

Project Startup Report

Project Name: Management Information System Upgrade (MIS Upgrade)

Agency: Department of Health (DoH)

Business Unit/Program Area: Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

Project Sponsor: Kristi Miller

Project Manager: Brandi Fagerland

Project Description

The North Dakota (ND) and Iowa (IA) WIC Programs are jointly upgrading their developed management information systems (WICnet in ND and IWIN in IA) to the Mountain Plains State Users Group System (MPSC). The two states are in a unique position for an upgrade due to the fact that their systems served as the baseline for the MPSC system. After a thorough review and comparison of the MPSC system functionality to the current systems the states recognize that an upgrade is the logical solution to updating the MIS. The states believe an upgrade will be a lower cost alternative, requiring less time and effort to transition to the MPSC system for the two states. The streamlined upgrade will also better position the states for Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) and for a long term MIS solution as part of a User's Group (and the inherent cost sharing, etc.). The concept of an upgrade (versus a full system transfer) should allow the states to move to the MPSC system in a more efficient timeframe and with less cost than a full system transfer. A Request for Proposal (RFP) was conducted for a contractor to assist with this upgrade. Ciber was awarded this contract.

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. Before North Dakota WIC can move to EBT, the MIS needs to be upgraded or modified.
2. North Dakota WIC needs an upgraded MIS system. The current MIS is 9 years old and may be reaching end of life in the next few years. The platform of the system may eventually not be supported any further causing the system to be unuseable or having to update to newer platforms.
3. Costs for a maintenance and operations contractor for their MIS system must be affordable for North Dakota WIC. Paying a maintenance and operations contractor takes up a considerable amount of the North Dakota WIC Nutrition Services and Administration (NSA) budget. North Dakota WIC is required to go out for bid every 5 years for this contract, and had to re-release an RFP because all the proposals came back unaffordable. After re-releasing the RFP, North Dakota WIC was able to secure a maintenance and operations contractor that was affordable but the contract expires in 2017.
4. North Dakota WIC would like to move to a completely paperless environment. North Dakota WIC was hoping to be completely paperless when WICnet was implemented in 2006, however, there are still some forms, including check registers that staff need to keep on file.

Key Metrics

Project Start Date	Project End Date	Original Baseline Budget
03/16/2015	01/14/2016	\$466,832

Objectives

Project Objectives	Measurement Description
<p><u>Business Need/Problem 1:</u> USDA/FNS has mandated the implementation of EBT as the delivery method of food benefits for WIC by October 1, 2020. Before North Dakota WIC can move to EBT, the MIS needs to be upgraded or modified.</p> <p><u>Objective 1.1:</u> North Dakota WIC will release an RFP to hire an Upgrade and</p>	<p><u>Measurement 1.1.1:</u> The proposals will be evaluated to select an Upgrade and Implementation Contractor</p> <p><u>Measurement 1.1.2:</u> North Dakota WIC will negotiate and sign a contract with the selected contractor to start the project</p>

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<p>Implementation Contractor to upgrade to the MPSC system</p>	
<p><u>Business Need/Problem 1:</u> USDA/FNS has mandated the implementation of EBT as the delivery method of food benefits for WIC by October 1, 2020. Before North Dakota WIC can move to EBT, the MIS needs to be upgraded or modified.</p> <p><u>Objective 1.2:</u> The selected Contractor will upgrade and implement the MPSC system for North Dakota WIC</p>	<p><u>Measurement 1.2.1:</u> During UAT, the selected Contractor will deliver a data element mapping document to North Dakota WIC to confirm that the data conversion process is completed and the data is verified for quality</p> <p><u>Measurement 1.2.2:</u> UAT training and testing is scheduled and completed and there are no remaining critical issues open</p> <p><u>Measurement 1.2.3:</u> The contractor will provide the state and local staff with training on the use and navigation of the MPSC system. After training, attendees will be given homework scenarios to complete upon return to their offices. The state office will check in with agencies on their completion of the homework scenarios and will identify further needs for training.</p> <p><u>Measurement 1.2.4:</u> The contractor will assist ITD in installing the system on North Dakota's environment and the system will be rolled out statewide</p>
<p><u>Business Need/Problem 2:</u> North Dakota WIC needs an upgraded MIS system. The current MIS is 7 years old and may be reaching end of life in the next few years. The platform of the system may eventually not be supported any further causing the system to be unuseable or having to update to newer platforms.</p> <p><u>Objective 2.1:</u> Upgrade the North Dakota WIC system to the MPSC system</p>	<p><u>Measurement 2.1.1:</u> On the scheduled go-live weekend, the old system is shut down and the new system is brought up and determined to be working properly</p> <p><u>Measurement 2.1.2:</u> It is anticipated that the WICnet help desk calls will be reduced by half upon implementation of the MPSC system. On average, currently the help desk gets fifty to seventy-five help desk calls per month. 3 months after implementation of the new system, help desk staff will be surveyed to determine if the number of help desk calls has reduced by half.</p>
<p><u>Business Need/Problem 3:</u> Costs for a maintenance and operations contractor for their MIS system must be affordable for North Dakota WIC. Paying a maintenance and operations contractor takes up a considerable amount of the North Dakota WIC Nutrition Services and Administration budget. North Dakota WIC is required to go out for bid every 5 years for this contract, and had to re-release an RFP because all the proposals came back unaffordable. After re-releasing the RFP, North Dakota WIC was able to secure a maintenance and operations contractor that was affordable but the contract expires in 2017.</p> <p><u>Objective 3.1:</u> Join the MPSC Users Group</p>	<p><u>Measurement 3.1.1:</u> North Dakota WIC will apply to become part of the Users Group and sign the charter</p>
<p><u>Business Need/Problem 4:</u> North Dakota WIC would like to move to a completely paperless environment. North Dakota WIC was hoping to be completely paperless when WICnet was implemented in 2006, however, there are still some forms, including check registers that staff need to keep on file.</p> <p><u>Objective 4.1:</u> By upgrading to MPSC, North Dakota WIC will eliminate all paper forms</p>	<p><u>Measurement 4.1.1:</u> Scanners will be purchased for each local agency to scan medical forms, court documents, etc. and 100% of local agencies will be using the scanners after system implementation</p> <p><u>Measurement 4.1.2:</u> Electronic signature pads will be purchased by each local agency to allow the participants to sign for their checks, and sign all other needed forms and 100% of local agencies will be using the pads after system implementation</p>

