



Food and
Nutrition
Service

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March 24, 2021

SUBJECT: WIC Policy Memorandum #2021-3: Implementation of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (P.L. 117-2), State Agency Option to Temporarily Increase the Cash-Value Voucher/Benefit for Fruit and Vegetable Purchases

TO: Regional Directors
Special Nutrition Programs
All Regional Offices

WIC State Agency Directors
All State Agencies

Issuing Agency/Office:	FNS/Supplemental Nutrition and Safety Programs
Title of Document:	Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC Program) Policy Memorandum # 2021-3: Implementation of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (P.L. 117-2), State Agency Option to Temporarily Increase the Cash-Value Voucher/Benefit for Fruit and Vegetable Purchases
Document ID:	WIC Policy Memo #2021-3
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Replaces:	N/A
Summary:	This memorandum sets forth the applicable statutory requirements to temporarily increase, at WIC State agency option, the cash-value voucher/benefit for fruit and vegetable purchases during the COVID-19 public health emergency.
Disclaimer:	The contents of this guidance document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.
<i>Body of guidance document follows.</i>	

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) into law. Under section 1105 of Subtitle B, Title I of ARPA, the USDA may temporarily increase the Cash-Value Voucher/Benefit for Fruit and Vegetable Purchases (CVV/B) for certain food packages to an amount that is less than or equal to \$35 per month during the

federally declared COVID-19 public health emergency under Section 319 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 247d). ARPA provides \$490 million to support the CVV/B increase across all participating WIC State agencies. This memorandum sets forth applicable parameters for the optional implementation of CVV/B increase.

Per ARPA, the CVV/B provided to participants via WIC food packages III, IV, V, VI, and VII, as defined under WIC regulations at 7 CFR 246.10(e), would qualify for an increase at State agency option. For those State agencies that choose to implement this option, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) will authorize an increase in the CVV/B for all participants receiving these food packages up to the \$35 maximum monthly benefit permitted under ARPA.

A State agency may provide the increase in the CVV/B amount for an applicable period of up to four (4) consecutive months. **The authority of a State agency to increase the amount of the CVV/B terminates on September 30, 2021.** Consequently, the State agency may only provide the increased CVV/B to participants as fiscal year (FY) 2021 food benefits. Although the Start Date (i.e., the First Date of Use) of September food benefits must begin in September 2021, the time periods for transacting and redeeming September food benefits may occur after September 30, 2021, in accordance with the State agency's current policy and procedures. When selecting the period for the CVV/B increase, State agencies should ensure adequate implementation time to update their Management Information Systems and communicate the CVV/B increase to their participants and vendors.

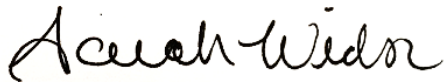
The State agency must notify FNS of its intent to increase the CVV/B by sending an email to SM.FN.WIC.CVV.Increase@usda.gov that includes the following information:

- (1) the increased amount of the CVV/B per participant, not to exceed \$35; and
- (2) the period selected by the State agency to increase the CVV/B, not to exceed four (4) consecutive months (e.g., June 2021 - September 2021).

Funding for the CVV/B increase will be made available once the funds are apportioned to FNS, and within ten days of receipt of the State agency's notification by FNS. FNS will allocate funding provided under ARPA based on each State agency's share of the total average monthly women and children participation for December 2019 through November 2020. The State agency must conduct a monthly reconciliation of each household's CVV/B redemptions to determine the portion of the redemptions in excess of currently authorized amounts of \$9 for children and \$11 for women to be charged to the ARPA grant. In addition to these food costs, the administrative costs to implement the CVV/B increase may be charged to the ARPA grant.

The ARPA grants and expenditures must be reported separately from State agencies' food and nutrition services and administration (NSA) grants and expenditures reported on the FNS-798. Consequently, a SF-425 report for the ARPA grants will be available in the Food Programs Reporting System (FPRS) for State agencies to report the final disposition of their ARPA grants¹. The final (closeout) reports for ARPA grants will be due at the same time as State agencies' FY 2021 FNS-798 annual closeout reports. Prior to submitting its closeout reports, the State agency should complete a final reconciliation to ensure all costs associated with the CVV/B increase are reflected in the ARPA closeout report and not included on the FNS-798 closeout report.

State agencies may direct any questions related to this memorandum to their respective FNS Regional Offices.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah Widor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sarah" and last name "Widor" clearly distinguishable.

SARAH WIDOR
Director
Supplemental Food Programs Division

¹ OMB Control Number 0584-0594, Food Programs Reporting System, which includes both the FNS-798 and SF-425, will be reviewed for updates as necessary.