
Updated September 11, 2026 | **By Zoë Neuberger and Luis Nuñez**

States Continue to Streamline and Modernize WIC

Most States Have Adopted Flexibilities and Digital Tools to Simplify Participation for Families

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides healthy foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and referrals to health care and social services to pregnant and postpartum people with low incomes, infants, and children under age 5. Despite the well-documented nutritional and health benefits associated with WIC participation,¹ in recent years almost half of eligible people (43.9 percent in 2023) have not been enrolled, especially pregnant individuals and children ages 1 through 4.²

To reach more eligible families with low incomes, state and local WIC agencies have adjusted their policies and practices to remove barriers to enrollment. These efforts were accelerated under COVID-19-related waivers of certain program rules and continued with waivers authorized under the modernization initiative in the 2021 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).³ In 2023, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), which administers WIC, issued a policy memorandum to clarify available flexibilities for streamlining WIC certification and to encourage WIC state agencies to adopt them; state agencies have responded by implementing additional policy flexibilities.⁴

This report compiles selected state WIC certification policies that CBPP collected from WIC state agencies during 2021 and 2022, with updates and responses to additional questions provided by states in the fall and winter of 2023–2024 and most recently in the winter of 2025–2026. (This report focuses on policy flexibilities that do not require waivers.) CBPP also collected information from state agencies about digital technology tools available to WIC applicants and participants, such as online forms, apps, and portals, for the first time in 2025–2026.⁵

Understanding which policies states have implemented can help federal policymakers update program rules – legislatively when WIC is reauthorized, or administratively – and help program administrators in other states implement policies that simplify WIC enrollment and recertification procedures.

Understanding which digital tools states are using can help WIC state agencies connect with other states that have implemented technology they want to adopt or features they want to add to existing tools. By

adopting these policies and tools, WIC state agencies can make it easier for eligible families to get and stay enrolled and reduce the administrative burden on local staff.

Our compilation of state WIC certification policies shows that:

- **Thirty WIC state agencies allow pregnant applicants who meet WIC's income standards to be enrolled immediately, in advance of the nutrition assessment.** This enables them to begin receiving food benefits as soon as they are determined to be income-eligible.
- **Forty WIC state agencies have eliminated the requirement that households without any income provide a third-party statement verifying their income.** Such a requirement can prevent or delay vulnerable families from obtaining nutrition assistance during critical periods of prenatal, infant, and child development.
- **Thirty-five WIC state agencies exempt infants and children of working parents from being physically present for certification appointments.** While many states currently have a waiver permitting certification by telephone or video conference for *all* applicants, those that adopt the flexibility to exempt infants and children of working parents can reduce the burden of certification appointments when waivers end.

In addition to widespread adoption of those long-standing policies, nearly all state agencies have implemented one or more policies that USDA's 2023 policy memo on streamlining certification highlighted as available flexibilities to reduce barriers to participation:

- **Thirty-eight WIC state agencies allow income and/or residence eligibility to be determined in advance of certification appointments;** one additional state is in the process of implementing this policy. Checking income and residence eligibility in advance reduces both the duration of the certification appointment and the number of documents that applicants must provide.
- **Forty-eight WIC state agencies explicitly permit applicants to provide electronic documentation,** either in person or transmitted by secure electronic methods. The number and types of methods available for sharing documents vary widely, however.
- **Forty-four WIC state agencies facilitate prompt enrollment of newborns by using the mother's (or another household member's) participation in Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and/or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) as the basis for eligibility;** two additional states are implementing this policy. However, 12 of the states that have implemented this policy do not include participation in SNAP, as permitted by USDA.
- **Forty-eight WIC state agencies accept documentation of an applicant's enrollment in Medicaid, SNAP, or TANF to document their residence and/or identity as well as their income;** one additional state is implementing this policy.

- **Forty-two WIC state agencies allow temporary 30-day certifications** to give applicants more time to provide eligibility documents without delaying food benefits.

By adopting more of these flexibilities, WIC state agencies can build on the increase in WIC coverage between 2021, when 51.2 percent of eligible people participated, and 2023, when the share rose to 56.1 percent. *All of the policies described in this report are allowed under regular program rules, will remain available to states after the ARPA-related waivers expire, and can be adopted by states by amending their state plan, revising their policy manual, or both.*

State agencies have also deployed a range of digital tools to make information more accessible to participants and to help families apply for WIC benefits and services:

- **Thirty-six WIC state agencies offer a digital tool to assist families with starting the process of applying for WIC.** The types of information collected from applicants vary, with nearly all states collecting contact information and most also gathering some of the information needed for an eligibility determination. Nineteen of the states collect information used to schedule appointments.
- **Participants in 49 states can view their food benefits through a digital tool.** In 44 states, participants can access information to assist them with shopping for WIC foods.
- **Participants in 20 states can view family information, such as enrolled family members, address, and phone numbers,** and two additional states are adding this information to a digital tool. In 13 of these states, participants may *change* certain family information, and one more is adding this functionality.
- **Participants in 30 states can use a digital tool to request an automated appointment reminder.** In 28 states, participants can view their upcoming appointments, with two more states adding this feature. Participants in 15 states can request and/or change appointments; two more states are adding this functionality.

More widespread use of all available policy flexibilities and expanded use of digital tools would allow eligible individuals to receive benefits more easily and promptly, and help them participate for as long as they are eligible. This would increase WIC enrollment and improve health outcomes while also reducing administrative tasks for staff, freeing up time to provide nutrition and breastfeeding services.

Assessing Your WIC Certification Practices

A CBPP toolkit to help WIC agencies modernize and streamline the certification process is available at www.cbpp.org/wiccertificationtoolkit. It includes descriptions of practices for facilitating WIC enrollment and simplifying eligibility determinations, along with examples from WIC state and local agencies and additional resources.

Many States Have Updated Their Certification Policies and Practices and Adopted or Enhanced Digital Tools

WIC agencies assess eligibility for benefits when applicants first apply and periodically thereafter. The program serves certain categories of applicants: infants and children under age 5, pregnant individuals, and, for up to one year, postpartum individuals. Additional eligibility criteria include income, residence, and nutritional risk. Applicants are also required to provide identification. Under federal law, WIC state agencies may establish certification periods of one year rather than six months for breastfeeding parents, infants, and children ages 1 through 4.⁶ All states and the District of Columbia have adopted full-year certification for all of these categories.

While WIC programs operate under certain federal eligibility rules and policies, state and local WIC agencies have considerable flexibility to determine how they certify new applicants and recertify participants. WIC state agencies set policies and procedures for certifying eligibility, and local agencies or clinics implement these within the context of their staffing patterns and facilities. As a result, WIC agencies employ a wide range of certification options and a variety of processes. Many state and local WIC agencies have changed their certification processes since CBPP issued its initial report on this issue in 2017.⁷ Among other factors, the COVID-19 pandemic required agencies to adopt new ways of certifying and serving participants. Increased use of technology and experience with virtual appointments have increased flexibility and simplified certification processes while inspiring creative ways of gathering information.

As a result, many promising practices have emerged. Practices such as online applications and electronic referrals from health care providers simplify WIC enrollment, which helps both participants and staff. Increased coordination with health care providers reduces the need for families to provide duplicative information and for WIC staff to collect measurements and bloodwork, thereby streamlining the certification process and enhancing continuity of care.

To document some of the changes, CBPP has periodically asked the 50 geographic WIC state agencies to update the information about certification policies and practices published in the 2017 report and to respond to questions about additional items. The District of Columbia was also asked to provide the information starting in 2022. While U.S. Territories and tribal organizations are also considered state

agencies operating the WIC program, their policies are not included in this report. The geographic state agencies serve the vast majority of WIC participants (99 percent in fiscal year 2025).

