



## Memorandum

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#19-086

**TO:** WIC Local Agency Directors

**FROM:** Amanda Hovis, Director  
Nutrition Education / Clinic Services Unit  
Texas WIC Program

**DATE:** October 28, 2019

**SUBJECT:** ***Texas WIC Policies CS:26.0 – Issuance and Disposition of Replacement Texas WIC Cards and CS:27.0 – Enrollment of Transferring Participants***

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This memo announces revisions to Texas WIC Policies *CS:26.0 – Issuance and Disposition of Replacement Texas WIC Cards* and *CS:27.0 – Enrollment of Transferring Participants*. These revisions were reviewed by TALWD and approved by USDA. The revised policies are effective December 1, 2019. At that time they will be posted online and you may update your *Policy and Procedures Manual* by accessing the *WIC Website* at:

<https://hhs.texas.gov/doing-business-hhs/provider-portals/wic-providers/wic-policy-procedures-manual>.

Monitoring will begin on June 1, 2020. A Summary of Changes is below.

### Summary of Changes

#### *Policy CS:26.0 Issuance and Disposition of Replacement Texas WIC Cards*

- Added Procedure V.4 providing a new reason for expediting benefits being when a participant returns from another state without their Texas WIC card that was locked within the past three calendar days.

#### *Policy CS:27.0 Enrollment of Transferring Participants*

- Procedure I was revised to clarify the process for transferring a family record to the gaining clinic and the requirement for documenting proof of current address.
- Revised Procedure III.D.4 with instructions to destroy a WIC card or food instruments/cash value vouchers from the losing state when a participant transfers from out-of-state or from the WIC Overseas Program.

### Training

Live trainings will be announced for November to cover the revisions in both policies.

If you have any questions or require additional information regarding Texas WIC Policies *CS:26.0 – Issuance and Disposition of Replacement Texas WIC Cards* and/or *CS:27.0 – Enrollment of Transferring Participants*, please contact Tiffany Brown, Clinic Services Program Coordinator, Nutrition Education and Clinic Services Unit, at [tiffany.Brown@hhsc.state.tx.us](mailto:tiffany.Brown@hhsc.state.tx.us) or 512-341-4587.

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Effective December 1, 2019

Policy No. CS:26.0

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## **Issuance and Disposition of Replacement Texas WIC Cards**

### **Purpose**

To limit interruption of services to the WIC participant due to the loss, theft, damage, or failure of the Texas WIC Card.

### **Authority**

State Policy

### **Policy**

The local agency (LA) clinic sites shall issue replacement Texas WIC Cards when card is reported lost, stolen, or damaged.

### **Definitions**

**Disabled (Locked) Card** - a Texas WIC Card which has been locked in the MIS due to being lost, stolen, or damaged

**Administrative Lock** – A type of lock on the WIC card that is effective the first day of the following month

**Expedited Benefits** – the reissuance of current month’s benefits by the LA following a lock of card. This process allows the MIS to override the required three calendar days waiting period

**Hot Card List** (vendor list of locked cards) - indicates that a Texas WIC Card has been permanently disabled (locked) due to being lost, stolen, or damaged or administratively disabled due to a family transfer to a non-EBT clinic, partial family transfer, or dual participation. Texas WIC Card is blocked for use at vendors while it is on the Hot Card List.

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**Procedures**

- I. When a participant or parent/guardian reports that his/her Texas WIC Card has been lost or stolen:
  - A. Either the SA or LA can disable (lock) the card.
    1. When the participant calls the SA to report a lost or stolen card:
      - a. The SA will place an immediate lock on the card and, if current benefits are on the card, staff will inform the participant or parent/guardian that it will take three calendar days for a replacement card.
      - b. The SA will instruct the participant to call the LA and schedule an appointment for a replacement card.
    2. When the participant contacts the LA (in person or over the phone) to report lost/stolen/damaged card, the LA shall:
      - a. Place an immediate lock on the card.
      - b. If benefits were issued for the current month, schedule an appointment for a replacement card on or after the third calendar day.
      - c. If current benefits were not issued on the card, participant does not need to wait three calendar days for a replacement card. LA staff shall provide a replacement card immediately with current and/or future months' benefits.
  - B. When the participant comes to appointment (on or after third calendar day) to get replacement card:
    1. The LA staff shall confirm the card has been locked within the MIS.
    2. The participant or parent/guardian shall present appropriate identification as stated in Policy CS:05
    3. LA will issue new card, have participant sign the back of the card, and select and confirm the personal identification number (PIN).
    4. LA will replace in full current and future unredeemed benefits (regardless of the number of days remaining in the month).
    5. Benefits for past months will not be loaded on the card.

