

COVID19 Webinar Notes – 4/23/20

These notes capture what was shared on this webinar. Information is changing quickly. We'll share updated information during the webinars and in future webinar's notes as it becomes available.

Question	Answer	State Staff Follow-up
Welcome and Announcements		
Jacqueline Beard, ONS Communication and Training Supervisor	Welcome to the 11 th WIC COVID-19 webinar update. I just want to thank you for all your wonderful questions and thoughts.	
Training Survey	Please complete and email the Training Survey to wawictraining@doh.wa.gov by Friday, April 24 th .	
May 12 and 13 meetings	You no longer need you to hold these dates for the CSAC and the breastfeeding meeting, we'll use the Monday and Thursday webinar times.	
Issues we're working on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPA observations • Release of Information (ROI) and Medical Documentation Form (MDF) • Cell phone use 	Communication will be sent out when we have updated information.
Income Policy Clarifications		
Household Size	Determining household size is key. Household size (Ch. 6 – Income , p. 21) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household = economic unit • FNS had us add the following in 2017: A household/economic unit must have its own source of income or savings adequate to support living expenses (Guidance \$500 per person/mo) • Purpose: assess for all sources of income and support to accurately determine the economic unit 	
Zero Income	Zero income (Ch. 6 – Income , p. 35) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After assessing the above, if the household has no income: • Document Zero Income Declaration Reason on the income screen • Electronically sign the Statement of Income Form (Affidavit) 	

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What counts and doesn't count as income?	<p>Doesn't count:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulus payments – CARES Act <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This is an advance tax credit, which isn't counted as income for WIC <p>Does count:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment benefits and the Supplemental benefit (\$600/week) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unemployment benefits count for WIC (based on WIC regulations) ○ Office of General Counsel is reviewing the supplemental benefit • Family Medical Leave and/or Family Protection Leave <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No regulatory allowance to exclude 	
Current and Annual Income	<p>Issue: earning more income with supplemental benefit than they normally receive.</p> <p>Use current or annual income – whichever is most reflective of the household's financial status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current = income received in the past 30 days • Annual = income received in the past 12 months <p>Unemployed – use the amount during unemployment if it makes the household eligible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current = income received in the next 30 days • Use the amount determined by Employment Security • If not determined yet, use zero income when appropriate and update when there are changes • Assess if annual income is more reflective 	
I heard you say current = income received in the past 90 days but it says 30 days on the slides. Which is correct?	Current = income received in the past 30 days	
Is the zero income declaration required if proof of income is covered by Provider One?	No, for adjunctive eligibility enter "0" in self-declared field.	

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Are we supposed to ask about income at Subsequent Certification appointments or at all appointments?	Only ask about income at certification appointments. On the R&R that participants sign, it states that they need to let us know when there has been an income change. We need to continue to be careful to treat all participants equitably.	
If their new income puts them over income guidelines but they still have provider one, they are still eligible, correct?	Yes, adjunctive eligibility takes priority for income eligibility.	
Can you clarify who is getting the \$600 supplemental benefit?	We are not familiar with the Employment Security Department regulations.	According to COVID-19 information on the Washington State Employment Security Department website “An additional \$600 per week will be available to nearly everyone on unemployment from March 29 through week ending July 25.”
Cascades doesn't let you enter zero in the self declared income field, you have to use the drop down, please correct me if I'm wrong.	Cascades doesn't require you to enter an amount in the Self Declared Income field, if it won't let you enter “0”, it's best to enter nothing.	Marian verified that staff can enter zero in the Self Declared Income Field.
What do we do if a participant self-reports higher income mid-cert?	When you become aware of income changes, you are required to act on it. Enter it in to Cascades. If the amount makes them income ineligible then try income averaging. If that does not work we are required to give them the 20 day ineligible notification letter. You may have to issue one more month of food benefits then take them off the program.	
What do we do when one child is adjunctively eligible through Provider One and one child is not?	If this does happen, look for other types of adjunctive eligibility that make the other child eligible. If still not eligible, do an income-based assessment. If still not eligible, remove from program.	

