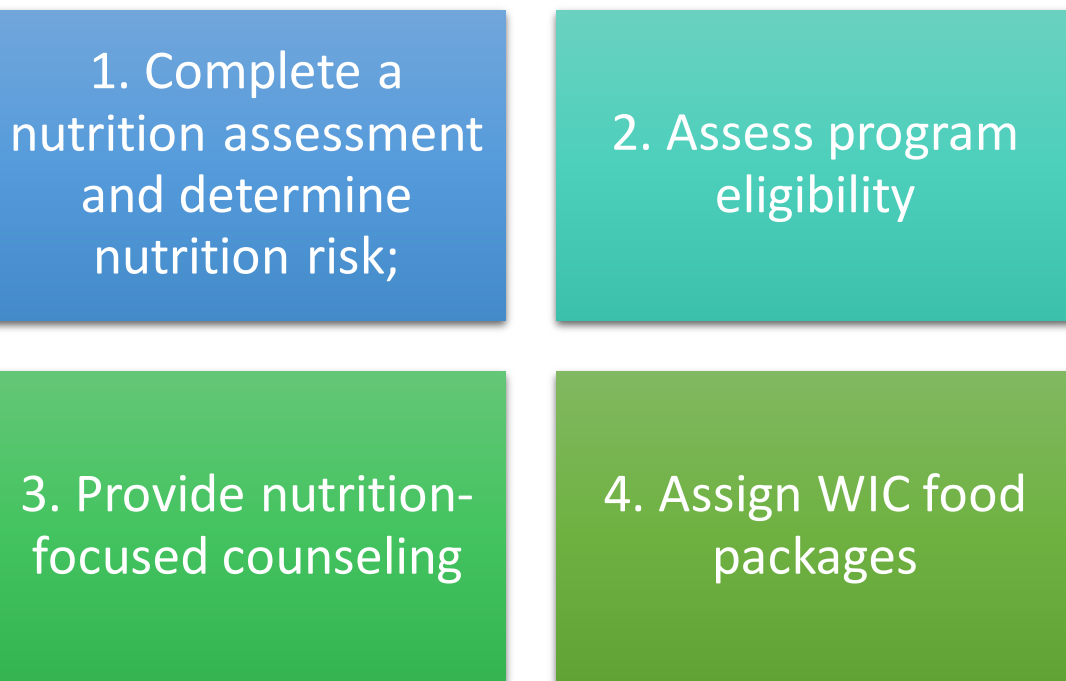


2-1 Road Map of Certifier Duties

What is your role?

Each WIC staff member has a role in delivering WIC services to participants. Your special role is “certifier.” WIC calls your role a certifier because you will be the person who certifies participants to be on the program. Every WIC program must have someone trained to be a certifier.

Certifiers are the only WIC staff who can:



You will learn the details about each of these certifier roles in another chapter of the *Certifier Guide*.

- Chapter 4 – Completing an Assessment
- Chapter 5 – Providing Nutrition-focused Counseling
- Chapter 6 – Assigning Food Packages

Note: Clerical staff, or any staff not trained as a certifier, may not prescribe or assign food packages for participants. All food packages must be approved or assigned by a certifier. This guide leads you through all the special training you need to be a certifier.

Certifiers are responsible for additional things, but other WIC staff can also help with tasks such as the following:

- Performing other certification procedures, including required documentation in the data system;
- Providing breastfeeding promotion and support;
- Referring to health care and community services;
- Referring high-risk participants to a WIC nutritionist for follow-up and individual care plans if needed.

