ARPA Physical Presence Waiver FAQ (v. 08-10/2023)

The ARPA physical presence waiver guidance is available on the WIC Coordinator Resources page. This FAQ is a "living document." That means it will be updated when there are changes to processes or new questions are added. The version date will be updated when information changes. Local agencies will be notified by email of changes to this document.

Questions in this document

How often do we need to offer remote services?

The purpose of this physical presence waiver is to provide more flexibility in how services are delivered to WIC participants. The requirement is that every agency is able to, and has a plan for, offering remote services to WIC participants. Your local agency decides the boundaries within which you provide remote services. The needs of participants and staff resources vary from agency to agency. Make choices that best meet the needs of the participants in your community. It is a good idea to revisit this decision over time to see if adjustments need to be made.

Do we need to continue to document a reason for providing a remote appointment as we did before COVID?

You no longer need to say why a person is receiving services remotely. It is a good idea to find a way to track it for your own purposes. We will work on updating policies to reflect the changes to physical presence. Please remember to document the type of appointment in TWIST.

What is the expectation for getting participant signatures on the Rights and Responsibilities and Voter Registration forms?

Please attempt to get participant signatures **before** the certification appointment. Here are some ways that can happen:

- Participants can sign the *Rights and Responsibilities* and *Voter Registration* documents in person at the clinic at, or before the appointment.
- The local agency can mail, email, or text documents to the participant. The participant will need to then print, if needed and
  - sign, scan, and email or text them back
  - sign, take a photo, and email or text them back.
  - sign and fax them back to the local agency.
  - send an email or text stating:
    "I have read and understand the Rights and Responsibilities form and agree to receive WIC services."

The participant response needs to be documented in writing, text, or be a photograph or scanned copy of their acknowledgement that you can save and file based on your agency policies..

What if the participant has not provided a signature or written acknowledgement for the Rights and Responsibilities form before the certification appointment?

Agencies must have a signature or written acknowledgement to provide services (before a certification). If a signature or written acknowledgement is not received at or before the certification appointment, the certification cannot be completed and must be rescheduled.

The purpose of signatures and written acknowledgement is to have documentation that the participant agrees to receive WIC services and is aware of their rights and responsibilities for the program, therefore, we cannot provide any WIC service **before** we get that acknowledgement. Do your best to obtain this written acknowledgement or signature by text, email, fax, or in-person before services are provided to avoid rescheduling and certification delays.

Is there a way to sign documents using Teletask?

Teletask is working on a feature that allows participants to sign the *Rights and Responsibilities* and *Voter Registration* documents directly on their phone. This feature is expected to be available in September.

How do we keep track of signatures obtained electronically?

Use a system that is consistent within your agency so you will be able to find the records if needed. Options include:

- Save the information to the texting platform.
- Screen capture or print the text or save the email with the acknowledgement and file with your agency's participant signature forms.
- Print the text or email and file with your agency's participant signature forms.

More options for this process may become available as Teletask is implemented and the new signature feature added.

Can we use measurements taken before the certification appointment?

Yes! FNS is encouraging agencies to work toward getting measurements before the certification appointment. Measurements taken up to 60 days before the appointment can be used. Please see "Options to obtain anthropometrics and blood tests" in the guidance document.

Can we use bloodwork that was taken before the certification appointment?

Yes! FNS is encouraging agencies to work toward getting bloodwork data before the certification appointment. Bloodwork taken up to 90 days before the appointment may be used, but must be reflective of the woman applicant's current category and CDC's anemia screening schedule for infants and children (see Policy 626: Hemoglobin and Hematocrit Screening in WIC). Please see "Options to obtain anthropometrics and blood tests" in the guidance document.

What do I do if I don't have measurements 60 days after certification?

If measurements are not received by 60 days after the certification, you must continue to attempt to get them. Document reminders and attempts to get measurements in TWIST. Document reminders and attempts in "WIC Notes on Enrollment" so attempts by all staff can be documented as completed. Here's what that might look like:

- Remind participants each time you have contact with them that measurements are needed.
- Remind participants once a month to send measurements until they are received.
- Reminders can be in-person, text, email, or US mail.

What do I do if I don't have Hemoglobin 90 days after certification?

If bloodwork is not received by 90 days after the certification, you must continue to attempt to get them. Document reminders and attempts to get measurements in TWIST. Document reminders and attempts in "WIC Notes on Enrollment" so attempts by all staff can be documented as completed. Here's what that might look like:

- Remind participants each time you have contact with them that measurements are needed.
- Remind participants once a month to send measurements until they are received.
- Reminders can be in-person, text, email, or US mail.

Is there a way to track missing data for measurements and bloodwork in TWIST?

The TWIST programmers and Nutrition Consultants are working on developing a report to assist you in tracking what data is missing for measurements and bloodwork. Details about this will be available by the end of August.