Nearly all states responded to CBPP's requests for updates in 2021 and 2022 (47 of 50 in 2021 and 48 of 51 in 2022); most (42 of 51) also provided updates in 2023–2024. All but three state agencies responded to the most recent request for updates during the winter of 2025–2026. These states also provided new information about digital tools, such as online forms for requesting WIC benefits, apps, and participant portals, that CBPP had not collected in the past. This report summarizes the information they provided in four areas: adopting adjunctive eligibility, broadening options for applicants to document eligibility, adopting other policies to streamline certification, and offering digital tools for applicants and participants. Each section includes a table listing policies and practices across the state agencies. The range of certification processes and digital tools shown in the tables can help federal stakeholders understand their use and help state program administrators connect with peers to learn about different approaches.

Adjunctive Eligibility Simplifies Enrollment

To help ensure that low-income families with young children receive the benefits and supports for which they qualify and to avoid duplicative administrative work, policymakers have streamlined enrollment across benefit programs through a policy known as adjunctive eligibility. Under federal law, applicants who are enrolled in Medicaid or SNAP or receive monthly TANF cash assistance are automatically considered income-eligible, or adjunctively eligible, for WIC.⁸ This long-standing policy simplifies WIC eligibility determinations for more than 3 in 4 applicants.⁹ Nonetheless, USDA estimates that nationwide, nearly half of WIC-eligible people receiving Medicaid or SNAP (or both) did not access WIC in 2023.¹⁰ Targeted outreach to these groups and robust referrals from health care providers are important ways of increasing WIC take-up.¹¹

During the certification process, WIC agencies are required to attempt to determine if the applicant is adjunctively income-eligible before performing a traditional income determination. State agencies must include procedures in their annual state plan for obtaining adjunctive eligibility information *prior* to the certification appointment.¹² While nearly all states accept an applicant's paper documentation of Medicaid, SNAP, or TANF participation, such as an eligibility determination letter, they also use a variety of other options to check for participation. All WIC agencies have access to online portals, data, or automated phone systems set up by at least one of the other programs; 16 agencies have integrated a process to check for adjunctive eligibility into their WIC information system and three more are developing an integrated process. (See Table 1.)

USDA's 2023 policy memo on streamlining certification notes that infants are considered income-eligible for WIC if their parents are enrolled in Medicaid or their families receive SNAP or TANF; no documentation that the *infant* receives those benefits is necessary. USDA encouraged state agencies to implement this policy to facilitate timely WIC enrollment of newborns; 44 states have already done so and two others are implementing it. Most (41) of these states certify income-eligibility for infants of

participants enrolled in Medicaid. (See Table 3.) Fewer states (32) report permitting it for infants born into families enrolled in SNAP; by adopting this change, states can facilitate timely enrollment of infants in families participating in SNAP or TANF but not Medicaid.

Nearly all WIC state agencies accept documentation of enrollment in Medicaid, SNAP, or TANF to meet both income and residence requirements if that program checks residence within the state as part of its eligibility process. Enrollment in these programs is also used to document identification in most states, which maximizes the benefit of checking for adjunctive eligibility. USDA encourages state agencies to permit one source to document multiple eligibility factors to make the process easier for both participants and staff.

Table 1 shows how state agencies direct local staff to check for adjunctive eligibility. It also lists which states use adjunctive eligibility documentation to document residence and/or identity in addition to income.

TABLE 1

WIC Certification Policies and Practices: Methods for Checking Adjunctive Eligibility

Legend:

RES = Residence

ID = Identity

-- = Information not available

	Approval notice from agency that administers Medicaid, SNAP, TANF, and/or other applicable program ¹	Call to automated phone system to check Medicaid, SNAP, TANF, and/or other applicable program ¹	Online access to Medicaid portal/data	Online access to SNAP and/or TANF program portal(s)/data	Interface built into WIC eligibility system that checks Medicaid, SNAP, and/or TANF eligibility	Does the state allow documentation of adjunctive eligibility to document residence and/or identity in addition to income?
Alabama	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	RES, ID ²
Alaska	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	RES, ID
Arizona	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	RES, ID
Arkansas	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	RES, ID
California	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	RES, ID
Colorado	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	RES, ID
Connecticut	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	RES, ID
Delaware	No	No	No	No	Yes	RES, ID
District of Columbia	Yes	Yes	Yes ³	Yes ³	No	No
Florida	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	RES
Georgia⁴	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	RES
Hawai'i	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	In process	In process
Idaho	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Illinois	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	RES
Indiana⁴	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	RES, ID
Iowa	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	RES, ID
Kansas	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	RES, ID

Kentucky	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	In process	RES, ID
Louisiana	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	RES, ID
Maine	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	RES, ID
Maryland	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	ID
Massachusetts	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	RES, ID
Michigan	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	RES, ID
Minnesota	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	RES, ID
Mississippi	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	RES, ID
Missouri	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	RES, ID
Montana	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	RES, ID
Nebraska	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	ID
Nevada	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	RES, ID
New Hampshire	Yes	Yes	Yes	No ⁵	No	RES
New Jersey	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	ID
New Mexico	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	RES, ID
New York	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	RES, ID
North Carolina	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	RES, ID
North Dakota	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	RES
Ohio	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	ID
Oklahoma	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	RES, ID
Oregon	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	RES, ID
Pennsylvania	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	RES, ID
Rhode Island	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	RES, ID
South Carolina	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	RES, ID
South Dakota	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	RES, ID
Tennessee	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	ID
Texas	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	In process	RES, ID
Utah	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	RES, ID
Vermont	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	RES, ID
Virginia⁴	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	--	RES, ID
Washington	Yes	Yes	No	Yes ⁶	Yes	RES, ID
West Virginia	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	RES, ID

Wisconsin	Yes	Yes	Yes	In process	No	RES
Wyoming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	ID

¹ Under federal rules, state agencies may accept documentation of the applicant's participation in state-administered programs that routinely require documentation of income, provided that those programs have income eligibility limits at or below WIC's. State agencies include other applicable programs in their annual WIC state plan. See 7 C.F.R. §246.7(d)(2)(vi)(B).

² Alabama WIC permits adjunctive eligibility documentation for up to two of three requirements (income, residence, identity).

³ In the District of Columbia, online access is available to some local agencies; D.C.'s WIC agency is implementing access in all agencies.

⁴ Responses are from 2022 for Georgia and from 2024 for Indiana and Virginia. These states did not provide updates in 2025-2026.

⁵ New Hampshire does not have online access to a SNAP or TANF portal, but WIC receives a nightly file of SNAP enrollees that is also used for outreach.

⁶ In Washington, online access is available to participants only.

Source: Information collected by CBPP from state policy documents and directly from WIC state agencies during the summers of 2021 and 2022, updated in the fall and winter of 2023-2024 and again in the winter of 2025-2026.

States Have Broadened Options for Applicants to Document Eligibility

Federal rules allow WIC staff to accept documents that are shown in electronic form during in-person appointments or transmitted electronically, and USDA's policy memo on streamlining certification requires WIC state agencies to develop policies for the secure use of online and/or electronic resources. Nearly all states include a policy on the use of electronic documents for certification in their policy manuals. But the options available to applicants for sharing electronic documents vary.

Prior to the pandemic, it was uncommon for WIC agencies to offer a mechanism to transmit documents electronically. But all states established such mechanisms as they transitioned to conducting certification appointments by telephone or video to protect participants and WIC staff after the onset of COVID-19. Now state policies allow for a range of methods for participants to rely on electronic documents before, during, or after certification appointments.

