

WIC & FMNP Modernization Evaluation Annual Report | 2025

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) served an average of almost 7 million women, infants, and children each month in fiscal year (FY) 2025. WIC provides healthy foods, breastfeeding support, nutrition education, and referrals to other services. The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) provides a seasonal benefit that allows WIC participants to purchase domestically grown fruits and vegetables in areas where the Program operates.

In 2021, Congress provided the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Administration (FNA, formerly Food and Nutrition Service) with \$390 million and waiver authority for WIC and FMNP outreach, innovation, and program modernization (collectively called "modernization" in this report). With these funds and waiver authority, FNA provided grants, waivers, and technical assistance to WIC State agencies and funded cooperative agreements, contracts, and interagency agreements to support modernization efforts.

This is the second annual report of the [WIC and FMNP Modernization Evaluation](#). It provides an overview of the modernization efforts underway and highlights early implementation findings, covering progress on activities through December 2025.¹

For this report, the evaluation team examined WIC and FMNP State agencies' early experiences with implementing activities that FNA directly funded through grants. This report draws on interviews with and grantee reports from State agencies. The evaluation team interviewed 80 WIC State agencies from September 2025 to February 2026. For the eight WIC State agencies that did not complete an interview, the evaluation team relied on information from grantee reports.

For the purposes of this evaluation, modernization includes projects across the five focus areas listed in Box 1. For each focus area, the report summarizes State agencies' activities and experiences for direct grants from FNA and provides a brief update on modernization projects managed by FNA. The report concludes with a discussion of experiences and challenges common across the focus areas and a summary of how State agencies implemented the waivers that enabled virtual services in WIC (i.e., the two waivers that allow participants to attend WIC appointments virtually and receive WIC benefits remotely).

More information about these efforts is available in the evaluation's [first annual report](#), on the [WIC modernization webpage](#) and the [FMNP modernization webpage](#), and in the [WIC & FMNP modernization dashboard](#). Information on all modernization waivers and a full list of waivers awarded to each WIC State agency are available on the [WIC modernization waiver webpage](#).

Box 1. Five focus areas

- ◆ [Modernizing technology and service delivery](#)
- ◆ [Improving the shopping experience](#)
- ◆ [Improving access to farmers' markets](#)
- ◆ [Developing the workforce](#)
- ◆ [Conducting outreach](#)

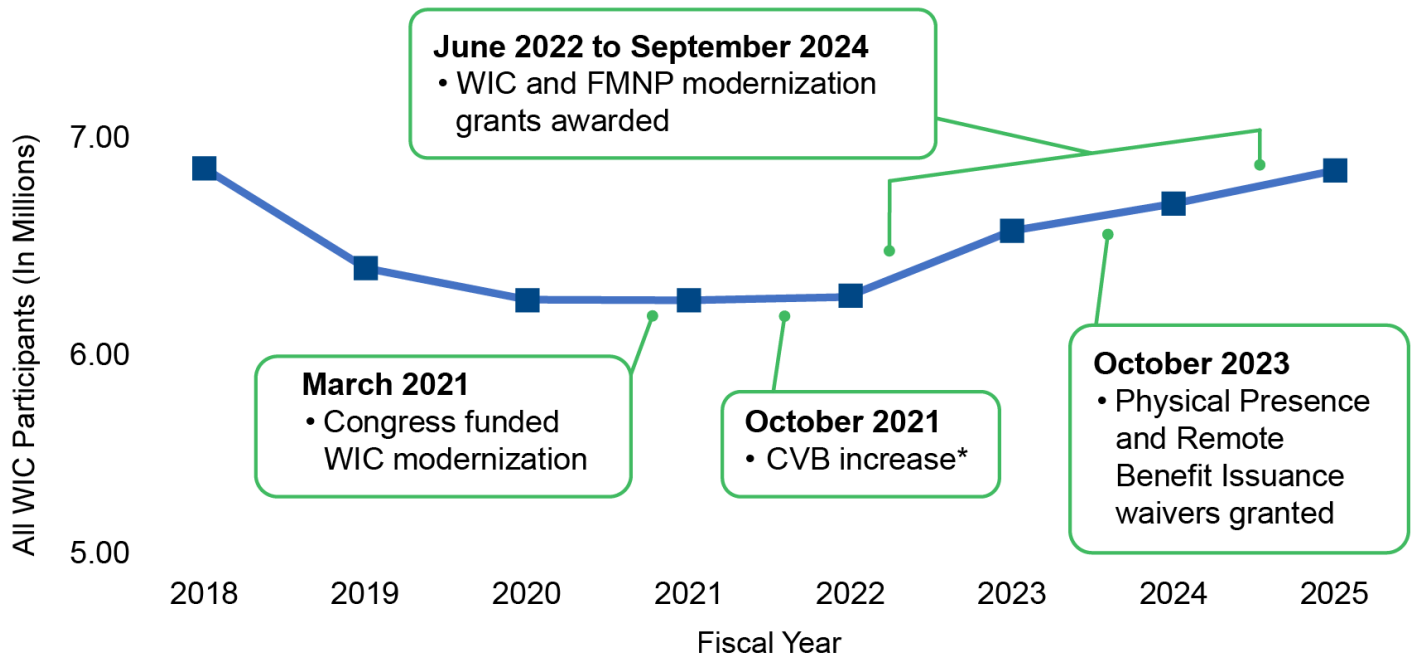
WIC Participation and Retention Trends

The WIC and FMNP Modernization Evaluation assesses whether modernization efforts are associated with increases in program enrollment, participation, retention, and redemption of food benefits, as well as improvements to the participant experience and program access and delivery. The exhibits below show recent trends in two of these outcomes: participation and retention.

Average monthly WIC participation increased from 6.24 million participants in FY 2021 to 6.87 million in FY 2025 (Exhibit 1).

¹ References to year throughout the report are for the calendar year (CY), unless specifically noted as fiscal year (FY).