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6. If the card was lost, stolen, or damaged at the end of the month, remaining benefits for the month may be lost due to the time element of three calendar days for the replacement process.
- C. If a family member (e.g., a newborn) is certified during the locked period:
    1. Issue a replacement card on the day of the certification with benefits for this individual.
    2. Schedule an appointment in 3 calendar days for the participant or parent/guardian to return to load the other family member's replacement benefits on the card.
- II. Damaged Cards
- A. When a participant reports by phone or in person a card is damaged:
    1. Staff shall place an immediate lock on the card in the MIS.
    2. Participant shall be instructed to return to the clinic on or after 3 calendar days for the replacement card.
    3. LA shall issue a new card.
    4. Replacement benefits, if available at the time the replacement card is issued, will be automatically loaded on the replacement card when it is issued.
  - B. The damaged card does not need to be returned to clinic. When a damaged card is returned to the clinic, staff shall destroy the card per parent agency destruction policies.
- III. Disposition of Unusable Texas WIC cards
- A. When a Texas WIC Card fails during or after benefit issuance and the **participant has not left the clinic**, staff will immediately place a lock on the damaged card and reissue benefits on a new card. Staff shall select "damaged" as the reason in the MIS.
  - B. Staff shall destroy the card according to LA/parent agency protocol, after identifying the reason for destruction within the MIS.

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IV. Locked/Unlocked cards

A. A locked card can be unlocked at the clinic. In a situation where it is determined that the card should be unlocked (card reported lost, then found) staff may unlock within the MIS and card can be reused by the same recipient. Staff shall give the participant the option of either:

1. Waiting **4 calendar days** after the card is reported found and unlocked by LA/SA to ensure the card is removed from the Hot Card List (vendor list of locked cards). If the participant attempts to redeem benefits with the found (unlocked) card before the 4 calendar days, the card may be automatically re-locked by the vendor system for an additional 3 days.
2. OR participant can come into the clinic after the **3 calendar days** have passed from the initial lost-stolen report and get a replacement card. The "found" card shall be destroyed by participant or clinic.
3. Clinic/State Agency staff will use the reason "*found card*" in MIS to unlock the card.

B. Administratively locked cards due to one or more family members transferring:

1. The losing clinic will be alerted by the MIS.
2. Losing LA shall be responsible for notifying the family with the Texas WIC Card, by phone and/or mail, that their Texas WIC Card will not work the first day of the following month unless they return to the clinic with the card before that date to have the appropriate benefits removed from the card.
3. Once the benefits have been removed, the card can be reactivated for issuance and redemption.
4. If only the transferring participant exists on the Texas WIC Card, the card shall not be reactivated.

V. Expedited benefits

A. A process that can be used in rare situations to override the three calendar day waiting period

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- B. Reasons for expediting benefits:
1. Current months' benefits remain on the card and there are less than three calendar days remaining in the month
  2. Clinic closures for an extended period of time that creates an undue hardship to WIC families in need of food benefits (satellite clinics with limited hours, holidays, inclement weather)
  3. A participant is removed from a foster home and placed in another foster home
  4. A participant returns from another state without their Texas WIC Card that was locked within the past three calendar days.

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## **Enrollment of Transferring Participants**

### **Purpose**

To ensure transition of services and uninterrupted benefits for transferring participants for the entire duration of the current certification period.

### **Authority**

7 CFR Part 246.7; State Policy

### **Policy**

Participants transferring from another WIC local agency (LA) or from the WIC Overseas Program shall be eligible to receive WIC benefits (or priority placement if a USDA- and State agency-approved waiting list is in place) if they present valid WIC identification cards from Texas or valid proof of current certification from another state or the WIC Overseas Program.

### **Definitions**

Administrative Lock – a WIC Card lock which is in effect the first day of the following month

### **Procedures**

- I. In-state Transfer - Texas
  - A. When a family requests a transfer, staff shall transfer the family record to the gaining clinic and then schedule an appointment.
  - B. if the SA has a waiting list, place the participant(s) first on the list and then enroll the participant(s) according to Policy **CS:31.0**.
  - C. Enroll the participant(s) immediately.
  - D. Document proof of identification (Policy **CS:05.0**).
  - E. Document proof of current address if available. If not, document verbal declaration of current address.
  - F. Issue all benefits for which the participant(s) is eligible.