Applicants (whether applying for the first time or being recertified) can show documents on their telephones during in-person or video appointments, or they can send a photo or screenshot of a document via text message, email, or fax. Also, a growing number of states are setting up secure methods for participants to *upload* documents, with 22 states reporting that they offer this option in 2025-2026. In some states, document uploading capability is part of an online application or is a feature within their WIC portals or mobile apps, while others offer standalone tools for uploading documents.

In a 2025 survey of more than 56,000 WIC participants conducted in 25 geographic state agencies and two agencies in Indian Tribal Organizations, an average 61 percent of participants reported using a method other than in-person to provide documents for certification. The methods most frequently used included a website, portal, WIC app, or online application (43 percent of all respondents); text messaging (39 percent); and email (36 percent). More than 9 in 10 of those who shared their personal information with WIC using any of those virtual methods found it somewhat or very easy to do so.¹³ In a 2023 survey of WIC participants, respondents rated their comfort with using virtual methods for sharing personal information with WIC at an average of 3.5 out of 4 across all virtual methods.¹⁴ While these findings are encouraging, it is also important for state and local agencies to adopt measures to protect the confidentiality of the information provided without sacrificing ease of use.

USDA's policy memo on streamlining certification encouraged WIC state agencies to "utilize tools at their disposal to collect information and documents in advance of certification appointments to identify any missing items and streamline the certification process." It also encouraged state agencies that can access applicable sources to assess whether a participant nearing the end of their certification period remains adjunctively income-eligible in advance of their recertification appointment.

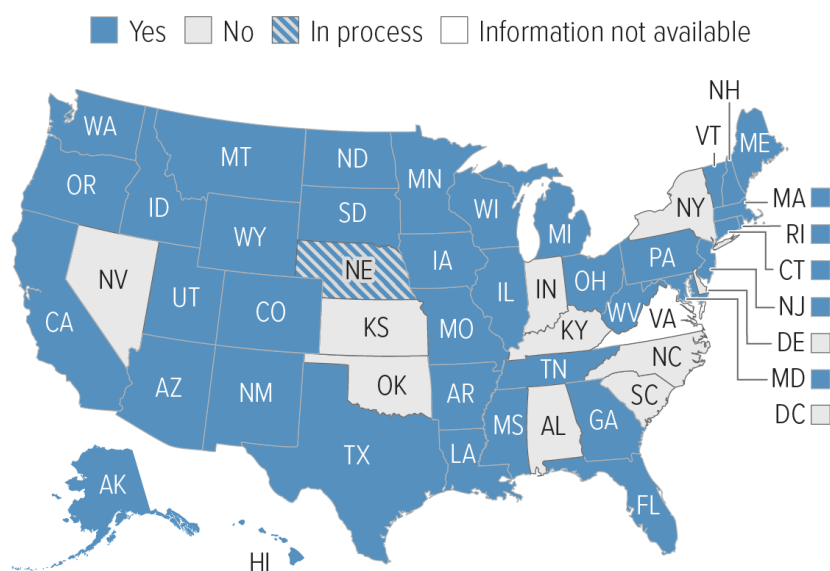
Thirty-eight WIC state agencies permit local staff to determine income and/or residence eligibility in advance of the certification appointment (with advance times ranging from the same day to 30 days),

and one additional state is implementing this policy. (See Figure 1.) Thirty-nine WIC state agencies allow adjunctive eligibility to be checked before a *recertification* appointment; most of them permit staff to use available methods (such as an automated phone system or online portal) and permit participants to submit documents by email or other methods.

By maximizing the use of electronic documents and adjunctive eligibility, especially in advance of certification appointments, additional states could reduce the duration of certification appointments, the number of documents that applicants must provide, and the number of applicants with incomplete documentation.

FIGURE 1

38 WIC State Agencies Simplify Certification Appointments by Allowing Advance Determinations of Income and/or Residence Eligibility



Source: Information collected by CBPP from state policy documents and WIC state agencies during the summers of 2021 and 2022, fall and winter of 2023-2024, and winter of 2025-2026

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When applicants do not have all the required documentation, most state agencies permit a temporary 30-day certification to give them more time to provide eligibility documents without delaying food benefits. USDA's policy memo on streamlining certification strongly encourages state agencies to use existing flexibilities to minimize barriers to benefits, including by granting a temporary 30-day certification period if an applicant can provide two of the three documents required to determine eligibility (identity, residency, and income). If a temporary certification period is initiated, the applicant must provide appropriate documentation within 30 days to continue receiving benefits. Flexible, electronic options for submitting the information without having to return to the clinic are important to help participants with temporary certifications become fully certified.

Some state and local agencies monitor the number of temporary certifications as well as the number of these that become full certifications. If many participants are certified for only 30 days, this may indicate a need for staff training on maximizing the use of electronic documents. For example, by training staff to view and receive documents electronically, Maricopa County, Arizona, lowered the share of certifications that were temporary because clients had not provided all required documents from 26 percent to 2 percent.¹⁵ In addition, a high rate of temporary certifications that do not become full certifications may warrant more follow-up assistance to ensure that eligible and interested families are able to submit the documentation necessary to continue receiving benefits.¹⁶

Table 2 compiles state policies on using electronic documents, checking eligibility prior to certification appointments, and granting temporary certifications.

TABLE 2

WIC Certification Policies and Practices: Using Electronic Eligibility Documentation, Checking Eligibility Prior to Certification Appointments, and Granting Temporary Certifications

Legend:

EML = Email

FAX =

Facsimile

PHN = Phone

TXT = Text

UPL = Upload

VID = Video

NS = Not specified

OTH = Other

STF = Staff

PPT = Participants

INC = Income

RES = Residence

ID = Identity

-- = Information not available

	Does the state provide direction on whether a local agency or clinic may accept electronic documents?	If yes, what options for sharing electronic documents are included?	Does the state allow for determining income and/or residence eligibility prior to the certification appointment?	If yes, how far in advance?	Does the state allow adjunctive eligibility to be checked before a recertification appointment?	If yes, do staff use available methods (e.g., online, phone) and can participants submit documents (e.g., upload, email)?	Does the state allow temporary certifications of up to 30 days for applicants who do not have income, identity, or residence documentation? ¹	If yes, which documents can be missing?
Alabama	Yes	EML	No		No		No	
Alaska	Yes	EML, FAX, PHN, TXT	Yes	NS	Yes	STF, PPT	Yes	INC, RES, ID
Arizona	Yes	EML, UPL, VID	Yes	NS	Yes	STF, PPT	Yes	INC, RES, ID
Arkansas	Yes	EML, PHN, TXT, OTH	Yes	OTH	Yes	STF, PPT	Yes	INC, RES, ID
California	Yes	EML, FAX, PHN, UPL, VID	Yes	NS	Yes	PPT	Yes	INC, RES, ID
Colorado	Yes	EML, FAX, TXT	Yes	≤1 week	Yes	STF, PPT	Yes	INC, RES
Connecticut	Yes	EML, FAX, TXT	Yes	Same day	Yes	STF, PPT	Yes	INC, RES
Delaware	Yes	EML, OTH ²	No		Yes	PPT	Yes	INC, RES, ID
District of Columbia	No		No		No		Yes	INC, RES, ID

