



Policy and Procedure Manual

Volume 1, Chapter 8

WIC Farmers Market

Nutrition Program

Washington State WIC Nutrition Program

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WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program

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Section 1: Participant Eligibility and Farmers Market Nutrition Program Benefit Issuance

POLICY: Local Agency FMNP Policy

Local agencies must:

1. Develop a written WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) benefit issuance policy by May 31st, prior to each season. Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) requires a new policy each season.

Note:

- Staff can review and update the previous year's FMNP policy to meet this requirement, including the date the policy was updated.
- Staff may use the Local Agency FMNP Policy template to develop their agency policy to meet this requirement.
 - Refer to the [Local Agency FMNP Policy template](#).

This policy must:

1. Describe how the local agency plans to distribute FMNP benefits equitably, securely, and by the state set deadline.
2. Follow WIC civil rights practices for FMNP benefits issuance and activities. Ensure that staff issue FMNP benefits to all eligible participants consistently and equitably.
 - Refer to [Volume 1, Chapter 20 - Notification, Fair Hearings and Civil Rights](#).
3. Ensure staff issue FMNP benefits in compliance with state and federal confidentiality laws.
 - Refer to [Volume 1, Chapter 25 – Legal Considerations and Confidentiality](#).
4. Ensure staff don't issue FMNP benefits to themselves, family members, or friends.
 - Refer to [Volume 1, Chapter 2 – Program Compliance](#).
5. Ensure all staff involved in FMNP complete the FMNP training for the current season.
6. Be reviewed annually by staff who issue FMNP benefits.
7. Be accessible to all staff for reference.

8. Be accessible to participants upon request.
9. Be kept on file for four years.

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

- A. Develop a local agency FMNP policy that includes all details required by state policy. Options include:
 1. Update the previous year's policy with information for the upcoming season. Be sure to include the date the policy was updated.
 2. Fill in your agency's information in the Local Agency FMNP Policy template to reflect your plans for offering FMNP benefits for the upcoming season.
 - See Local Agency FMNP Policy template in the Appendix.

Refer to "[Guide to Writing a FMNP Policy for Benefit Issuance](#)" in the appendix.

- B. Make policy accessible to staff and participants.
- C. Keep the current FMNP policy and staff training log on file for four years.

POLICY: Participant Eligibility for FMNP Benefits

Staff must offer FMNP benefits to all eligible participants in active status.

Participants eligible for FMNP benefits include:

1. Pregnant participants, including those presumed eligible.
2. Breast/chest feeding participants with active eligibility, including those past 6 months postpartum who receive breastfeeding support without food benefits.
 - Staff must not issue FMNP benefits to a breast/chest feeding participant on or after her child's first birthday regardless of active eligibility.
3. Non-breast/chest feeding postpartum participants.
 - Non-breast/chest feeding postpartum participants are eligible to receive FMNP benefits through the end of the month in which the infant turns 6 months of age.
4. Children ages 1 - 5 who have current eligibility.
 - Infants before their first birthday **aren't** eligible to participate in FMNP.
 - Staff can issue FMNP benefits to eligible children on or after the first birthday.
 - Staff can issue FMNP benefits to eligible children on or before their 5th birthday.

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

- A. Assess participants' eligibility for FMNP benefits.
- B. Issue FMNP benefits.
 - See the "[Issue FMNP Benefits](#)" policy in this chapter for more information.

POLICY: Issue FMNP Benefits

Staff must offer FMNP benefits to all eligible participants in active status.

Staff must:

1. Screen eligible participants for their interest and ability to use the FMNP benefits.
 - a. Participants, Parent Guardians, Caretakers, and Proxies must show personal identification (ID) to receive FMNP benefits at in-person appointments.
 - b. Staff don't need to see participant's or caretaker's identification when issuing FMNP benefits remotely.
 - See [Volume 1, Chapter 22 – Issue WIC Food Benefits](#), Identification to Receive WIC Food Benefits for a list of acceptable proof of ID.

Note: Limited FMNP funding doesn't allow all eligible participants in Washington State to receive FMNP benefits. Therefore, it's important to screen participants for their interest and ability to use the benefits at authorized farmers markets and farm stores.