Exhibit 1. Average Monthly WIC Participation (FY 2018 to FY 2025)

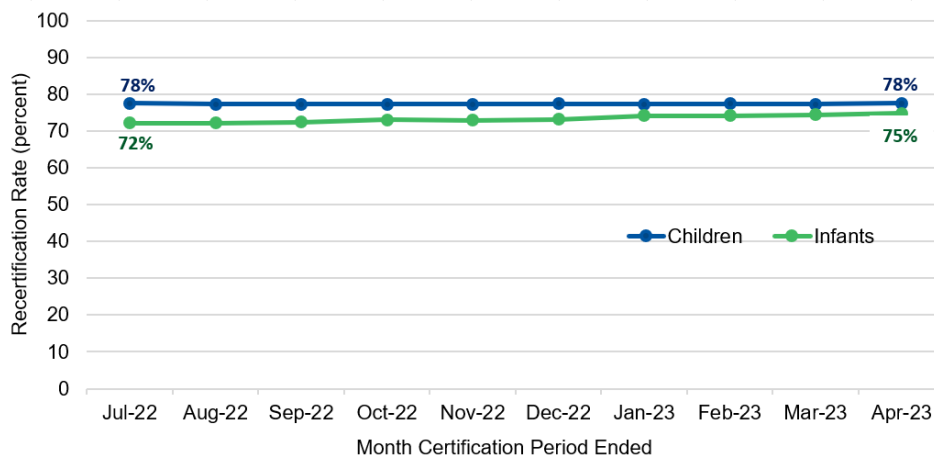


Note: Participation is averaged over the fiscal year (October through September) and the marker is at the midpoint (March 30). Participation data are available at <https://www.fna.usda.gov/pd/wic-program>. Grant milestones in this exhibit represent direct grants to WIC and FMNP State agencies and do not include milestones for cooperative agreements and related subgrants, contracts, or FNA projects.

*The cash value benefit (CVB) increase was funded separately from WIC modernization.

The recertification rate is a retention measure defined as the share of infant and child participants who recertify to remain on WIC in their next year of life. For both infant and child participants, the share recertified to remain on WIC was relatively stable from July 2022 to April 2023 (the time period for which data are available). The recertification rate for infants ranged from 72 to 75 percent, and the recertification rate for children was slightly higher, ranging between 77 and 78 percent (Exhibit 2). As WIC and FMNP modernization activities progress and more data become available, this evaluation will determine whether these efforts are associated with changes in the recertification rate and other outcomes.

Exhibit 2. Recertification Rates for Infants and Children (July 2022 to April 2023)



Note: Infant recertification is measured as the share of WIC infants who were recertified to participate as a one-year-old (that is, the share recertified at any point before they turn age two). The values are reported by the month in which their certification ended. For example, for infants, the certification period ends at their first birthday, and the July 2022 value is for infants who turned one year old in July 2022 and shows the share recertified before age two years old. Child recertification is measured as the share of WIC children recertified to participate at the next age level. For example, for WIC children participating at age one, this is the share recertified to participate at age two (that is, the share recertified at any point before age three). For children ages one to three, certification ends at their next birthday, and the July 2022

value is for children who turned two, three, or four years old in July 2022 and shows the share recertified before their next birthday. Data are from the WIC Participant and Program Characteristics 2024 collection, which has monthly data for May 2022 through April 2024. The recertification window begins the month before their birthday and ends the day before their next birthday. The sample includes infants and children enrolled the month before the recertification window opens (that is, two months before their birthday). Therefore, the first month for the recertification rate measure is for infants and children with birthdays in July 2022 because the sample includes those enrolled two months prior in May 2022, the first month of data. The final month for the recertification rate measure is for certifications ending in April 2023 because the measure requires observing participation for this cohort in February 2023 and any recertifications in the following months of March 2023 through April 2024, the last month of data. The exhibit reports recertification rates for the 66 WIC State agencies with longitudinal records combined, omitting 8 of these State agencies that had fewer than 24 months of data (n=58 State agencies).

Modernization Activities by Focus Area: Early Implementation Findings

WIC and FMNP modernization focuses on improvements to technology and service delivery, the WIC shopping experience, access to farmers' markets, development of WIC staff, and outreach to eligible families. Through WIC and FMNP modernization funding and waiver authority, FNA offered direct grant opportunities to State agencies; funded cooperative agreements, contracts, and interagency agreements; and approved 1,069 time-limited waivers across 24 waiver categories.² This section summarizes the modernization activities and experiences of State agencies with grants from FNA and provides a brief update on related modernization projects, by focus area.

Modernizing technology and service delivery

WIC State agencies received WIC Technology and Service Delivery and WIC Modernization grants from FNA for planning and implementing technology that improves WIC participants' experience. In addition, WIC State agencies received WIC General Infrastructure grants from FNA to support technological, digital, partnership, and outreach infrastructure. Certain State agencies also received Offline to Online Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) grants from FNA to enable all State agencies with outdated "offline" EBT to move to "online" EBT technology. This upgrade allows WIC families to receive benefits without having to visit a WIC clinic every three months and makes online shopping possible.

Exhibit 3 provides information about the WIC Modernization and WIC General Infrastructure grants, which support both improvements to technology and service delivery, and other modernization focus areas (discussed in subsequent sections of this report). Exhibit 4 summarizes the grants focused specifically on modernizing technology and service delivery.

Exhibit 3. Grants supporting multiple areas of WIC modernization

Grant	Number of grants awarded	Number of State agencies participating	Total funding
WIC Modernization	88	88	\$99,249,756
WIC General Infrastructure	7	7	\$7,517,895

Source: [WIC & FMNP modernization dashboard](#).

Exhibit 4. Grants supporting modernizing technology and service delivery

Grant	Number of grants awarded	Number of State agencies participating	Total funding
WIC Technology and Service Delivery Improvement	44	66	\$23,100,000
Offline to Online Electronic Benefit Transfer	7	17	\$52,296,578

Source: [WIC & FMNP modernization dashboard](#).

Note: Some grants were awarded to support the work of a group of State agencies.

² This waiver count includes all approved waivers, though not all approved waivers are implemented by the State agencies.

Participant-facing technology and service delivery activities. This section describes technology and service delivery activities that engage WIC participants directly and WIC State agencies' experiences implementing these activities. In all, 78 State agencies are conducting at least one activity related to participant-facing technology. Thirty-five percent of these activities are in the planning phase, 52 percent are in the implementation phase, and 12 percent are completed. Exhibit 5 describes these activities, which are presented in order of prevalence, and lists the number of State agencies pursuing each activity and their stage of implementation.

Exhibit 5. Participant-facing technology and service delivery activities funded by direct grants from FNA

Activity	Description	Number of State agencies			
		Planning	Implementing	Completed	Total
Improve mobile phone access and supports	Includes the ability for participants to use their phones to manage their benefit balances, schedule appointments, send and receive text messages, attend appointments, watch nutrition education videos, upload documents, and find other information about WIC. Additional activities to improve mobile phone access include making WIC websites mobile-friendly and using one- and two-way text messaging to communicate with WIC.	18	29	10	57
Improve participant website experience	WIC websites and participant portals—accessible by phone and computer—often offer features like those available in WIC mobile applications (see row above for a list of features). Improvements to WIC websites include adding participant portals, supporting submission of online certification information (potentially including secure document upload), providing automated appointment reminders, completing online appointments, and other activities.	23	24	2	49
Provide plain language and limited English proficiency support	Includes efforts to make WIC materials and website content easier to understand and more accessible by removing communication barriers. It also covers translating materials and website content as well as training WIC staff, per WIC requirements.	4	14	4	22
Improve customer service	Includes other activities that improve customer service for participants, such as purchasing vehicles that provide mobile clinic services to participants, organizing participant advisory groups to provide input on how to improve participants' experience in WIC, and providing mini grants to local agencies to support these activities.	3	7	3	13
Implement additional technology	Includes improvements to other technologies that WIC participants use, including telehealth services, such as setting up Zoom accounts for virtual appointments and developing and improving online nutrition education and online participant trainings.	6	6	0	12

Source: WIC State agency interviews conducted September 2025 to February 2026 and State agency grantee reports.

