

Case Study

Vermont Department of Health

“Our timeline for joint implementation of a new management information system and full eWIC had little room for delays. Then our original partner backed out, leaving us in immediate need of someone with expertise and proven success with WIC EBT. Conduent came in quickly and helped us sort through a variety of challenges. They agreed to our established schedule and we were able to implement eWIC right on time.”

– Donna Bister, WIC Program Director, Vermont Department of Health



The Challenge

Under the Department of Health, the Vermont Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program helps pregnant women, new mothers, and young children stay healthy through nutrition education and counseling. The Vermont program serves 14,000 participants each month.

Previously, Vermont WIC participants received most of their benefits twice a month from contracted home delivery vendors, and used a WIC-branded SNAP EBT card to access their WIC cash value fruit and vegetable benefits. However, program administrators were looking to improve the State's program and increase choice and convenience for participants. Additionally, to meet the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010, mandate for all WIC programs to implement Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) by 2020, the State had to remodel the entire program to comply with the legislation.

In order to initiate this overhaul, Vermont WIC selected a vendor to help define and build the online eWIC interface with a transferred management information system. Early on in the process, the vendor pulled out of the card services business and Vermont WIC was left to find another vendor who could quickly and seamlessly pick up the work in order to meet their previously established goals and timeline.

Conduent was chosen as the partner to meet their development, design and implementation goals.

The Solution

Through an accelerated timeline and multi-faceted collaboration effort between MIS and Conduent developers, the state and retailers, Vermont WIC implemented a new state agency model management information system and started issuing WIC benefits via EBT at the same time.

The implementation required weekly calls and daily interaction with the MIS contractor to ensure the new system, Ceres, had a USDA FNS compliant universal interface that could be transferred to other states and support all aspects of the agency's WIC operations, including electronic food benefit issuance, caseload management and federal reporting.

Since the WIC program was moving from home delivery to eWIC via cards, participants had to learn how to use the new system and retailers – who weren't previously involved in WIC and EBT programs – and their employees had to be educated and trained on the new process and system.

We also provided a test environment to make sure initial transactions went smoothly, facilitated the enablement of new stores and tested changes to the retail system.

Our core EBT solution helped Vermont quickly implement EBT for WIC. As the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act 2020 mandate looms, fast and effective are critical components to implementation. Extraordinary coordination was required to execute the simultaneous rollout of the new MIS with EBT and implement an online universal interface to a state agency model (SAM) system that had previously only issued offline WIC EBT benefits using a smart card.



We also met every milestone for testing including preliminary integration testing with the MIS along with a user acceptance testing that simulated the WIC clinic workflow.

The Results

The Vermont WIC program processes more than 9 million food redemptions annually. By moving from a home delivery to an online system, participants automatically receive benefits electronically, a very simple, cost-effective and seamless process.

Thanks to Conduent and the vision established by the team from the Vermont WIC program, participants now have consistent and flexible access to their benefits and the freedom to choose which WIC approved items they want for their family.

Without skipping a beat, we were able to jump in to meet all the State's pre-existing timelines and go live in nine months. The online system was customized based on Vermont's specific requirements and allowed the state to speed up settlements and easily pull reports to track compliance and costs.

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