

WIC Local Agency Conference Call

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2024, 8:30-9:30 AM

Agenda and summary notes

Agenda items:

- National updates
- WIC 50th recap – Megan Leonard/Kathy Duffy
- Winnie update – Jill Wilson/Tami Matti
- MN benefits pilot – Kate Franken/Rebecca Gruenes
- Conference preparations – Carole Kelnhofer
- Breastfeeding bonus awards - Rosie Pierce-Martin
- Formula update – Jessie Zins

National updates- Kate

Federal government funding for FFY 2025

Negotiations continue in Congress on federal government spending bills for FFY 2025, which begins October 1. Last Wednesday, House Republicans had to pull their proposed continuing resolution (CR) from floor consideration once it became clear that it would not garner enough votes to pass. The proposed CR includes spending flexibilities for WIC, requested by the White House, to allow the program to continue serving all eligible applicants for the duration of the funding extension, which would last into March 2025. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) has called for a short-term funding extension to provide time to negotiate full FY25 appropriations bills after the November election.

Other program updates

WIC 50th recap – Megan/Kathy

A celebration for the WIC 50th anniversary was held two weeks ago on September 5, at the Wilder foundation. There was time to gather, a presentation, and Ramsey County WIC clinic tours. During the speaking event Dr. Brooke Cunningham, Commissioner; Supplemental Nutrition Division Director for the Midwest region, Nancy Ranieri; Kate Franken, WIC Director; Hennepin County WIC Peer, Yaa Yaa Nti; and Ramsey County WIC Nutrition Educator, Andrea Phothisanh; shared a few words to recognize the positive work and outcomes of the WIC program. Four media outlets were also there. Megan shared photos from the event during the local agency call. Thank you to all involved!

[WIC 50th Anniversary Event Recording](#)

[Minnesota WIC 50th Anniversary \(YouTube\)](#)

Ramsey County partners were able to attend the event and Kathy, Ramsey County WIC coordinator, shared this was a great opportunity to get the community involved because they had staff speaking and WIC clinic tours at the Wilder location. They invited county leadership and community partners. “WIC does so much with families, and this was a nice opportunity to highlight WIC!” Ramsey County WIC reconnected with partners that they hadn’t spoken with in a while and this event provided an

opportunity to renew their partnership. Kathy encourages other Local Agencies to consider an opportunity like this to connect with partners in your communities. Kate commented on MDH's efforts to pull together event resources and develop a toolkit for other agencies that might be interested in hosting a similar event. This is an opportunity to educate the community about WIC, engage partners and celebrate WIC!

Winnie update – Jill/Tami

Tami shared some reminders about rollout. We are less than two weeks out from statewide rollout. In the [WINNIE Readiness guide](#), at two months before rollout, it states to check connectivity where you will be accessing WINNIE. The instructions ask agencies to reach out to the help desk and confirm your agency has tested connectivity. After you check connectivity, email, or call the helpdesk to confirm this is complete for your agency. Do this as soon as possible! Thank you to all the pilots – Dakota (phase 1), Ramsey (phase 2), Hennepin (phase 3). Kudos for your efforts to make this pilot successful!!

Jill Wilson, Hennepin County WIC coordinator shared that the transition went smoother than anticipated. She appreciates how resilient their team has been through rollout! It went smooth despite firewall issues up until the week before rollout. This issue didn't allow Hennepin WIC staff to use the training environment as planned. Jill reiterated the importance to check in with your local IT and communicate deadlines to be successful with rollout. WINNIE speed and the ability to not have to print and scan documents, are positive changes. They are experiencing some slowness with the scheduling and that is more of an issue with Hennepin County. Jill advises agencies to build clinic schedules ahead of time. Overall Hennepin staff are liking WINNIE!

MN benefits pilot – Kate/Rebecca

Kate shared that as part of the governor's One Minnesota Plan and efforts to reduce food insecurity, MDH WIC is working with the [MNbenefits](#) team to include WIC through various strategies. One strategy is to include WIC and SNAP programs in the MNbenefits application flow to connect families that need food support with opportunities to enroll in benefits. The recent [Weekly Update](#) highlighted this work with the Department of Human Services (DHS). There are three strategies for this work:

- Integrate WIC information in the MNbenefits application flow.
- After MNbenefits application completion, text messages will prompt applicants to consider WIC program participation.
- MNbenefits website is undergoing reconstruction. After this is complete, WIC will be added as a food resource for families with links to find out more information about WIC and to the online application.

