

# WIC Local Agency Conference Call

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2025, 8:30-9:30 AM

## Note: Artificial intelligence (AI) powered note taking assistants – guidance for meetings

There are multiple AI-powered meeting assistants that are designed to take notes or attend meetings in place of staff. Although these types of tools are becoming more popular, we ask that you do not use these types of artificial intelligence tools to record any state WIC sponsored meetings. These types of recording devices require consent from all participants to record.

## Agenda and summary notes

### Agenda items:

- National updates - Kate
- Training updates (participant centered champions, workplace safety, cultural toolkit) – Carole
- New App changes – Tobi
- Advisory group strategic priorities – Kate
- Minnesota WIC breastfeeding awards – Kristen

### National updates- Kate

#### USDA reorganization announcement

On July 24, 2025, Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins announced plans to reorganize in [Secretary Memorandum: SM 1078-015](#), which is in line with the broader administration's efforts to reduce the size of the federal government. The memo outlines plans to close the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) offices in Alexandria, VA and relocate FNS responsibilities to one of seven new hubs and service centers outside of Washington, DC. These hubs would also house new USDA regional offices, reducing the total number of regions from seven to five.

The Minnesota WIC Program is currently located in the Midwest Region and assigned to oversight and support from the Midwest Regional Office (MWRO) for FNS along with Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Iowa. The WIC team at the MWRO has already seen numerous reductions in staff over the last 6 months with only three staff remaining working directly with the WIC Program. We don't know when these reorganization changes will take place or how it will impact Minnesota WIC, but we are concerned about further reductions in experienced WIC staff at the national and regional offices supporting our program. [USDA Opens Public Comment Period on Department Reorganization Plan](#) for interested parties to provide comments and feedback through August 26th.

#### National WIC Association tech conference

The National WIC Association (NWA) Technology, Innovation, and Vendor Management conference will be held in Minneapolis on September 3-5. I heard from NWA staff earlier this week that 52 people were registered to attend from Minnesota. There is a group of state office staff attending and we hope to see some of you from local agencies at the conference too. If you are attending, stop any of us at the

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conference to introduce yourself and connect. The updated [National WIC Association WIC Technology, Innovation, and Vendor Management Conference Tentative Agenda](#) was just posted this week on NWA's website. Even if you can't attend, NWA often offers access to some recorded conference sessions afterwards for a fee. You can find more information about this post-conference in NWA's Monday update.

### Other program updates

#### Training updates - Carole

- **Participant centered champions** – Switching up the format for the call to be more content rich. It will include a presentation, then move into discussion, with participation and sharing from local agencies. The next call is Sept. 9, 8:30-9:30 am. Training reminders are shared in the [Weekly Update](#) and also on the [Important Dates Calendar](#).
- **Workplace safety training** August 29, 9:00 – 10:00 am [What about us? Preventing violence for health care professionals](#).
- **Cultural toolkit** – Boluwatife Lowen presented  
Boluwatife contributed to the [Food Allergies Topic of the Month](#) and on the Nigerian cultural toolkit during her internship with MDH WIC. Boluwatife is a graduate student in Public Health Nutrition at the University of MN. She was born in Nigeria and has experience working with diverse communities. With the cultural toolkit, the goal is to enhance culturally responsive care, and promote individualized, respectful service. The kit discusses eating practices, staple foods, dietary challenges, and pregnancy, postpartum and infant feeding. For details see the Nigeria toolkit on the [WIC Cultural Toolkit](#) page.

#### New App changes - Tobi

New features are coming this fall in efforts to modernize the mobile app. Tobi shared the following updates

- A Somali version will be available and can be switched under settings to Somali, English or Spanish.
- An appointment reminder can be set and added into a participant's personal phone calendar.
- In Benefits, it can show benefits purchased, date and where items were purchased.
- The app will link to social media sites including MDH WIC Facebook and Instagram and MDH LinkedIn and YouTube.

#### Advisory group strategic priorities – Kate

Strategic planning was completed in 2018 with the advisory group. Progress has been made on various priorities, and we were pushed to move forward with some priorities due to COVID. At advisory group discussion in October 2023 further strategic priorities were identified, and in July 2024 there were small group discussions to follow up, and in July 2025 more was shared at advisory group. Kate shared 2023 WIC program vision elements, the 2023 highest priority strategies and the 2025 current state: internal and external factors. These slides will be reviewed and available in August regional meetings. We plan to continue to review and discuss these priorities together.

**Minnesota WIC breastfeeding awards - Kristen**

Kristen shares this year's awardees. Congratulations!

**Gold awardees:**

- Dakota County
- Sherburne County

**Premiere awardees:**

- Olmsted County
- St. Louis County
- Carlton County

**Honorable mentions:**

- Faribault-Martin County
- Bloomington

**Questions and answers**

**Will the \$2,500 supplemental funds be offered again in FY2026?**

Yes, we do plan to offer the \$2,500 supplemental funds again this year.

**Where can we get brochures/pamphlets about food allergies and early feeding for infants?**

[Food Allergies- Topic of the Month](#). You can check out the Infant Nutrition education cards on the [WIC Nutrition and Your Family](#) page for topics related to introduction of foods for infants.

**Will the benefits listed be translated?**

Currently what is listed on the benefits is not translated since it is pulled directly from the eWIC processor. There are links to the food lists in the correct languages.

**Will the app update be automatically pushed out or will participants need to manually do it?**

It depends on if they have their phone's auto updates turned on. This update isn't like the last release where there was a platform update that needed a full removal and install of the new mobile app.

**Is it possible to link to recommended nutrition ed cards to the app that were discussed during the appointment?**

We can take this back as a future enhancement

**WIC APP - when will the set up PIN feature on the WIC app be available?**

The link to the PIN in the app brings up the phone number they need to call to set it. At this time, they cannot directly set it through the app, but it is listed as a future enhancement.

**When will we hear about peer program funding for FFY26?**

Federal levels are set and there are some items we continue to wait on for our FFY26 funding level. We are currently reviewing budget proposals and anticipate having more information to local agencies by end of September.

**When in 2026 do the waivers expire?**

September 30, 2026

**Reference – Complete Listing of Hyperlinks**

Secretary Memorandum: SM 1078-015 (<https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/sm-1078-015.pdf?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=6633918c-9379-4e8c-b70b-ddb2509632ad>)

USDA Opens Public Comment Period on Department Reorganization Plan (<https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2025/08/01/usda-opens-public-comment-period-department-reorganization-plan?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=6633918c-9379-4e8c-b70b-ddb2509632ad>)

National WIC Association WIC Technology, Innovation, and Vendor Management Conference Tentative Agenda (<https://media.nwica.org/2025techagenda.pdf>)

WIC Weekly Update (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/localagency/wedupdate/index.html>)

MN WIC calendar for local agencies

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

What about us? Preventing violence for health care professionals

(<https://events.gcc.teams.microsoft.com/event/58f15d4a-1b1d-4dd4-8b90-848ef59cf647@eb14b046-24c4-4519-8f26-b89c2159828c>)

WIC Cultural Toolkit - MN Dept. of Health

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

Food Allergies - Topic of the Month

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

Minnesota Department of Health - WIC Program, 625 Robert St N, PO BOX 64975, ST PAUL MN 55164-0975; 1-800-657-3942, [health.wic@state.mn.us](mailto:health.wic@state.mn.us), [www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us); to obtain this information in a different format, call: 1-800-657-3942.

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