2. Provide QR codes to participants. Participants use QR codes for redeeming benefits at authorized farmers markets and farm stores.
 - a. Clinic staff order WIC Cards with QR codes from the Fulfillment Center and distribute them to participants as needed.
 - b. Staff provide WIC Cards in person or by mail depending on participant's preference. When mailing a WIC card with QR code, staff:
 - Verify the participant's address.
 - Include the Mailed WIC Card Letter and the WIC card with QR code printed on it.
 - Use an opaque (security) envelope when possible. If using a regular or window envelope, wrap the Mailed WIC Card Letter around the WIC Card with QR code.
 - Write or stamp on the envelope, "DO NOT FORWARD, RETURN TO SENDER."
 - Write or stamp the return address of the WIC clinic on the envelope.

- Staff don't have to reclaim a deactivated or replaced WIC Card.
 - If a participant returns a deactivated or replaced card, destroy it by cutting the card in half.
 - c. Participants who have the WICShopper App can find their QR code in the app.
 - d. For participants who don't have the WICShopper App or a WIC Card with a QR code, state staff generate and provide the QR codes electronically via text or email, or by mail depending on participant preference as needed.
3. Issue FMNP benefits to each eligible participant, up to the maximum for the family.
- a. Issue FMNP benefits in Cascades on the Issue FM Food Instruments screen.
 - Cascades will only allow staff to issue the amount of FMNP benefits allowed by federal regulations.
 - Cascades documents issuance in the participant's file.
4. Provide information about how and where to use FMNP benefits, including directing them to the closest eligible farmers markets or farm stores, what market items can be purchased, and detailing efficient use of the benefits at the market. Staff document how this information was provided in the Family Alert.
5. Offer information about seasonal produce, (i.e., purchasing, storing, preparing, and using fresh fruits and vegetables).
- Staff offer nutrition education about fruits and vegetables to all FMNP participants between March and October in the farmers market year, and within the participant's current certification.
 - See the "[Nutrition Education](#)" policy in this chapter for more information.
6. Document nutrition education in each participant's Individual Care Plan.

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

- A. Assess participant eligibility, interest, and ability to use FMNP benefits during the appointments before the FMNP season begins, usually in February or March and document in the participant's Individual Care Plan for follow up at the next appointment during the FMNP season.

- B. When providing FMNP benefits in person, view the ID of the participant, parent guardian, caretaker, or proxy before issuing food benefits. For remote benefit issuance follow the [“Remote Benefits Issuance”](#) policy.
- C. Issue benefits to participants in the amount determined by policy.
- D. Begin issuing FMNP benefits June 1st.
 - 1. Once benefits are issued, the benefits remain in the participant benefit account until the end of the season or until they are used.
 - 2. Benefits will expire on October 31st.
 - 3. Participants should have as many months as possible of FMNP season to spend their benefits.
- E. Issue all FMNP benefits by September 30th of the current year.
 - 1. Participants have until October 31st of the current year to use FMNP benefits at authorized farmers markets and farm stores.
 - 2. Contact the state WIC staff if your agency can’t issue all FMNP benefits by August 1st. State WIC staff can redistribute unissued benefits.
 - Best Practice- Document a Family Alert that FMNP benefits were issued. Set the end date to 10/31 of the current year for the alert to dismiss at the end of the season.
- F. Provide and document information about how and where to use the FMNP benefits, including directing the participant to the closest eligible farmers markets or farm stores, what market items can be purchased and how to use benefits at the market or farm stores.
 - Refer [“Offer Participant Education on Using FMNP Benefits”](#) policy for what information to provide participants and how to document in the participant’s file.
- G. Document nutrition education provided about seasonal fruit and vegetables in each participant’s Individual Care Plan.
 - Refer to [“Nutrition Education”](#) policy in this chapter for more information.

- H. If participants transfer out of state, document FMNP benefit issuance on the transfer card to prevent over issuance of FMNP benefits. Refer to [Volume 1, Chapter 21 - Transfer Verification of Certification](#).
- I. If the WIC Card is lost or stolen card, refer to the “Replace WIC Cards” policy in [Volume 1, Chapter 22](#) – Issue WIC Food Benefits.

POLICY: Issue FMNP Benefits at the Farmers Market

Staff may issue FMNP benefits and provide fruit and vegetable nutrition education at the local farmers market during market hours.

