

WIC Local Agency Conference Call

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 2023, 8:30-9:30 AM

Agenda and Summary Notes

Agenda Items:

- National Updates - Kate
- ARPA Waivers Guidance – Kate
- Participant Data Issue and Follow Up – Tami
- Trending Participation - Tami
- Infant Formula Extending Large Cans – Jessie
- Designated Breastfeeding Expert – Rosie
- Self-checkout at Hy-Vee - Erin

National Updates- Kate

Earlier this month President Biden and Congressional leaders negotiated the debt ceiling deal to avoid a default on the nation's debt. The deal includes a two-year cap on federal spending, which would freeze non-defense discretionary spending at current levels for fiscal year 2024 while limiting growth to 1% in fiscal year 2025. This could dramatically affect WIC, since flat funding falls short of what USDA estimates is needed to meet the program's expanding caseload in fiscal year 2024. WIC Participation is growing across the nation, including in Minnesota, and with food prices seeing increases over recent years this combines to increase the funding needs of the WIC Program into the future.

The annual appropriations process is in full swing in Congress to put funding bills together for federal fiscal year 2024. A bill put forward last month by House Appropriators would underfund the current estimates for the WIC Program participation, which could put the expanded CVB benefit level at risk along with the possibility of waiting lists for the first time in 2 decades in WIC. The National WIC Association has created some resources to highlight the needs for WIC Program funding and organized a WIC Week of Action to raise awareness about these issues.

Other Program Updates

ARPA Waivers Guidance - Kate

- ARPA waiver guidance was sent out Friday, June 16, along with a Sample Script for LAs. The following are posted to the MN WIC website:

[Implementation of WIC ARPA Waivers](#)

[Suggested Process for Implementing ARPA Waivers](#)

- In the Weekly Update there will be a Questions & Answers document addressing common questions that have come forward. The [Q & A: WIC ARPA Waivers](#) is posted under the ARPA

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waivers section on the website. As questions come forward, we will continually update this document on the website.

- If you do have questions about the guidance, please reach out to your State WIC Consultant.

Participant Data Issue and Follow Up – Tami

An issue has been identified in HuBERT that is impacting the participation counts for a subset of the Fully Breastfed (FBF) infants < 6 months of age and Some-Breastfeeding Women (SBF) > 6 months postpartum. This issue is caused by having both the Woman and Infant folders open in HuBERT at the same time when starting the certification. Since a very specific scenario creates the issue, the total impact varies across the state. Some agencies will see no difference in their participation counts while others may see an increase. The impact to the total statewide participation is <1%.

A correction is being made to the EOM process to ensure these participants will be correctly counted moving forward.

The fix to the EOM process will only correct the database tables and participation count in HuBERT for months May 2023 and after. Participation reports, run in HuBERT or Infoview, that include the months of October 2022 to April 2023 will not include the updated counts. The state office will manually add the missed participation counts to the posted reports on the WIC Monthly Participation page on the website to participation is reflected correctly for Federal Fiscal Year 2023.

Local Agency WIC funding is based on previous participation for each local agency; for example the participation counts for July 2021 to June 2022 were used to determine the FFY23 funding. We have identified the number of participants that were missed in the participation count by agency and to ensure local WIC agencies receive the correct funding based on participation during this time. Adjustments for this missed participation will be applied to local agencies final payouts at the end of the fiscal year.

This information will be provided in the Weekly Update going out today.

Trending Participation – Tami

Total participation is trending up. The initial statewide count for May 2023 is 108,237. We have not had a statewide count this high since November 2017.

Over the last six months from October 22-April 23 we had a 1.98% increase in total participation the biggest areas of increase were Pregnant women at 2.41% and Breastfed Women up 3.68%.

Infant Formula Extending Large Cans – Jessie

Large can substitutions for contract and medical formula have been extended to the end of August. See the MN WIC webpage [Formula Guidance – WIC Staff](#) for more information.