Note: During the "planning" phase of activities, State agencies are developing plans including assessing needs, seeking input, and identifying resources and objectives. During the implementation phase, State agencies are working toward the product or service (which may be before or after a technology product is available online). For completed activities, no further grant-funded work is anticipated.

Early implementation findings

- Of the 78 WIC State agencies implementing a participant-facing technology activity, 20 implemented text messaging services. This improved communication and engagement between WIC staff and participants through benefit issuance updates, appointment and nutrition education reminder texts, and two-way texting communication. As a result, appointment no-show rates and participant satisfaction improved in 17 State agencies.
- Fourteen out of 78 WIC State agencies implemented online applications and/or appointment scheduling systems (six implemented both, five implemented online appointment scheduling only, and three

implemented online applications only), expanding participant access and enhancing service delivery. Specifically, WIC State agencies described an increase in the number of WIC applications received and a decrease in missed appointments after implementing these tools.

- Twenty out of 78 WIC State agencies reported technology-related barriers and delays to participant-facing modernization efforts. Delays include system defects, such as ongoing error messages, typically identified and addressed during development and testing phases. Technology barriers include infrastructure limitations such as some participants not having cell phones, participant phones not being set up to receive text messages, local agencies lacking the infrastructure to ensure security of health records for online applications, and limitations in MIS language support, including the inability to accommodate some indigenous languages needed by participants. Additional technology barriers included MIS connectivity issues and inconsistent internet access that affected some participants' ability to use technology-enabled services. State agencies addressed these challenges through iterative system updates, vendor collaboration, and phased implementation strategies; however, a few State agencies opted to discontinue some technologies.

Vendor- and staff-facing technology and service delivery activities. This section describes technology and service delivery improvements primarily used by WIC-authorized vendors and WIC staff. A total of 66 State agencies are working on at least one activity related to vendor and staff-facing technology. Twenty-eight percent of these activities are in the planning phase, 57 percent are in the implementation phase, and 15 percent are completed. Exhibit 6 describes these activities, which are presented in order of prevalence, and lists the number of State agencies pursuing each activity and their stage of implementation.

Exhibit 6. Vendor- and staff-facing technology and service delivery activities funded by direct grants from FNA

Activity	Description	Number of State agencies			
		Planning	Implementing	Completed	Total
Implement MIS enhancements	Includes transitioning to a new MIS provider and updating the MIS that WIC staff use to manage WIC participant enrollment, benefits, and program operations.	8	22	5	35
Improve data analysis and management	Includes conducting data analysis, creating visualizations, and measuring program performance to support monitoring and improvement efforts. It also includes developing or enhancing public-facing WIC data dashboards.	7	20	5	32
Implement additional technology and service delivery enhancements	Includes improving or procuring new technology equipment and hardware (such as new computers or iPads for WIC clinics) as well as non-technology supplies (waiting area furniture, anthropometric equipment). It also covers other technology projects such as software platforms for clinics, cybersecurity improvements, technology for Universal Product Code (UPC) collection, and other software-related activities.	6	10	3	19
Transition from offline to online EBT	Seventeen WIC State agencies are transitioning from an older EBT technology ("offline") to a modern EBT system ("online"). Online technology allows WIC families to receive benefits remotely—reducing the time they must spend in the clinic—and makes online shopping possible.	3	11	3	17
Enhance other service delivery	Includes activities such as redesigning business processes, improving staff manuals and internal staff communications, and strengthening knowledge management systems to improve program operations to better meet participants' needs.	3	4	0	7

Activity	Description	Number of State agencies			
		Planning	Implementing	Completed	Total
Implement data matching with other programs	Involves developing processes that support sharing data with programs such as Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Data sharing is primarily done to streamline applicant income eligibility determinations or to facilitate outreach to people who are potentially eligible for WIC.	3	3	0	6
Improve vendor portal and related technology	Allows WIC authorized vendors to manage aspects of their relationship with the WIC program online. Portals may allow grocers to apply to become authorized vendors, access approved product lists (APLs), and review training materials or scheduling information.	4	1	0	5
Implement data sharing with health providers	Includes developing agreements with health providers to allow them to share health information with WIC. Data such as anthropometric data and blood tests may be shared to satisfy WIC's requirement for a nutrition assessment. This streamlines eligibility determinations and reduces the time participants must spend in the clinic.	2	0	2	4

Source: WIC State agency interviews conducted September 2025 to February 2026 and State agency grantee reports.

Note: During the "planning" phase of activities, State agencies are developing plans including assessing needs, seeking input, and identifying resources and objectives. During the implementation phase, State agencies are working toward the product or service (which may be before or after a technology product is available online). For completed activities, no further grant-funded work is anticipated.

EBT = electronic benefit transfer; MIS = management information system.

Early implementation findings

- Fifteen out of 66 WIC State agencies reported receiving positive feedback from staff following implementation of various vendor-facing technology and service delivery improvements. These changes include improved communication between WIC State and local agencies and increased overall satisfaction with program operations.
- Nine out of 66 WIC State agencies reported receiving positive feedback from vendors following implementation of various vendor-facing technology and service delivery improvements. These changes enhanced the vendor experience by improving vendor reporting and monitoring processes.
- Fifteen out of 66 WIC State agencies reported improved efficiency and more streamlined workflows after implementing vendor-facing technology and service delivery platforms that reduce administrative burden for State agency staff. These improvements include enhancing data collection, reporting, and visualization capabilities; implementing data sharing with health providers to streamline collection of anthropometric and hematological data; and conducting data matching between WIC and other programs such as Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to establish adjunctive eligibility and simplify the WIC certification process.
- Ten out of 66 WIC State agencies experienced challenges with technology contractors. These challenges include performance issues such as limited technical capacity or infrastructure to support requested system changes, as well as communication and coordination challenges that affected responsiveness, project timelines, and implementation efforts. To address these challenges, State agencies shifted plans and activities with technology contractors and in some cases, State agencies had to terminate the contract entirely and develop a new set of activities.

