

Goals and Objectives: WIC State Plan FFY 2006

Food Issuance and Redemption Services

Implement appropriate changes to the competitive pricing report to segregate predominantly WIC vendors from other vendors in each local agency service area. Determine the competitiveness of the predominantly WIC vendors using local agency service area averages not impacted by the predominantly WIC vendors' pricing.

Hold quarterly meetings with Local Agency Vendor Liaison personnel to prepare them for an active role in the Level III Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Certification of WIC grocer/vendors.

Hold regional meetings with vendors to discuss the statewide rollout of WIC EBT, the timelines, roles and responsibilities.

Information Systems

WIC Information Network (WIN) Evolution Project

Continue the first phase of the WIN Evolution Project, a project to enhance and optimize client service delivery. Begin planning and needs assessment to implement a model WIC information system to:

- Improve program effectiveness;
- Strengthen controls and accountability;
- Increase operational efficiency;
- Enhance fraud detection;
- Meet Federal reporting requirements;
- Meet the FRED-E requirements for systems with EBT; and
- Enable service providers to provide quality services to more potentially eligible low income families during the critical times of development of the unborn child and the very young child when proper nutrition and linkages to health care are most needed.

Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT)

Continue the EBT pilot operations in the El Paso area with minor expansion of the pilot into Grayson and Collin Counties to allow full testing of the major commercial retailer systems including Kroger (IBM ACE), Albertsons (IBM SA), and Brookshires (NCR), which were not present in the original piloted area.

- Continue to monitor effectiveness and efficiency of the piloted EBT system in the El Paso area
- Continue work related to commercial retailer systems for use in potential statewide rollout

- Transition clinic hardware to new clinic terminal replacing the current terminal which is no longer being manufactured

Continue planning for full statewide rollout subject to USDA approval of the El Paso pilot experience and constraints.

- Coordinate expansion plans with USDA and all stakeholder groups if statewide expansion is approved by USDA

Plan and initiate development for Phase II of Texas WIC EBT to include:

- Transition EBT system into full compliance with ANSI standards, as modified
- Enhance EBT system to comply with USDA security recommendations including the potential use of an interpretive card that permits separation of credit and debit keys
- Continue close coordination with the State of New Mexico to ensure the states can jointly take advantage of developmental activities in both states
- Coordinate and ensure WIC Phase II system is compatible with on-going planning and design for a State of Texas Integrated Benefits Card
- Enhance interoperability capability of system by bringing it into full compliance with interoperability standards (State and Federal)

Organization, Staffing, Funding, and Management Services

Continue to lead the transformation of the Nutrition Services Section consistent with Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and HHSC direction. Successfully direct and assess the evaluation of business functions and implement improvements to effect change management in response to evolving needs of DSHS.

Implement legislation passed during the 79th Session of the Texas Legislature. Document and track progress in accordance with department requirements.

Ensure timely and appropriate implementation of policy and operational changes to comply with any policy or regulations USDA issues in late 2005 and in 2006 to implement the provisions of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 and the Appropriations Act.

Closely monitor funding, expenditures and food inflation and ensure effective controls are in place in the event funding is cut in order to continue to serve as many clients as possible. Work with members of the Texas Association of Local WIC Directors to proactively develop and implement an updated caseload management plan early in the fiscal year.

Nutrition Education and Clinical Services

Enhance the delivery of WIC nutrition and breastfeeding services by:

- Assessing current operation at state and local agencies;

- Assessing the capacity of the WIC Information Network (WIN) to measure health outcomes and making recommendations for modification to enhance the system's capacity;
- Planning, implementing, and evaluating staff development initiatives, including development and implementation of training on high risk counseling, and establishing a competency model;
- Continuing ongoing development and evaluation of culturally-competent client education;
- Assisting with the EBT statewide rollout and the WIC evaluation project; and
- Augmenting the use of WIC data for program management.