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DATE: May 20, 2020
TO: Coordinators and LA Staff
FROM: State WIC Staff
SUBJECT: COVID-19 Updates

Hunger Solutions

Last week on the Wednesday Local Agency, call it was brought up that Hunger Solutions had removed the WIC Program from their website since they thought we were closed.

We reached out to the Hunger Solutions Program & Communications Manager, Jill Westfall. She was surprised about the misinformation given out from her staff and assured us that she would remind her staff that the WIC Program is open.

She also mentioned that removal of the WIC Program from their website was not a recent development due to the pandemic. They updated the map design about two years ago, and in that process streamlined the programs from 12+ to the current five. She stated that for their users, having so many programs on the map was overwhelming. So they removed the places where one applies for programs (like WIC, SNAP county offices, workforce centers) and streamlined it to only include places where people directly get food (food shelves, meal sites, etc.).

Thank you for bringing up this concern and please continue to communicate any additional misinformation about our program being closed directly to me. Tina.breintenbach@state.mn.us

Unemployment stimulus Checks

At this time, USDA has provided the following clarification about families currently receiving the \$600/week unemployment stimulus check in addition to their regular unemployment check. WIC staff calculating income should consider both checks as income as we discussed on our Local Agency calls. However when calculating income during COVID-19, USDA shares:

- WIC staff can calculate income based off the previous 12 months rather than looking at the current month if that affects WIC eligibility.
- If a family is adjunctively eligible through Medicaid, SNAP or TANF or other adjunctive program, the family is eligible for WIC and staff do not have to explore unemployment income further.

WIC App Message:

During the last call with Local Agencies, there was a suggestion to send an app message to participants to communicate that WIC continues to be open. An app message will be sent to participants late in the day Thursday, 5/21 with the following message: ***Have you purchased your WIC foods this month? WIC is here for you. Call your local WIC agency for appointment choices from home.***