3.8 Operations Management

The Operations Management functional area is intended to provide general support to WIC local agencies and clinics for a variety of activities and provides program management support for the State agency. It automates administrative tasks and reports such as inventory control for serialized and non-serialized items. It captures contact information and statistics for local agencies and clinics for use in conducting outreach activities. It also provides customer service support and tracks WIC participant satisfaction with program services. Finally, it provides data to help the State assess participant and local agency integrity.

The functions described in this section could be performed by the WIC IS or by one or more non-WIC systems. In fact, in some cases, it may be more efficient and cost effective for the function to be performed outside of the WIC IS. In addition, adoption of some of the automated functions in this section may not be cost-effective for small State agencies.

- Monitor Administrative Operations
  - Maintain Information on Local Agencies and Clinics
  - Analyze Local Agency Operations
  - Support Clinic/Patient Flow Monitoring
- Manage Participant Outreach
  - Maintain Outreach List for Local Agencies
  - Track Outreach Campaign Activities
- Monitor Customer Service
  - Document and Track WIC Customer Service Calls
  - Document Complaints
  - Track Call or Complaint Outcomes
- Provide Survey Capability
  - Monitor Participants' Views of WIC Program Services
- Maintain Inventory
  - Maintain Inventory of Serialized Items
  - Maintain Inventory of Non-Serialized Items
- Monitor Program Integrity

- Monitor Participant Integrity
- Monitor Clinic Integrity
- Track Participant Sanctions
- Track Administrative Hearings

