

Project Startup Report

Submitted to Large Project Oversight on 10/14/2019

GENERAL INFORMATION

Project Name: eWIC (Electronic Benefits Transfer for Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children)

Agency Name: Department of Health

Project Sponsor: Kristi Miller

Project Manager: Kris Vollmer

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The North Dakota Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program provides approximately 12,000 WIC participants with nutrition guidance and provides healthy eating by issuing WIC food instruments that can be redeemed at approximately 160 WIC authorized vendors throughout the state. This project will implement an online solution for WIC Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT).

BUSINESS NEEDS AND PROBLEMS

1. USDA/FNS has mandated the implementation of EBT as the delivery method of food benefits for WIC by October 1, 2020.
2. North Dakota WIC desires to move to an easier and more efficient system by using EBT instead of paper checks.
3. Decrease burden on grocery stores through an electronic process versus the current cumbersome manual process and provide the participant greater flexibility in the shopping experience.

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OBJECTIVES

The Business Objectives are associated with the Business Needs and Problems identified above.

Business Objective	Measurement Description
1.1 North Dakota WIC will release an RFP to hire WIC EBT Implementation Contractor	1.1.1 The proposals will be evaluated to select an Upgrade and Implementation Contractor 1.1.2 North Dakota WIC will negotiate and sign a contract with the selected contractor to start the project
1.2 The selected Contractor will implement the WIC EBT System	1.2.1 UAT training and testing is completed and there are no remaining critical issues open 1.2.2 The pilot will be completed, and the system operates as expected. The EBT cards are processed successfully. 1.2.3 The EBT system is approved for statewide rollout and implemented in 100% of the agencies.
2.1 Meet the Governor's initiative for reinvention of state government	2.1.1 The WIC EBT system is functional in 100% of the contracted grocery stores at time of implementation.
3.1 Meet the Governor's initiative for reinvention of state government	3.1.1 The WIC EBT system is functional in 100% of the contracted grocery stores

PROJECT BASELINES

Project Start Date	Baseline Start Date	Baseline End Date	Baseline Budget
01/05/2018	08/1/2019	10/30/2020	\$2,407,435

Notes:

The project kickoff meeting was held in Bismarck May 21 – 23, 2019. The project execution officially began on 08/01/2019.

COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS

This project is being funded through a grant from the USDA Food and Nutrition Service. An Implementation Advance Planning Document was submitted in August 2017 requesting project funds of \$2,191,174. The amount was approved. An Implementation Advance Planning Document Update was submitted in June 2019, reflecting an additional amount of \$463,736. A modified project budget of \$2,407,435 was approved as the baseline budget and is pending approval by FNS.

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KEY CONSTRAINTS AND/OR RISKS

Risk	Impact	Response
Future funding of system	Loss of system	ND WIC may not be able to afford the cost per case month to operate EBT in our state. This would cause us to look at all our costs and possibly cut or decrease funding to some items in our budget.
Resources staff	Negative schedule variance	With the implementation of EBT, we are fearful that we may need more resources to maintain EBT. With the affordability of EBT in general, we know that we cannot afford additional staff, so we will need to figure out how to manage the extra duties.
If North Dakota does not implement the system, the Federal 2020 Mandate will not be made	North Dakota would be out of compliance.	If North Dakota does not implement EBT by October 1, 2020, we would need to apply for a waiver/exemption.