

WIC Local Agency Conference Call

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2025, 8:30-9:30 AM

Agenda and Summary Notes

Agenda Items:

- National Updates – Reminder about Continuing Resolution (CR) - Kate
- Windows 11 and Hardware Inventory – Tami
- WIC MIS Overview – Tami
- Equity in Lactation and Collective Local Agency (LA) Projects – Rosie

National Updates- Kate

Reminder about continuing resolution - Kate

WIC is currently operating under a CR through March 14, 2025. Congress will need to act with another CR or budget appropriation. If Congress doesn't act before that date, there could be a partial federal government shutdown. In looking at MDH WIC federal funds received so far, the funds will take us through the end of April if there is a short-term gap. We are watching this closely and will communicate more details as we have them.

Brooke Rollins was confirmed as the new USDA Secretary of Agriculture.

Other Program Updates

Windows 11 and hardware inventory – Tami

There are thirty-five agencies that have not submitted their inventory logs yet. Agencies have until the end of February to complete and turn the logs to the Minnesota WIC Help Desk. Agencies using locally owned computers still need to complete the inventory logs for other items like signature pads, scanners and card readers. If you are in process of transitioning to locally owned computers and need a shipping label to return state-owned computers, please contact the help desk. Each agency should be using only state owned or locally owned computers, not a mixture of both.

Windows 11 has been successfully tested in WINNIE. If you are using locally owned computers, you can follow your local IT guidance for when to transition to Windows 11. For state provided computers watch for information in the Thursday email with directions to update. All computers must be using Windows 11 by October 2025 when support for Windows 10 runs out. There is one model of state provided computers that will not update to Windows 11. MIS & data unit will be in communication with those that have model 5580 with further directions.

WIC Management Information System (MIS) overview – Tami

Tami shared background information of our MIS. Minnesota is part of the State agency model (SAM) SPIRIT user group (SUG). This is a consortium of WIC State Agencies that share the same source code and prioritize and make changes as a group. This group includes 6 geographic WIC State Agencies (Alaska, Maine, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana), 8 Independent Tribal Organizations (ITOs) in Oklahoma, 1 ITO in Mississippi and 1 ITO in Maine. Minnesota joined the SUG when we transitioned

to HuBERT in 2009. SPIRITWeb (branded WINNIE in Minnesota) is the reengineered version of HuBERT and the newest version of a MIS currently in use across the country. Not all states within the SUG have implemented SPIRITWeb as of yet. States that are currently live are Maine, Montana, Minnesota, and the Oklahoma ITOs. The rest of the states will complete pilot and rollout by fall 2025.

Prioritization of changes are determined as part of the SUG. Changes occur in the following order:

1. Regulatory Changes from Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) or State regulations (risk factor changes, food package changes, etc.).
2. Technology upgrades to ensure products used for SWEB stay current.
3. Bug fixes.
4. Change requests.

Upcoming WINNIE releases

Release 3.4 – Tentatively scheduled for release to production in April/May 2025 which contains bug fixes for issues found when current states rolled out.

Release 3.5 will go to states for testing May 2025. It includes bug fixes and set up to allow food package regulatory changes.

Release 3.6 will go to states for testing November 2025 and includes bug fixes and regulatory changes to report to FNS.

Current priority projects:

- SPIRIT releases
- Participant portal. As part of Spirit user group (SUG) to be completed in 2027.
- 2022 universal interface – regulatory change for how WINNIE sends information to the eWIC processor.
- Incorporate reengineering the HuBERT Vendor Module in WINNIE, which includes changes to allow for required reporting to FNS.
- Bug Fixes
- Change requests (suggestion can be submitted, but it is likely four-five years before these are agreed upon by the SUG and prioritized in a release)

Equity in lactation and Coffective LA projects – Rosie

Rosie shared information about **promoting equity in lactation grants**. Funding is up to \$5,000 for projects related to improving equity in lactation in your community and promote WIC lactation services. Applications due March 28. Projects must be completed by September 30. Application link will go out in the Wednesday update. For application information and project examples refer to: [Additional Funding for Local WIC Agencies](#).

Five 2024 equity in lactation projects were highlighted:

- Aitkin – Promoted the peer program and face to face WIC services through breastfeeding support letters and supplies at targeted contacts. Engaged local businesses for world breastfeeding week with breastfeeding and business packet. They also purchased a lactation tent to use at events for breastfeeding families or staff.
- Itasca – provided breastfeeding incentives and encouragement at targeted milestones. Additional funds were used for staff materials for breastfeeding promotion and participant education.
- Meeker McLeod Sibley -provided lactation support in the community. The developed lactation baskets and gave them to participants planning to fully breastfeeding, first-time parents, and to those hoping to reduce formula supplementation. They also supported World Breastfeeding Week lactation event.

- Red Lake – Created a lactation space that reflects the cultural values and preferences of WIC participants and purchased books featuring indigenous families.
- White Earth – commissioned artwork that highlights breastfeeding and traditional values it has to the native American culture. It promotes milk as medicine and made breastfeeding families feel more welcome and comfortable.

Coeffective grants- Community partnership collaborative grants

Coeffective provides coaching and support as part of the project. Grants are up to \$5,000 to increase lactation support in your community. One of the main goals is to collaborate with partners.

2024 Coffective grants:

- Anoka – held lactation training in the hospital. Strengthen partnerships through breastfeeding trainings with Anoka County Health and Environmental Services and hospital staff.
- Des Moines Valley Health and Human Services WIC – provided breastfeeding resources at the library and in the community.
- Meeker McLeod Sibley Counties –They trained six CLCs to promote better connection to care and promote better connection with hospitals.
- Olmsted County- worked to improve partnerships by providing training to increase breastfeeding support in the community and develop better connections. Staff at the Jerimiah Program, hospital, and other community groups participated in training to support breastfeeding in the community.
- Ramsey County’s goal addressed early formula supplementation in the hospital. They developed prenatal hand expression kits and hosted lunch and learns with local hospitals to coordinate care.

Some other project examples include: Lunch and learn, furniture and equipment, community assessment, increased access to IBCLCs, and education materials are all ideas to use this funding opportunity. Visit the [Coeffective](#) website for more information.

Coeffective doesn’t have their application form posted yet. Watch the Weekly Update for information and steps on how to complete the interest form by March 28.

Reference – Complete Listing of Hyperlinks

[Additional Funding for Local WIC Agencies](#)

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

[Coeffective](https://coffective.com/) (<https://coffective.com/>)

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, www.health.state.mn.us; to obtain this information in a different format, call: 1-800-657-3942.

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