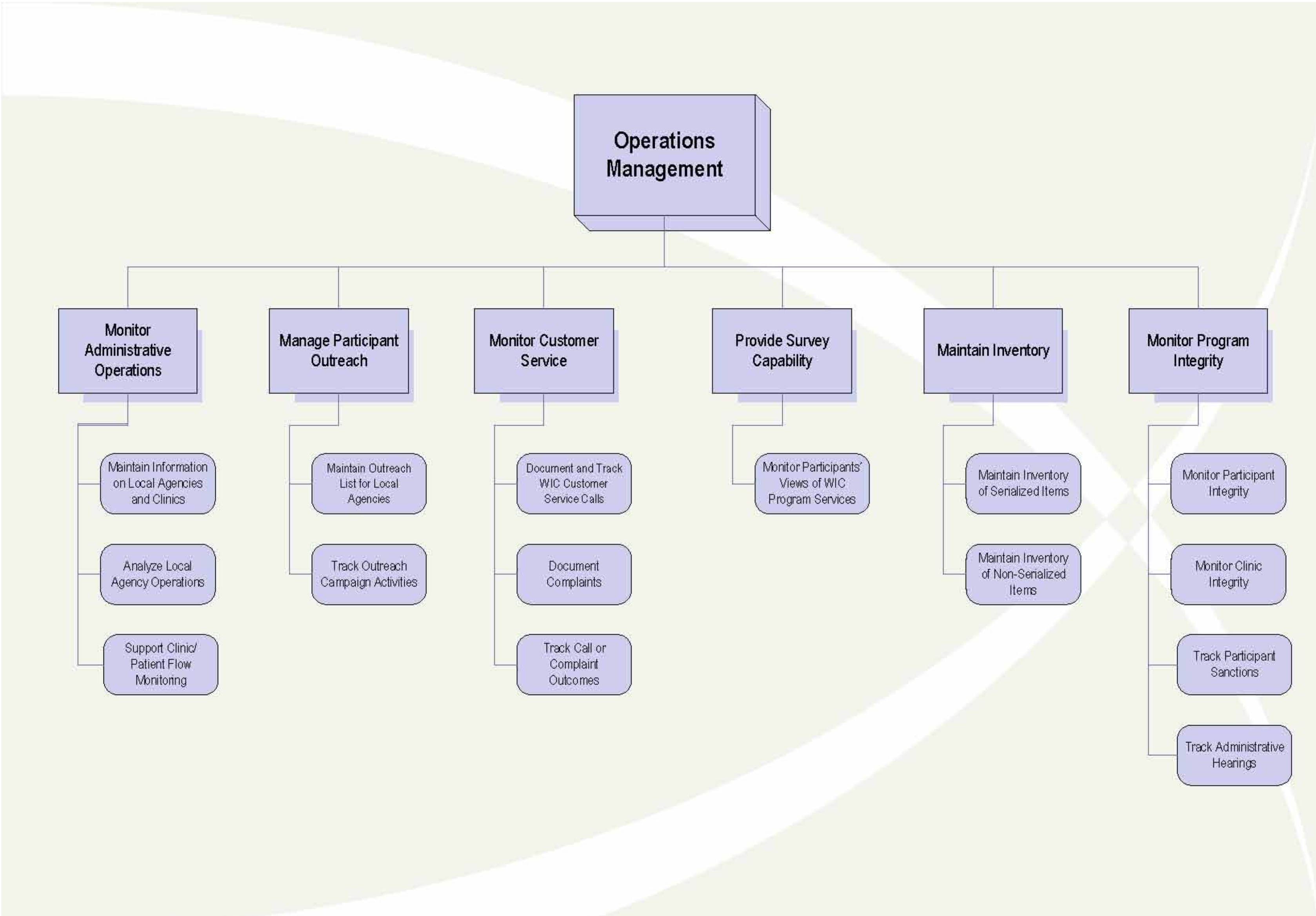

Exhibit 3-8: Functional Decomposition Diagram – Operations Management

3.8.1 Monitor Administrative Operations

Periodically, State agencies assess the flow of operations at local agencies and clinics. The system should provide information to help administrators assess operations. This information could include the total number of education classes given, number of participants certified, and the number of benefits issued during each month. The State and local agency can compare this data to statistical information such as staffing levels and positions, participant-to-staff ratios, nutritionist-to-staff ratios, participants per square foot of space, and cost per participant figures. This information is helpful for improving participant service and clinic flow, and making funds allocation decisions based on local agency infrastructure and capability.

3.8.1.1 Maintain Information on Local Agencies and Clinics

The system should maintain basic data on each local agency.

Inputs:

Local Agency

Local Agency Address- County

Local Agency Address- City

Local Agency Address- State

Local Agency Address- Street

Local Agency Address- Zip Code

Local Agency Contact Name

Local Agency Contact Title

Local Agency Email Address

Local Agency Facsimile Number

Local Agency Identification Number

Local Agency Name

Local Agency NSA Cost per Participant

Local Agency Number of Certifying Staff

Local Agency Number of Clerks

Local Agency Number of Clinics

Local Agency Number of Nutritionists

Local Agency Number of Other Staff

Local Agency Participants per Square Foot

Local Agency Regional Identifier

Local Agency Space

Local Agency Staff to Participant Ratio

Local Agency Telephone Number

Clinic

Clinic Address- City

Clinic Address- County

Clinic Address- State

Clinic Address- Street

Clinic Address- Zip Code

Clinic Contact Name

Clinic Contact Title

Clinic Email Address

Clinic Facsimile Number

Clinic Identification Number

Clinic NSA Cost per Participant

Clinic Number of Certifying Staff

Clinic Number of Clerks

Clinic Number of Nutritionists

Clinic Number of Other Staff

Clinic Participants per Square Foot

Clinic Regional Identifier

Clinic Space

Clinic Staff to Participant Ratio

Clinic Status Code

Clinic Telephone Number

Local Agency Identification Number

Process:

- Input data on local agencies and clinics and store in Local Agency and Clinic data stores

- Save local agency and clinic data

Outputs:

Screen display or report on local agency/clinic profile data

> Implementation Approaches
>
> ► Where a local agency operates several clinics, the State agency may wish to further break out the data by clinic. The system could use this data for mailing lists, productivity reporting, infrastructure assessment, and clinic efficiency.

3.8.1.2 Analyze Local Agency Operations

> *In order to effectively manage local agency participant service, the State agency may wish to assess local agency and clinic staffing and facility resources. This information is useful for NSA funds allocation decisions, outreach campaigns and local agency/clinic reviews.*

The system should support the analysis of each local agency/clinic for factors such as the participants served, local agency/clinic space, appointment characteristics (e.g., no show rates and trends), and number of staff by type (e.g., certifying staff, clerks, nutritionists, other, bilingual).

