

WIC During Disaster

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) is not designed to be a disaster assistance program, and is, therefore, not considered a first response option for disaster survivors. WIC policies allow State agencies flexibility in program design and administration to support continuation of benefits to participants during times of natural or other disasters. WIC State agencies are encouraged to work with State and local emergency services offices, as well as FEMA, to assist participants during a disaster.

WIC State Agencies

- ▶ Disaster-related evacuees who seek WIC benefits should receive expedited certification processing.
- ▶ In cases where disaster-related evacuees move in with another household, the displaced individuals may be treated as a separate economic unit.
- ▶ Verification of certification (VOC) information should be provided by the local WIC office to WIC participants when a disaster-related evacuation is anticipated.
- ▶ The documentation requirements for income, residency and/or identity do not apply to a disaster survivors whose documentation has been damaged, lost or destroyed, or if the agency determines the income documentation requirement would present an unreasonable barrier to participation.
- ▶ State agencies may allow the participant's certification period to be shortened or extended by a period not to exceed 30 days.
- ▶ State agencies may establish their own policies and procedures with regard to replacement of unredeemed food instruments (check, vouchers, or EBT Cards) that are destroyed in disasters.
- ▶ State agencies may mail food instruments. When State agencies exercise this option, the nutrition education visit must be rescheduled.

WIC Participants

- ▶ Participants/evacuees do not have to present proof of identity, residency or income that is normally required (that is, if one had to leave home in such a hurry that she was unable to bring the necessary documents, or if those documents were destroyed).
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- ▶ Participants/evacuees may be able to use their original paper food instruments (WIC checks or vouchers) in the State to which they have been relocated. The WIC State agency will inform participants if this is the case, usually through a toll-free telephone number and/or other public announcement. WIC State agencies that are EBT capable may issue the participant a new EBT card.
 - ▶ Contact information for State WIC agencies can be found on the Food and Nutrition Service website: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts>

WIC-Authorized Vendors

(Originating WIC State agency – the WIC State agency in which the participant was initially certified).

- ▶ WIC vendors may be allowed to accept out-of-State paper food instruments during disaster situations. The State agency will advise vendors if this is allowed.
- ▶ If at all possible, the participant should receive the exact brand of infant formula specified on the out-of-State food instrument.
- ▶ If it is not possible to provide the exact brand items for the other foods listed on the WIC food instrument from the originating State agency, a similar item from the out-of-State's WIC-approved food list may be substituted.
- ▶ The originating WIC State agency is responsible for the cost of the food instrument. The out-of-State vendor should deposit each WIC check into his or her bank account for payment. If the originating WIC State agency issues vouchers instead of checks, the out-of-State vendor should submit the vouchers for payment to the originating WIC State agency.

These WIC vendor policies do not apply to State agencies that do not operate through retail stores.

**the following links: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/disasterresponse.htm>
and <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/disasterpolicyguidance.htm>**