

WIC EBT Issuance and Redemption Transaction Database

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 90 WIC state agencies, including the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 34 Indian tribal organizations, and 5 U.S. territories. WIC serves 8 million monthly participants at more than 48,000 approved vendors. Participants receive nutritious supplemental foods, nutrition education, counseling, referrals to healthcare, social services, and other social services. Although most participants receive paper instruments to redeem their food prescriptions, WIC has been moving to electronic benefit transfer (EBT) systems. WIC EBT currently operates through both an online and an offline system, but there is no data system that collects, organizes, and stores WIC EBT transaction data at the national level.

This project describes the technical requirements, user needs, potential barriers, and costs related to establishing a nationwide WIC EBT issuance and transaction data system that would centralize EBT transaction data, link transaction data to participant and vendor data, and generate public and restricted-use datasets and analytical reports. The study will also examine the potential strengths and weaknesses of such a database, including the impacts on states, the costs of gathering the data, and the potential of research to inform program operations. The benefits to state,



regional, and national program members 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-capture system and database for storing WIC EBT transaction data
- Estimates and describes the potential costs for FNS, state agencies, EBT processors, third-party processors, vendors, and others for each stage of development and implementation of such a national system

Products

Final report, including feasibility study and cost estimates