

Section II: Local Agency Procedure Manual

VIII. Local Certification, Eligibility and Coordination

F. Notification of Ineligibility and End of Certification

Purpose

To provide guidance to local agencies to apply appropriate notification of ineligibility and end of certification procedures.

Policy

Participants found ineligible for the Montana WIC program during a certification will be advised in writing of their ineligibility. Each participant, parent, or caregiver will be notified not less than 15 days before the expiration of each certification period, that certification for the program is about to expire.

1. Notification of Ineligibility

- An applicant/participant is determined ineligible for one of the following reasons:
 - If a certification is shortened due to a category change, such as the discontinuation of breastfeeding after 6 months for a woman.
 - Applicant/participant does not meet income guidelines.
 - Scan income documentation into the applicant/participant folder to support a Fair Hearings claim.
 - Shows no nutritional risk, and/or
 - The participant commits fraud and is terminated from the program based on the criteria outlined in the Participant Fraud, Abuse and Sanctions policy.
- If applicant/participant is found ineligible:
 - Generate the proper Notice of Ineligibility.
 - If the automated form is used, it will show in the notes section and does not need to be scanned into the participant folder.
 - If the non-automated *End of Certification and Notice of Ineligibility Form* is used, a copy will be scanned into the applicant's/participant's folder.
 - This notice includes the reason for disqualification, the non-discrimination statement, and the fair hearings procedure.
 - Prior to system termination, the participant will be provided benefits for 15 days, unless the reason for termination is a change in categorical eligibility, or they no longer reside in the state.
- Local WIC clinics will provide information about other potential sources of local food assistance.

2. End of Certification Notice

- All participants will be issued the End of Certification notice at least 15 days prior to their certification end date, or when their last set of WIC benefits are issued (if greater than 15 days from their certification end date).

- If the automated form is used, it will show in the notes section and does not need to be scanned into the participant folder.
- If the non-automated *End of Certification and Notice of Ineligibility Form* is used, a copy will be scanned into the applicant's/participant's folder.
- If a verbal notification of end of certification is given, it will be documented in the MIS notes.
- If the participant's shopping list (available balance) or cardholder is used as notice, it must be documented in the participant's folder.
- Participants will be provided a food package to cover the 15-day time period.
 - If the system terminates for non-participation, the *End of Certification/Notice of ineligibility* does not need to be sent.

3. Office of Fair Hearings

- The Office of Fair Hearings is part of the Department of Health and Human Services (DPHHS) Office of Administrative Hearings. They are located at PO Box 202922, Helena, MT 59620, and their contact phone number is (406) 444-2470, or email hhsafh@mt.gov.