

WIC Local Agency Conference Call

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 15, 2023, 8:30A.M.-9:30A.M.

Agenda and Summary Notes

Agenda Items:

- National Updates - Kate
- Cash Value Benefits (CVB) for December– Tami
- Winnie Delay Update – Tami
- Formula Update – Jessie
- Reminder: Training on Prevention and Addressing Iron Deficiency Anemia – Carol
- Equity in Lactation Projects - Rosie

National Updates- Kate

WIC Funding

Congress is expected to consider a Continuing Resolution (CR) this week, with current government funding measures set to expire Friday, Nov. 17. Last night the House approved a tiered CR bill that continues government funding into 2024 with different dates. The agriculture bill, including WIC, is included in the CR that would go through Jan. 19, 2024. The bill now goes to the Senate for consideration and vote.

State WIC Agencies received a second allocation of WIC grant funding in recent weeks that will cover WIC Program costs into February 2024, even if there is a federal government shutdown. It is looking like there will be a CR passed this week, so with that in mind along with the current funding we've received for WIC thus far, we aren't in danger in the near term of running out of funding.

That said, we still have concerns about needing a higher level of funding for the full FY 2024 to cover current caseload and food costs. While the forecast looks okay over the next few months as we are working under CRs, we hope Congress will fully fund the WIC Program for the full year with an annual appropriation in the coming months.

USDA WIC Coverage Report for 2021

Earlier this month, USDA released [National and State Level Estimates of WIC Eligibility and Program Reach in 2021](#). In an average month of 2021, nationally an estimated 12.1 million people were eligible to participate in WIC. Of that group, 6.2 million people participated in the program, meaning the share of eligible people who participated in WIC (the coverage rate) was 51 percent. Minnesota maintained a higher coverage rate than the national average for 2021 with an overall coverage rate of 61.5 percent. This is encouraging to see, and we know that even with 61.5 percent of eligible Minnesotans participating in the program, there are many other families that could be connected with WIC Services.

Other Program Updates

Cash Value Benefits (CVB) for December– Tami

We are working with contractors behind the scenes to increase the CVB for December on Monday Nov. 27. Depending on what happens with the CR on Friday (Nov. 17), we may also be increasing January. We will let agencies know more as dates approach.

Winnie Delay Update – Tami

We were due to begin pilot on Oct. 31. Week prior to beginning pilot, it was determined there was a piece of software that is currently out of support. After discussions with Gainwell and Minnesota IT (MNIT) it was determined that since the unsupported software cannot receive security patches, Minnesota would delay the Pilot until this was updated. Information was sent out to Local Agencies on Nov. 1. Once we receive additional information on when we will receive the updated software, we can create a new pilot and rollout schedule. Watch the Weekly Update for additional information.

Formula Update – Jessie

There continue to be supply concerns with Nutramigen Infant. We are working with Mead Johnson to understand the issue. Total Comfort is an issue with Abbott contract states. While it is no longer a part of Minnesota Contract formula, it could potentially be impacting supply for Nutramigen or Gentlease in states.

The WIC Formula header on the Minnesota WIC website that was located at the top of website pages, has been moved under [WIC Shopping Help](#).

Reminder: Training on Prevention and Addressing Iron Deficiency Anemia – Carole

- **Registration:** [The Valuable Role WIC Staff Play in Preventing and Addressing Iron Deficiency Anemia](#) Thursday, Nov. 30, 8:30am – 10:00 am
- [MN WIC Calendar for Local Agencies](#) Important Dates
- **Registration:** [2023 National Maternal Nutrition Intensive Course](#)

National Maternal Nutrition Intensive Course distance program **registration ends Nov. 30**. Cost: \$35. Self-Paced.

Equity in Lactation Projects – Rosie

Rosie shared a PowerPoint. Equity and Lactation grants have occurred over the last year with the purpose of normalizing breastfeeding, sharing WIC breastfeeding services and strengthening partnerships. Projects up to \$5,000 were available. This year seven agencies were funded.

Watch for 2024 Equity in Lactation Grant information between March and April 2024. Reach out to Rosie with any questions Rosie.Pierce-Martin@state.mn.us.

- **Beltrami County** Family Health and WIC partnered with the community to start a Baby Café.
- **Meeker McLeod Sibley** provided lactation education and normalization by providing books at the mall and local library, WIC and breastfeeding support group. Taught classes at high school. Established a prenatal lactation education class and participated in a World Breastfeeding Week Event.
- **Isanti County** Public Health hosted a Community Baby Resource Fair.
- **Cass County WIC** provided books that support breastfeeding/human milk in all communities in Cass County. Participated in a Blue Plus Baby Shower event and the Leech Lake Welcome Baby Celebration.

WIC LOCAL AGENCY CONFERENCE CALL

- **Le Sueur WIC** purchased education materials such as breastfeeding baby dolls, and breastfeeding trainers to provide one on one education to WIC participants.
- **Nicollet County WIC** developed four diverse billboards placed through Nicollet County to promote and normalize breastfeeding.
- **St. Joseph's Hubbard** purchased breastfeeding books for outreach and donated sets of books to 27 businesses to promote breastfeeding.

Questions & Answers

Can we anticipate the WINNIE rollout to follow the same order of agencies once it begins?

It will be very similar. Due to the delays we may condense it some to allow for a shorter roll out period.

Are you recommending that we switch client's to Alimentum in place of Nutramigen if able?

At this time, work with families on what formula they prefer.

Do we still need approval for the Alimentum or can we go ahead and change it without the approval?

Yes, Health Care Providers can write options on the Medical Documentation Form (e.g., either Alimentum or Nutramigen or Neosure or Enfacare) allowing clinic flexibility to switch to comparable products as needed.

Reference – Complete Listing of Hyperlinks

[National and State Level Estimates of WIC Eligibility and Program Reach in 2021](https://www.fns.usda.gov/research/wic/eligibility-and-program-reach-estimates-2021)

(<https://www.fns.usda.gov/research/wic/eligibility-and-program-reach-estimates-2021>)

[WIC Shopping Help](https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/shopforwic/index.html) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/shopforwic/index.html>)

[MN WIC Calendar for Local Agencies](https://calendar.google.com/calendar/embed?src=500k4ns9eqb26v51529qg1fpuo%40group.calendar.google.com&ctz=America/Chicago)

(<https://calendar.google.com/calendar/embed?src=500k4ns9eqb26v51529qg1fpuo%40group.calendar.google.com&ctz=America/Chicago>)

[The Valuable Role WIC Staff Play in Preventing and Addressing Iron Deficiency Anemia](https://events.gcc.teams.microsoft.com/event/99a73b2e-3162-49b0-a51e-5d9e1d819501@eb14b046-24c4-4519-8f26-b89c2159828c)

(<https://events.gcc.teams.microsoft.com/event/99a73b2e-3162-49b0-a51e-5d9e1d819501@eb14b046-24c4-4519-8f26-b89c2159828c>)

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