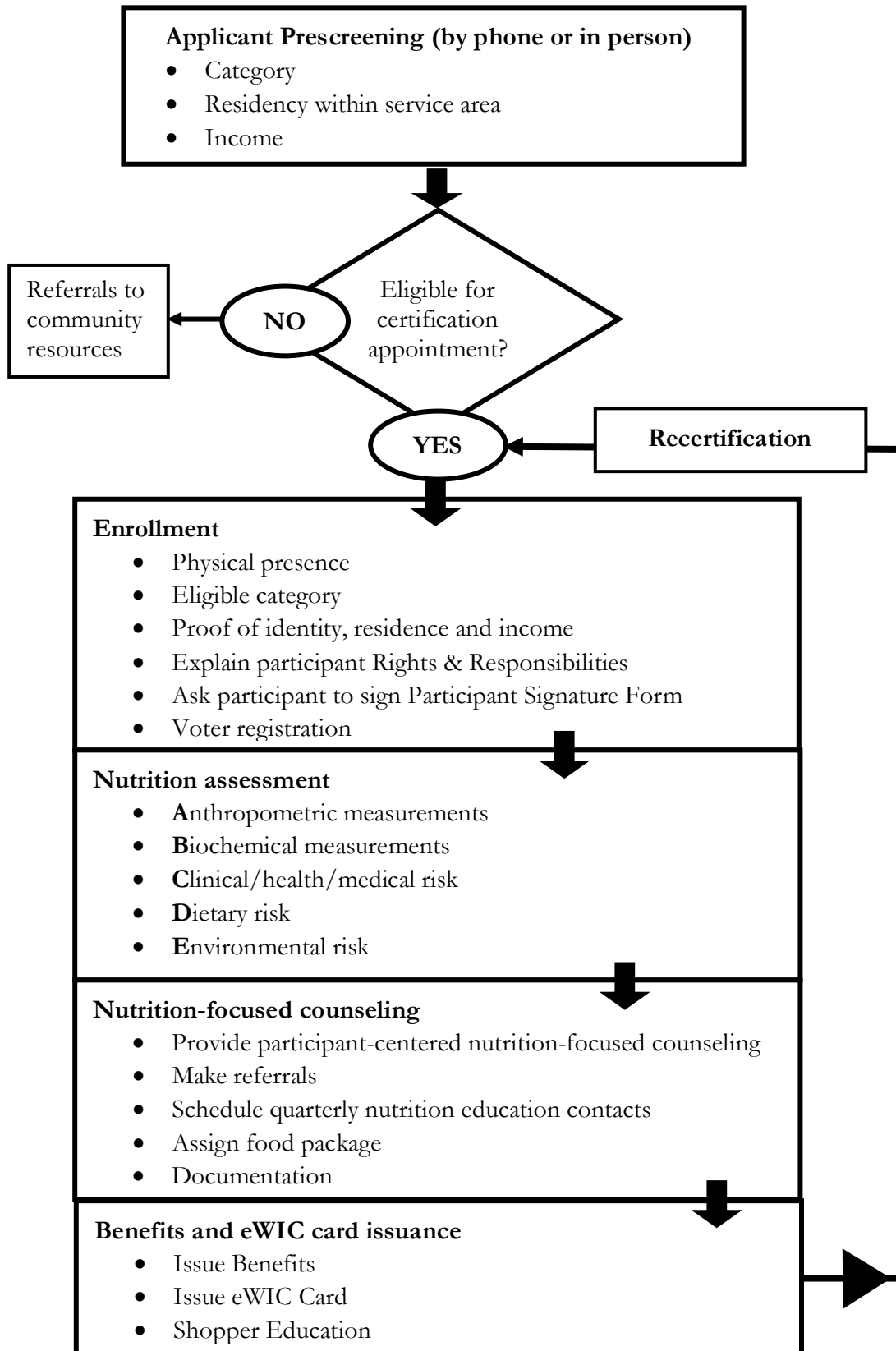
Learning activity



When you completed the *Introduction to WIC* training module, you learned about the certification process which is outlined on the next page.

1. Look at the certification process flow chart. How does it compare with what you have observed in your clinic?
2. Circle the items on the chart that only a certifier can do.
3. Who in your clinic does the other items listed?
4. Talk with your Training Supervisor about your questions.

Certification process flow chart



Other names for certifier

WIC certifiers may be called different things. In policy, certifiers are referred to as CPA's. That's because WIC federal regulations call certifiers "Competent Professional Authority." The regulations define who can be a CPA and what kind of training is required to do CPA-specific tasks.



What are certifiers called in your agency?

- Certifiers
- CPA's
- Counselors
- Nutrition Assistants or Aides
- Something else? _____

Three kinds of certifiers

There are 3 different kinds of certifier, depending on their education and qualifications. The type of certifier you are determines which participants you can see and the nutrition counseling you can provide.

Paraprofessional CPA: A certifier who does not have a health-related college degree. A health professional will oversee the paraprofessional CPA's direct contact with WIC participants. Qualifications or requirements to be a paraprofessional certifier include:

- At a minimum, must have a high school diploma or GED equivalent;
- Has received WIC specific training in specified competency areas by completing WIC training modules or online courses; AND,
- Works under the direct supervision of a health professional (Professional CPA) who is also responsible for ongoing job training and evaluation.