Project spotlights

- ◆ American Samoa WIC successfully implemented online nutrition education modules for participants, accessible on American Samoa WIC's website. Participants responded positively to the self-paced online nutrition education because it offers flexibility and convenience, allowing them to complete modules independently without visiting the clinic and to choose topics that interest them. One exclusively breastfeeding mother shared that she was able to watch and pause videos at night while caring for her baby, creating an experience that met her needs.
- ◆ Missouri WIC successfully transitioned from offline EBT to online EBT, eliminating manual claim submission and reducing retailer processing time. Benefits are now processed and settled in real time, significantly improving retailer efficiency and reducing complaints. The transition also improved clinic operations by eliminating the need to manually load benefits onto cards during appointments, allowing staff to focus more on nutrition education and participant services.

Highlights from other modernization projects

In addition to awarding grants directly to State agencies, FNA funded five other modernization projects through cooperative agreements and contracts focused on technology and service delivery. Highlights related to the projects include the following:

- **Matching, Outreach, Referrals for Enrollment in WIC (MORE WIC!).** In FY 2023, FNA awarded a five-year cooperative agreement to Johns Hopkins University to provide WIC State agencies with subgrants and support with data matching and referrals, focusing on data sharing with SNAP and Medicaid. Five State agencies received subgrants in 2024. At the end of 2025, two of these State agencies are sharing data, and the other three are working to finalize data sharing agreements. An additional three State agencies received subgrants in 2026. For more information on the project, visit [MORE WIC!](#).
- **WIC Management Information Systems (MIS) Strategy.** In FY 2024, FNA awarded a four-year cooperative agreement to the National WIC Association, which is partnering with Nava Public Benefit Corporation and Code for America, to develop a strategy to support MIS modernization for all WIC State agencies. The team has conducted research to understand the current state of MIS modernization efforts and will use their findings to develop a short-term Transitional Plan and a long-term WIC MIS Modernization Strategy.
- **WIC and FMNP Human-Centered Design Support.** In FY 2023, FNA partnered with the Lab at the Office of Personnel Management to build human-centered design capacity among FNA and WIC State agency employees as they work on modernization projects. The Lab implemented a Learning Program that included classes, a community of practice, technical assistance, and project facilitation support and reached a total of 442 participants. This project ended in 2025.
- **WIC Customer Experience Project.** In FY 2021, FNA began efforts to better understand how WIC State agencies collect and use WIC participant (i.e., customer) experience information. FNA commissioned a survey of State agency practices and capacity in 2024. FNA is developing approaches to providing technical assistance to State agencies to enhance, support, and improve collecting and using customer experience information.
- **WIC Texting Project.** In FY 2023, FNA awarded a project to Porter Novelli Public Services to inform resource development for text messaging. Porter Novelli Public Services developed a five-part Texting Toolkit and training video series to help WIC State agencies improve their text messaging capabilities. This project ended in 2025.

Improving the shopping experience

The WIC Shopping Experience Improvement grant aims to improve the shopping experience, increase the redemption of WIC food benefits, improve participants' satisfaction, and expand participants' access to vendors (Exhibit 7). In addition, under the WIC Modernization grant (Exhibit 3), WIC State agencies are conducting activities related to in-store shopping improvements and online shopping. In all, 43 WIC State agencies are

conducting at least one activity related to improving the shopping experience. Twenty-five percent of these activities are in the planning phase, 48 percent are in the implementation phase, and 28 percent are completed. Exhibit 8 describes these activities, which are presented in order of prevalence, and lists the number of State agencies pursuing each activity, and their stage of implementation.

Exhibit 7. Grants supporting improving the shopping experience

Grant	Number of grants awarded	Number of State agencies participating	Total funding
WIC Shopping Experience Improvement	21	21	\$10,984,204

Source: [WIC & FMNP modernization dashboard](#).

Exhibit 8. Improving the shopping experience activities funded by direct grants from FNA

Activity	Description	Number of State agencies			
		Planning	Implementing	Completed	Total
Implement other shopping improvements	Includes activities not covered in the rows below, such as implementing participant shopping education; doing customer service research to improve the shopping experience, such as focus groups to gather feedback from participants on their shopping experiences; making user-friendly updates to WIC food guides; developing in-store improvements to help WIC shoppers better understand their WIC food benefits and find approved foods; implementation of self-checkout; and improving vendor training.	4	15	8	27
Implement WIC online shopping	Includes implementing technology to enable participants to use WIC food benefits to purchase WIC foods when shopping on retailer websites or mobile applications for pickup or delivery.	8	3	2	13
Implement WIC shopping apps	Enables participants to scan foods in store to see whether they are WIC eligible, check their WIC food benefit balances, locate authorized retailers, find recipes, and report problems with buying food products.	0	7	3	10
Provide plain language and limited English proficiency support for shopping	Includes developing and sharing materials, in-store visual aids, in-store signage, or similar supports that provide simple, plain language communication for shopping. It also includes translation of materials for shopping, per WIC requirements.	1	4	5	10
Implement mobile pay	Includes developing or improving technology solutions that allow participants to use WIC EBT to purchase WIC foods through a mobile wallet or smartphone-based payment system at an authorized retailer.	3	2	0	5

Source: WIC State agency interviews conducted September 2025 to February 2026 and State agency grantee reports.

Note: During the “planning” phase of activities, State agencies are developing plans including assessing needs, seeking input, and identifying resources and objectives. During the implementation phase, State agencies are working toward the product or service (which may be before or after a technology product is available online). For completed activities, no further grant-funded work is anticipated.

Early implementation findings

- Ten out of 43 WIC State agencies reported positive participant feedback on their activities to improve the shopping experience. Among these agencies, two State agencies—one that hired community health workers to assist participants when shopping with WIC and another that implemented online shopping—reported that participants said the improvements helped them to “shop with confidence” by identifying WIC foods, supporting increased food benefit redemption.

- Six out of 43 WIC State agencies reported successful experiences with contractors developing technology solutions, including the WIC Shopper App and mobile pay. They noted that technology contractors' prior experiences working with other WIC State agencies enabled efficient completion of their projects.
- Fifteen out of 43 WIC State agencies implemented waivers that allow flexibilities supporting online shopping and other shopping improvements, such as allowing refunds and exchanges, allowing adjustments to how long food benefits remain valid online, and allowing WIC transactions to be completed without the physical presence of a cashier.
- Ten out of 43 WIC State agencies reported State procurement challenges when finalizing agreements with contractors to carry out shopping improvement activities. At least one State agency mitigated delays by engaging additional staff to assist with shopping materials so their overall timeline would not be disrupted. One State agency noted that there were not enough contractors with capability to implement required technology enhancements, particularly as the increased availability of funding increased demand for their services. With a limited pool of qualified contractors, demand from multiple State agencies left contractors overextended. Nine State agencies reported that they had staffing constraints, including difficulty hiring and retaining staff to implement shopping projects.