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One of our participants earns less income than when she was certified, do I need to change something in Cascades that reflects this? She is also adjunctively eligible	You only need to enter increases that would affect eligibility. In this particular situation, what we really need to know is when the participant no longer qualifies for adjunctive eligibility.	
Video Conferencing Update		
Platform change	We will be offering the GoToMeeting platform, not WebEx. The licenses will for 12 months. The situation may last longer than we expect so WebEx was not a long-term solution. We are very confident that GoToMeeting will be work well for your agencies. If LA staff need support with GoToMeeting, webcams, and/or headsets, please call Cascades Support. Before full rollout of the GoToMeeting platform, we will piloting it with a few agencies.	
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with Service Desk to assure user-friendly set-up • Exploring software and determining preferences and best practices to guide staff to use with WIC participants • Developing training • Training the Cascades Support team • Testing training and support with a few clinics • Rolling it out 	
Can we get the GoToMeeting licenses soon so our staff can conduct meetings?	We will let you know a timeframe as soon as we can.	
Farmers Market Nutrition Program		
Exploring equitable ways to offer Farmers Market benefits and services during COVID-19 pandemic	<p>We took this question to our ONS team. Here are the ideas we came up with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Come First Serve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop specific days, times, and place for distribution (for example, every Tuesday from 8-12 at the front door of the clinic) ○ Issue only at the Farmers Market – includes set days and time and location at the market 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Concerns: face-to-face and maintaining social distancing ● Lottery Style <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Notify all participants that FM benefits are available, ask them for their interest, and there's a random selection of interested participants (example: pulling names from a hat or another random process) ● Issue during the month(s) as participants have an appointment and show interest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Concerns: having to hold back checks until appointments and running out of checks. 	
<p>What are equitable ways to distribute FMNP benefits to participants? Hear from you.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mailing FMNP checks - challenges: staff working remotely, who is going to mail the checks? ● Call participants to see if they interested then mail FMNP checks ● Mass phone call to all participants, whoever calls back gets the checks - first come first serve then mail checks. ● Mass text (similar to notifications in Cascades). This would work if the agency had a way to do this. Customizing text notifications for Cascades is not an option. ● Drive through station for FMNP check pickup at certain times. Issue checks through car window using social distancing ● Distribute in a parking lot (first come first serve) ● Would like to minimize how many times we are contacting participants about FMNP (ask if they are interested, notification of mailed checks, etc.) ● Market distribution (challenges: maintaining social distancing and check education) ● Send letter to all participants. If interested, they can set up an appointment to get checks ● Inform participants during remote appointments starting in June 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clinics could take the checks to the market and have farmers give CSA style boxes, like one box with \$28 worth of fruits and veggies, per family. Then distribute by having the clients pick up the boxes. 	
We are not allowed to begin distributing FM checks until June. Is the current thought, at the State level that we will not reopen in June either?	We need to be prepared if we cannot re-open. Social distancing may be around for a while.	
Is it possible to back out completely of offering FMNP this year? I am not comfortable with any of these options.	Yes, your agency does not have to participate if you feel there are no adequate solutions to these issues. Please contact us.	
Is increasing redemption rates still a priority?	We want there to be a good redemption rate but due to COVID-19 this may not happen.	
When will the market/farm store list be available? So we can know whether or not there will be a place for clients to go to use their checks.	Lists will be available the second week of May.	
Can WA WIC place a banner on the WIC app that states "FMNP checks are here"?	Yes, we plan to do this.	
What is the best way to handle signing for the benefits? Hear from you.	<p>Challenges: signing off on check registers and maintaining social distancing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WIC staff should be able to write participants names in Plastic sheets on register with hole cut out so participants can sign. The sheet could then be sanitized after every use Capture a signature on a pin type pad (give away a cheap stylus pen to each person) and sign the pin pad that would register to a scanned sheet on a computer Participants could reply to a text letting agencies know they received the checks and then staff would sign the register for the participant 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a disposable latex glove for participants to use to sign • Mail them a postcard to sign then mail checks • Participants signing with initials instead of signature • Sign in Cascades similar to remote certification (RBI) • Each participant could get a pen and a hand sanitizer 	
Can staff sign for participants?	We would need a federal waiver for this.	We will provide more information on this topic in the future.
If we are mailing out the checks, how do you keep track on the register form without the client's signature?	We would need a federal waiver to have staff sign for participants.	We will provide more information on this topic in the future.
Can we give away pens with a fruit and veggie message on them?	We will take a look at this idea.	We will provide more information on this topic in the future.
Has the state thought about loading the FM amount on the WIC EBT card instead of using checks?	It would be great, but it's not in possible currently.	
Can we increase the benefit amount assuming far fewer clients will actually accept them or redeem them this year? This would result in us having to work with fewer different families.	The FMNP check amount will be increase by \$4.00 to \$28.00, up to 3 check packs per family. This will reduce the number of families receiving checks.	
What's the best way to handle the benefit distribution process? Hear from you.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covered above – provide check packs using social distancing or mailing. 	
We are currently scheduling farmer's market dates. Should we hold off on this even if it's not until July?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go ahead and schedule, but realize it may not work out. 	

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What are the best ways to educate participants about using the benefits?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YouTube style videos- how to use checks • GoToMeeting with several participants at a time (concern: participants name on the screen is a confidentiality issue. • How-to-videos on WIC Shopping App • Send paper instructions on how to use FMNP checks • Mailing FMNP pamphlet • Provide check education on the phone. Give them education handouts when they pick up the checks • Provide information to the market managers about how to use checks so they can help participants if they have questions while they are at the market and staff are not there. 	
Do we still want to have an April 27 th webinar? Polling question:	64%-No 36%-Yes. We will not have an April 27 th (Monday) webinar but we will still have an April 30 th (Thursday) webinar. Please send other topics you want to hear about to WICPolicy@doh.wa.gov .	