



Food and
Nutrition
Service

Park Office
Center

3101 Park
Center Drive
Alexandria
VA 22302

April 11, 2019

SUBJECT: WIC Policy Memorandum #2019-3:
Optional Implementation of Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Cash-
Value Benefit (CVB) at WIC-Authorized Farmers and Farmers'
Markets

TO: Regional Directors
Special Nutrition Programs
All Regional Offices

WIC State Agency Directors
All WIC State Agencies

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-296) requires all State agencies administering the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) to implement EBT by October 1, 2020, unless granted an exemption by the Secretary. WIC State agencies must seek Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) approval via an Advance Planning Document (APD) process to implement EBT.

The statutory EBT implementation requirement does not apply to WIC-authorized farmers and farmers' markets, which are defined separately from WIC-authorized vendors in WIC regulations at 7 CFR 246.2. Under WIC regulations, WIC State agencies achieve statewide EBT when they convert all WIC clinics to an EBT delivery method and all authorized vendors (e.g., retail stores) are capable of transacting EBT purchases. However, WIC State agencies may wish to optionally implement the EBT version of the cash-value voucher (CVV) for fruits and vegetables, the cash value benefit (CVB), at WIC-authorized farmers and farmers' markets.

FNS supports innovation and the use of technology to promote program efficiency and enhance customer service to program participants. FNS further supports State agency flexibility in how benefits are delivered, and technological advancements that may enable farmers and farmers' markets to accept CVB.

For farmers and farmers' markets authorized in WIC on the date of statewide EBT implementation, WIC State agencies may use available nutrition services and administration funds, including operational adjustment funds, to pay for implementation of CVB, subject to FNS approval. Non-Federal funds may also be used. Because technology funds are limited and necessary to support the 2020 statutory mandate to equip WIC-authorized vendors with EBT, such funds cannot be used for to pay for CVB implementation at WIC-authorized farmers and farmers' markets.

Similar to the requirement applicable to WIC vendors authorized after statewide EBT implementation, WIC farmers or farmers' markets authorized *after* statewide EBT implementation must demonstrate EBT capability and pay for their EBT equipment or EBT solution.

If a WIC State agency seeks to implement CVB at WIC-authorized farmers and farmers' markets *prior to* achieving statewide EBT, it must continue to follow the APD process to implement CVB at such locations. If a WIC State agency seeks to implement CVB at WIC-authorized farmers and farmers' markets *after* achieving statewide EBT, and there will be additional costs to the federal grant related to enabling farmers and farmers markets to accept CVB (e.g., equipment, software, or implementation costs), the State agency must submit an APD for FNS review and approval before making any federal funding obligations.

Any State agency implementing CVB at WIC-authorized farmers and farmers' markets must update its State Plan pursuant to WIC regulations at 7 CFR 246.4.

If a WIC State agency chooses to implement CVB at WIC-authorized farmers and farmers' markets, FNS recommends close communication with EBT processors regarding available technology options.

State agencies may direct any questions to their respective FNS Regional Office WIC EBT contacts.



Sarah Widor
Director
Supplemental Food Programs Division