Project spotlights

- ◆ Alabama WIC implemented the WICShopper App, which integrated with its MIS, allowing participants to view real-time balances of their food benefits, review redemption history, scan products in store to confirm WIC eligibility, and locate authorized retailers. The number of WIC participants using the app has doubled compared with the prior app and the call volume to clinics has declined, indicating participants are able to access information and resolve questions independently, reducing staff burden and improving efficiency. Alabama WIC reported that their project was successful because they worked closely with technology contractors to customize features to their needs rather than adopting a standard version.
- ◆ Pennsylvania WIC implemented in-store self-checkout and provided technical assistance to retailers for point-of-sale issues. They also introduced shelf tags to help participants identify WIC approved items in store, which is a vendor requirement in Pennsylvania. The shelf tags were particularly successful, prompting other WIC State agencies to seek guidance on replicating them. Pennsylvania WIC also developed participant-facing materials to address common shopping challenges, including translating their WIC foods list and posters to help limited English proficient participants, per WIC requirements. American Samoa WIC successfully implemented online nutrition education modules for participants, accessible on American Samoa WIC's website. Participants responded positively to the self-paced online nutrition education because it offers flexibility and convenience, allowing them to complete modules independently without visiting the clinic and to choose topics that interest them. One exclusively breastfeeding mother shared that she was able to watch and pause videos at night while caring for her baby, creating an experience that met her needs.

Highlights from other modernization projects

In addition to awarding grants directly to State agencies, FNA funded two other modernization projects through cooperative agreements and contracts focused on the shopping experience. Highlights related to the projects include the following:

- **WIC Online Shopping.** In FY 2023, FNA awarded a cooperative agreement to the Center for Nutrition and Health Impact (CNHI) to expand its support to WIC State agencies and develop, test, and strengthen WIC online shopping projects. In 2024 and 2025, CNHI provided subgrants covering 13 State agencies to support planning for and implementing online shopping. In addition, in 2021 and 2022, prior to this cooperative agreement, CNHI provided online shopping subgrants covering nine State agencies. By the end of 2025, seven of these State agencies were offering online shopping. Additionally, CNHI makes support available to all State agencies, including tailored online information, one-on-one support, a resource library, webinars, training, and online peer learning discussion boards. For more information on this project, visit www.wicshopplus.org.

- **WIC In-Store Shopping Project.** In FY 2023, FNA awarded a two-year contract to Porter Novelli Public Services to inform resource development and support improved WIC in-store shopping experiences for WIC participants. Porter Novelli Public Services created toolkits and fact sheets for WIC clinic staff, participants, cashiers, store managers, and WIC agency staff. This contract ended in 2025.

Improving access to farmers' markets

The FMNP eSolution and WIC Modernization grants fund activities that enable participants to purchase fresh and locally grown produce from farmers, farmers' markets, and roadside stands using FMNP benefits and WIC cash value benefits (CVBs) via eSolutions (i.e., EBT cards or another electronic purchasing method, such as QR codes). Twelve percent of these activities are in the planning phase, 50 percent are in the implementation phase, and 38 percent are completed. Exhibit 9 summarizes the FMNP eSolution grant and Exhibit 3 summarizes the WIC Modernization grant. In all, 37 WIC and FMNP State agencies are conducting at least one activity to improve access to farmers' markets. Exhibit 10 describes these activities, which are presented in order of prevalence, and lists the number of State agencies pursuing each activity and their stage of implementation.

Exhibit 9. Grants supporting improving access to farmers' markets

Grant	Number of grants awarded	Number of State agencies participating	Total funding
FMNP eSolution Grant	37	37	\$9,172,475

Source: [WIC & FMNP modernization dashboard](#).

Exhibit 10. Improving access to farmers' markets activities funded by direct grants from FNA

Activity	Description	Number of State agencies			
		Planning	Implementing	Completed	Total
Implement eSolutions for FMNP benefits at farmers' markets	Involves supporting the adoption and use of electronic solutions (eSolutions) for FMNP benefits. eSolutions allow participants and farmers to transact, process, and redeem benefits digitally. Activities also may include outreach and training for farmers and participants and purchasing equipment such as hot spots that are necessary for electronic transactions at markets.	4	16	15	35
Implement eSolutions for CVB at farmers' markets	Involves supporting the adoption and use of electronic solutions (eSolutions) for CVB at farmers' markets, including updates to WIC EBT card functionality to allow use at farmers' markets or the addition of features (such as QR codes) to facilitate transactions with farmers. These eSolutions allow participants and farmers to transact, process, and redeem benefits digitally. Activities also may include outreach and training for farmers and participants and purchasing equipment such as hot spots that are necessary for electronic transactions at markets.	2	4	1	7
Implement other farmers' market activities	Includes posting materials to encourage participants to shop at farmers' markets and training staff at local agencies on how to educate participants on benefits that can be used at farmers' markets.	0	1	0	1

Source: WIC State agency interviews conducted September 2025 to February 2026 and State agency grantee reports.

Note: During the "planning" phase of activities, State agencies are developing plans including assessing needs, seeking input, and identifying resources and objectives. During the implementation phase, State agencies are working toward the product or service (which may be before or after a technology product is available online). For completed activities, no further grant-funded work is anticipated.

CVB = cash value benefit.

Early implementation findings

- Twenty-one out of 37 WIC and FMNP State agencies reported that farmers' market activities improved the participant experience and increased attendance at farmers' markets. Agencies also heard from participants that replacing bulky coupon books with eSolutions made transactions easier and feel less noticeable, removed the need to replace lost paper coupons, and sped up FMNP benefit issuance. Ten State agencies also reported increased food benefit redemption.
- Fourteen of the 37 WIC and FMNP State agencies reported that farmers prefer eSolutions because of immediate payment, ease of use, and reduced administrative burden. Seven State agencies reported increased participation by farmers in FMNP after the eSolution was implemented.
- Twelve of the 37 WIC and FMNP State agencies implemented a waiver that allowed them to use remote training methods for farmers and market managers rather than in-person sessions, and several noted that farmers appreciated the flexibility of remote, self-paced training.
- Fourteen of the 37 WIC and FMNP State agencies that implemented farmers' market activities reported farmer resistance and discomfort with technology as implementation barriers. Five State agencies described how robust, one-on-one training and real-time support through help desks and 1-800 phone numbers helped to build farmers' comfort with eSolutions.