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- G. If the participant has lost the Texas WIC Card, refer to Policy **CS:26.0**.
  
- II. Participant (split-family) transfer – Texas
  - A. The gaining clinic transfers the participant –
    - 1. The MIS will automatically place an administrative lock on the losing family’s Texas WIC Card effective the first day of the following month.
    - 2. The losing clinic shall make an effort to notify the family that their Texas WIC Card will not work beginning with the effective date of the administrative lock (on the first day of the following month) unless they return to the clinic with the card for staff to remove appropriate benefits and unlock the card prior the effective lock date.
    - 3. When the card is returned to the losing clinic, remove appropriate benefits and unlock the card.
    - 4. If more than one participant is active on the card, remove future benefits for the transferred participant(s).
  
  - B. The gaining clinic shall issue benefits.
    - 1. If participant is transferring to a family that does not have a Texas WIC Card, staff shall issue benefits to a new card for the appropriate months.
    - 2. If participant is transferring to a family that has a Texas WIC Card, staff shall issue benefits to the family’s card.
    - 3. Use the expedite benefits function when current benefits have not been redeemed.
    - 4. For foster children, see Policy **CS:11:0**.
  
- III. As the Transfers from **Out of State and the WIC Overseas Program with Verification of Certification (VOC)**: When a transferring participant presents a VOC from another state or the WIC Overseas Program with the participant’s name and a valid certification date, follow this process:

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- A. Enroll the participant immediately.  
Document proof of identification (Policy CS:05.0) and residency (Policy CS:06.0). The VOC is valid until the certification period shown on the VOC expires and shall be accepted as proof of eligibility for program benefits.
- B. If out-of-state/WIC Overseas Program proof of certification reflects a shorter certification period than that authorized in Texas, the LA shall apply the Texas WIC Program's certification period.
- C. Enroll instream migrants and Indians with valid WIC VOC. Instream migrants with an expired VOC shall be enrolled if income was determined in the last 12 months.
- D. Issue a Texas WIC Card to the participant.
  - 1. If the date when food benefits were last issued is unknown, contact the other state to verify issuance. If the participant does not have current benefits and is enrolled before the 16<sup>th</sup> of the month, full month benefits will automatically be issued. If the participant is enrolled on or after the 16<sup>th</sup> of the month, a partial package will automatically be issued.
  - 2. If the participant has already redeemed and used his/her benefits for the current month, schedule the participant to return the following month.
  - 3. Document the eligibility of the out-of-state/WIC Overseas Program transferring participant by using the information on the VOC. Scan and attach VOC to the MIS.
  - 4. Destroy WIC Card or food instruments/cash value vouchers from the losing state and issue any unredeemed benefits, current and/or future months.
- E. If the VOC does not reflect a specific nutrition risk condition or the participant was certified based on a nutrition risk condition not in use by Texas WIC, the MIS will assign risk condition 502, Transfer of Certification.
  - 1. A transfer cannot be refused because another state or WIC Overseas Program has nutrition risk criteria that are different from the criteria in Texas.

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2. It is not necessary to obtain additional information on nutrition risk conditions or clinical data. The nutrition risk determination by the originating state is sufficient to qualify the transferring participant for benefits through the end of the current certification period.
3. Staff shall have the participant or parent/guardian/caretaker read, or have read to her/him, the Rights and Responsibilities, and participant shall sign on the signature pad.

- IV. **Transfers going to another State or the WIC Overseas Program with Verification of Certification (VOC):** When a participant informs the WIC clinic they are leaving Texas to participate in another state WIC program follow this process:
- A. Provide the participant a copy of their VOC to take with them to the gaining state.
  - B. Educate the family to shop for WIC benefits before leaving Texas as the Texas WIC card will not work in another state and the card must be given to the new/gaining out of state or Overseas WIC clinic.
  - C. WIC participants issued VOC cards when they transfer overseas shall be instructed that:
    1. There is no guarantee that the WIC Overseas Program will be operational at the overseas site where they will be transferred.
    2. By law only certain individuals are eligible for the WIC Overseas Program.
    3. Issuance of a WIC VOC card does not guarantee continued eligibility and participation in the WIC Overseas Program.
  - D. A transferring participant may receive benefits at the new LA for the duration of the valid certification period documented on his/her VOC.

### **Guidelines**

Information about the WIC Overseas Program may be accessed on the TRICARE website at <http://www.tricare.mil/wic>.