Florida	Yes	EML, FAX, UPL	Yes	≤30 days	Yes	STF	Yes	INC, RES, ID
Georgia³	Yes	EML, UPL, PHN	Yes	≤30 days	--	--	Yes	INC, RES, ID
Hawai'i	Yes	EML, FAX, PHN, TXT	Yes	≤30 days	Yes	STF, PPT	Yes	INC, RES, ID
Idaho	Yes	PHN, UPL, FAX, VID	Yes	≤30 days	Yes	STF, PPT	Yes	INC, RES, ID
Illinois	Yes	EML, PHN, TXT, VID	Yes	NS	Yes	STF, PPT	Yes	INC, RES, ID
Indiana³	Yes	EML, FAX, PHN	No		--	--	Yes	INC, RES, ID
Iowa	Yes	EML, FAX, PHN, TXT, UPL, VID	Yes	≤30 days	Yes	STF	Yes	INC, RES
Kansas	Yes	EML, FAX, PHN, TXT	No		--	--	Yes	INC, RES, ID
Kentucky	Yes	EML, FAX, PHN, OTH	No		Yes	PPT	Yes ⁴	INC, RES, ID
Louisiana	Yes	EML, FAX, PHN, UPL	Yes	≤30 days	Yes	STF	Yes	INC, RES, ID
Maine	Yes	EML, FAX, PHN, TXT, VID	Yes	≤1 week	Yes	STF	Yes	INC, RES, ID
Maryland	Yes	EML, FAX, PHN, TXT, UPL, VID	Yes	≤30 days	Yes	STF, PPT	Yes	INC, RES, ID
Massachusetts	Yes	EML, FAX, PHN, TXT, UPL	Yes	≤30 days	Yes	STF, PPT	No	
Michigan	Yes	EML, FAX, PHN, TXT, VID	Yes	≤30 days	Yes	STF	Yes	INC, RES, ID
Minnesota	Yes	EML, FAX, PHN, TXT, UPL, VID	Yes	≤21 days	Yes	STF, PPT	Yes	INC, RES, ID
Mississippi	Yes	UPL	Yes	≤30 days	Yes	STF	Yes	INC, RES, ID

Missouri	Yes	EML, FAX, PHN, TXT, UPL	Yes	≤30 days	Yes	STF, PPT	Yes	INC, RES, ID
Montana	Yes	NS	Yes	≤1 week	Yes	STF, PPT	Yes	INC, RES, ID
Nebraska	Yes	EML, TXT, UPL, VID	In process		No		No	
Nevada	Yes	EML, TXT	No		Yes	STF, PPT	Yes	INC, RES, ID
New Hampshire	Yes	EML, FAX, TXT	Yes	Same month as certification	Yes	STF, PPT	Yes	INC, RES, ID
New Jersey	Yes	EML, PHN, TXT, OTH	Yes	≤30 days	Yes	STF, PPT	No	
New Mexico	Yes	UPL, OTH	Yes	≤30 days	Yes	STF, PPT	Yes	INC, RES, ID
New York	Yes	EML, FAX, PHN, TXT, VID	No		No		Yes	INC, RES, ID
North Carolina	Yes	EML, PHN, TXT, FAX, UPL, VID	No		No		No	
North Dakota	Yes	EML, FAX, PHN, TXT	Yes	NS	Yes	STF, PPT	Yes	INC, RES
Ohio	No		Yes	NS	Yes	STF, PPT	No	
Oklahoma	Yes	EML, FAX, PHN, TXT, UPL	No		No		Yes	INC, RES, ID
Oregon	Yes	EML, TXT, UPL, VID	Yes	≤5 business days	Yes	STF, PPT	Yes	INC, RES, ID
Pennsylvania	Yes	NS	Yes	≤1 week	--	--	No	
Rhode Island³	Yes	EML, FAX, TXT	Yes	≤30 days	--	--	Yes	INC, RES, ID
South Carolina	Yes	EML, FAX, PHN, TXT, UPL, VID	No		Yes	STF, PPT	Yes	INC, RES, ID
South Dakota	Yes	EML, FAX, PHN, TXT	Yes	≤72 hours	Yes	STF, PPT	Yes	INC, RES, ID

Tennessee	Yes	EML, FAX, PHN, TXT, UPL	Yes	≤30 days	Yes	STF, PPT	No	
Texas	Yes	EML, FAX, PHN, UPL, VID	Yes	≤30 days	Yes	STF, PPT	Yes	INC, RES, ID
Utah	Yes	EML, PHN, TXT, VID,	Yes	≤30 days	Yes	STF, PPT	Yes	INC, RES, ID
Vermont	Yes	EML, FAX, PHN	Yes	1-2 days	Yes	STF, PPT	Yes	INC, RES, ID
Virginia³	No		--	--	No		No	
Washington	Yes	VID	Yes	≤30 days	Yes	STF	Yes	INC, RES, ID
West Virginia	Yes	EML, FAX, PHN, TXT,OTH ⁴	Yes	≤30 days	Yes	STF, PPT	Yes	INC, RES, ID
Wisconsin	Yes	EML, FAX, PHN, TXT, UPL, VID, OTH	Yes	≤30 days	Yes	STF, PPT	Yes	INC, RES, ID
Wyoming	Yes	EML, FAX, UPL	Yes	≤30 days	Yes	STF, PPT	Yes	INC, RES, ID

¹ Federal rules permit temporary certification for up to 30 days for applicants who provide documentation for two of these three requirements. The missing documentation must be provided by the end of the temporary period for the applicant to be fully certified.

² In Delaware, electronic documents can be uploaded through the Management Information System (MIS). West Virginia is adding document sharing through a portal.

³ Responses are from 2022 for Georgia and Rhode Island and from 2024 for Indiana and Virginia. These states did not provide updates in 2025-2026.

⁴ In Kentucky, 30-day temporary certifications are permitted for hospital certifications only.

Source: Information collected by CBPP from state policy documents and directly from WIC state agencies during the summers of 2021 and 2022, updated in the fall and winter of 2023-2024 and again in the winter of 2025-2026.

States Can Adopt Other Policies to Streamline Certification

Described below are several other ways in which WIC state agencies can adjust their policies, and local agencies can adjust their practices, to make the certification process easier to navigate and less burdensome for both participants and staff.

Exempting Some Individuals From In-Person Appointments

Federal law permits WIC state agencies to exempt certain individuals from the requirement that applicants be physically present at certification appointments. They include infants or children receiving ongoing health care (after the initial certification), infants or children with working parents (after the initial certification and with a limit on how much time can elapse between in-person appointments), and newborn infants under 8 weeks old. For adults, exemptions from the physical presence requirement are limited to individuals with disabilities.¹⁷

Under short-term waivers approved by the USDA during the pandemic, state agencies made virtual appointments available to all WIC applicants and participants to protect the health of families and WIC staff. Participants were offered telephone and video certification appointments and options for providing eligibility information without visiting a WIC office. New waivers granted since 2021 under ARPA's broad WIC modernization initiative have allowed WIC agencies to continue offering virtual certification appointments to all participants, but without legislation this temporary flexibility will expire.

Participant satisfaction with virtual appointments is very high. In the 2025 survey of 56,000 participants cited above, the average share across agencies of participants reporting attending virtual WIC appointments was 89 percent. More than 9 in 10 participants reported they were somewhat or very satisfied with interacting with staff over phone, text, or video.¹⁸

Even without waivers, states can make it easier for parents and caretakers to schedule and keep appointments by offering telephone or video appointments for certification when a physical presence exemption applies, or for mid-certification, nutrition education and breastfeeding support appointments.

