

# WIC Local Agency Conference Call

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 2026, 8:30-9:30 AM

## Agenda and summary notes

### Agenda items:

- Program Updates- Kate
  - USDA Reorganization
  - WIC Funding
  - ARPA Waivers
  - WIC Maternal Health Grant Opportunity
- Hardware Transition Reminders – Tami (5 min)
- Food Package Reminders – Tami (5 min)
- SNAP Policy Updates – Lori Bona, Jasmin Roden, Nicole Lindemyer from DCYF (15 min)
- SNAP Outreach and Connecting Families – Betty Balan from DCYF (15 min)
- SUN Bucks Program - Jennifer Christie from DCYF (10 min)

### General program updates- Kate

**USDA Reorganization** – USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins announced additional details of the FNS reorganization plan on April 30 in the press release, [USDA Announces Actions to Better Serve States, Nutrition Program Recipients, and the American Taxpayer](#).

FNS will be reorganized into a new Food and Nutrition Administration, relocating program staff from current D.C. and regional office locations to new hubs across the country. The Supplemental Nutrition and Safety Programs (SNAS) team, which oversees WIC and other nutrition programs, will be relocated to Kansas City, MO, with regional office staff moved to five new hub locations.

### President’s Budget/House Appropriations Bill

The House Appropriations Committee voted to approve their proposed Agriculture funding bill for fiscal year (FY) 2027. That bill proposes a \$200 million decrease from current levels, and cuts WIC's fruit and vegetable benefit by 10 percent. This comes after President Trump’s fiscal year 2027 budget calls for a \$200 million decrease from current levels and sharply reducing the fruit and vegetable component of WIC’s food benefits. It also fails to address the critical need for Congress to permanently authorize flexible services in WIC currently allowed through ARPA. A spot in the proposal is the recommended \$500 million boost to the WIC contingency fund, which would better position USDA to respond to future government shutdowns or other emergencies.

### ARPA Waivers

Minnesota WIC is currently leveraging regulatory waivers available through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). These waivers allow for waiving the physical presence requirement for certification in WIC if health measurements can be obtained from another provider to meet the WIC requirements. The waiver also allows for remote benefit issuance. These waivers are set to end September 30, 2026 or

when USDA completes their evaluation of these waivers. USDA must provide notice to WIC state agencies 90 days before these waivers end.

Legislation has been introduced in Congress to make these waivers permanent through the MODERN WIC Act in the House and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century WIC Act in the Senate. There has also been discussion about adding these regulatory flexibilities to the FFY 2027 WIC appropriations bills if the legislation doesn't advance through the bills already introduced in Congress.

We anticipate that FNS will be providing more information to state agencies about the timeline with these waivers in the coming weeks. I've reached out to our FNS regional office to request clarification on the timing, and we will share any updates with you once we receive them. With the 90-day notice requirement, any changes or expiration of these waivers will come with notice to WIC agencies. For now, local agencies should continue to operate under these waivers and we are hopeful that more information will be coming soon so that we can share the timeline. As a reminder, Minnesota WIC, along with all online eWIC states, have been doing remote benefit issuance since we rolled out eWIC. We don't anticipate a change even if the ARPA waivers expire since it has been in place prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to your state WIC Consultant.

#### **Maternal Health Center grants – Kate**

The WIC Maternal Health Center is a group of partners from across the country with expertise in WIC, community engagement and research. We work together to gather and share information about maternal warning signs initiatives for WIC agencies to help ensure moms stay healthy during and after pregnancy. The Center is housed at UNC-Chapel Hill and includes partners from the National WIC Association, Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere (ROSE), University of Illinois Chicago (UIC), and Urban Metrics Consulting.

WIC Maternal Health Request for Applications (RFA) are due July 6, 2026. For more information visit [WIC Maternal Health Center](#) webpage.

