



June 8, 2011

United States Department of Agriculture

SUBJECT: WIC Policy Memorandum # 2011-7
Conversion Factors for WIC Income Eligibility Guidelines (IEGs)

Food and Nutrition Service

TO: Regional Directors
Supplemental Food Programs
All Regions

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WIC State Agency Directors
All Regions

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to assist State agencies that administer the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) when converting multiple income sources to a monthly equivalent as part of the WIC income eligibility determination. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has received a number of requests for guidance regarding the conversion factors to be used. This policy memorandum provides additional guidance for WIC State and local agencies regarding income-source conversions, and therefore supersedes the information contained in the Section entitled "Use of Current Versus Annual Rate of Income" in FNS Instruction 803-3, Revision 1. At this time, no other sections of FNS Instruction 803-3 are affected by this change and are still applicable as of the April 1, 1988, issue date.

BACKGROUND

Many WIC applicants and participants are members of households with more than one source of income, e.g., several adults with different jobs, a grandparent receiving Social Security or Supplemental Security Income (SSI), child support payments, seasonal income from farming, etc. Further complicating the WIC income eligibility determination process, these income sources are frequently on different payment schedules; one adult may be paid weekly while another is paid twice a month; other types of income (Social Security, SSI, child support or alimony) are received once a month, as a general rule. Prior to the development of automated WIC management information systems that incorporated the WIC certification process, State and local agencies were told to use the conversion factors shown below when converting a weekly, bi-weekly, or semi-monthly income source to a monthly figure.

Conversion factors as listed in FNS Instruction 803-3, Revision 1:
Monthly Income Equals:
Weekly income x 4.3
Bi-Weekly income (every two weeks) x 2.15
Semi-Monthly income (twice a month) x 2

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In 2008, the Child Nutrition Program (CN) established new conversion factor procedures for the purpose of determining income eligibility for their applicants. In an effort to improve consistency between FNS Program areas, and to resolve the confusion associated with using conversion factors when determining income eligibility, WIC has decided to implement the procedures established by CN. These procedures are outlined as follows:

NEW CONVERSION FACTOR PROCEDURES

1. If a household has only one income source, or if all sources have the same frequency, do not use conversion factors. Compare the income, or the sum of the separate incomes, to the published IEGs for the appropriate frequency and household size to make the WIC income eligibility determination.
2. If a household reports income sources at more than one frequency, perform the following calculations:
 - Annualize all income by multiplying weekly income by 52, income received every two weeks by 26, income received twice a month by 24, and income received monthly by 12.
 - ***Do not round the values resulting from each conversion.***
 - Add together all the unrounded, converted values.
 - Compare the total to the published IEGs (annual income for the appropriate household size) to make the final income eligibility determination. Do not recalculate the published IEGs, as they are already calculated and rounded up to the next whole dollar prior to being published in the Federal Register.

IMPLEMENTATION

State agencies that are using the “old” conversion factors (4.3 for weekly income, 2.15 for bi-weekly income) must update their management information system software to reflect this change to the new conversion factor procedures **no later than July 1, 2012**.

For further questions or assistance on how to convert multiple income sources, State agencies should contact their respective FNS Regional Offices.



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