

## Endorsers and Proxies

- I. Applicants are persons applying to receive WIC benefits or may be persons applying on behalf of a child or an infant (endorsers). Endorsers applying on behalf of a child or an infant may be a parent (mother or father), foster parent, legal guardian, or caretaker.
- II. An additional endorser may be designated by the primary endorser.
  - a. The additional endorser must also be a parent (mother or father), foster parent, legal guardian, or caretaker.
  - b. When reasonably possible, both endorsers should be present together at the time that the additional endorser is added to the family.
  - c. Either endorser may bring the children to subsequent certification appointments. Both endorsers have equal rights to make decisions regarding the participant.
  - d. Additional endorsers must read the Rights and Responsibilities form (R&R). Both endorsers are held accountable for compliance with the Rights and Responsibilities (R&R) regardless of which endorser signed the signature pad for the R&R for that certification period. Endorsers are also held responsible for the actions of their proxies. By signing the signature pad each time they receive WIC benefits, endorsers and proxies are implying continued agreement with the R&R.
  - e. In unusual circumstances such as child abandonment, or the incarceration or incapacitation of the primary endorser, an additional endorser can be approved by the clinic supervisor without the permission of the primary endorser.
    - i. Clinic staff should attempt to acquire the written or verbal permission of the primary endorser.
    - ii. The additional endorser must sign the General Signature Document printed from the system describing the circumstances regarding the primary endorser and why they are not able to provide permission to designate the additional endorser.
  - f. In circumstances where the endorsers are separated, it is allowable for the family to have two ID packets. It is the responsibility of both endorsers to share the checks and ensure the WIC foods are given to the children. WIC staff should not get involved in custody disputes.
    - i. If a new ID packet must be issued to the additional endorser, stamp “none authorized” on the first endorser signature line and have the additional endorser sign the ID packet on the line marked “Alternate Endorser Signature”.

- III. Proof of Guardianship/Caretaker. Non-parent applicants applying to become the endorser for a child need to provide proof of guardianship or provide proof that they are the caretaker authorized by the parent to certify the child.
- a. Acceptable proofs of guardianship/caretaker include:
    - i. Legal custodial/guardianship agreement,
    - ii. Documentation from another agency listing the applicant as receiving benefits on the child's behalf,
    - iii. Letter from Human Services/DCFS for foster parents,
    - iv. A signed letter from the parent assigning temporary custody of the child to the applicant,
    - v. A signed letter from the parent authorizing the caretaker to certify the child.
  - b. When a non-parent is the endorser for the family this should be noted in the Comment/Alerts so this proof can be reviewed at subsequent certification appointments.
  - c. Unless an expiration date or time frame for custody is listed on the proof of guardianship/caretaker, it does not expire. While this proof is required at each certification, the proof may be the same document that was provided for a previous certification period so long as the document remains current and valid. If the proof will expire, this should be marked as an alert so the need to bring this proof at subsequent certifications is visible on the screen.
  - d. Proof of Guardianship must be scanned into the computer and may be used at subsequent certifications if still valid.
  - e. In the event these proofs are forgotten or are not readily available, the *General Signature Document* may be used. The certification may be completed and the current month's checks may be issued. This proof will be required to obtain subsequent month's checks. The system will not automatically restrict to allow only the current month's issuance; for this reason, the food benefits issuance on the family screen must be changed to "1 Month".
  - f. In the event it is unreasonable for the caretaker to bring these proofs:
    - i. The applicant may sign a written statement in the WIC office on the *General Signature Document* declaring they are caring for the child and explaining the circumstances under which they became the caretaker and cannot provide these proofs. This should only be used in unusual circumstances such as: the parent has abandoned the child, is incarcerated, incapacitated etc.
    - ii. The Clinic Director must approve the situation.
    - iii. Full benefits may be issued upon clinic director approval.

- g. Parental proof is not required unless custodial rights between the parents or foster parents are in question, or, if clinic staff has reasonable doubts that the applicant is the parent.
- IV. Proxies. Endorsers may choose to designate a proxy if desired. A proxy is a person chosen by the participant or an endorser to pick up and redeem checks in place of the participant/endorser.
  - a. A proxy may be designated by the primary or additional endorser.
  - b. Proxies are not allowed to certify infants or children in place of the parent, legal guardian or caretaker.
  - c. Participants should be encouraged to use a proxy in lieu of mailing checks.
  - d. Up to two proxies may be designated per family.
  - e. Proxy designation is accomplished by either the proxy being present with the endorser at the clinic and both signing the ID packet; or, an endorser sending a written note with the proxy to the clinic giving them permission to become a proxy and pick up and redeem checks.
  - f. In unusual circumstances such as child abandonment, or the incarceration or incapacitation of the endorser(s), a proxy can be approved by the clinic supervisor without the presence or written permission of the endorser(s).
    - i. Clinic staff should attempt to contact the endorser(s) if possible.
    - ii. The proxy must sign a General Signature Document printed from the VISION system describing the circumstances regarding the endorser(s).
    - iii. The clinic supervisor should consider if a single month of check issuance is appropriate in the situation.
  - g. Proxy designation does not expire at the end of the certification period but may be revoked at any time by an endorser.
  - h. If the proxy was not present to sign the endorser's ID packet at certification, a new ID packet can be issued to the proxy. The proxy signs the proxy signature line and "none authorized" is stamped on the endorser lines.
  - i. Proxies must read the Rights and Responsibilities form (R&R) before acting as a proxy and at each certification period. By signing the signature pad to pick up WIC benefits, proxies are implying agreement with the R&R.

- j. Endorsers are responsible to ensure that their proxies follow the R&R and that they attend nutrition education classes and individual counseling sessions in place of the endorser when necessary.
- k. Proxies must deliver any written or verbal notifications received at the clinic to the endorser.
- l. If the proxy does not follow all WIC responsibilities, the clinic staff should educate the proxy and/or the participant must select a new proxy.
- m. The proxy must show proof of identity at each clinic visit prior to checks being issued.
- n. Clinic staff must emphasize that the proxy and endorser signatures must be on the WIC ID packet which is taken to the store.