Inputs:

Clinic Identification Number

Local Agency Identification Number

The actual data used in the assessment will vary based on the analyses performed. See Implementation Approaches for examples.

Process:

- Retrieve information on local agency and clinics from the Local Agency and Clinic data stores
- Retrieve data from other applicable data stores (e.g., number of participants served from the Participation data store, "no show" data from the Scheduled Appointment data store)
- Calculate applicable factors
- Prepare analysis report by local agency/clinic of participant to staff type and square foot of space

Outputs:

Screen display or report of local agency/clinic statistics

Updated data stores for factors being analyzed

Implementation Approaches

- The system could assess factors such as such as no show rate, participants per square foot, staff to participant ratio, or cost per participant.

3.8.1.3 Support Clinic/Patient Flow Monitoring

Local agency/clinic administrators have to balance providing quality service with limited resources. Ideally, quantitative data could be used to make decisions to improve local agency/clinic operations. Administrative staff members may wish to use clinic and participant flow data to identify problems in clinic flow, determine staffing and space needs, or track clinic costs per participant visit. Using quantitative flow data may result in reduced waiting time in the clinic, more equitable distribution of staff workload, ability to serve more caseload, improvement in the quality of services provided, or reduced operating costs.

The system should support the collection and analysis of patient and clinic flow data.

Inputs:

Clinic Identification Number

Local Agency Identification Number

Participant Identification Number

Additional inputs will vary depending on the type of clinic analyses conducted. See Implementation Approaches for examples.

Process:

- Retrieve data for the specific type of analysis being performed
- Calculate appropriate values for the type of analysis being performed
- Compare values to Statewide standards, if applicable

Outputs:

Screen display or report of clinic flow data

Graphical report of clinic flow data

Implementation Approaches

- The system could provide timing data based on defined system functions. For example, the system could accept a "check in" data element to begin the appointment. Based on the appointment type, certain functions (anthropometric data entered, nutrition risks assigned, nutrition education topics recorded, food benefits prescribed, or food benefits issued) are expected to take place. Using screen access and saves (or another approach depending on design), the system could document times for activities and use that data to determine how much time was spent on each activity or waiting.
- The system could track flow through various data elements that would need to be included in the system. Inputs may include: check-in/check-out time, user activity in the record, number of people attending appointment, number of people being served by WIC at the appointment, or scheduled appointment time.
- Because each staff member logs in to the system using a unique username, staff productivity could be measured using a clinic analysis function. This may include the number of participants served during a period of time or the time spent on a certain activity, if applicable.
- If a State agency uses a patient flow analysis (PFA) tool, such as the CDC patient flow analysis software, the State agency could use data from the system to populate the PFA tool.
- The State could identify certain quality standards for clinic operations, such as an average range of the amount of time spent on a certification appointment for each participant category or maximum waiting time in the clinic. These standards could be loaded into the system and compared against individual clinic results.

3.8.2 Manage Participant Outreach

The State agency may ask local agencies to increase their caseloads to take advantage of an increased budget or to reach a particular type of participant group (such as migrants or pregnant women). Therefore, the system should maintain contact lists of organizations and individuals such as church groups or physicians that are in regular contact with families that may qualify for the WIC Program, as well as for health or social service organizations that serve individuals who might be WIC candidates. Additionally, outreach campaigns are often quite expensive, so the system might provide information to the State agency that assesses the cost benefit of particular campaigns.

As a part of ongoing operations, aggregate referrals to other health and social services organizations should be tracked. Since a part of WIC's mission is to increase participant access to health care and other services, it is important to have access to data on referral activity.

3.8.2.1 Maintain Outreach List for Local Agencies

The system should support this function by allowing the State agency or local agency to enter and update the information for organizations that may serve potential WIC participants. The system should also record the last time each outreach organization record was updated to help local agencies keep the contact information as current as possible.

Inputs:

Outreach Address- City

Outreach Address- State

Outreach Address- Street

Outreach Address- Zip Code

Outreach Contact Name

Outreach Contact Title

Outreach Email Address

Outreach Facsimile Number

Outreach Identification Number

Outreach Organization Name

Outreach Telephone Number

Process:

- Add, update or delete outreach organizations
- Store in Outreach data store

Outputs:

Screen display or report of outreach organizations

3.8.2.2 Track Outreach Campaign Activities

If a targeted outreach campaign is initiated at some expense (such as television or radio advertisements) the local agency should evaluate the success of the campaign and its cost benefit.