For appointments when infants or children are not present, it is important to collaborate with health care providers to obtain measurements and blood test results to inform the nutrition assessment. During the COVID pandemic, most state agencies received waivers for obtaining measurements and bloodwork, and many state and local agencies coordinated with health care providers to get this information to inform nutrition assessments during certification appointments conducted by phone or video. WIC participants appreciated this change: 60 percent of respondents surveyed in 2021 cited the ability to use measurements and blood tests from doctors' visits as an advantage of WIC services during the pandemic.¹⁹

Under the ARPA waivers currently in place, WIC agencies must obtain measurements when offering services virtually but may delay doing so for up to 60 days after the certification appointment. To

facilitate phone or video certification appointments, WIC agencies are employing a variety of methods of obtaining applicants' information from health care providers, including incorporating information from electronic health records into referrals and allowing providers to make referrals through health information exchanges.²⁰ When the relevant information cannot be obtained from a health care provider, WIC agencies sometimes offer "drop-in" visits for parents to bring their infant or child to the WIC site briefly for measurements and blood tests at a convenient time, either before or after a certification appointment is conducted virtually.

Expediting Enrollment for Pregnant Applicants

Federal WIC rules allow WIC state agencies to immediately enroll pregnant individuals who meet income standards as presumptively eligible based on income eligibility, with a nutrition assessment and determination of nutritional risk eligibility completed within 60 days. Some agencies are using this option to establish presumptive eligibility for prenatal applicants with a nutrition assessment within 60 days or, in a few cases, 30 days.

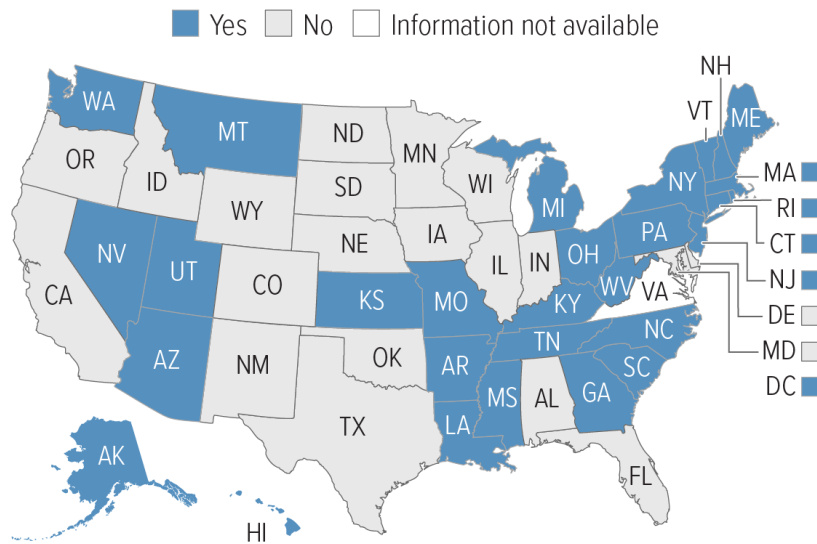
As Figure 2 illustrates, 30 states have adopted this two-step process, which makes it easier to enroll pregnant individuals as soon as they contact WIC to apply. This approach also can facilitate providing WIC's food benefits to individuals earlier in their pregnancy. For example, when a parent of a child participating in WIC shares that they are pregnant during an appointment for their child, they could be enrolled right away (assuming the family remains income-eligible) and begin to receive food benefits immediately. The nutrition assessment and risk determination could be scheduled one or two months later.

For a prenatal applicant who does not have a child participating in WIC, a two-step process may be less overwhelming than a single appointment. The first contact could focus on collecting demographic information, confirming income eligibility, making referrals for prenatal care or other support, assigning a food package, and providing education on WIC foods and how to shop for them. The second contact could focus on a nutrition assessment, nutrition and breastfeeding education, and the participant's questions about shopping or using WIC foods. If the second contact is scheduled after a prenatal health care appointment, measurements and blood test results may be available for use in the nutrition assessment.

Enrolling pregnant individuals and providing food assistance earlier in their pregnancy helps ensure that they receive the maximum benefit from the program. Enrollment earlier in pregnancy is associated with reduced risk of late entry into prenatal care, increased access to healthy foods and essential nutrients vital for fetal development, and greater likelihood of initiating breastfeeding and continuing longer.²¹ Yet fewer than half (48 percent) of prenatal participants are enrolled in the first trimester of pregnancy, and the figures are lower for Asian (45 percent), Black (44 percent), and Pacific Islander (38 percent) prenatal participants than for white participants (50 percent).²² More widespread adoption of presumptive eligibility offers an opportunity to enroll individuals with low incomes earlier in pregnancy, which may yield greater health and nutrition improvements.

FIGURE 2

30 WIC State Agencies Provide Food Benefits Immediately to Income-Eligible Pregnant Individuals



Note: These states provide immediate WIC benefits using presumptive eligibility, which allows income-eligible pregnant individuals to be immediately enrolled based on income eligibility, with a nutrition assessment and determination of nutritional risk eligibility completed within 60 days.

Source: Information collected by CBPP from state policy documents and WIC state agencies during the summers of 2021 and 2022, fall and winter of 2023-2024, and winter of 2025-2026

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Permitting Self-Declaration of Income

As permitted under federal law, nearly all WIC state agencies allow applicants to self-declare their income when they are unable to provide documentation.²³ This flexibility accommodates vulnerable families such as those who are experiencing homelessness or have been affected by a natural disaster.

Families with *no* income likely are experiencing substantial hardship. Federal rules allow them to self-declare their income and do not require WIC state agencies to obtain a third-party statement verifying their income.²⁴ Instead, federal guidance suggests inquiring about their circumstances and how they obtain basic necessities such as food, shelter, medical care, and clothing in order to correctly apply program rules about household size and income, as well as providing important referrals for assistance.²⁵ As in other circumstances, WIC staff may require third-party verification if they deem it necessary to confirm self-reported information, but third-party verification does not need to be obtained just because a household reports zero income.²⁶ Nonetheless, 11 state agencies require a third-party statement from *all* households that report having zero income.

Having periods without any income is not unusual for poor households. In a typical month in 2024, 19 percent of households receiving SNAP benefits – nearly 4.2 million households – had zero gross income.²⁷ There are many situations in which a family can manage temporarily without income: they might

be living in public or shared housing, getting food at a food pantry, eating meals at a soup kitchen, or relying on other in-kind benefits. Requiring such families to find an official or entity to document the *absence* of income creates a special burden for families who likely are extremely fragile or facing a crisis. As a result, such a requirement can prevent or delay vulnerable families from accessing nutrition assistance during periods of prenatal, infant, and child development, when even short periods of food insecurity can have lasting consequences.²⁸ States can help deliver WIC's essential foods promptly to families without income by utilizing the federal flexibility to eliminate the requirement to document lack of income.

Clarifying Document Retention Policies

State policies vary regarding how local WIC staff are instructed to handle documents that are shared with them to demonstrate eligibility. For applicants who meet eligibility requirements, more than half of state agencies either do not have a document retention policy or have a policy of returning documents to applicants or discarding them. State agency policies requiring documents to be retained are most often limited to income documents.

Several WIC state agencies noted that they require copies of documents to be kept only for applicants found to be ineligible. This is likely a policy in other states, since these documents are important for potential fair hearing requests.

As use of electronic documents increases, applicants will provide fewer paper items, and policies for handling documents with confidential information will likely evolve. It will be increasingly important for state agencies to adopt clear policies for the processes used to collect the documents and for storage or deletion after they are used to determine eligibility. Such policies should balance protecting applicants' privacy, reducing the duration of certification appointments, and using staff time efficiently.

Table 3 shows state agency policies in the four areas discussed above.

