

State of New Mexico WIC Program Disaster Plan

2019 Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

Clinic Version (Tier I): Providing Expedited Services in Clinic



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Background

A new coronavirus is causing an outbreak of pneumonia. The virus was first identified in December 2019, among people who visited a seafood and animal market in Wuhan City, China. Health authorities have confirmed that the virus is able to spread from person to person. Cases have been identified in the United States.

The New Mexico Department of Health, Public Health Division is closely monitoring this outbreak in collaboration with other national, state and local partners. This is a rapidly evolving situation and the New Mexico WIC Program is in constant communication as we await updates and guidance from the department.

In the case of this Public Health Emergency, the New Mexico Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program will implement these procedures if WIC services have been or need to be disrupted. The state agency (SA) will focus on providing support to WIC Clinics and Contract Agencies affected by this emergency.

WIC is a federally funded program that serves a specific population with special nutritional needs. WIC is not designed or funded to meet the basic nutritional needs of disaster victims who would not otherwise be eligible under the program. Unlike the distribution of commodities or the emergency issuance of food stamps, there is no legislatively mandated role for WIC in disaster relief, nor is there legislative authority for using WIC food funds for purposes other than providing allowable food benefits to categorically eligible participants. WIC must operate in disaster situations within its current program context and funding. For these reasons, WIC is not to be considered a first line of defense in responding to nutritional needs of disaster victims, including the provision of infant formula.

During this period of emergency, every reasonable effort will be made to continue issuance of food benefits to participants.

Best Practices for Preventing Illness

Best practice for preventing illness and the spread of the virus, please refer to

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/protect/prevent.html>
2. <https://cv.nmhealth.org/>
3. In addition, after any contact with an applicant/participant and/or EBT card, immediately staff must wash their hands. After applicants/participants leave the office, staff are to clean countertops, chairs, etc. prior to calling the next person up their workstation.

WIC State and Clinic Protocol

State Agency Responsibilities:

1. The SA will develop a plan for continuation of WIC services to the best of our ability.
2. The SA will assess statewide all inventory including EBT Cards.

3. As necessary, the SA will coordinate communications and services with other state and federal programs, and all WIC business partners.
4. SA will notify vendors to contact the state if there is any disruption in normal business operations that directly impact WIC Families, (i.e. cannot meet minimum stocking requirements or have a change in business hours). SA will document any vendor correspondence.
5. The SA will work with the Drop Ship vendor regarding possible deliveries of special formula to a participant's home or an acceptable physical address.
6. The SA as necessary, will work with the New Mexico Department of Health Media & Social Media Manager to issue a press release and update all social media sites.
7. The SA will update the New Mexico WIC website as necessary.
8. The SA will utilize Mass Text in NMSOL to communicate ongoing changes and/or updates with WIC families (i.e. Scheduling accommodations, clinic closures, etc.).

Region/Clinic Responsibilities:

1. The clinics will follow all procedures listed below.
2. Clinics will post all signage according Department of Health and WIC State Office direction.
3. Clinic staff will refer applicants/participants to any available food assistance and/or HSD for Emergency Food Assistance or Expedited SNAP benefits.
https://www.hsd.state.nm.us/LookingForAssistance/Emergency_Food_Assistance.aspx
4. Clinics will waive all other WIC duties (i.e. Vendor Monitoring, Outreach, etc.). Primary focus is feeding WIC families.

Procedures for Processing Affected Disaster Applicants/Participants

The following policies and procedures will be implemented to expedite services and ensure continuity of care.

New Certifications or Recertifications

Note: *For all applicants who have a card in hand, staff must insert and read the card to open the Family record.*

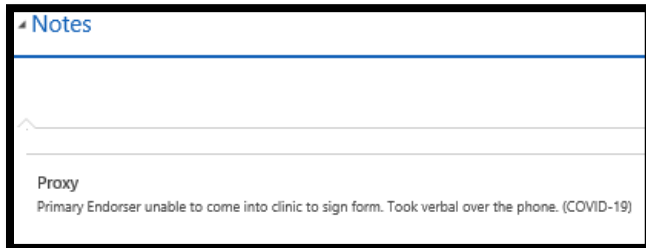
Staff will utilize the Disaster Mode in NMSOL to speed up the processing of certifications/recertifications. The NMSOL Disaster Mode function for a family allows an applicant/participant to be provisionally certified for 120 days with only a risk code and food package selected. All other requirements for a certification/recertification such as anthropometrics, blood work, health history, VENA, income and/or adjunct, residency, and identification, are waived.