After the campaign has concluded, the State and local agency could review the data on additional participants attracted by the campaign and approximate a cost per participant by dividing the additional participants into the total campaign expense. This would provide State and local agencies with information on the success of the campaign and, if it was *successful, the approximate cost to conduct another campaign in the future.*

The system should allow the input of data that would help local agencies track and evaluate outreach activities.

Inputs:

Local Agency Identification Number

Outreach Activity Date

Outreach Activity Description

Outreach Activity Outcome Code

Outreach Activity Time

Outreach Campaign Cost

Outreach Campaign Description

Participant Source of Information About WIC Code

Participation Actual (for month prior to campaign and month following campaign)

Process:

- Retrieve Participant-Source of Info About WIC data from Participant data store
- Accept user input of Outreach Campaign Cost
- Retrieve data on the number of participants for each local agency involved in the campaign from the Participation data store for the month before and after the outreach campaign
- Compute the participation difference between the participation for the month before and after the outreach campaign
- Divide the cost by the participant difference to obtain a cost per participant

Outputs:

Screen display or report of outreach campaign cost benefit

Implementation Approaches

► The system could retrieve data on the additional participants in the area targeted by the campaign over the period of the campaign.

- The local agency could also ask the participant how he/she heard about the WIC Program as a part of the certification intake process and input this in the system.
- The system could capture narrative text about an outreach campaign. This capability would allow program staff to maintain notes about their campaign and provide "lessons learned" for other staff.

3.8.3 Monitor Customer Service

Customer service is needed to support the WIC IS. Participants, vendors, and program providers all may need support from customer service when using the WIC IS. Vendors may need to call the State agency with questions about a WIC food sale or when there is an equipment malfunction. Program staff may need to call customer service when there is an equipment malfunction, system problem, or on-site customer problem.

State agencies may choose to provide customer service through outsourcing or in-house WIC personnel. Regardless of the provider of customer service, there is a need for a system to track the disposition of customer service contacts. Calls may be received manually or through an Automated Response Unit (ARU) that receives and routes calls.

3.8.3.1 Document and Track WIC Customer Service Calls

The system should record the type of call received and the outcome for quality assurance assessments. If calls are answered manually, the system may only track the type of call, problem, and final resolution.

Inputs:

Customer Service Identification Number

Customer Service Representative Name

Customer Service Request Code

Customer Service Request Date

Process:

- Accept input of service requested code into the Customer Service data store or create new customer service record
- Assign appropriate call type and enter call information, including disposition if available
- Update Customer Service data store

Outputs:

Report of assigned customer service issues

Implementation Approaches
► In a manual environment, when Customer Service receives a call, the person receiving the call could determine the nature of the request or question and provide the appropriate information, if possible, or log the call. The system should allow the call to be logged and assign a service code and staff (or a customer service team) to be responsible for resolving the issue. The system should provide a complete list of contacts and their area of specialty. Once the person answering calls has connected the caller with the proper staff, he/she should input the name of the person assisting the caller in the system. The person assisting with the call should enter into the system the nature of the problem.
► In an ARU environment, the ARU could answer the call, and provide a recorded message to triage the call (i.e., ask if the call is to receive basic program information, report an equipment/assistance failure, report lost card/benefits, etc.). The caller would then be prompted to enter a menu choice for the appropriate response and the IS should accept any applicable input to the Customer Service data store.

3.8.3.2 Document Complaints

> *Complaints provide a source of information about participants, vendors, or other applicable persons that have tried to violate or have violated WIC Program rules.*

The system should capture and maintain data on complaints about participants, vendors, or staff members from any source.

Inputs:

Complaint Date

Complaint Identification Number

Complaint Source Type

Complaint Status Code

Complaint Subject

Complaint Summary

Complaint Type Code

Process:

- Input complaint data on participant/vendor/staff member in the Complaint data store in a new complaint record or as an update to an existing complaint record

- Link the complaint data to the appropriate record using the participant/vendor/staff member unique identifier
- Generate report of complaints for follow-up action

Outputs:

Screen display or report of complaints

3.8.3.3 Track Call or Complaint Outcomes

The system should track the outcomes of customer service calls and complaints.