TABLE 3

Certification Policies and Practices: Physical Presence Exemptions, Prenatal Presumptive Eligibility, Income Self-Declaration, and Document Retention

Legend:

INC = Income

DIS = Discard/Do not keep copies

ELE = Electronic copies

ETR = Either paper or electronic

OTH = Other

-- = Information not available

	Does the state exempt infants and children of working parents from the physical presence at certification requirement?	Does the state allow prenatal applicants to be certified as presumptively eligible for up to 60 days?	Does the state allow infant adjunctive eligibility without additional income documentation based on parent enrollment in Medicaid or SNAP or family enrollment in TANF?	If yes, which program(s): MED, SNAP, and/or TANF?	Does the state require a third-party statement for zero-income households?	Does the state provide direction about keeping copies of residence, identity, and/or income documents?	If yes, what type of document must be retained? ¹
Alabama	No	No	Yes	MED, SNAP, TANF	No	No	
Alaska	Yes	Yes	Yes	MED, SNAP, TANF	No	Yes	INC
Arizona	Yes	Yes	Yes	TANF	No	Yes	DIS
Arkansas	No	Yes	Yes	MED, SNAP, TANF	Yes	Yes	DIS
California	Yes	No	Yes	MED, TANF	No	Yes	ELE
Colorado	Yes	No	Yes	MED	No	Yes	DIS
Connecticut	Yes	Yes	Yes	MED, SNAP, TANF	No	Yes	DIS
Delaware	Yes	No	Yes	MED, SNAP	No	Yes	INC

District of Columbia	No	Yes	Yes	MED, SNAP, TANF	No	Yes	DIS
Florida	No	No	Yes	MED	No	Yes	OTH
Georgia²	Yes	Yes	Yes ³	MED, SNAP, TANF ³	No	Yes	INC, ETR
Hawai'i	Yes	Yes	Yes	MED, SNAP, TANF	Yes	Yes	DIS
Idaho	Yes	No	Yes	MED, TANF	No	Yes	DIS
Illinois	Yes	No	Yes	MED, SNAP	No	Yes	OTH
Indiana²	No	No	--	--	No	Yes	DIS
Iowa	Yes	No	Yes	MED, SNAP	No	Yes	OTH
Kansas	No	Yes	Yes	MED, TANF	No	No	
Kentucky	Yes	Yes	Yes	MED, SNAP, TANF	No	No	
Louisiana	No	Yes – for 30 days	Yes	MED, SNAP	Yes	Yes	DIS
Maine	Yes	Yes – for 30 days	Yes	MED, SNAP, TANF	No	Yes	ELE
Maryland	Yes	No	Yes	MED, SNAP, TANF	Yes	Yes	ETR
Massachusetts	No	Yes	Yes	MED, SNAP, TANF	Yes	Yes	ETR
Michigan	Yes	Yes	Yes	MED	No	Yes	ELE
Minnesota	Yes	No	Yes	MED, SNAP, TANF	No	Yes	DIS
Mississippi	No	Yes	Yes	MED, SNAP, TANF	Yes	Yes	ELE
Missouri	Yes	Yes	Yes	MED, TANF	No	No	
Montana	Yes	Yes – for 30 days	Yes	MED	No	Yes	ELE
Nebraska	No	No	No		No	Yes	DIS
Nevada	Yes	Yes	In Process	--	No	Yes	DIS
New Hampshire	Yes	Yes	Yes	MED, SNAP, TANF	No	No	
New Jersey	Yes	Yes	In process	MED (In process)	Yes	Yes	DIS
New Mexico	No	No	Yes	MED, SNAP, TANF	No	Yes	ELE

New York	Yes	Yes	Yes	MED, SNAP, TANF	No	Yes	DIS
North Carolina	Yes	Yes	Yes	MED, SNAP, TANF	No	Yes	DIS
North Dakota	Yes	No	Yes	TANF	No	Yes	DIS
Ohio	Yes	Yes	Yes	MED, SNAP, TANF	No	Yes	DIS
Oklahoma	Yes	No	Yes	MED, SNAP, TANF	No	Yes	DIS
Oregon	Yes	No	Yes	MED, SNAP, TANF	No	No	
Pennsylvania	No	Yes	Yes	MED, TANF	No	Yes	DIS
Rhode Island²	Yes	Yes	--	--	Yes	Yes	--
South Carolina	No	Yes	Yes	MED, SNAP, TANF	Yes	No	
South Dakota	Yes	No	Yes	MED, SNAP, TANF	No	Yes	INC, ELE
Tennessee	Yes	Yes	Yes	MED, SNAP, TANF	Yes	Yes	DIS
Texas	No	No	No		No	Yes	INC, ELE
Utah	Yes	Yes	Yes	SNAP, TANF	No	Yes	DIS
Vermont	Yes	Yes	Yes	MED, SNAP, TANF	No	Yes	DIS
Virginia²	No	--	Yes	MED, SNAP	Yes	Yes	INC, ELE
Washington	Yes	Yes	No		No	Yes	DIS
West Virginia	No	Yes – for 30 days	Yes	MED, SNAP	No	Yes	OTH ⁴
Wisconsin	Yes	No	Yes	MED, SNAP, TANF	No	Yes	DIS
Wyoming	Yes	No	Yes	MED	No	Yes	DIS

¹ Some state agencies require eligibility documents to be retained only when applicants are determined to be ineligible.

² Responses are from 2022 for Georgia and Rhode Island and from 2024 for Indiana and Virginia. These states did not provide updates in 2025-2026.

³ This information was obtained from the WIC state agency policy manual available online.

⁴ West Virginia permits (but does not require) copies to be retained.

Source: Information collected by CBPP from state policy documents and directly from WIC state agencies during the summers of 2021 and 2022, updated in the fall and winter of 2023-2024 and again in the winter of 2025-2026.

Digital Tools Help Eligible People Apply for and Participate in WIC

Prior to 2020, only a limited array of interactive digital tools were available to help families apply for WIC. While WIC state agencies included information about eligibility requirements and WIC clinic locations on their websites, most lacked an online option for families to request services or apply for the program. Some local WIC agencies developed online WIC requests or application forms, but these were not available to families statewide. USDA maintained an online eligibility screening tool and many state websites linked to it, but it did not retain applicant information and thus was not useful for follow-up with potential applicants or for eligibility determinations.

As WIC state agencies implemented electronic cards for food benefits in the years preceding the 2020 deadline established under federal law, many began offering downloadable apps to provide participants with information about food benefit balances and shopping assistance. In a few states, the app also shared information about upcoming appointments and links to nutrition education and other resources.

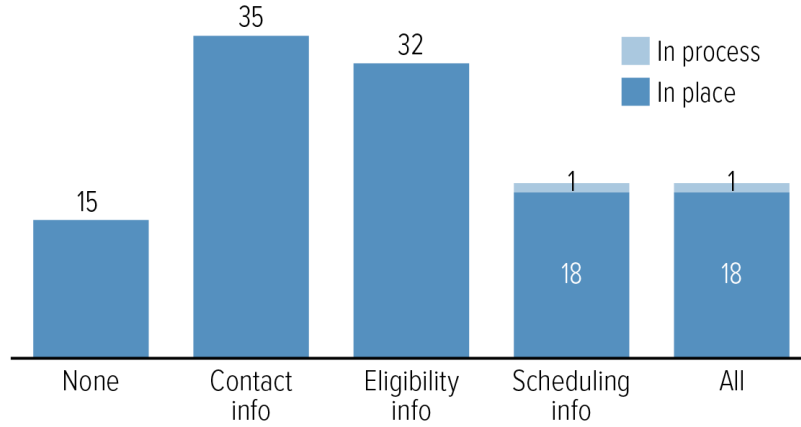
Over the past five years, state WIC agencies have expanded both the number of digital tools available and the functionality of the tools they offer.²⁹ Experience with virtual services during the pandemic likely made WIC staff and participants more comfortable using digital tools, and WIC state agencies have made technology tools part of their modernization efforts.

