



June 15th Child Nutrition Listening Session with the Biden

Administration:

Maximizing the Reach of WIC and Child Nutrition Programs in California

Event Date 6.15.2021

Transcript of Chat Entries

This is a transcript of chat entries that were directed to panelists and attendees (collectively) during the listening session. In order to protect the privacy of attendees, commenters' names as well as direct messages and messages sent only to the panelists are not included. Please note that some of the entries below have been edited for clarity.

- Would like to know if there's progress on the proposal to extend WIC coverage to up to 6 years for children. There's a gap that needs to be closed when these WIC children "graduate" from WIC and then move to pre-school with no similar nutrition support program until they start grade school. Thank you.
- Hi everyone! Stacy, will you please share more about USDA's vision and priorities for CACFP? Particularly interested in your thoughts about how CACFP can fit into national aspirations for universal preschool. Thank you for all you are doing!
- Barriers to WIC participation are many and during the pandemic. Our increased caseload was due to all the waivers that [made] it easy for families to participate. Data sharing and adjunctive eligibility will reduce this burden to participate. Keeping many waivers are vital to make it easy to participate.
- On behalf of CWA and also myself as a former WIC mom, I can't emphasize enough how important it is to extend/make permanent the ability of local WIC agencies to serve families remotely for many of their appointments. We've had overwhelmingly positive feedback from WIC families and staff. The no-show rate has decreased, and parents feel safe and comfortable not having to find a way to transport their young children to appointments. I feel it may also help with retention - I definitely remember weighing the



value of the WIC benefit package against the leave I had to take from my job to attend WIC appointments. If I'd had the option to make it a phone call on my lunch hour, that would have been a game changer! Many families, especially the ones that came to WIC for the first time during the pandemic, will have a very difficult time going back to entirely in-person visits.

- Thank you for your time. Please continue efforts to increase the value of the WIC package. In [terms of] weighing the value of attending an appointment for what the family receives, the more [benefits] the better. We have had overwhelming support for increased fruits and veggies CVB. Keeping this at \$35 per person is a much bigger draw than \$9 or \$11. Thank you for any effort to keep or increase the \$35 CVB and increase the value of the overall package.
- Thanks, Stacy! And advocates in CA are always open to relaying concerns from directly-impacted immigrants.
- The income eligibility in high-cost cities such as SF and the greater Bay Area really limits who we can enroll given the higher wages in families who continue to struggle. Additionally, the lower value of the WIC food package does not make it worth all the hassle of participating.
- I know this is on your radar, but I'd also just like to reiterate that online shopping is really a must. During the pandemic it was a huge issue of course, because families had to increase their exposures or even break quarantine to get their WIC foods. Some families made the difficult decision to go without their WIC foods in order to keep their families safer. Even during non-pandemic times, though, transportation is often a huge barrier for WIC families. Now that they can use SNAP online, they're wondering why WIC doesn't have that same capability.
- Echo the thought to make shopping easier for WIC families. Recommend online shopping capabilities and self checkout.
- CACFP just needs to be rebranded with a catchier name!



- I am an ordinary citizen who observed a WIC user not being able to purchase herbs to season her food for her family. It is a cultural item that was not on the list but was from the vegetable section of the store! It wasn't expensive. Cultural needs should be on the list to make food taste good!
- We need to focus on nutritious delicious sustainable food and end HFCS subsidies (Heinous Federal Crop Subsidies / High Fructose Corn Syrup)
- Want to highlight nutrition security for infants especially during this pandemic. Breastfeeding support by WIC has been critical during these trying times. Increased funding for breastfeeding in WIC to support peer counseling and IBCLC [International Board Certified Lactation Consultant] is vital for babies to get the healthiest start in life!
- We collaborate with WIC and 2 hospitals to run 3 farmers markets in Salinas, CA where people can choose the culturally relevant produce they want using their CalFresh and WIC benefits, and we need more funding for these opportunities for small-scale farmers to sell directly to WIC and CalFresh recipients, using Market Match, which is a similar program what the rep from SPUR was talking about. Thank you, Hester Parker, Everyone's Harvest calling from Rumsen unceded land in Monterey County, CA. And thanks to all of the participants on this call who are doing amazing work.
- I want to highlight the incredible work being done through SNAP-Ed (CalFresh Healthy Living) to provide nutrition education, promote physical activity and increase access to healthy foods. Great to hear the support for SNAP-Ed you mentioned in your introduction, Stacy. Thank you!
- I'd like to echo that the COVID-19 CACFP/SFSP waivers have been instrumental in expanding our reach this past program year. It would be amazing to see some of these waivers stick around for continued flexibility. Specifically, Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County has relied heavily on Non-Congregate, Parent/Guardian Pick Up, Meal Time Flexibility, and Area Eligibility. Thank you for your time Deputy Stacy, and to all the people on the webinar working hard to feed our communities.