

Subject: Local Agency Staff Requirements**Item: Competency Requirements and Certification: WIC Nutrition Assistants (WNAs)**

PURPOSE:

To describe the requirements and process to certify WIC local agency (LA) staff as a WIC Nutrition Assistant (WNA).

POLICY:

- I. Paraprofessionals and Dietetic Technicians, Registered (DTRs) must complete the WNA certification process. The LA must obtain certification from CDPH/WIC for a staff person to become a WNA.
- II. Registered Dietitians (RDs); Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs); Registered Dietitians, Eligible (RDEs); Degreed Nutritionists (DNs); Master Degreed Nutritionists (MDNs); and Registered Nurses (RNs) are automatically considered a Competent Professional Authority (CPA) according to USDA regulations. However, LA management may choose to verify competency by requiring completion of the WNA training materials.

PROCEDURE(S):

- I. WNAs must meet the requirements and perform the specified program functions, as described below.
 - A. Minimum requirements for WNA Certification:
 1. Have a high school diploma or GED.
 2. Have a minimum of 1,000 hours of experience in a LA. A candidate may begin WNA training prior to accumulating 1,000 hours of LA experience but is only eligible for WNA certification after completing the required hours of experience.
 - a. A DTR with a current Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) certification card, or other document of certification from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, may be credited for 500 hours of the experience required above.
 - b. An individual with a nutrition or a related degree that does not meet the qualifications of a DN may be credited for 500 hours of the experience required above. Refer to WPPM 130-50 for information about DNs.

Subject: Local Agency Staff Requirements**Item: Competency Requirements and Certification: WIC Nutrition Assistants (WNAs)**

- B. The WNA candidate must demonstrate competency in the following task areas as outlined in the *California WIC Nutrition Assistant (WNA) Certification Training Manual, Candidate's Assessment Workbook, and WNA Reviewer's Guide*:
1. Communication and Cultural Competence.
 2. Certification and Recertification.
 3. Nutrition and Health.
 4. Individual Education.
 5. Food Packages, Benefits, and WIC Card.
 6. Group Education.
 7. Baby Behavior.
- C. Completion of a Task Area
1. When a WNA candidate has completed training and demonstrated competency in a task area, a LA reviewer must:
 - a. Document completion of the task area on the *List of Competency Evaluations* in the *WNA Candidate's Assessment Workbook*.
 - b. Retain a copy of the *WNA Candidate's Assessment Workbook* for each task area until the candidate is fully certified as a WNA and has obtained a signed certificate from CDPH/WIC.
 - c. Follow the reviewer guidelines, including qualifications for reviewers, contained in the *WNA Certification Guidance for Candidates and Reviewers*.
 2. The reviewer may authorize a candidate to perform the functions of a particular task area as part of regular work assignments before the candidate is fully certified as a WNA. The reviewer must follow the guidelines for authorization as stated in the *WNA Certification Guidance for Candidates and Reviewers – WNA Authorization Process*.
- II. Voluntary Competency Verification for Individuals Already Considered CPAs
- A. RDs, RDNs, RDEs, DNs, MDNs, and RNs are automatically considered CPAs and are not required to complete the WNA certification materials.
 - B. If a LA chooses to verify competency for these individuals, the LA may expedite the process by testing and observation. The LA should make this determination on a case-by-case basis to ascertain which WNA modules and tests are necessary for areas that may need attention.
-

Subject: Local Agency Staff Requirements**Item: Competency Requirements and Certification: WIC Nutrition Assistants (WNAs)**

III. To Finalize WNA Certification:

- A. The LA reviewer must complete the *WNA Certification Approval Request Form*. An RD must review, sign, and forward all the forms and transcripts to CDPH/WIC per directions in the WNA manual.
- B. CDPH/WIC staff will review the request using the standards for certification of a paraprofessional and may follow up with the LA Director if more information is required.
- C. CDPH/WIC will send a signed certificate for every WNA candidate that is successfully certified.
- D. The LA must obtain and keep on file a signed certificate for every approved WNA candidate from CDPH/WIC. The LA must also keep the *WNA Certification Approval Request Form* and the sign-off sheet(s) documenting completion of each task area, but may discard the assessment workbooks if desired.
- E. LAs must consult with their CDPH/WIC Nutritional Consultant (NC) if they have training questions regarding their specific business processes.
- F. The desired timeframe for completing WNA certification is six to twelve months. LAs must notify their NCs anytime the WNA certification process for an individual is taking more than this timeframe to complete.

AUTHORITY:

[7 CFR §246.2](#)

[WIC Nutrition Services Standards: Standards 3\(G\)](#)

[22 CCR §40621](#)

RESOURCE:

[California WIC Nutrition Assistant \(WNA\) Certification: Training Manual](#)

[California WIC Nutrition Assistant \(WNA\) Certification: Candidate's Assessment Workbook](#)

[California WIC Nutrition Assistant \(WNA\) Certification: WNA Reviewer's Guide](#)

[WNA Certification Guidance for Candidates and Reviewers](#)

[WNA Certification Approval Request Form](#)