

# WIC Local Agency Conference Call

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 2024, 8:30-9:30 AM

## Agenda and Summary Notes

### Agenda Items:

- National Updates - Kate
- Cash Value Benefits (CVB) in Default Food Package – Tami
- Multi-state WIC Participant Survey Results – Joni

### National Updates- Kate

#### WIC Funding: Federal Fiscal Year (FFY)

The grant summary we've received from USDA for FFY 2024 indicates flat funding for NSA and an increased level for food grant funding. At this point in the year, we are forecasting that our food grant plus anticipated formula rebate payments will be adequate to cover WIC food costs at the current level of participation. We have requested additional NSA funding to help cover higher administration costs this year, as was reflected in last year's program administrative expenses for the state and local agencies. We won't know for some time if we will receive any additional NSA funding. Our Peer Breastfeeding grant was slightly lower for FFY 2024 at \$1,407,752 compared to last year's funding level of \$1,415,794 (a difference of \$8,042).

#### WIC Food Package Changes

The final revisions to the WIC food packages were published last week. Visit the [What are the WIC Food Packages?](#) to access the final rule, answers to common questions, and other information.

The final changes align with the latest nutrition science and provide more variety, more choice, and more flexibility for participants, as well as more support for breastfeeding participants to meet their individual goals. As with the previous revisions to the food packages, the scientifically based changes are designed to provide under-consumed nutrients to, and improve the nutrition and health of, WIC participants while also accommodating special dietary needs and personal and cultural food preferences.

Some highlights of the changes include:

- Allowing fresh herbs with the CVB,
- Reducing the amount of juice for children and women,
- Allowing substitution of juice for \$3 CVB,
- Reducing the amount of milk for children and women,
- Adding plant-based yogurt and cheese,
- Allowing infant CVB to begin at 6 months of age,
- Increasing the CVB substitution amounts for infants,
- Allowing more flexibility for amount of infant formula for the first month,
- Requiring that states offer 75% of breakfast cereals that meet whole grain criteria,
- Adding canned fish to food packages for all children, and

## LOCAL AGENCY CONFERENCE CALL

- Allowing greater flexibility in package sizes offered as long as at least one package size or a combination of package sizes add up to the full nutritional benefit.

WIC State agencies have up to two years to implement most of the changes to the food packages for participants. Minnesota WIC will be working with our Food Package workgroup and our SPIRIT coalition partners to develop a timeline for implementing the changes. Making the expanded fruit and vegetable benefit permanent will occur right away and Tami will be sharing more about that on this call. We plan to keep local agencies updated on our plans as they progress.

USDA shares on their website that the key considerations for the final changes to the WIC food packages include:

- Science-based recommendations from the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine.
- The [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) (DGA), 2020-2025, which is the first iteration to include specific recommendations for women who are pregnant or lactating, infants, and children under age 2 years.
- Information in the FDA-EPA's 2021 [Advice about Eating Fish](#).
- Nearly 17,000 comments on the proposed rule received from a variety of stakeholders, including WIC State and local agencies.
- The intent of the food packages, which are supplemental and designed to fill key nutritional gaps, rather than provide all necessary nutrients for participants.

### 2023 Multi-State WIC Participant Satisfaction Survey Now Available

The National WIC Association and the Nutrition Policy Institute released the [2023 Multi-State WIC Participant Satisfaction Survey](#) and it is posted on the WIC Hub. Minnesota participated in this multi-state survey and Joni will be sharing more about the results from Minnesota respondents later in the call. The survey assessed WIC satisfaction across multiple states and 40,000 participants.

## Other Program Updates

### Cash Value Benefits (CVB) in Default Food Package – Tami

An advanced copy of the *Final Rule: Revision in the WIC Food Packages (2024)* has been published and includes the increased levels of the Cash Value Benefit (CVB) for Women and Children. Now that this increase is permanent, we can update the default food packages in HuBERT to include these higher CVB amounts.

- **Beginning Monday, April 22, the increased CVB levels will be available in the default food packages (DFPs) in HuBERT.**
- Please review [Increase in Cash Value Benefit \(CVB\) Permanent!](#) for important details and information on how to manage food packages.

### Multi-state WIC Participant Survey Results – Joni

The slides from the presentation will be posted on our website, watch the Weekly Update for the announcement.

If your agency would like information by zip code, please complete the [Local Agency Reports and Data Request](#).

## Questions & Answer Appropriation

**Will you get an error when trying to print if the lower amount is being issued.**

No, the information system will not indicate an error when you attempt to issue lower than the correct amount of CVB.

**What will the higher CVB Fruits and Vegetable default be named? Will it still be the same as what the default is now?**

The standard **Fruits and Vegetable - (WIC Allowed)** food item that is in the current default food packages will remain, but we will increase the default amount of the CVBs.

**What was the time frame period of the survey? Was this survey available in other languages?**

States recruited WIC participants to complete an online survey in English or Spanish between July and September 2023. To see more information and results on the survey, see the [Multi-State WIC Participant Satisfaction Survey](#) summary.

**Is the survey information specific to Minnesota?**

Yes, the template for the PowerPoint isn't WIC specific but the data Joni presented are from MN specific responses.

## Reference – Complete Listing of Hyperlinks

[What are the WIC Food Packages?](https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-food-packages) (https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-food-packages)

[Dietary Guidelines for Americans](https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/) (https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/)

[Advice about Eating Fish](https://www.fda.gov/food/consumers/advice-about-eating-fish) (https://www.fda.gov/food/consumers/advice-about-eating-fish)

[2023 Multit-State WIC Participant Satisfaction Survey](https://thewichub.org/2023-multi-state-wic-participant-satisfaction-survey/?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=d2a1778b-9310-4b59-91db-74221ee62f66&eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=d2a1778b-9310-4b59-91db-74221ee62f66) (https://thewichub.org/2023-multi-state-wic-participant-satisfaction-survey/?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=d2a1778b-9310-4b59-91db-74221ee62f66&eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=d2a1778b-9310-4b59-91db-74221ee62f66)

[Increase in Cash Value Benefit \(CVB\) Permanent!](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/wu/2024/0417cvb.pdf)

(https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/wu/2024/0417cvb.pdf)

[Multi-State WIC Participant Satisfaction Survey](https://media.nwica.org/2023%20multistate%20wic%20survey%201.pdf)

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