Note: All NMSOL (*) required fields will still need to be entered on each page in order to move forward with the abbreviated certification.

Endorsers/Proxies:

Staff must ensure that the correct endorser is selected prior to signing any documents.

When WIC participants are unable to use their benefits because they or another family member are under quarantine (voluntary or involuntary), they have the option to designate a proxy to redeem WIC benefits on their behalf. Staff will make every effort to ensure all documentation is captured. If a proxy form is unable to be signed, staff can take verbal permission over the phone from the primary endorser, and the proxy must be entered as an endorser on the Family page, and documentation must be entered in the Notes field on the Endorser/Proxy page.

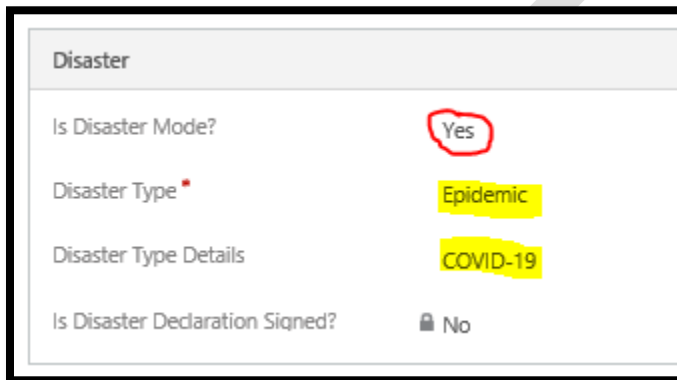


Notes

Proxy
Primary Endorser unable to come into clinic to sign form. Took verbal over the phone. (COVID-19)

Disaster Mode (Family):

Upon selecting Disaster Mode (Family Page) for the applicant staff will document the following:



Disaster

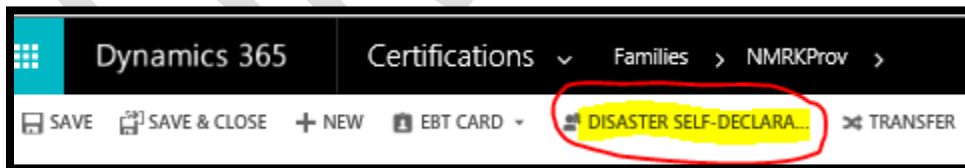
Is Disaster Mode? Yes

Disaster Type Epidemic

Disaster Type Details COVID-19

Is Disaster Declaration Signed? No

After the page is saved, staff must have the applicant/participant sign the Disaster Self-Declaration form.



Dynamics 365 Certifications Families NMRKProv

SAVE SAVE & CLOSE NEW EBT CARD DISASTER SELF-DECLARA... TRANSFER

Most questions will be 'No', but please make sure question # 4 is set to 'Yes'.

My/my child's food benefits had not been received for the current month.

YES

Back Continue

4 / 9

Note: The 2nd required signature is for the WIC staff.

WIC Self-Declaration Form for Disaster Victims

Clinic Information:
 Name: Santa Fe Southside WIC Office
 Address: 2538 Camino Entrada Suites 204-205 Santa Fe
 Santa Fe NM 87507
 Phone No: 505-476-2602 N/A

Mark the statements that describe your situation:

- My/my child's food benefits were received and lost in the disaster.
- My/my child's food benefits were received and cashed and WIC food was lost in the disaster.
- My/my child's food benefits were received and cashed and WIC food was left behind.
- My/my child's food benefits had not been received for the current month.
- I am/my child is a victim of disaster and has no acceptable proof of identification for myself/my child.
- I am/my child is a victim of disaster and has no acceptable proof of residency for myself/my child.
- I am/my child is a victim of disaster and homeless and unable to provide proof of income.

Reason for disaster:
 Disaster Type: Epidemic
 Disaster Type Details: COVID-19

Participant's Affected

- Testing NMRKProv

By signing this form, I affirm that I/my child am not applying for services at any other WIC program during this crisis and am not staying in a shelter that is providing food/formula.

[Handwritten Signature] 2020-03-12 06:57:35
 Applicant/Participant/Parent or Guardian Signature Date

[Handwritten Signature] 2020-03-12 06:57:35
 WIC Official Signature Title Date

Navigate to Document Management on the Family page to ensure the Document Status is 'Signed'.