Inputs:

Complaint Identification Number

Complaint Resolution

Customer Service Action Taken Code

Customer Service Action Taken Date

Customer Service Identification Number

Customer Service Problem Description

Customer Service Problem Resolution Code

Customer Service Problem Resolution Date

Customer Service Representative Name

Process:

- Accept staff input related to call or complaint
- Update data in Customer Service or Complaint data store

Outputs:

Screen display or report of customer service calls and outcomes

Implementation Approaches

- ► The system could track any actions to resolve the caller's problem. When the problem is resolved, the outcome of the call would be entered into the system.
- ► In an ARU environment, the receiving Customer Service Representative could update the call tracking entry with the disposition of the call. If necessary, standard escalation procedures would be followed to ensure that the call is routed to the intervention level needed to resolve the problem.

► If a separate ARU or other system is managing the call process, the WIC IS could link to that system to capture data about call outcomes.

3.8.4 Provide Survey Capability

States may wish to provide a generic capability to conduct surveys and track survey responses for various aspects of the WIC Program. The system may support fully automated collection of survey data (i.e., provide a survey form online for participants to complete) or manual entry of survey results (i.e., enrollees are asked to complete a manual questionnaire or are asked questions in a personal interview and their responses are entered into the system). Regardless of the degree of data collection automation, the system should capture the results for each survey participant and generate a summary assessment.

3.8.4.1 Monitor Participants' Views of WIC Program Services

> *The WIC Program periodically conducts surveys to obtain participant views of the services provided. Automating the collection and compilation of survey information would free staff from this time-consuming task. A survey may include questions about the participant's experience at certification, the usefulness of the nutrition education provided, whether he/she obtained the recommended health care service and satisfaction with shopping for food benefits. The State agency may assess the survey to obtain information on what is working well and what needs improvement.*
>
> *The State agency may also wish to do periodic surveys of vendors to determine if there are problem areas in dealing with WIC participants or complying with requirements. Vendors may have suggestions on ways to make the shopping experience more positive for WIC participants.*

The system should collect and summarize data related to local and statewide surveys.

Inputs:

Clinic Identification Number

Local Agency Identification Number

Participant Identification Number

Survey Question Identification Number

Survey Question Text

Survey Question WIC Service Type Code

Survey Questionnaire Identification Number

Survey Questionnaire Question Sequence Number

Survey Questionnaire Survey Name

Survey Questionnaire Survey Type Code

Survey Response Nutrition Education Size

Survey Response Nutrition Education Type

Survey Response Opinion Score

Survey Response WIC Service Date

Survey Response WIC Service Type Code

Vendor Identification Number

Process:

- Design survey instrument and update Survey Questionnaire and Survey Question data stores
- Accept user entered survey results and update Survey Response data store
- Generate analyses of survey responses

Outputs:

Report of survey opinions

Implementation Approaches
► The system could accommodate statewide surveys (developed by the State agency and distributed throughout the State) and local surveys (created at the local level for use in only one local agency).

3.8.5 Maintain Inventory

State agencies maintain an inventory of many types of items needed for administration of the WIC Program. Some items, such as food instruments (checks, vouchers, coupons and EBT cards), are negotiable instruments that need to be safeguarded from misuse. Other items are capital assets, such as computer equipment and breast pumps. All of these items should have serial numbers to track their use and disposition.

There are many other stock items, such as publications, brochures, and reporting forms, that are routed to the proper location in adequate amounts and when supplies run low. The State agency also tracks the use of these non-serialized items.

3.8.5.1 Maintain Inventory of Serialized Items

> *When the State agency orders and receives items such as EBT cards[51] or equipment, each item should have a unique number. These items can be tracked by the unique number for control purposes.*

The system should track serialized items. The system should track items at all levels (received at the State, shipped to local agencies, and received at local agencies), as well as items that are returned or no longer usable (e.g., broken, lost).

