just for use in North Carolina?

Yes, NC eWIC benefits can only be transacted in NC.

3. Will there be machines at each computer to load cards, not just at the processing assistants' computers?

With eWIC, cards are not "loaded." Food benefits are issued to an Electronic Benefit Account (EBA) and an eWIC card is issued to the cardholder. Card readers are used to read the 16-digit card number. Any local agency WIC staff that issues eWIC cards will have an eWIC card reader. Additional card readers are available for staff that may want to use the eWIC card to search for families. The card reader is smaller than a computer mouse and can be attached to the side of your computer monitor.

4. Will foster children have their own card so that their benefits will be kept separate from other members in the foster family?

Yes, foster children will have their own EBA that will contain their food benefits and will be issued their own eWIC card.

5. Does eWIC update in Crossroads in real time? For example, if a participant uses their card in a store at 10 am and then contacts the WIC office at 10:15 am and states that they have lost their card, will Crossroads reflect the 10 am purchase?

Crossroads reflects eWIC purchases in real time but ONLY on the shopping list; the FI list and "Purchases under Journal of Transactions" will not be updated until after the overnight batch process.

6. Will the app that is associated with eWIC have the capability to send the participant an alert when their WIC EBT card is empty to remind them that it's time for their card to be reload/time for their appointment?

The eWIC app (Bnft) will provide WIC participants with current food benefit balances (including zero balance). Notifications regarding when benefits will expire and account activity can be sent if selected by the participant, but the app does not communicate with the Crossroads scheduling module.

7. Will the shopping list printed for the participant have the next appointment on it?

While the shopping list will have "First Date to Spend" and "Last Date to Spend" listed for each month of benefits issued, it does not have the next appointment printed on it.

8. How does the Parent/Guardian 2 (PG2) or Caretaker set the PIN on the eWIC card?

The eWIC card can be issued to either the PG1, the PG2 or the Caretaker. Whoever the card is issued to is the Cardholder. The PIN is created after the Cardholder provides his/her own date of birth and the zip code of the address in the record. If there is a physical address AND a mailing address, the zip code of the mailing address is used. So, if the eWIC card is issued to the PG2, the PG2's date of birth is used to PIN the card.

9. How many times can a participant have his/her eWIC card replaced if lost?

An eWIC card may be replaced as many times as needed. Families who need their card replaced more than three times should be encouraged but are not required to use the eWIC Customer Service system for a mailed replacement. Local staff can review the EBT Card History box on the Issue EBT Card screen to view reasons for multiple (excessive) replacements and discuss ways to reduce card replacement with the cardholder as needed.

10. Why can eWIC cards be replaced when paper food instruments can't be replaced?

The EBT system of food benefit issuance is significantly different from a paper system. Food benefits are not on the card, instead they are stored in the participant's Electronic Benefits Account (EBA). The eWIC card is the means of accessing their benefits in the EBA, and it is protected by a PIN. Replacing the NC eWIC card does not change the amount of food benefits remaining in the family EBA. Any current food benefits reported as missing or stolen from an EBA cannot be reissued. When participants are issued their eWIC card for the first time, they will be encouraged to handle them securely as they did their paper benefits. If a card is truly lost or stolen, it no longer means that the participant has to go the remainder of the month or three months without the benefit of the WIC food package, and police reports are no longer needed. Being able to replace the eWIC card is also a benefit for state and local staff, because we will no longer be faced with whether to replace benefits for which we cannot determine the status.

11. When the Parent/Guardian 1 or 2 or Caretaker changes, local users should deactivate the previous eWIC card and issue a new eWIC card. If there are redeemed but irretrievable food benefits such as cans of infant formula, can users add the benefit back to the EBA or do we issue cans of formula from inventory or order from CNSS?

Irretrievable formula could be re-issued from your physical inventory or ordered from CNSS. Each situation must be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The previous eWIC card would be deactivated only if there are no other participants in the original family.

12. If a participant has a formula change and the participant returns cans of formula, can that benefit be added back to the EBA or do we have to issue from inventory or order from CNSS?

When there are formula changes for participants with eWIC, the Exchange/Increase screen is used to exchange the formula. If there is formula left in the EBA, the Quantity from EBT Account field is completed, and that formula is automatically exchanged. There is also a field on the Exchange/Increase screen for local users to add in the number of returned cans of formula. Resources will be provided prior to your rollout on how to use Exchange/Increase with eWIC.

13. Can clinics continue to use their WIC Wallets?

You are welcome to continue using the WIC Wallets until they are gone. CNSS has quite a supply in the warehouse to order. We will not be reordering any after the warehouse supply is depleted. We are working on something to eventually replace the WIC Wallets, but do not have it in place yet.

14. If food instruments (FIs) are printed and the participant or CPA notices a mistake, the FIs must be voided, corrections made and new FIs printed. How would this be done with the eWIC card?

Once your clinic has rolled out eWIC, after the Issue button is clicked the participant's electronic signature is obtained and Crossroads issues the aggregated food benefits to the family's Electronic Benefits Account. A status message will appear in Crossroads stating, "EBT Benefits were sent successfully." After issuance, Crossroads navigates to the Food Instrument List screen. Local users must use the Print Shopping List button on the bottom right of the screen to open and print the Shopping List. This list displays the Food Benefit Balance for each month of issuance. It includes the first and last date to purchase, the quantity, unit of measure and description of food item. Local users will review this list with the participant. If the user or participant notices mistakes, the benefits can be voided and reissued.

15. What will participants use as a WIC ID? Will they get a WIC ID like we have used the WIC wallet or does the e-WIC card serve as the WIC ID?

WIC participants will be able to use their eWIC card as ID for food benefit issuance and subsequent certifications.