When this option is used staff must:

1. Assure participant confidentiality at the farmers market.
 - See [Volume 1, Chapter 25 - Legal Considerations and Confidentiality](#) for more information.
2. Follow the “Use a Secure Network to Access Cascades” policy in [Volume 2, Chapter 8 – Electronic Devices, Security and Service Interruption Plan](#).
 - Staff must not use public Wi-Fi to access Cascades.
3. Follow the requirements in the “[Issue FMNP Benefits](#)” policy in this chapter.
4. Only issue FMNP benefits and provide fruit and vegetable nutrition education at the farmers market and not complete certifications or other services.
 - Staff may collect the name and phone number of potential applicants to call when back in the clinic.
 - Issuing FMNP benefits and providing a fruit and vegetable nutrition education contact at the farmers market doesn’t make the market a “clinic.”
 - See [Volume 2, Chapter 8 – Electronic Devices, Security and Service Interruption Plan](#) for more information about providing WIC services only at state-approved clinics.
5. Include procedures for issuing FMNP benefits at the farmers market in the Local Agency Farmers Market policy.
 - See the “[Local Agency FMNP Policy](#)” in this chapter.

Information:

Contact your Local Program Consultant for options if you need MiFi to issue FMNP benefits at the farmers market.

Section 2: Offer Participant Education on Using FMNP Benefits

POLICY: Offer Participant Education on Using FMNP Benefits

Staff must offer participants, parent guardians, caretakers, and proxies information about how and where to use FMNP benefits. Check in with participants about using their benefits at the farmers market and farm stores at the next appointment.

The [Washington WIC Rights and Responsibilities form](#) that the participants sign at their certification appointment also applies to participating in the FMNP.

- All statements related to WIC retailer staff apply to farmers market staff, farm stores, and growers.
- Refer to [Volume 1, Chapter 7 - Rights and Responsibilities](#).

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

- A. Provide all participants or parent guardians receiving FMNP benefits the following Benefit Issuance Education (BIE):
 1. A “[WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program](#)” brochure. Offer a printed copy, a link to brochure on the website or in WICShopper app. The brochure has information about how to use WIC FMNP benefits, not accepting cash or tokens, where to make a complaint, ideas for safe storage, and tips for eating more fresh produce.

Note: Staff can order the printed copies of the brochure in additional languages from [myPrint](#).
 2. A printed list, a link to webpage or list in WICShopper app of the authorized farmers markets and farm stores or the website with information about the location, days and hours of operation, payment options (SNAP or Matching Program).
- B. Explain to participants how to use the benefits including:
 1. The dollar value of their benefit.

2. Which locally grown produce can be bought using FMNP benefits (fresh fruits and vegetables, and fresh, cut edible herbs) See "[Eligible Produce](#)" list in the Appendix.
3. Which farmers markets and farm stores near them are authorized to accept FMNP benefits.
 - Refer participants to the market and farm store list showing location and hours of operation. Indicate which are closest to them.
 - Participants **can't** use FMNP benefits at grocery stores or wholesale stores.
4. How to find authorized growers at the markets that can accept FMNP benefits.
 - WICShopper App directs participants to authorized markets and growers who are accepting FMNP benefits.
 - Tell participants to look for **WIC and Senior Farmers Market Benefits Welcome Here** signs to locate authorized growers and farm stores who accept FMNP benefits. Post a sign at the clinic. There's a picture of the sign in the FMNP participant brochure.

Note: If clinics want a FMNP sign to post, contact state FMNP staff at FMNPteam@doh.wa.gov.
5. After selecting locally grown produce, show the grower the QR code, confirm the cost of the purchase, and enter the PIN into the grower's mobile device. Participants shouldn't verbally give their PIN to the grower.
 - Participants can manually enter their WIC Card number if the QR code isn't readable.
 - See the [How to Use Your WIC QR Code at Authorized Farmers Markets and Farm Stores](#).
6. The deadline to use FMNP benefits is October 31st of the current year.
7. WIC participants can't exchange FMNP benefits for cash.
8. WIC participants won't get change back, even if the food items total less than the maximum value on the benefit.

- Participants may use a combination of FMNP benefits, monthly fruit and vegetable benefits (CVBs), cash, EBT card, debit card, or other forms of payment acceptable to the grower for purchases greater than the value of the FMNP benefits.
9. Produce purchased with FMNP benefits are for the WIC participant only.
10. Let the participant know they have a right to make a complaint if they have any concerns or problems using the FMNP benefits at the farmers market or a farm store.
- Share the link to the complaint form in the Farmers Market brochure, on the website or in the WICShopper app or print and give a hard copy of the complaint form.
 - The complaint form guides the participants how to make a complaint.
- C. Document in the Family Alert that benefit issuance education was provided to participant and how the two required materials, WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program brochure and growers list, were offered.
- Examples of documentation may include:
- FM BIE via Shopper app
 - FM BIE via links to webpage
 - FM BIE via printed copies
- D. Ask participants about their shopping experience at the farmers market and/or farm stores at the next appointment and offer additional education as needed.