- WIC agencies will be funded up to \$200,000 over a 24-month period.
- Awarded sites will receive ongoing implementation support and join a learning collaborative to learn from one another and help us understand how these programs work in real-world WIC settings.

#### **Maternal Health Initiatives**

1. Education on Urgent Maternal Warning Signs (UMWS)
2. Hear Her Communication Campaign
3. Blood Pressure Screening & Referral
4. Psychosocial Screening & Referral

### **Other program updates**

#### **MIS & Data Unit Updates – Tami**

- **WINNIE Release 3.6.2**, Saturday May 23, see [WINNIE Release 3.6.2 Document](#) for details.

- **Hardware Transition Reminders**

Please refer to the [WIC Hardware Transition \(PDF\)](#) memo for the following guidance and information:

- Distribution of peripheral items.
- Inventory Report and Ownership Acceptance form.
- Technical specifications for WINNIE hardware.

- Returning computers.
- **Reminder! Agency-specific Infoview reports**

One of the projects the state will be working on is performing a thorough review of all current Infoview templates to streamline the Infoview folders and their contents. We will be:

- Combining templates providing the same or similar information.
- Updating outdated or old templates that are still being used.
- Removing obsolete templates.

### **Food Package Reminders – Tami**

Whole grain items went to ounces in January. There are still some participants continuing to get 1-2 ounces on their benefits, resulting in no whole grain benefit redemption when they are in the store. You **MUST** review the benefits quantities before issuing the May benefits.

Benefits can be adjusted if they **are** issued with the incorrect amount of whole grains. You should use the Infoview FOOD & FORMULA ITEMS ISSUED BY PFDTU report to identify these participants. Enter 58 into the Food Item prompt and use the input controls to limit the output to select 1 and 2 for the Item Quantity. You must correct these before May 31. After that time, the food items will be inactive and you will be unable to adjust the benefit quantities.

Please refer to the [Phase 3 Food Package Changes – June Guidance \(PDF\)](#) document for the following guidance and information:

- Default food packages
- Issuing late for May in June
- Adjusting May benefits in June
  - Issued before June 1
  - Issued on or after June 1

For infants changing breastfeeding status or requiring different formula who were issued May benefits before June 1, you can adjust the formula only. **Do not void** benefits (even if redemption has not occurred) and do not adjust any other food items!

### **Adjusting May benefits**

You will **NOT** be able to adjust May benefits issued in May since the food items will be expired.

If you issue benefits late for May on or after June 1, you can adjust these benefits since the new food items will have been issued.

**SNAP Policy Updates** – Lori Bona, Jasmin Roden, Nicole Lindemyer from DCYF provided updates on HR1 impacts on SNAP and Minnesota. They share 440,000 Minnesotans receive snap benefits/month and over the next 10 years there will be \$187 billion in cuts to federal SNAP spending. The cuts include major policy changes to SNAP including more shifts of SNAP costs onto states and local governments, expanded work requirements, changes in how benefits are calculated and narrows the legal noncitizen eligibility. Fiscal estimates, and the impact to the state, counties, Tribes and others are based on current SNAP caseload in a recent month. Over time, there will be a cumulative impact of new policy changes on future applicants and participants. Estimates on the slides do not attempt to capture the cumulative impacts. Effective October 1, 2026, the rate of federal reimbursement that states receive for program administration will be cut from 50% to 25%. Minnesota will receive an estimated \$39 million less annually. In October 2027, states will be required to pay a share of SNAP benefits based on payment error rates. Minnesota required share is estimated to be 10% of benefit costs or approximately \$97

million annually. A payment error is an incorrect benefit determination for a SNAP household, either overpayment or underpayment. All errors must be corrected. Payment error rates are driven by unintentional mistakes and often increase when new laws are implemented. USDA monitored error rates prior to H.R. 1, and the new law uses the measure in a new way.