Professional CPA: A certifier with a bachelor's or master's degree in a health profession, such as nutrition, nursing or health education. Qualifications to be a professional CPA include:

- Bachelor's degree in nutrition or nutritional sciences;
- Bachelor's or master's degree in health education or public health;
- International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC);
- Physicians;
- Registered nurses;
- Physician's assistants.

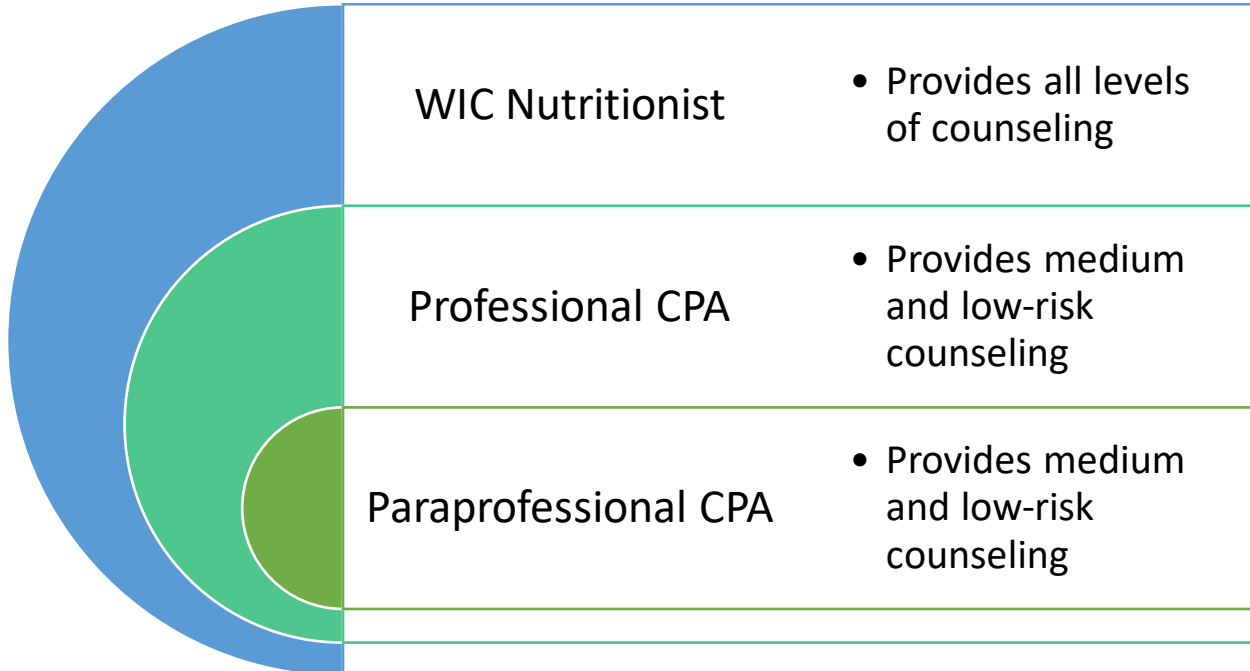
WIC Nutritionist: A nutrition professional working in WIC. Qualifications to be a WIC Nutritionist include:

- Registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) with the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics;
- Oregon Licensed Dietitian (LD);
- Master’s Degree in nutrition; or,
- A person who is eligible for RDN registration.

Note: Every agency must have access to a WIC Nutritionist.

The difference is the level of counseling you can provide

When you certify WIC participants you will find that most of them have very minor concerns and uncomplicated nutrition risks, and you can provide basic nutrition counseling. But sometimes you will certify someone with much more complicated health issues and a higher level of nutrition risk. Only a WIC nutritionist can provide high risk levels of counseling.



The Paraprofessional CPA role

In most agencies a paraprofessional CPA will do the majority of certifications. That means that they assess and assign nutrition risks for most WIC participants. That also means that a paraprofessional CPA will provide the initial counseling for most participants, regardless of their risk level.

Provide basic or “normal” or low-risk nutrition-focused counseling

After assigning nutrition risks, the CPA can provide basic nutrition-focused counseling for participants. Some examples of low-risk or basic or “normal” nutrition counseling topics include:

- Healthy eating during pregnancy;
- Breastfeeding promotion;
- Basic breastfeeding skills;
- Breast pump instruction;
- Infant feeding – how to mix formula, when to introduce new foods;
- Healthy eating for children; and,
- How to have a healthy feeding relationship with children.