Project spotlights

- ◆ The Kentucky Department of Public Health, which administers FMNP, implemented an FMNP eSolution and found that comprehensive initial trainings helped farmers overcome initial hesitation about using the eSolution. The team incorporated demonstration videos, encouraged farmers to bring cashiers to trainings, and provided help desk support. The Kentucky FMNP coordinator led in-person regional trainings and remained accessible to local agencies and markets. Kentucky also implemented a waiver that allowed them to train farmers remotely, streamlining training for farmers. Although some farmers left FMNP during the initial rollout, positive word of mouth about faster reimbursements and ease of use brought several back to the Program, and redemption rates for FMNP benefits increased after the first season of implementing the eSolution in 2022. WIC staff also reported improved oversight and program integrity, with the ability to track redemptions and quickly replace lost FMNP benefit cards.
- ◆ Maryland Departments of Health and Agriculture (which administer WIC and FMNP, respectively) implemented a mobile app-based eSolution to accept both FMNP and WIC cash value benefits (CVB) at farmers' markets starting in July 2024. Staff reported that farmers observed an increase in both repeat customers and participants who had not previously shopped at farmers' markets. According to Maryland WIC staff, two key factors contributed to the project's success: strong buy-in from WIC staff, supported by collaboration and data sharing between the Departments of Health and Agriculture, which improved implementation in the second year; and robust farmer support during rollout, including group trainings and one-on-one technical assistance. Maryland also leveraged early adopter farmers as informal champions, whose influence helped drive broader participation among farmers.

Developing the workforce

The WIC Modernization grant funds activities to develop the WIC workforce, such as training for WIC clinic staff and other staff training (Exhibit 3). Eight WIC State agencies are conducting at least one activity related to developing the workforce. Thirty-eight percent of these activities are in the planning phase, 25 percent are in the implementation phase, and 38 percent are completed. Exhibit 11 describes these activities, which are presented in order of prevalence, and lists the number of State agencies pursuing each activity and their stage of implementation.

Exhibit 11. Developing the workforce activities funded by direct grants from FNA

Activity	Description	Number of State agencies			
		Planning	Implementing	Completed	Total
Implement other training activities	Includes investments in leadership skills, how to use technology, and other topics not covered in the row below.	3	1	3	7
Implement trainings related to interacting with participants	Covers a range of topics related to interacting with participants, such as providing nutrition education and conducting virtual appointments.	0	1	0	1

Source: WIC State agency interviews conducted September 2025 to February 2026 and State agency grantee reports.

Note: During the “planning” phase of activities, State agencies are developing plans including assessing needs, seeking input, and identifying resources and objectives. During the implementation phase, State agencies are working toward the product or service (which may be before or after a technology product is available online). For completed activities, no further grant-funded work is anticipated.

Early implementation findings

- Two out of eight WIC State agencies that implemented trainings for clinic and other staff found that asynchronous virtual training allowed staff to better fit the training into their schedules. For example, one State agency reported that staff completed 33,000 trainings during one year.
- Two out of eight WIC State agencies highlighted that the ability to track training completion in their training platform or database was helpful to ensure all staff are trained on the appropriate topics.
- One out of eight WIC State agencies that implemented virtual trainings reported that staff struggled to find time to complete trainings even when the trainings were offered asynchronously, on demand. They recommended messaging about the importance of the training to gain staff buy-in and clearly communicating to all staff the expectations of the State agency for training completion.
- Three out of eight WIC State agencies reported that workforce training related to modernization requires a significant investment of staff time to develop and complete. One of these State agencies noted that staff reported feeling overwhelmed and burnt-out completing training for modernization along with their other responsibilities. To address this, State agencies extended the deadline for staff to complete the trainings. Another WIC State agency shared that, in addition to the time required to develop trainings, staff spent significant time providing technical assistance to staff to navigate the technological aspects of the trainings.

Project spotlights

- ◆ California WIC upgraded its professional training to support its paraprofessional model. As of October 2025, California WIC had developed 26 e-learning modules for paraprofessionals, with a length of about 30 minutes each.
- ◆ West Virginia WIC focused on staff leadership development to address recruitment and retention concerns. The State agency hired two consultants, one for the State agency and the other to work with local agency staff. At the State agency level, West Virginia WIC developed a framework to help staff understand how the agency makes consensus-based decisions. With local agencies, the consultant worked on staff leadership skills, such as communication, strategic planning, and program management.

Highlights from other modernization projects

In addition to awarding grants directly to WIC State agencies, FNA established an interagency agreement with the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to collaborate on the WIC Workforce Development Initiative. There are five active projects under this initiative:

- **University of Minnesota School of Public Health—WIC Professional Opportunities for Paraprofessional Staff (POPS).** The project team collected and analyzed data to document paraprofessional staffing models in WIC. They identified three paraprofessional positions and four staffing

models that they will use to develop a competency-based pilot training program for paraprofessionals in Wisconsin and Minnesota to perform Competent Professional Authority (CPA) duties, such as determining nutritional risk, prescribing food packages, and providing nutrition education for low-risk participants.

- Cornell University—Nutrition Paraprofessional Projects for WIC.** This project is researching and documenting paraprofessional staffing models in WIC to develop a competency-based pilot training program in New York State so paraprofessionals can perform CPA duties for low-risk participants. In 2025, the project team conducted a desk review of WIC staffing policies and procedures.
- University of Minnesota Extension—The I Matter Project: Staffing Models and Training for a Stronger WIC Workforce.** This project aims to document staffing models used in WIC, conduct a job study identifying roles, and recommend consistent job titles for those roles. The project team will then conduct a compensation analysis to determine fair market value for the salaries of the WIC roles identified. As of the end of 2025, the project team had interviewed WIC State and local agency staff, facilitated learning labs for WIC staff to share ideas, and trained a Workforce Advisory Board to provide guidance.
- University of Minnesota REACH lab—Technical Assistance and Peer Coaching.** This project is developing a pilot technical assistance and peer coaching training model for WIC staff using a model that has been successfully applied in related fields. As of the end of 2025, the lab had formed an advisory committee that includes WIC State and local agency staff to inform the project’s development. They also had identified a group of subject matter experts to support the project.
- District of Columbia WIC—Creating Pathways to a Sustainable WIC Staff Recruitment and Retention Model Through Scholarship, Training and Credentialing.** This project supports WIC staff who are completing education and training programs. The project has provided support to staff pursuing undergraduate degrees, registered dietitian graduate degrees, and credentials for breastfeeding counseling. The project team has completed one round of leadership training and plans to offer a second round, as well as paid internships, in 2026 to prepare existing staff for career advancement in WIC.

Conducting outreach

WIC contributes to healthy outcomes for mothers and their young children, yet only 56 percent of eligible women, infants, and children participated in the Program in 2023.³ Some WIC Modernization and WIC General Infrastructure grants fund outreach activities that aim to make sure eligible families know about WIC and the benefits it provides (Exhibit 3). Since WIC serves women, infants, and children during critical times of growth and development, effective outreach to enroll eligible individuals in a timely manner is critical to the Program’s success. Outreach materials are also used to support the partnership goals specified in statute and assigned to the USDA as a responsibility. A total of 21 WIC State agencies are investing in a range of outreach activities. Thirty-five percent of these activities are in the planning phase, 58 percent are in the implementation phase, and eight percent are completed. Exhibit 12 describes these activities, which are presented in order of prevalence, and lists the number of State agencies pursuing each activity and their stage of implementation.