SNAP work requirements are changing to expand to adults through age 64 (previously 54) and limits the dependent child exemption to adults with children under 14 (previously 18). This was implemented Nov. 1, 2025. It also eliminates exemptions for veterans, people experiencing homelessness, and youth leaving foster care, and restricts geographic waivers to areas with 10%+ unemployment rates. About 18,000 more adults in an average month will be subject to SNAP work requirements. Two-thirds are older adults ages 55-64; a quarter are parents with children age 14 and older. It added new exemptions for American Indians, Alaska Natives, Urban Indians, and California Indians.

SNAP benefit and eligibility changes:

**Thrifty Food Plan changes.** A “cost-neutrality” restriction prevents USDA from increasing the cost of SNAP through reevaluations of the benefit formula, limiting updates to the Consumer Price Index. Reevaluation may occur Oct. 1, 2027, while 440,000 will receive an estimated \$5 less per month on average beginning in 2027.

**Utility deduction changes.** Prohibits treating internet as a utility expense and using energy assistance payments to automatically qualify for the heating/cooling standard utility allowance for families without an elderly or disabled family member. Implemented Oct. 1, 2025 (internet restriction) and Nov. 1, 2025 (energy assistance restriction). SNAP participants will still qualify for the allowance if they have heating/cooling costs.

**Legal noncitizen eligibility changes.** Limits SNAP to U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents, Cuban/Haitian entrants, and noncitizens lawfully in the U.S. under a Compact of Free Association. This was implemented March 1, 2026, and will be applied at the unit’s next recertification. Roughly 9,000 fewer legal noncitizens primarily refugees and asylees, are eligible for federal and state funded SNAP in an average month.

**SNAP-Ed funding eliminated** after FFY 2025.

These changes will have a ripple effect on other programs. SNAP is used to confer categorical eligibility for a range of other programs serving children and families, including Summer EBT, WIC, Head Start, Early Learning Scholarships, free and reduced-price school meals and the Transit Assistance Program. This could potentially reduce participation in other programs and increase strain on community food shelves and food banks.

Contact [nicole.lindemyer@state.mn.us](mailto:nicole.lindemyer@state.mn.us) and [lori.bona@state.mn.us](mailto:lori.bona@state.mn.us) with questions.

**SNAP Outreach and Connecting Families** – Betty Balan from DCYF provided information. She shared SNAP is the largest nutrition assistance program, administered by USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and the state is responsible for program administration. Federal regulations define eligibility requirements, benefit levels, and administrative rules. In 2007, the program began with 12 partner agencies and has grown to 28 partners. Partner agencies have diversified to include culture specific, hunger relief, nonprofits, etc. In FY 22 [mnFoodHelper](#) tool was developed. On the mnFoodHelper tool, one can request the assistance of an outreach specialist to complete a SNAP application, or they can apply on their own through MNbenefits. In FY 23, for the first time, state funding was allocated to SNAP outreach work. Now SNAP information is shared through presentations, flyer/brochures, tabling at events, provides translated materials, webpage/social media, newsletters and SNAP campaigns. It is beneficial to collaborate with SNAP to reach more Minnesotans, increase exposure on flyers, brochures and on their website. For more information about the presentation contact Betty at [betty.d.balan@state.mn.us](mailto:betty.d.balan@state.mn.us) or [mnsnapoutreach.DCYF@state.mn.us](mailto:mnsnapoutreach.DCYF@state.mn.us).

**SUN Bucks Program** - Jennifer Christie from DCYF

Data shows that SUN Bucks work and demonstrated that summer grocery benefits reduced child hunger by 33%. Participation data indicates that numbers are higher in urban areas while there is greater participation in rural areas.

SUN Bucks serves approximately 425,000 children in Minnesota. They receive \$120 loaded on a new SUN Bucks card per eligible child for the summer period. Benefits can be used at grocery stores, farmers markets and other food retailers. Cards will begin to be sent in late May. Families with eligible children will receive a SUN Bucks card in the mail for each eligible child.

Families who receive SUN Bucks should use these benefits before using regular SNAP benefits.