MNbenefits and MDH WIC are seeking pilot agencies to integrate the application flow changes and text messaging strategies in their communities. If your agency is interested, please reach out to your state WIC consultant.

Conference preparations – Carole

Thanks to the conference team planning the [MN WIC 2024 Training Conference](#), we are excited that it is almost here! The event is at the [DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Bloomington- Minneapolis South](#) on Sept. 26, 2024. **Registration is now closed.**

- The registration window will be open at 7:30 and will be closed during all sessions. The conference will start promptly at 8:30.
- Check out the webpage [MN WIC 2024 Training Conference](#), it is the 'go to' for all conference information, including the agenda and speaker presentations. We will stay as close to schedule as possible.

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- We have fourteen speakers speaking! There are two general speakers, two breakout sessions with various speakers and a final speaker at the end of the day.
- Meals include breakfast and lunch buffets, afternoon snacks, and beverages.
- There will be lactation space, prayer/meditation room, and community partner tables.
- There is free parking for the event! Find current [Minnesota Road Conditions](#) and check road construction before you travel.
- CEUs will be provided; it is important that attendees complete the evaluation sent by email following the event to receive their certificate of attendance.
- We are going green with our conference. The agenda, full program, and speaker handouts are posted on our conference webpage; a QR code on your badge and at the conference venue will support easy access. There is also free WIFI at the conference.
- Questions about the conference, email health.wic@state.mn.us.

Breastfeeding bonus awards - Rosie

Minnesota received a breastfeeding performance bonus award. Awards recognize state agencies that significantly improved the rate of fully breastfed infants between fiscal year 2022 and 2023. Award amounts are based on state agency caseload size. State staff are still planning how to use the award. Minnesota's exclusive breastfeeding rates increased 5.6%, the 4th highest increase in the nation. Thank you for the amazing work local agencies do!

Formula update - Jessie

Rebates for large can sizes will no longer be available for Gentlease, Reguline and AR, on October 16, 2024. Supply appears to be adequate in Minnesota and we don't anticipate further supply disruptions resulting from the tornado that hit the Mead Johnson warehouse. Participants and vendors will be notified about this change. If your agency experiences any supply issues, please order formula through MDH state WIC office. If you have supply concerns or questions, please contact your state WIC consultant.

Questions & answers

Will there be any impact on WIC if there is a shutdown?

At this time, we don't feel a shutdown will occur; a continuing resolution is more likely.

If staff don't have time to watch the preconference sessions before the conference, will they be available to view after the conference?

Yes, there will be opportunities to watch this after the conference.

Just to confirm, large cans will be unavailable as of 10/16/2024?

Yes, this is correct.

Reference – Complete Listing of Hyperlinks

[WIC 50th Anniversary Event Recording](https://files.web.health.state.mn.us/wic50anniversary.mp4) (https://files.web.health.state.mn.us/wic50anniversary.mp4)

[Minnesota WIC 50th Anniversary \(YouTube\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gC6FOEECFGo) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gC6FOEECFGo)

[WINNIE Readiness guide](#)

(https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/winnie/readiness.pdf)

[MNbenefits](https://mnbenefits.mn.gov/) (https://mnbenefits.mn.gov/)

[Weekly Update](https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MNMDH/bulletins/3b4ccd2) (https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MNMDH/bulletins/3b4ccd2)

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[DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Bloomington- Minneapolis South](https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/mspbsdt-doubletree-bloomington-minneapolis-south/)

(<https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/mspbsdt-doubletree-bloomington-minneapolis-south/>)

[MN WIC 2024 Training Conference](https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/localagency/24conference.html)

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/localagency/24conference.html>)

[Minnesota Road Conditions](https://511mn.org/@-96.49243,46.92432,6?show=metroTrafficMap,roadReports,weatherWarningsAreaEvents,stationsAlert,otherStateInfo) ([https://511mn.org/@-](https://511mn.org/@-96.49243,46.92432,6?show=metroTrafficMap,roadReports,weatherWarningsAreaEvents,stationsAlert,otherStateInfo)

[96.49243,46.92432,6?show=metroTrafficMap,roadReports,weatherWarningsAreaEvents,stationsAlert,otherStateInfo](https://511mn.org/@-96.49243,46.92432,6?show=metroTrafficMap,roadReports,weatherWarningsAreaEvents,stationsAlert,otherStateInfo))

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