

WIC EBT Issuance, Redemptions, and Transactions Data Resource Feasibility Study

Client: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service

Overview

Administered at the federal level by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is operated by 89 WIC state agencies, including the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 33 Indian tribal organizations, and 5 U.S. territories. WIC serves 8 million monthly participants who redeem their food benefits at more than 48,000 approved vendors. Participants receive nutritious supplemental foods, nutrition education, counseling, referrals to healthcare, social services, and other social services. Most participants now use electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards to obtain food benefits, but there is no data system that collects, organizes, and stores WIC EBT transaction data at the national level.

This project assesses the technical requirements, user needs, potential barriers, and costs related to establishing a nationwide WIC EBT issuance and transaction data resource, which would give FNS access to EBT data for analysis and reporting. The study also examines the potential strengths and weaknesses of such a resource, including the impacts on state agencies and EBT processors, the costs of gathering the data, and the potential of research to inform program operations. The benefits to regional and national program staff and other key stakeholders will also be explored.



Under this project, Insight—

- Performs a needs assessment to determine the usefulness of currently available WIC EBT data systems and identify unmet needs
- Gathers critical and desired functional requirements that identify the technical parameters for a national data resource for storing WIC EBT transaction data
- Estimates and describes the potential costs for FNS, state agencies, EBT processors, and others for each stage of development and implementation of such a national resource

Products

Final report, including feasibility study and cost estimates