Inputs[52]:

Item Stock- Serialized Batch Beginning Serial Number

Item Stock- Serialized Batch Ending Serial Number

Item Stock- Serialized Card Stock Batch Number

Item Stock- Serialized Card Stock Serial Number

Item Stock- Serialized Date Received by Local Agency

Item Stock- Serialized Date Received by State Agency

Item Stock- Serialized Date Shipped to Local Agency

Item Stock- Serialized Equipment Identification Number

Item Stock- Serialized Equipment Retirement Date

Item Stock- Serialized Food Instrument Identification Number

Item Stock- Serialized Food Instrument Stock Batch Number

Item Stock- Serialized Type Code

Local Agency Identification Number

Process:

- Input serial numbers when shipments are received by State agency
- Input serial numbers or equipment identification numbers for items sent to a local agency

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[51] Agencies that use on demand MICR printing for food instruments will not be able to track their stock through a serialized tracking process; the stock will not contain any numbers. This blank food instrument stock should still be managed carefully to ensure appropriate inventory and security and ensure that duplicate check numbers are not issued in the State. Although MICR printing is preferred, agencies that use pre-printed food instrument stock will need to use an inventory function to track numbers on the paper stock and match that number to the numbering scheme in the system.
[52] Inputs will vary based on the type of inventory being tracked.

- Input local agency code for the local agency receiving the shipment
- Update Item Stock-Serialized data store

Outputs:

Display screen or report of serialized item stock inventory status

Implementation Approaches
► The system could record the shipments by the serial numbers of items in storage. When these items are shipped to local agencies for use, the system could record the beginning and ending serial numbers of the shipment and the local agency to receive the shipment. The system could calculate the number of days supply and have a projected date for replenishment based on typical usage. As serialized items are used, the stock remaining should be decremented.
► For equipment, each item should have an identification number. The system could maintain a list of all equipment, where the equipment is located, and the date of receipt. When equipment is no longer usable, the State agency could input the date of retirement in the record.

3.8.5.2 Maintain Inventory of Non-Serialized Items

> *Non-serialized items such as forms, publications, or special formula are needed by local agencies to conduct the program. The State agency typically maintains an inventory of the amount of each item in storage.*

The system should track non-serialized item inventory to ensure that inventory levels remain appropriate.

Inputs:

Item Stock- Non-Serialized Entry Date

Item Stock- Non-Serialized Identification Number

Item Stock- Non-Serialized Number of Items Received by Local Agency

Item Stock- Non-Serialized Number of Items Received by State Agency

Item Stock- Non-Serialized Number of Items Shipped to State Agency

Item Stock- Non-Serialized Received by Local Agency Date

Item Stock- Non-Serialized Received by State Agency Date

Item Stock- Non-Serialized Shipped to Local Agency Date

Item Stock- Non-Serialized Type Code

Local Agency Identification Number

Process:

- Input number of items when shipments are received by State agency
- Input number of items for items sent to a local agency
- Input local agency code for the local agency receiving the shipment
- Update Item Stock-Non-Serialized data store

Outputs:

Screen display or report of item stock non-serialized inventory status

> Implementation Approaches
>
> ► The system should estimate the need for each item based on historical use, and project the date for replenishment based on historical use rates.
>
> ► The State agency could ship items when requested by the local agencies and maintain a supply on hand based on the number of days lead-time needed to obtain a shipment.
>
> ► The system could track formula inventory to document when formula is received, transferred, or destroyed.

3.8.6 Monitor Program Integrity

The system must maintain data that assists the State and local agency in monitoring program integrity. For participant integrity, this includes a system for reviewing data to determine if false eligibility information was provided (e.g., household size, or income). It also reviews for the fraudulent use of benefits (e.g., substituting foods, selling foods) and for dual participation[53].

For clinic integrity, data related to suspicious patterns should be reviewed. The most likely fraudulent activity is creating fictitious records to obtain benefits or applying lenient eligibility determinations for friends and relatives. Special attention should be paid to local agencies or clinics where limited separation of duties, which make fraudulent behavior easier to perform, exist.

[53] Dual participation and dual enrollment checks should also be performed at certification and benefit issuance.