Document Management			
Document Name	Document Status ↑	Document Link	Created On ↑
Disaster Self Declaration For...	Signed	https://biattrafficmgr03.fnsmis.com/l/8HyEY...	3/12/2020 6:55 AM

Or you can verify in the Disaster Mode section on the Family page.

Disaster	
Is Disaster Mode?	Yes
Disaster Type *	Epidemic
Disaster Type Details	COVID-19
Is Disaster Declaration Signed?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes

The Certifying Authority must then complete all required fields in the Family and Participant pages as necessary.

Participant Type:

Certifying Authority must change 'Participant Type' to 'Disaster' on each applicant/participant being certified.

Participant Category	
Participant Category *	Pregnant
Participant Type	Disaster
Participant Profile	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pregnant-Pregnant
Miscarriage	<input type="checkbox"/>

Risk Code:

Certifying Authority must manually enter the following Risk Code according to Participant Profile if no other Risk Codes are auto assigned:

- Pregnant: **RC 401:** Failure to Meet Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- Breastfeeding/Nursing: **RC 401:** Failure to Meet Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- Postpartum: **RC 401:** Failure to Meet Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- Child 12-23 Months: **RC 428:** Dietary Risk Associated with Complementary Feeding Practices
- Child 24-59 Months: **RC 401:** Failure to Meet Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- Infant: **RC 428:** Dietary Risk Associated with Complementary Feeding Practices

In the Notes section of the Participant Risk Code page please document the following:

*Disaster Cert
COVID-19*

The screenshot shows a web interface for 'PARTICIPANT RISK CODE'. The top left displays '401' with a menu icon. The top right shows the user 'Owner' as 'Santa Fe Southside WIC Office'. The 'General' tab is active, showing fields for 'Participant' (Testing NMRKProv), 'Assigned Method' (Manual), 'Risk Code' (401), and 'Risk Code Expires'. On the right, a 'NOTES' section contains a note titled 'Disaster Cert COVID-19' with the text 'You - Just now'.

Standard Food Package:

Certifying Authority must assess and customize food package as necessary according to current policies. The State Office will send out additional guidance if the situation changes and additional food package customizations are recommended.

Referrals:

Staff will continue to provide applicants/participant with the Healthcare and Social Service Programs brochure (HCSS) and other referrals as necessary.

Counseling:

Staff will inquire and provide nutrition counseling as requested by the applicant/participant. Health History Questionnaires/VENA are not required to complete disaster certification.

Completing the Certification:

After requirements are met, Certifying Authority must certify, have the endorser/proxy sign the Rights & Responsibilities.

Benefit Issuance/Scheduling:

Staff will issue the maximum benefit periods allowable (up to 4 months) within the certification period. Staff will encourage participants to complete online nutrition education. Staff will defer all required nutrition education contacts during this disaster timeframe. For the next appointment, staff will schedule all participants certified in 'Disaster Mode' for a 'Provisional Follow-up'.

Refer to Disaster Recovery procedures for follow up scheduling when NM WIC returns to normal operations.

All Other Appointments (Group Ed, Midcert, Midpoint, All Counseling, etc.)

Note: *For all applicants who have a card in hand, staff must insert and read the card to open the Family record.*

WIC Staff will change the 'Participant Type' to 'Disaster' on each participant being served.

Participant Category	
Participant Category	Pregnant
Participant Type	Disaster
Participant Profile	Pregnant-Pregnant
Miscarriage	<input type="checkbox"/>

Group Education:

When participants come into the clinic for a Group Education appointment, staff will load the maximum allowed benefits to the card. Staff will provide individual counseling as necessary and encourage participants to complete online Nutrition Education classes.

Lactation Counseling:

To continue supporting breastfeeding/nursing parents, staff are encouraged to contact participants prior to their appointment and complete counseling over the phone if possible. If in-person, staff are to inquire and provide appropriate counseling.

Other Counseling:

Staff will inquire and provide nutrition counseling as requested by the participant. Staff will encourage and remind participant to complete online Nutrition Education classes. Staff may utilize existing nutrition education handouts/brochures/tear-offs as needed.

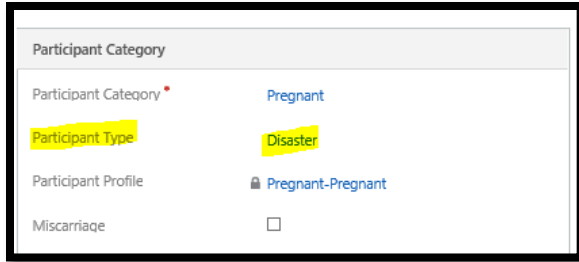
Midcert/Midpoint:

Midcert and Midpoint appointments including collection of Anthropometric and Blood Work data will be deferred until NM WIC returns to normal operations. Staff will inquire and provide nutrition counseling as requested by the participant.