Exhibit 12. Conducting outreach activities funded by direct grants from FNA

Activity	Description	Number of State agencies			
		Planning	Implementing	Completed	Total
Implement general outreach	This includes activities that focus on broad outreach to all or most potentially WIC-eligible individuals in a State agency’s jurisdiction.	5	10	1	16

³ Kessler C., Bryant A., Munkacsy K., Maxson S., Ressler D., Saluja R., and Farson Gray K. (2025). *National- and State-Level Estimates of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Eligibility and WIC Program Reach in 2023*. Prepared by Westat, Contract No. GS-00F-009DA/140D0424A0040, Order No. 140D0424F1045. Alexandria, VA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Project Officer: Grant Lovellette. Available online at: www.fna.usda.gov/research/wic/eer/2023.

Activity	Description	Number of State agencies			
		4	5	1	10
Improve outreach to specific communities	This includes individual outreach to communities in which people may be WIC eligible, such as people enrolled in other programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medicaid, rural communities, and military families.				

Source: WIC State agency interviews conducted September 2025 to February 2026 and State agency grantee reports.

Note: During the “planning” phase of activities, State agencies are developing plans including assessing needs, seeking input, and identifying resources and objectives. During the implementation phase, State agencies are working toward the product or service (which may be before or after a technology product is available online). For completed activities, no further grant-funded work is anticipated.

Early implementation findings

- Two out of 21 WIC State agencies used electronic signs outside of WIC clinics to raise awareness of the Program. They also used the signs to communicate important updates with the community, such as program news, activities that WIC offers, and nutrition education and breastfeeding promotion messages.
- Two out of 21 WIC State agencies used events in communities, including rural communities, to connect with people who may be eligible for WIC. One of the State agencies found outreach in rural communities raised awareness and knowledge of WIC.
- According to three WIC State agencies, obtaining buy-in from WIC local agencies was critical to the success of outreach activities, as these agencies were responsible for implementing outreach on the ground. Their support helped ensure consistent execution, effective communication with participants, and that strategies were responsive to local needs.
- WIC State agencies reported several barriers to successful implementation of outreach activities: delays by a contractor (reported by one State agency); substantial time required to develop outreach activities and staffing constraints (reported by two State agencies); funding limitations (reported by one State agency); and the need to identify a champion to lead the effort (reported by one State agency). Some WIC State agencies addressed these challenges by delaying implementation and extending activity timelines.

Project spotlights

- ◆ New Mexico WIC participated in five outreach events to promote the WIC program in communities, with total attendance estimated at 7,000 people—a notably high level of engagement for the State agency. The Governor of New Mexico chose locations for these events and invited service agencies, including New Mexico WIC, to share information about their programs. New Mexico WIC advertised these events through social media, radio advertisements, and other organizations. New Mexico WIC brought fresh produce to the events to showcase what the Program can offer to participants. New Mexico WIC characterized these outreach events as highly successful, noting their ability to reach thousands of participants, strengthen partnerships, expand access to fresh local food, and enhance community engagement and awareness of WIC services.
- ◆ California WIC developed toolkits with materials and pre-packaged talking points for local agency staff to support communicating program changes. Local agencies report that these toolkits help rapidly disseminate information to participants. For example, one toolkit for local agencies focused on modernization projects at farmers’ markets, and another provided guidance on communicating with families about how to use WIC benefits, including new features such as QR codes, eWIC cards, and updated shopping processes. Local agencies responded very positively to the toolkits, noting they were timely, easy to use, aligned with their needs, and helpful for improving outreach and communication with WIC families.

Highlights from other modernization projects

In addition to awarding grants directly to WIC State agencies, FNA has funded three other modernization projects through cooperative agreements and contracts focused on conducting outreach. Highlights related to the projects include the following:

- **WIC Community Innovation and Outreach Project (WIC CIAO).** In FY 2022, FNA awarded the WIC CIAO cooperative agreement to the Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) to support local level outreach. FRAC has awarded 63 subgrants to WIC State and local agencies and nonprofit entities to support innovative outreach strategies and increase WIC awareness, participation, and food benefit redemption. FRAC is using lessons learned from these projects to develop resources for WIC agencies, including toolkits such as rural outreach and military families. For more information on WIC CIAO, visit www.hellowic.org.
- **WIC Branding and Communications Resources Project.** In FY 2022, FNA began working with a contractor to develop clear, consistent, user-friendly materials for use by FNA, WIC State and local agencies, and partners. The project created a new WIC logo in 2024 as well as a variety of supporting design elements and resources that will be shared with WIC agencies and partners through the [WIC Image Gallery](#) once the resources are cleared. This project ended in 2025.
- **Additional Outreach and Engagement Activities.** In FY 2023 and FY 2024, FNA funded several additional outreach and engagement activities. Under a design contract, the project team created print files for a sticker with the new WIC logo and two WIC banners and designed four infographics. Under two photoshoot contracts, the project teams delivered photos that FNA uses in communications activities and are available for public use via the [WIC Image Gallery](#). These activities ended in 2025.

Common Experiences Across State Agencies

Looking across the five focus areas, there are several cross-cutting themes in the modernization experiences of WIC and FMNP State agencies.

- **Increased WIC and FMNP retention and redemption.** Twenty-six WIC and FMNP State agencies reported increases in WIC food benefit redemption or participant retention since they began implementing modernization activities. Ten State agencies reported increased benefit redemption at farmers' markets due to modernization activities.
- **Positive feedback from WIC and FMNP staff, participants, vendors, and farmers.** Forty-five WIC and FMNP State agencies reported receiving positive feedback from State agency staff, local agency and clinic staff, participants, vendors, and/or farmers about their modernization activities. Examples of positive feedback include easier program access, greater flexibility, and improved shopping experiences for participants; improved clinic workflow and efficiency; reduced workloads; better data reporting; more efficient payment transactions; better shopping support tools; faster payments for farmers; and reduced administrative burden, among others.
- **Collaboration with other WIC State agencies.** Forty-two WIC State agencies reported collaborating with other WIC State agencies. These collaborations often occurred through consortia and user groups, partnerships between larger State agencies and Indian Tribal Organizations within their geographic State, and direct one-on-one relationships between State agencies. State agencies frequently reported reviewing and learning from modernization efforts implemented in other State agencies to inform their own activities, including the ability to share costs and brainstorm solutions.
- **Improved service delivery.** Thirty-four WIC State agencies reported improvements in service delivery because of modernization activities. These improvements included the ability to conduct services remotely, enhanced communication with participants, easier food benefit redemption and shopping experiences, improved data coordination across programs, and improved access for communities, including rural communities.

- **Sustainability.** Twenty-nine WIC State agencies reported that they expect to be able to sustain the activities that they implemented or are planning to implement after the grant funding periods ends. Another 22 WIC State agencies reported that it is too soon to determine whether the activities will be sustainable after the grant period concludes.

