

WIC EBT Redemption Simulation Analyses and Datafiles

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

Overview

The state agencies that administer the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) are responsible for all aspects of vendor management, including identifying, investigating, and sanctioning vendors that violate regulations. This study aimed to identify empirical measures that could indicate which authorized retail vendors are most likely to commit program violations and provide resources state agencies might use to identify such vendors through analysis of their own electronic benefit transfer (EBT) data.

As state agencies transition from delivering benefits to participants via paper vouchers to EBT, the ways vendors might violate regulations and the ways the violations can be detected have also changed. For example, vendors might overcharge for WIC foods, substitute other items for WIC foods, or charge for WIC foods the participant does not receive. These behaviors may be reflected in certain patterns in the EBT data for a given vendor; these patterns in turn can be used to prioritize vendors for investigation.

As part of this project, Insight—

- Studied six state agencies to compile a list of potential indicators of vendors at high risk of committing violations based on EBT issuance, transaction, and redemption data



- Developed a toolkit, including several Microsoft Excel spreadsheets and accompanying materials to assist state agencies in using their EBT data to identify high-risk vendors

Products

Toolkit for WIC agencies, including Excel tools to identify program violators

Final Report: Thorn, B., Kline, N., Griffiths, R., Budge, E., & Mantovani, R. (2017). *WIC EBT redemption simulation analyses and data files*. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.