To view eligibility information, frequently asked questions and answers along with other details, check out the [SUN Bucks](#) webpage and their new online outreach toolkit: [2026 SUN Bucks Program](#). For questions contact [jennifer.christie@state.mn.us](mailto:jennifer.christie@state.mn.us) or [kelcie.litchfield@state.mn.us](mailto:kelcie.litchfield@state.mn.us).

## Questions & Answers

**What happens when mom/baby has May, June, and July benefits but need breastfeeding status changed from MBF to Some BF for their May benefits in June. If the Adjust Benefits page is locked/error message how will staff adjust the woman's package for June and July? Or is the error message displayed inside of Adjust Benefits for the month of May only?**

Leave mom's benefits as they are, MIS & Data team will provide more information in the Thursday email.

**There are some children who have turned 5 and we are no longer able to adjust their benefits and you cannot adjust current benefits for anyone out of a cert but have benefits with incorrect whole grain items.**

That is correct. That is why it is important to always review the food prescriptions and aggregate issuance page before issuing benefits.

**Please verify if adjustments to women's fruit/veg amount also needs to be done for all benefits by 5/31.**

Yes, if it was missed and you have time to also resolve the \$1 increase for the pregnant and postpartum women you should resolve. At this point whole grains are more critical to resolve since with those quantities issued, they cannot purchase any whole grains.

**Are the 9000 fewer refugees a national number or a MN number?**

It is a MN specific number.

**The error rate reimbursement will come down to the individual counties, correct?**

It is up to the state legislature to determine how much of the state cost share of SNAP benefits will be paid by the state and what part, if any, must be paid by county agencies.

**Does HR1 impact the SNAP outreach program at all?**

Yes, SNAP outreach is paid through a portion of the federal reimbursement for administration, which was cut from 50 to 25 percent. An additional \$2.25 million will be lost for SNAP outreach activities.

**Can children who are 5 but haven't yet enrolled in school, can they get SUN bucks? Also, what about kids who have dropped out of school? Can they still get them?**

Yes, children who are under age 7 can receive SUN Bucks if they attend a school participating in National School Lunch Program or School breakfast program, including preschool programs that participate. Children must have an approved application, and the school must submit their info to the MDE's SUN Bucks program. If a child drops out of school, they may still qualify if they were approved for NSLP/SBP at any point in the eligibility time frame. Or if they are on SNAP, MFIP, etc. Homeless and runaway children also qualify, the key element there is that we do need an address to mail them a card.

**References – Complete Listing of Hyperlinks**

[USDA Announces Actions to Better Serve States, Nutrition Program Recipients, and the American Taxpayer](https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2026/04/30/usda-announces-actions-better-serve-states-nutrition-program-recipients-and-american-taxpayer) (<https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2026/04/30/usda-announces-actions-better-serve-states-nutrition-program-recipients-and-american-taxpayer>)

[WIC Maternal Health Center](https://wicmhc.unc.edu/) (<https://wicmhc.unc.edu/>)

[WINNIE Release 3.6.2 Document](https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/localagency/winnie/releasedocs.html)  
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/localagency/winnie/releasedocs.html>)

[WIC Hardware Transition](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/infosystem/hardware/260506memo.pdf)  
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/infosystem/hardware/260506memo.pdf>)

[Phase 3 Food Package Changes – June Guidance](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/fp/phase3juneguide.pdf)  
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/fp/phase3juneguide.pdf>)

[SUN Bucks](https://dcyf.mn.gov/sun-bucks) (<https://dcyf.mn.gov/sun-bucks>)

[2026 SUN Bucks Program](https://minnesotadcyf.us.engagementhq.com/sun-bucks) (<https://minnesotadcyf.us.engagementhq.com/sun-bucks>)

[mnFoodHelper](https://mn.gov/dhs/mnfoodhelper/) (<https://mn.gov/dhs/mnfoodhelper/>)

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