Common Challenges Across State Agencies

WIC and FMNP State agencies have experienced challenges while planning and implementing modernization projects. The most common challenges include the following:

- **Staff capacity.** Forty WIC State agencies reported difficulties implementing modernization activities with small teams that lacked the specialized knowledge needed to carry them out efficiently. Twenty-five State agencies said competing priorities delayed project implementation, noting that the time spent on modernization efforts often took staff away from participant-facing work, as WIC staff often perform multiple roles. Six State agencies added that modernization activities coincided with food package updates and other federal changes that took priority, delaying modernization project implementation. Eight State agencies described significant learning curves, saying that staff initially lacked sufficient familiarity with technology to determine their needs and communicate them effectively to technology contractors. Despite these challenges, many State agencies reported strong staff buy-in and commitment to modernization efforts, and two State agencies noted that dedicated project management staff helped them stay on track and meet deadlines.
- **State procurement delays.** Forty-eight WIC State agencies reported State procurement challenges. Twenty-three State agencies described barriers to procurement, including lengthy and complex State procurement and IT rules, limited cross-agency coordination in securing contract approvals, and restrictions on modifying existing technology contracts. Some State agencies addressed these challenges by including potential future updates as options in their contracts to avoid repeated procurement for new features or enhancements. Three State agencies emphasized the importance of developing highly detailed requests for proposals to narrow the number of contractors that would bid to complete the work or working with existing contractors when permitted under State procurement rules.
- **Consortium and user group coordination.** Procurement difficulties were often compounded in consortium or user group arrangements. Sixteen WIC State agencies reported challenges coordinating across procurement rules in different states, and nine WIC State agencies that were partners within a consortium noted difficulties adapting technology designed for the lead State agency and modifying technology solutions to meet their needs and contexts. Although WIC State agencies appreciated the opportunity to collaborate with other State agencies to share costs and brainstorm solutions, several emphasized the importance of consistent participation in group meetings so that smaller State agencies could ensure their priorities were represented and negotiated in group decisions.

Waivers to Support Virtual WIC Services: Physical Presence and Remote Issuance

FNA issued the Physical Presence waiver and the Remote Issuance waiver to all 88 WIC State agencies. The two waivers have allowed State agencies to test and improve their virtual services, saving families time and money on in-person visits and supporting working parents by reducing the time needed to participate in WIC.

Physical Presence waivers give WIC State agencies the option to allow participants to enroll and re-enroll in WIC, if they are deemed eligible, without visiting a clinic in person.

- As of December 2025, 84 WIC State agencies (95 percent) have implemented the Physical Presence waiver. Several of these State agencies noted that the waiver reduces administrative burden (19 State agencies) and removes transportation as a barrier to WIC participation (18 State agencies).
- WIC State agencies described how they use the Physical Presence waiver to implement virtual services.

- Only one WIC State agency reported offering virtual appointments as the default appointment mode for all participants and for all types of appointments. Five WIC State agencies reported that virtual appointments are the default for some types of appointments, such as mid-certification and nutrition education appointments. (Note: only some WIC State agencies—66 of the 84 WIC State agencies that implemented the Physical Presence waiver—described their default appointment mode.)
- Twenty-one WIC State agencies emphasized providing flexibility to participants by offering a choice of in-person and virtual options. Twelve WIC State agencies offer flexibility for local agencies to decide whether to offer virtual appointments.
- In addition, 27 WIC State agencies described allowing virtual appointments only in special circumstances, such as for a medically fragile participant, or a participant who is unable to attend in person because of work, transportation, or a weather emergency.
- The four WIC State agencies that did not implement the Physical Presence waiver cited several State agency-specific reasons, including a perception that in-person services provide higher-quality interactions, concerns that the waiver was temporary and participants should remain accustomed to in-person appointments, and technological challenges related to receiving participant documentation.

Remote Issuance waivers provide WIC State agencies with the option to issue WIC food instruments and benefits remotely, eliminating the requirement for participants to pick up their food instruments or benefits in person.

- As of December 2025, 73 WIC State agencies (83 percent) have implemented the Remote Issuance waiver. Several of these State agencies noted that the waiver improves benefit redemption by giving families increased flexibility to receive benefits without visiting the clinic (18 State agencies), alleviating transportation issues that are often prevalent in rural communities (9 State agencies), and ensuring families' needs are met during emergencies, including remotely adjusting benefits if needed, such as during an infant formula recall (3 State agencies).
- The 15 WIC State agencies that did not implement the Remote Issuance waiver most commonly cited the inability to provide remote issuance until their WIC program implements online EBT (since remote issuance of benefits is not possible with offline EBT). These agencies reported plans to begin remote issuance once that capability becomes available. One WIC State agency also cited a preference for in-person visits.

Upcoming Evaluation Milestones

The WIC and FMNP Modernization Evaluation will provide a comprehensive examination of the implementation and impact of modernization activities between July 2022 and September 2028. The evaluation allows FNA to track the progress and outcomes associated with the work completed with WIC modernization funding and waivers. FNA plans to use evaluation findings to identify effective approaches and areas for potential further support or investigation. Evaluation findings are shared publicly so that WIC State and local agencies, FMNP State agencies, and other partners can learn from modernization experiences.

This complex evaluation relies on a variety of data sources, including administrative data; WIC Participant and Program Characteristics (WIC PC) data; grantee reports; and primary data collection (e.g., interviews, focus groups, and surveys) with WIC State and local agencies, clinic staff, vendors, farmers and farmers' market staff, and participants. The evaluation team conducted State agency interviews in fall and winter 2025-2026 and will conduct several primary data collection activities later in 2026:

-  **Case studies.** Site visits to select State or local agencies to learn about innovative practices, expected to begin in summer 2026.
-  **State agency interviews.** Individual interviews with each State agency to learn about progress on modernization activities and waiver implementation, expected to take place in summer 2026.
-  **Experience surveys.** Surveys with WIC staff, vendors, WIC and FMNP farmers/markets, and participants, expected to begin in fall 2026.

The evaluation will continue to produce annual reports that document progress of modernization activities and highlight key findings related to the implementation and impact of projects. A final evaluation report will be available at the conclusion of the evaluation.

Suggested citation: Zaveri, H., Bodenlos, K., Brooks, R., Kalb, M., Reed, D., White, S. (2026). WIC & FMNP Modernization Evaluation Annual Report | 2025. Prepared by Mathematica, Contract No. 47QRAA18D00BQ. Alexandria, VA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Administration, Office of Evidence, Analysis, and Regulatory Affairs, Project Officer: Carol Dreibelbis. Available online at: <https://www.fna.usda.gov/research/wic/fmnp-modernization-evaluation/annual-report-2025>.

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