Make referrals to other WIC team members or community resources

When a paraprofessional certifier identifies a high-risk participant, they will refer them to the WIC nutritionist for high-risk counseling and follow-up. Participants with more complicated breastfeeding concerns are referred to your agency breastfeeding specialist.

The Professional CPA role

The Professional CPA must also receive training from WIC on how to provide WIC services.

In addition to providing the same services as paraprofessional CPAs, health professionals may also supervise the work of the paraprofessional CPAs.

Many clinics also have health professionals who are specially trained to provide breastfeeding support and counseling to breastfeeding women. The breastfeeding specialists may be a health professional with advanced lactation training who is an International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC).

The WIC Nutritionist role

The WIC nutritionist has completed extensive education in nutrition before working for WIC. RDNs are the nutrition experts of the health and medical profession. The WIC nutritionist is key to providing accurate nutrition information in the local WIC clinic.

The WIC nutritionist's role includes:

- Providing nutrition counseling for high-risk participants;
- Developing individual care plans;
- Tracking high-risk participants' health improvements;
- Reviewing or prescribing specialized WIC food packages;
- Referring high-risk participants to other health-related and social services and assisting them in accessing services;
- Coordinating nutrition care for infants receiving special medical formulas; and,
- Documenting outcomes of WIC services.

Note: It is important to note that WIC nutritionists do not diagnose medical conditions. If they suspect a participant has a medical condition that has not yet been diagnosed, they should refer the participant to their health care provider.

Your "Scope of Practice"

During certification, a paraprofessional CPA will encounter participants with problems that are beyond the scope of their training. The participants with complex nutrition risks are referred to someone else for nutrition counseling, such as the WIC nutritionist. A certifier may refer a participant to community resources to address issues that are outside of the WIC program's expertise. Some examples of problems to refer to another person include:

- Participants with complex medical or health problems, such as diabetes, kidney problems, drug abuse or development delays, would be referred to the WIC nutritionist.
- Participants with breastfeeding complications would be referred to an IBCLC.
- Participants with substance abuse or mental health issues would be referred to an organization that specializes in that type of counseling.

It may feel awkward to tell a participant that they need to see someone else. Here is what a CPA might say when referring them to another staff member or community resource.

I'd like you to talk to Susan. She is our expert on helping women with diabetes during pregnancy.

You sound really motivated to stop smoking during this pregnancy. Would you like the free stop smoking hotline number for support?

As part of the services WIC offers, Beth, our nutritionist, meets with all clients on special diets. She is in the office on Wednesdays. I'd like to schedule an appointment for you to talk with her. Would this Wednesday work for you?

Maricela is the person who can help you with breastfeeding concerns. Let me see if she can see you now.

Note: If you are a paraprofessional CPA, remember that the most important part of your job is to know what you can and can't handle. Referring participants to other staff or resources is an important part of your job.

Learning activity



How would you change the wording in the examples above?

Case study - Camille



Camille is a high-risk pregnant woman in her first trimester. This example shows how WIC services can be provided to this high-risk participant.

New Enrollment Appointment



Joanne, a CPA, assesses Camille's health by reviewing her medical data, her health history questionnaire, and her diet information. Joanne assigns nutrition risks to Camille based on the information she reviews during certification. Camille has kidney disease which makes her high-risk. Joanne provides education on health habits to Camille, but does not provide nutrition counseling because of Camille's kidney disease. Camille's medical problems are too complex and go beyond "normal" nutrition. Joanne schedules Camille to return the following month to talk to the WIC nutritionist, Ada.

High-risk Follow-Up Appointment



When Ada sees Camille the following month, she finds out more about Camille's medical condition and the special diet the doctor has prescribed. Ada and Camille talk about how the WIC foods can fit into her current diet. Ada writes an individual care plan for Camille in her "Progress Notes," and schedules her for a weight check and a class.

Individual Follow-Up Appointment: Weight Check



Joanne sees Camille to check her weight gain. She knows by reading the individual care plan that she should schedule Camille for an appointment with Ada if her weight gain is too high or too low or if Camille has questions about her diet. Camille is doing fine, so Joanne reminds her about attending the breastfeeding class.

Next Nutrition Counseling Contact: Group Class



Camille does not see the WIC nutritionist every time she comes to WIC. This time she attends a breastfeeding class. Congratulations! Camille gives birth to a beautiful baby boy!

Ask the WIC Nutritionist in your agency to describe a recent high-risk participant that she provided counseling to. What was the concern and what did they talk about? What was the plan for further follow-up, if any?