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Cost/Benefit Analysis

The current operating systems in the states (North Dakota WICnet and Iowa IWIN) were a joint effort between the two state WIC programs. This project was the first time two states combined efforts and resources for the development of a WIC management information system. The project was initially planned as a transfer project, (transferring in the Pennsylvania QuickWIC system with minor modifications), but during the design sessions it was determined that there were a multitude of differences from the way Iowa and North Dakota WIC “do business” compared to Pennsylvania WIC. The transfer project then became significant system development.

In June 2003, after a competitive procurement led by Iowa, the two states signed contracts with Ciber, Inc. Iowa rolled out in late 2005 and North Dakota WIC rolled out statewide in January 2006 with the system. Significant changes from the original scope of the project included the switch to .NET architecture and a number of other enhancements. In 2008 both states contracted with Ciber for extended warranty and system support. As a shared contract between two states, the states shared the cost of development, etc. based on the size of the programs, with Iowa assuming 80% of costs and North Dakota, 20%.

Now, the options for North Dakota WIC to get an updated system were: Modify their current system, transfer in a State Agency Models (SAM) system, build a new system, or transfer in a non-SAM system. The cost to modify the current system for EBT has been estimated at over a million dollars, and to build a new system would most likely be double that cost (not to mention the time it would take to develop a new system). The most cost-effective and timely solution would be to transfer in a system that is already in use in another state and is EBT ready. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) will provide funding to those transferring a SAM system at a level of 100%, but will only fund up to 75% for a non-SAM system. Given that, North Dakota has chosen to transfer to a SAM system, there are only two SAM systems available for transfer to North Dakota WIC – SPIRIT & MPSC. Because the MPSC system was the basis for the current system that North Dakota WIC has (WICnet), it was a natural fit. After a complete review of the MPSC system, North Dakota chose the MPSC system and prepared an Implementation Advanced Planning Document (IAPD). North Dakota WIC received approval of the IAPD from the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and has been admitted to the MPSC User’s Group. There is no charge for taking the MPSC system; however, there will be a cost for Ciber as an implementation contractor. After implementation, North Dakota will be charged for the maintenance and operations of the system along with the other states in the User’s Group.

Key Constraints or Risks

Risk: North Dakota WIC is doing this project jointly with the state of Iowa and Iowa is paying the majority of costs.

Impact: If something happens to Iowa’s funding or Iowa’s staff, the project could come to stop.

Response: Accept

Risk: North Dakota WIC will need to follow the new major project process that was put into century code and made effective as of August 1, 2013.

Impact: Due to following the new major project process and having to work with another state (Iowa), there is a potential for project delays.

Response: Mitigate. There are several stakeholder expectations and requirements to manage. Open communication between all stakeholders will be critical.

Risk: Because this project is more of an upgrade than a transfer, a shorter training period is planned and there are also no plans to conduct a pilot. As a result, there is a chance that we may not be ready for implementation if users aren’t comfortable with less exposure to the system prior to rolling it out.

Impact: If we need to do additional training and/or add a pilot to the project, this would increase time and cost.

Response: Mitigate. Earlier and frequent communication with end users might mitigate these concerns. For example, a video of the system early might make them more comfortable.