



Food and
Nutrition
Service

April 17, 2020

SUBJECT: Request for WIC Flexibility in Response to COVID-19

1320
Braddock
Place
Alexandria,
VA
22314

TO: Kurt Messner
Regional Administrator
Northeast Regional Office

This letter is in response to March 23, 2020 correspondence from Rhode Island WIC requesting program flexibility in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) as a result of significant impacts to providing WIC program services to participants due to COVID-19.

Rhode Island WIC requests a waiver to Section 7 of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA), which requires that States offer voter registration opportunities at certain State and local offices, including public assistance and disability offices. USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) does **not** have the authority to waive this statutory request under section 2204(a)(1) of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (P.L. 116-127). FNS' waiver authority only applies to section 17 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1786).

Given the recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to control the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic through means of social distancing, USDA FNS understands that normal clinic operations and processes are impeded and many clinics are closed or operating remotely. State agencies may review the following Department of Justice website for further information on the NVRA: <https://www.justice.gov/crt/national-voter-registration-act-1993-nvra>. State agencies may also direct new WIC applicants to this U.S. Election Assistance Commission website: <https://www.eac.gov/voters/national-mail-voter-registration-form>.

USDA FNS appreciates Rhode Island WIC's commitment to addressing the operational challenges impeding the delivery of WIC benefits to low-income, at risk, women, infants and children.

Sincerely,

SARAH WIDOR
Director
Supplemental Food Programs Division