Table 4 summarizes the applicant and participant tools available in the 50 geographic states and District of Columbia. CBPP compiled the information by scanning state WIC agency websites and apps, then obtaining state agency reviews and updates.³⁰ CBPP gathered information on three types of digital tools: tools to initiate the application process, tools that help participants maintain household information or redeem their WIC food benefits at grocery stores, and tools that help manage appointments. For each type of tool, the table notes whether it is provided through a web-based portal or a downloadable app.

Thirty-six state agencies have digital tools available for WIC applicants. (See Figure 3 and Table 4.) Nearly all of these tools collect contact information, and most also gather some of the information needed for an eligibility determination, such as birth date, pregnant/postpartum status, participation in Medicaid or SNAP or TANF, or income. Nineteen states collect information used to schedule appointments, such as best day of week or time of day.

FIGURE 3

States With Digital Tools to Initiate WIC Applications



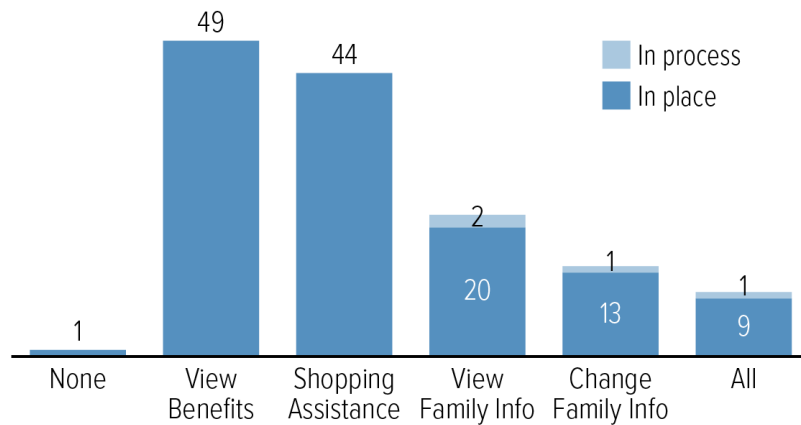
Source: Information collected from states by CBPP in winter 2025-26

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For WIC *participants*, 48 states have apps and 20 states have portals providing access to specific functions. (See Figure 4 and Table 4.) Most apps and portals enable participants to view information about food benefits and upcoming appointments. Also, almost half of apps and portals show family information such as enrolled family members, address, and phone number, and two states are adding this feature. Thirteen states have apps or portals that allow participants to *change* certain family information, and one other state is adding this function to its portal.

FIGURE 4

States With Digital Tools for WIC Participants



Source: Information collected from states by CBPP in winter 2025-26

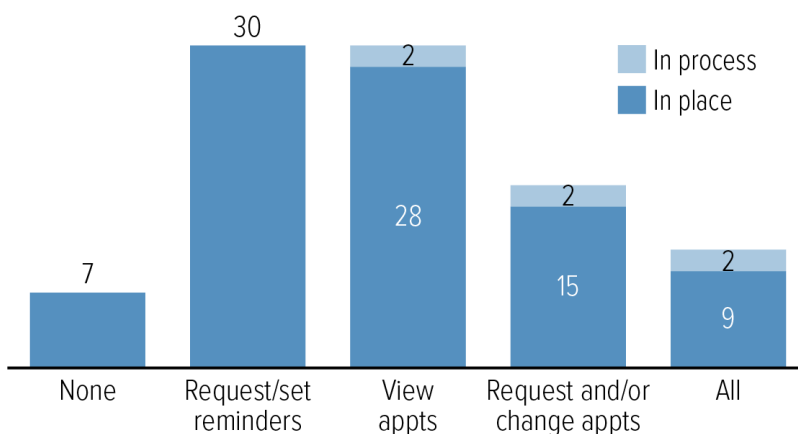
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Digital tools also help participants manage their WIC appointments. (See Figure 5 and Table 4.) In 30 states, participants can use an app or portal to request an appointment reminder. In 28 states, participants can use it to view their upcoming appointments, with two more states adding this feature. Appointment reminders are usually sent via text message or app notifications.

Participants in 15 states can request and/or change appointments through the app or portal or another digital tool; two more states are adding this functionality. Scheduling is an app feature that participants surveyed in 2025 indicated would be a desirable change in the states that do not currently offer it.³¹ In states that offer scheduling through a digital tool, participants surveyed who are people of color were more likely to use digital tools for scheduling than white participants surveyed.³²

FIGURE 5

States With Digital Tools to Manage WIC Appointments



Note: Information unavailable for three states.

Source: Information collected from states by CBPP in winter 2025-26

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TABLE 4

Digital Tools for WIC Applicants and Participants

Legend:

- A = Tool is accessible on an app
- P = Tool is accessible on a portal
- O = Other
- = Information not available

Tools for Applicants				Tools for Participants				Tools for Managing Appointments		
	Contact Info ¹	Eligibility Info ²	Scheduling Info ³	View Benefits ⁴	Shopping Assistance ⁵	View Family Info ⁶	Change Family Info ⁷	View Appt ⁸	Request/Set Reminders ⁹	Request And/Or Change Appt ¹⁰
Alabama¹¹				A	A					
Alaska	✓	✓		A	A					
Arizona	✓	✓	✓	A	A	P		A, P	A	P
Arkansas	✓	✓		A	A			A	A	
California		✓		A	A			A		
Colorado	✓	✓		A	A				A	
Connecticut	✓	✓	In process	A, P (In process)	A	P (In process)	P (In process)	P (In process)	A	P (In process)
Delaware				A, P	A	A		A	A	P
District of Columbia	✓	✓	✓	A	A	P	P	A, P	A	P
Florida	✓	✓	✓	A, P	A, P (In process)	A, P (In process)		A, P (In process)		O (AI Assistant on website)
Georgia¹²	✓			P		P	P	--	--	--
Hawai'i	✓	✓	✓	A	A			A	A	
Idaho	✓	✓		A	A					O (2 way texting program)
Illinois	✓	✓			A					
Indiana¹²	✓			A, P	A			--	--	--

TABLE 4

Digital Tools for WIC Applicants and Participants

Legend:

- A = Tool is accessible on an app
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- O = Other
- = Information not available

	Tools for Applicants			Tools for Participants				Tools for Managing Appointments		
	Contact Info ¹	Eligibility Info ²	Scheduling Info ³	View Benefits ⁴	Shopping Assistance ⁵	View Family Info ⁶	Change Family Info ⁷	View Appt ⁸	Request/Set Reminders ⁹	Request And/Or Change Appt ¹⁰
Iowa	✓	✓		A, P	A				A	
Kansas	✓	✓	✓	A	A			A	A	
Kentucky	✓			A	A					
Louisiana	✓	✓		A		A	A	A		
Maine				A	A				A	
Maryland				A, P	A	A, P	P	A, P		P
Massachusetts	✓	✓	✓	A	A			A	A	
Michigan	✓	✓	✓	A, P	A	A, P	A, P	A, P		A, P
Minnesota	✓	✓	✓	A	A	A		A	A	A
Mississippi				A	A				A	
Missouri	✓			A	A	A		A	A	
Montana				A, P (In process)	A, P (In process)	P (In process)		P (In process)	A	P (In process)
Nebraska				A	A	P	P	P	P	P
Nevada				A	A				A	
New Hampshire	✓	✓	✓	A	A			A	A	
New Jersey	✓	✓		A	A	P	P	A	A	