Section 3: Nutrition Education

POLICY: Nutrition Education

Staff must offer nutrition education about fresh fruits and vegetables to all FMNP participants between March and October in the FMNP year and within the participant's certification period.

Staff must document the nutrition education in each participant's Individual Care Plan.

For participants who aren't high risk:

- Staff may count nutrition education about fruits and vegetables offered to participants receiving FMNP benefits as a second contact, when the contact:
 - Includes education about fresh fruits and vegetables beyond how to use FMNP benefits.
 - Meets the requirements of a second contact, (i.e., includes the topic discussed, how the participant or caregiver feels about the topic, next steps or goals, and any additional supporting information).

Note: Staff may provide the fruit and vegetable education in a group session and document the session in the participant's file for the second contact.

For participants who are high risk:

- The registered dietitian (RD) can offer nutrition education on fresh fruits and vegetables during the high-risk visit in addition to education about the participant's nutrition risk(s) if time allows.

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

- A. Offer nutrition education about fresh fruits and vegetables to all FMNP participants between March and October and within the current certification. Work with the participant to identify which topic(s) to discuss. May include:
 - 1. Encourage participants to increase their intake and variety of fresh fruits and vegetables by buying and using foods from their local farmers market or farm store.

2. Offer information about buying, storing, preparing and using fresh fruits and vegetables at least one time within the current FMNP year and their current certification.
3. Use the FMNP benefits to open a discussion about selecting, storing, preparing, and/or eating fresh fruits and vegetables.

Note: Provide fruit and vegetable education at the next appointment if staff didn't provide it when issuing FMNP benefits.

- B. Document the fruit and vegetable nutrition education contact in each participant's Individual Care Plan.
- C. Document the nutrition education topic(s) discussed and mark as "Complete" in the Care Plan – Nutrition Education.

Information:

Below are examples of how clinic staff might offer nutrition education on fresh fruits and vegetables to FMNP participants.

1. Coordinate with [Washington State University Extension](#), or other community organizations, to have speakers present nutrition education on how to purchase, store, and prepare fresh fruits and vegetables.
2. Invite Farmers Market managers to your clinic to share information about what's available and how to use in-season produce available in your area.
3. Have a facilitated group discussion about using fresh fruits and vegetables prior to offering FMNP benefit education to the group.
4. Encourage participants to take a fruit and vegetable online lesson through WICHealth.

Section 4: Accountability and Security of Farmers Market Nutrition Program Benefits

POLICY: Accountability of WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program Benefits

The local agency must account for all WIC Cards with QR codes received from the Fulfillment Center.

- See WIC Card Inventory policy in [Volume 1, Chapter 22 - Issue WIC Food Benefits](#).

The State WIC Office allocates FMNP benefits based on agency caseload and enters the benefits into each participating clinic site.

Local agencies can transfer FMNP benefit allocation from one clinic site to another clinic site within the agency.

Agencies must contact state staff if they don't want or can't issue FMNP benefits. The state will reallocate the benefits to another agency.

PROCEDURES:

Staff:

- A. Follow policies for receiving and inventorying WIC Cards with QR codes from the state Fulfillment Center.
 - See WIC Card Inventory policy in [Volume 1, Chapter 22 - Issue WIC Food Benefits](#).
- B. Contact state FMNP staff when the clinic doesn't want or can't issue FMNP benefits.
 1. State staff will reallocate undistributed FMNP benefits to a different agency.

Section 5: WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program Complaints

POLICY: FMNP Complaints

FMNP participants, managers at authorized markets and farm stores, and authorized growers have the option to file complaints using the [Farmers Market Nutrition Program Complaint Form](#) with the local WIC agency or the state WIC office.

Clinic staff must forward the complaint to the State WIC office and keep a copy on file for four years at the local agency.

For civil rights complaints, staff must follow policies and procedures outlined in [Volume 1, Chapter 20 – Notification, Fair Hearings and Civil Rights](#).

