

FFCRA WIC Waiver Reporting Project

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

Overview

Passed in March 2020 and amended by the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021, and Other Extensions Act (P.L. 116–159), the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) allowed the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to grant two types of waivers to Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) state agencies. First, FNS was authorized to grant waivers to state agencies to conduct certification and recertification appointments without the need for participants to be physically present at a WIC clinic and to defer the anthropometric (e.g., height, weight) and blood work requirements necessary to determine nutritional risk (called physical presence waiver). Second, FNS was authorized to grant a wide variety of other programmatic waivers, including vendor compliance requirements waivers and food package substitution requirements waivers.

Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, FNS approved 15 different types of waivers, with 790 individual waiver requests across the 89 WIC state agencies. The approval rates varied by waiver type, ranging from 3 state agencies approved to extend expiring vendor agreements to all 89 state agencies authorized to waive the physical presence requirements.

The primary purpose of this study is to report on the use and impact of WIC programmatic waivers granted to state agencies as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study will equip FNS, state agencies, and local agencies with information on the implementation of each waiver and the impact of implementation on the provision of WIC services to women, infants, and children.



Insight is addressing the following study objectives:

- Summarize how WIC state agencies used each of their approved physical presence and administrative waivers.
- Summarize how WIC local agencies and clinic sites used their approved physical presence waivers.
- Describe to what extent the waivers resulted in improved WIC services for women, infants, and children.
- Prepare administrative data and determine completeness and usability of the data for future analysis.

The study will collect survey data from all WIC state and local agencies and their clinic sites. WIC administrative data will also be collected and analyzed from WIC state agencies.

Products

Set of 89 WIC state agency summaries produced in R Markdown; 15 summary memoranda (one for each waiver type); final summary report