



Food and Nutrition Administration

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

DATE: August 19, 2026

SUBJECT: The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Supports Card and Benefit Security as a Critical Aspect of Program Integrity

TO: Regional Directors
Supplemental Nutrition Division
All Regional Offices

WIC State Agency Directors
All State Agencies

Dear WIC State Agency Directors,

USDA's Food and Nutrition Administration (FNA) does not tolerate fraud, waste, or abuse in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). The FNA remains committed to supporting WIC State agencies in strengthening integrity in their program as they work to modernize electronic benefit delivery technologies and systems.

WIC card and benefit security is critical for ensuring participants can successfully obtain their supplemental foods and for protecting the integrity of taxpayer dollars. As program partners, we seek to work with state leaders to take actions to increase card security, safeguard participants' benefits, and prevent or reduce fraud. The following are options State agencies may consider as they review program policies and procedures to improve the security of WIC benefits.^{1,2}

¹ [Addressing Stolen SNAP Benefits](#)

² [SNAP and TANF Electronic Benefit Transfer \(EBT\) Card Skimming Prevention – Tools and Resources](#)

1. **Assess available security features:** Work with the EBT processors and mobile application contractors to explore available security features, such as allowing participants to receive text messages and/or mobile application notifications when a PIN change occurs, locking an account based on data analytics for fraud detection, and forcing PIN updates.
2. **Educate participants:** Develop easily understandable guidance to educate participants on best practices for safeguarding WIC benefits. In addition to providing guidance to participants to check their EBT balances regularly and contact customer service when there's an issue, this guidance could include information on how to:
 - **Identify scams:** This information may include how to identify card skimming devices and technology, phishing, and scams. This may include reminders that state and local agencies will never call or text to ask participants for PINs or card numbers.
 - **Secure PINs:** This may include information on avoiding simple PINs, changing PINs frequently, and covering the keypad when inputting their PIN.
 - **Activate available security features:** This information may include how participants can prevent unauthorized benefit use by activating certain security features within their control, such as freezing all activity on their EBT card and unlocking when ready to make a purchase, if that feature is available. It can also inform participants on how to enable this feature through their portal or by contacting their EBT processor or State agency.
3. **Engage the vendor community:** Maintain communication with authorized vendors to promote vigilant and proactive measures against fraud. Vendors can support the safety of WIC benefits by training employees on card security threats, such as how to regularly inspect point of sale (POS) machines and PIN pads for tampering. Vendors should contact local police, their POS equipment

provider and WIC State agency, and the USDA Office of Inspector General if they detect tampering.³

We know many State agencies are already employing these practices, and we commend you for the dedication and innovation in securing program benefits.

To strengthen our coordinated efforts, FNA is proactively assessing current WIC EBT card and benefit security measures and developing a plan for improvement. The project is evaluating challenges and weaknesses, reviewing SNAP security measures and improvements, and incorporating input from State agencies, program stakeholders, and industry partners. We are grateful for your active participation in this effort and for the thoughtful insights you have shared throughout the project.

As an initial action from reviewing feedback, we intend to implement WIC card and benefit security virtual meetings to convene program partners to share current challenges, updates, and innovative solutions. FNA further expects to work with program partners to explore ways to modernize WIC technical and functional guidance to ensure stakeholders have the information they need to ensure card and benefit security. Further, FNA intends to explore ways to strengthen participant facing self-service controls as a cost-effective means of preventing benefit theft. As we continue to develop a prudent and appropriate strategy, we remain committed to maintaining close communication throughout roll out and implementation. We welcome any additional insights into how FNA can best support State agencies these efforts.

Importantly, FNA plans to publish a WIC Program Integrity proposed rule in the coming year that would modernize vendor integrity requirements by reflecting the WIC program's nationwide implementation of EBT and its move away from paper-based processes.⁴ It would seek to advance security requirements to protect WIC participants' personal information and taxpayers in a modern marketplace. Further, it would enhance

³ [Report Nutrition Program Fraud](#)

⁴ [2026 Regulatory Plan and the Unified Agenda of Federal Regulatory and Deregulatory Actions](#)

requirements regarding State agency vendor selection criteria and investigation techniques to reduce vendor fraud, abuse, and waste. The proposed rule would also strengthen vendor investigation, violation, and sanction regulatory requirements.

It is important that WIC State agencies, participants, and vendors remain vigilant to reduce potential opportunities for fraud. As always, we thank you for your service to participants. Please reach out to your respective Regional Office with any questions about these resources or for technical assistance on card security and fraud in the WIC Program.

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