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

- A. Inform the participant, market manager, or grower they have the right to file a complaint.
- B. Provide a link or printed copy of the complaint form:
 - Link in the Farmers Market Nutrition Program brochure or WICShopper app.
 - Link on the [Farmers Market Program for WIC Participants](#) webpage or print a hard copy.

Note: The FMNP Complaint form is available in 17 languages.

- C. Have the participant complete the form or offer to help them complete it.
- D. Send the completed complaint form to the state WIC office within five business days from the date staff received the complaint.
- E. Keep a copy of the complaint form on file at the local agency for four years.
- F. Follow the state WIC staff guidance to follow up on the complaint.

Section 6: Appendix

Guide to Writing a FMNP Policy for Benefit Issuance

Local agencies may use the state provided [Local Agency FMNP Policy template](#) or develop their own policy following the guidance below.

What is it?

- It is a brief written policy about how your agency will fairly and equitably distribute FMNP benefits to your participants.
 - Include staff requirements to review FMNP state and local policy and current training for issuing benefits.
 - Include farmers market procedures if issuing FMNP benefits at the market.
 - Include internet connectivity source. (Use only secure internet connections. Do not use public-WIFI)
 - Include FMNP and participant information security plan.
 - Share and have easily accessible to staff
 - You don't have to post the policy, but you must provide it to participants if they ask.
 - You must write a policy for each FMNP season; but it can be the same as the previous year. You must review and list the new date on the document.
 - You don't have to send it to the state WIC office for approval.
 - Keep the policy on file for four (4) years.
 - State WIC monitor staff review the policy during on-site WIC monitors.

What does it include? Consider the following at a minimum:

- When you will issue FMNP benefits (i.e. every day starting June 1st or only on Tuesdays).
- Where you will issue benefits (at the clinic and market, if issuing at the market).
- Who is eligible (see this chapter for details).

These are required FMNP activities to include in your policy statement:

- The following are required:
 - Participants must provide ID to receive FMNP benefits for in-person appointments.
 - Staff share instructions with participants on how to use FMNP benefits.
 - Staff share the location of authorized markets and farm stores.
 - Staff provide nutrition education on using fresh fruits and vegetables (sometime during the current FMNP season) and proper documentation of this nutrition education.
- Ask participants about their interest and ability to use FMNP benefits in a participant centered and consistent way.

Eligible WIC FMNP Foods



CAN purchase with FMNP benefits

| Fruits | Vegetables | Cut Herbs |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apples • Apricots • Asian pears • Blackberries • Blueberries • Boysenberries • Cantaloupes • Cherries • Currants • Red and black figs • Gooseberries • Grapes • Ground cherries • Huckleberries • Kiwi • Loganberries • Marionberries • Melons • Muskmelon • Nectarines • Peaches • Pears • Plums • Raspberries • Seaberries • Strawberries • Tayberries • Watermelons | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alfalfa sprouts • Amaranth greens • Artichoke • Arugula • Asparagus • Beets • Bok Choy • Broccoli • Brussels sprouts • Cabbage • Carrots • Cauliflower • Celery • Chinese cabbage • Collard greens • Corn • Cucumber • Eggplant • Garlic • Green beans • Green onions • Kale • Kohlrabi • Leeks • Lettuce • Mizuna • Mushrooms • Mustard greens • Onions • Parsnips • Peas • Peppers • Potatoes • Pumpkins • Radishes • Rhubarb • Rutabagas • Shallots • Spinach • Squash • Swiss chard • Tatsoi • Tomatillos • Tomatoes • Turnips • Watercress • Yellow waxed beans • Yu Choy • Zucchini • Other edible greens • Other edible sprouts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basil • Cilantro • Chives • Dill • Fennel • Parsley • Microgreens • Other edible cut herbs <p>Sell to Senior only</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honey |

Foods not Eligible to Purchase at Farmers Markets

Important information about foods that can't be purchased with FMNP benefits

| Foods not eligible at farmers markets |
|---|
| <div data-bbox="673 514 933 751" data-label="Image"> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dried fruits, vegetables, or herbs ▪ Honey* or syrup ▪ Jams or jellies ▪ Fruit juice or cider ▪ Nuts or seeds ▪ Eggs ▪ Baked goods, e.g., bread, cookies, pastries, etc. ▪ Seafood or meats ▪ Milk or cheese ▪ Potted herbs or other plants ▪ Flowers |

* Participants using Senior FMNP benefits **can** purchase unprocessed honey.
 Participants using WIC FMNP benefits **can't** purchase honey.