Designated Breastfeeding Expert – Rosie

A new policy has been added to MOM: Section 4.7 Designated Breastfeeding Expert also known as a DBE and Exhibit 4-B Sample Job Description for the DBE.

- The Designated Breastfeeding Expert (DBE) policy and job description will provide information and guidance about the expanded role of the DBE in all WIC agencies.

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- A similar role, the IBCLC was formerly only required in agencies with a peer program, and only included in the peer program policy.
- The DBE policy outlines the qualifications for the position and the responsibilities of the DBE.
- Each WIC grantee will be asked to identify at least 1 DBE in the upcoming 2024-2025 Nutrition Education Plan.
- If agencies that are not be able to meet the requirement of having a DBE, they will need to submit a plan for referring participants with complex lactation concerns.
- DBEs must be trained in the new WIC Breastfeeding Curriculum up to level 4. Breastfeeding Curriculum levels 1-3 are now available for self-study on the [Minnesota Department of Health Learning Center](#).
- Level 4 will be offered as a live training with Cathy Carothers on September 12th, 14th, and 19th. Interested staff can register on the website at [WIC Breastfeeding Curriculum Trainings 2023](#).

Self-checkout at Hy-Vee - Erin

See [Tips for Transaction Issues at Hy-Vee Stores](#) for information.

Questions & Answers

If we haven't yet run the participation report for May 2023, will it be correct now?

Participation reports for May and after will be correct the Website reports we hope to have updated by 7/7/23.

When will we know how this impacted our count for last year?

We will not be posting previous years updated counts, we will use these numbers when doing Local Agency final payouts.

For questions related to the ARPA guidance document, see the [Q & A: WIC ARPA Waivers](#).

Can we continue to use medical formula waivers regarding the hypoallergenic or is that returning to normal?

Store brand hypoallergenic formulas are no longer MN WIC allowed. See the website for the current [Minnesota WIC Medical Formula Substitutions](#) list.

Is the DBE a different position than the BF coordinator?

The DBE is a different role than the Breastfeeding Coordinator and has different duties outlined in the policy. The DBE and the Breastfeeding Coordinator can be the same person.

Being an IBCLC does not meet the standards if they haven't taken the WIC course?

The DBE must be trained with the USDA WIC Breastfeeding Curriculum through level 4. This is a requirement from USDA Food and Nutrition Service.

Do we designate just one for the plan if we have more than one DBE?

The 2024-2025 Nutrition Education Plan will allow for more than one DBE to be listed.

Is this a new federal requirement or specific to MN?

This role is being implemented in all states, not just in Minnesota.

If we have approved plans for an IBCLC, do those now go away if they have not taken the WIC DBE course? Like we have gotten previous approval for our WIC IBCLCs to issue nipple shields?

Issuance of breastfeeding aids such as nipple shields shouldn't be impacted by the DBE implementation. Please reach out to Rosie.Pierce-Martin@state.mn.us to discuss your approved IBCLC plan.

Are we going to get a memo on the Hy Vee issues so we can better explain to our participations?

For guidance see [Using Self-Checkout with the WIC Card](#)

Besides HyVee and Walmart, are there any others stores with self-checkout for WIC?

Family Fresh

Reference – Complete Listing of Hyperlinks

Implementation of WIC ARPA Waivers

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/arpaguide.pdf>)

Suggested Process for Implementing ARPA Waivers

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/arpaprocess.pdf>)

Q & A: WIC ARPA Waivers

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/wu/2023/0502arpa.pdf>)

Formula Guidance – WIC Staff (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/localagency/contract.html>)

Minnesota Department of Health Learning Center

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/about/tools/learningcenter.html>)

WIC Breastfeeding Curriculum Trainings 2023 (<https://survey.vovici.com/se/56206EE3377EE275>)

Tips for Transaction Issues at HyVee Stores

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/wu/2023/0621hyvee.pdf>)

Minnesota WIC Medical Formula Substitutions

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/recall/medicalsubs.pdf>)

Using Self-Checkout with the WIC Card (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/selfcheckout.html>)

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