3.8.6.1 Monitor Participant Integrity

> *The State agency may wish to determine if any participants are routinely shopping at a vendor some distance from their home. This pattern might indicate a preference for a vendor that is willing to permit abusive behavior.*

The system should support the analysis of activities that could indicate fraud or abuse by accepting the input of data and providing reports. The system should support reporting violations and the claims imposed and collected.

Inputs[54]:

Dual Participation Potential Match Applicant

Dual Participation Potential Match Certified

Dual Participation Potential Match Program Code

Participant Address- Apartment

Participant Address- City

Participant Address- State

Participant Address- Street

Participant Address- Zip Code

Participant Identification Number

Vendor Address- City

Vendor Address- State

Vendor Address- Street

Vendor Address- Zip Code

Vendor Identification Number

Process:

- Retrieve data from the appropriate data store
- Separate clinics into peer groups according to caseload size to set baseline trend data for differing clinic caseloads
- Calculate results (as applicable) and store in the appropriate data store
- Monitor reports based on the baseline trend data

[54] Inputs will vary based on the specific analysis being performed.

Outputs:

Screen display or report on potentially fraudulent activities

Screen display or report of participant sanctions and claims status

Implementation Approaches
► The system could access/retrieve participant data from other State agencies or CSFP and match that participant data against the State's participant data to determine if there are any matches.
► Using data in the Food Instrument or Food Benefit Household Account and Participant data stores, the system could determine the vendor where the participant redeemed food benefits. The system could then compare vendor and participant addresses to determine how many participants are shopping at vendors outside the normal geographic radius of the participant's address

3.8.6.2 Monitor Clinic Integrity

Clinic integrity reviews should compare each local agency's data related to clinic abuse indicators to all local agencies to determine if the particular local agency is outside the normal range. Suspicious patterns could include low no-show rates, low attendance rate at nutrition education classes, disproportionate number of infants (who have high redemption value food benefits), unusually high number of certifications, production of food instruments or issuance of EBT cards at unusual hours or a large number of participants with no reported income.

The system should have the ability to create reports that provide data about clinic trends that could indicate fraudulent activity. The system should also identify potential conflicts of interest that may develop when an employee is responsible for both certifying eligibility and issuing benefits or when an employee is also a WIC participant.

Inputs[55]:

Clinic Identification Number

Local Agency Identification Number

Process:

- Retrieve data for all local agencies the specific type of analysis being performed.
- Calculate data for the clinic abuse indicators for each local agency in the State

[55] Additional inputs will vary depending on the type of clinic analyses conducted.

- Calculate an average for all local agencies
- Compare each local agency average to the average with all local agencies

Outputs:

Screen display or report of potential clinic abuse indicators

3.8.6.3 Track Participant Sanctions

> *When a participant has abused the program and the local agency has imposed a sanction or claim, the local and State agency must track the type of abuse and action taken.*

The system should track sanctions against participants.

Inputs:

Participant Identification Number

Sanction Case Appeal Indicator

Sanction Case Appeal Outcome Code

Sanction Case Status

Sanction Case Identification Number

Sanction Case Start Date

Sanction Case Type Code

Sanction Effective Date

Sanction Type Code

Process:

- Input data on participant violations, sanctions and claims imposed and claims collected along with the corresponding date
- Update the Sanction data store

Outputs:

Screen display or report of participant sanctions and claims status

3.8.6.4 Track Administrative Hearings

> *When abuses are identified, the WIC Program may take sanction action. In the case of such actions, the sanctioned party may appeal the action and the State must conduct administrative hearings.*

The system should be able to track sanctions and the disposition of the administrative hearings process to maintain a history of each program integrity case and its eventual outcome.

Inputs:

Administrative Hearing Date

Administrative Hearing Description

Administrative Hearing Identification Number

Administrative Hearing Outcome Code

Administrative Hearing Outcome Date

Administrative Hearing Outcome Description

Administrative Hearing Type Code

Clinic Identification Number

Local Agency Identification Number

Participant Identification Number

Vendor Identification Number

Process:

- Add, update, and delete Administrative Hearings data store
- Generate report on Status of Administrative Hearings

Outputs:

Screen display or report on hearing status

Implementation Approaches
► The system could aggregate sanction and administrative hearing data to track historical trends in program abuse.