Other Clinic Services

Note: *For all applicants who have a card in hand, staff must insert and read the card to open the Family record.*

WIC Staff will change the 'Participant Type' to 'Disaster' on each participant being served.



Prescriptions:

Staff will follow current WIC policy related to prescription formula. Every effort should be made to obtain the prescription form (i.e. fax). Staff may offer families the option of asking providers to upload prescriptions to the 'Contact Us' section of the New Mexico WIC website. The State Office will deliver any received prescriptions to the appropriate clinics. If regions are having difficulty with prescription approvals, they must contact the state office for assistance.

Drop Ship:

Staff will create the maximum allowable issuances according to benefit issuance guidelines above and write to card, creating the maximum number of drop ship orders. Staff will continue to 'Release' orders according to current Drop Ship policy. **Note:** All prescription guidelines must be followed.

Breastpumps:

Participants that need a breastpump during the time of disaster, will be issued ONLY a Single-User or Manual pump. Staff must remind participants that these pumps are for individual use only. Staff will follow current WIC policy related to breastpump issuance. **Note:** Additional guidance and updates on Multi-User breastpumps will be sent by email to WIC staff from the State Breastfeeding Manager.

Documentation and Reporting

These saved views will be used during disaster recovery to follow up for certification completion and scheduling.

State Agency Responsibilities:

Key staff will run the following views daily and save in the State Office Shared Drive:

- 'Participants Certified in Disaster Mode'
- 'Participants with Participant Type Disaster'

Region/Clinic Responsibilities:

Program Managers will run the following views weekly (Monday Morning) and will save in the following location: WIC Shared Documentation > Disaster > COVID-19 > [Region Folder]

- 'Participants Certified in Disaster Mode'
- 'Participants with Participant Type Disaster'

Disaster Recovery (Return to Normal Operations)

State Agency Responsibilities:

1. The State Agency will work with the MIS Vendor to change the default of benefits issuance from 120 days back to 90 days.
2. The State Agency will work with the MIS Vendor to change the default 'Disaster Mode' default certification period from 120 days back to 90 days.
3. The SA will assess statewide all inventory including EBT Cards.
4. As necessary, the SA will coordinate communications and services with other state and federal programs, and all WIC business partners.
5. The SA will inform the Drop Ship vendor regarding return to normal business operations.
6. The SA will work with the New Mexico Department of Health Media & Social Media Manager to issue a press release and update all social media sites as necessary.
7. The SA will update the New Mexico WIC website as necessary.
8. The SA will utilize Mass Text in NMSOL to communicate return to normal business operations as necessary.
9. Key staff will run the following views weekly and save in the State Office Shared Drive:
 - 'Participants Certified in Disaster Mode
 - 'Participants with Participant Type Disaster'

Region Responsibilities:

Program Managers upon direction of the WIC State Office, will run the following views once and will save in the following location: WIC Shared Documentation > Disaster > COVID-19 > Disaster Recovery > [Region Folder].

- 'Participants Certified in Disaster Mode'
- 'Participants with Participant Type Disaster'

Clinic Responsibilities:

1. As scheduled participants come in, staff will change the 'Participant Type' from 'Disaster' to either Standard, Migrant, Military, or Homeless as necessary. Note: Staff are not to change Participant Type until participant is physically in the clinic.
2. If within the 120-day period, staff do not have to click 'Start-Recertification' to extend the certification, but they must complete all 'normal' certification requirements that were waived during disaster mode.
3. For non-certification appointments, staff will perform and enter, any Anthropometric or Bloodwork data that was deferred during the disaster.
4. All clinics will return to normal operations including scheduling.

References

- Guide to Coordinating WIC Services During Disasters (2017)

- WIC Policy Memorandum 2007-5: WIC Program Response to a Human Pandemic
- WIC Policy Memorandum 2003-4: Allowable Costs of Bioterrorism Preparedness (referenced in above document)
- WIC Program Questions and Answers on Human Pandemics
- Executive Order 2020-004
<https://www.governor.state.nm.us/about-the-governor/executive-orders/>
- <http://www.newmexico.gov/>

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