TABLE 4

Digital Tools for WIC Applicants and Participants

Legend:

A = Tool is accessible on an app

P = Tool is accessible on a portal

O = Other

-- = Information not available

	Tools for Applicants			Tools for Participants				Tools for Managing Appointments		
	Contact Info ¹	Eligibility Info ²	Scheduling Info ³	View Benefits ⁴	Shopping Assistance ⁵	View Family Info ⁶	Change Family Info ⁷	View Appt ⁸	Request/Set Reminders ⁹	Request And/Or Change Appt ¹⁰
New Mexico	✓	✓		A	A	A	A	A	A	A
New York	✓	✓		A, P	A			A		
North Carolina	✓	✓		A, P		P	A, P	P		P
North Dakota										
Ohio				A				A		
Oklahoma	✓	✓		A	A					
Oregon	✓			A	A				A	
Pennsylvania	✓	✓	✓	A, P	A	P	P	P	A	P
Rhode Island¹²				A	A				A	
South Carolina	✓	✓	✓	A	A			A	A	
South Dakota				A	A	A				
Tennessee				A	A			A	A	
Texas	✓	✓	✓	A		A	A	A	A	A
Utah	✓	✓	✓	A, P	A				A	

TABLE 4

Digital Tools for WIC Applicants and Participants

Legend:

- A = Tool is accessible on an app
- P = Tool is accessible on a portal
- O = Other
- = Information not available

	Tools for Applicants			Tools for Participants				Tools for Managing Appointments		
	Contact Info ¹	Eligibility Info ²	Scheduling Info ³	View Benefits ⁴	Shopping Assistance ⁵	View Family Info ⁶	Change Family Info ⁷	View Appt ⁸	Request/Set Reminders ⁹	Request And/Or Change Appt ¹⁰
Vermont	✓	✓	✓	A, P	A				A	
Virginia¹²	✓	✓	✓	P				--	--	--
Washington	✓	✓		A	A				A	
West Virginia	✓	✓	✓	A, P	A	A, P	P	A, P	A, P	P
Wisconsin	✓	✓	✓	A	A	A, P	A, P	A		
Wyoming	✓	✓	✓	A, P	A	P		P		P

¹ Contact Info: information needed to contact the family, such as name, phone number, address, or email address.

² Eligibility Info: information needed to determine eligibility, such as birth date, pregnant/postpartum status, Medicaid/SNAP/TANF participation, or income.

³ Scheduling Info: information to assist with scheduling an appointment, such as best day of week or time of day.

⁴ View Benefits: view information about food benefits available on EBT card.

⁵ Shopping Assistance: view information or resources to assist with shopping, such as WIC-authorized stores, allowable foods, or product barcode scanner.

⁶ View Family Info: view family information provided to WIC, such as address, phone number, email address, or family members.

⁷ Change Family Info: change or update information provided to WIC, such as address, phone number, email address, or family members.

⁸ View Appt: view upcoming WIC appointments.

⁹ Request/Set Reminders: make a request for reminders or set reminders for upcoming WIC appointments.

¹⁰ Request or Change Appt: request a new appointment or reschedule an upcoming appointment and/or self-schedule an appointment.

¹¹ Alabama is planning to develop a participant portal. The specific features have not been determined, but the intent is to provide a resource for checking eligibility, making appointments, uploading documents, and other functions.

¹² Information was obtained through review of WIC state agency websites and was not confirmed or updated by the state agency.

Source: Information collected by CBPP from state websites and directly from WIC state agencies in the winter of 2025-2026.

Digital tools that collect applicant information and allow participants to access and update information and manage appointments make it easier to apply for and participate in WIC. They can also reduce staff time spent on administrative activities. By adopting digital tools, state and local WIC agencies may be able to increase enrollment and retention of the many eligible families who are not participating in WIC.

Resources to Assist WIC State Agencies With Planning and Implementing Digital Technology

- USDA, "WIC Online Application Toolkit," 2025, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/application-toolkit>.
- Summer J. Weber *et al.*, "Prioritization of Features for Mobile Apps for families in a Federal Nutrition Program for Low-income Women, Infants and Children: User Centered Design Approach," 2021, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8367138/>.
- Lauren Ciferri *et al.*, "Toolkit: How to Implement a WIC Participant Recertification Portal," Nava, 2023, <https://www.navapbc.com/toolkits/implement-wic-participant-recertification-portal>.
- Hilary Dockray *et al.*, "Launching New Digital Tools for WIC Participants, A Guide for WIC Agencies," CBPP, 2019, <https://www.cbpp.org/wicparticipanttechnology>.

Conclusion

State and local WIC agencies have flexibility under federal rules to adjust their policies and practices to remove barriers to enrollment, which can help them reach more eligible families with low incomes and use staff time more efficiently and effectively. The policies compiled here demonstrate that WIC administrators have made widespread use of these flexibilities.

Federal policymakers can take further steps to improve access to WIC. For example, they should make telephone and video certification appointments a permanent feature of WIC. They also should provide additional flexibilities that allow states to streamline and modernize the certification process to help more eligible families with low incomes enroll – especially earlier in pregnancy – and remain enrolled as infants become toddlers and preschoolers.

Even apart from further federal changes, states can reach more eligible families by adopting the streamlining policies described in this report, especially those that are far from universal. Examples include determining income and/or residence eligibility in advance of the certification appointment, allowing presumptive eligibility for prenatal applicants, allowing temporary 30-day certifications, and eliminating the requirement that zero-income households provide a third-party statement.

States also should expand use of digital tools, which make it easier for eligible families to enroll and participate in WIC for as long as they are eligible, while freeing up staff time to focus on providing WIC's rich array of services. States should employ additional digital tools to help participants accomplish routine tasks like scheduling appointments without having to call a WIC clinic during business hours.

Modernizing WIC through more flexible policies and convenient tools will help states enroll more eligible families, putting children on a healthier course for life.

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- ¹ For more information about the research evidence on WIC's effectiveness, see Steven Carlson, Joseph Llobrera, and Zoë Neuberger, "WIC Works: A Cost-Effective Investment in Improving Low-Income Families' Nutrition and Health," CBPP, updated January 20, 2026, www.cbpp.org/wicworks; U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service, "Reviewing the Evidence for Maternal Health and WIC," July 2021, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/reviewing-evidence-maternal-health-and-wic>; and Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, "Maternal and Childhood Outcomes Associated with the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)," amended May 14, 2021, <https://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/products/outcomes-nutrition/protocol>.
- ² Courtenay Kessler *et al.*, "National- and State-level estimates of WIC eligibility and WIC program reach in 2023," USDA, December 2025, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/research/wic/eer/2023>.
- ³ American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, P.L. 117-2, Sec. 1106, 135 Stat. 17.
- ⁴ See USDA, "WIC Policy Memorandum #2023-6: Streamlining Certification – Documentation Guidance," May 10, 2023, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/streamlining-certification-documentation-guidance>.
- ⁵ Linnea Sallack, an independent consultant formerly with the Altarum Institute and the California WIC program, helped compile and summarize state responses.
- ⁶ Pregnant participants are certified until about six weeks after the end of the pregnancy; postpartum participants who are not breastfeeding are certified for about six months after the end of the pregnancy. See 7 C.F.R. §246.7(g).
- ⁷ Zoë Neuberger, "Modernizing and Streamlining WIC Eligibility Determination and Enrollment Processes," CBPP, January 6, 2017, www.cbpp.org/wicstreamlining.
- ⁸ Recipients of other TANF-funded benefits or services are not adjunctively income-eligible for WIC. See 7 C.F.R. §246.7(d)(2)(vi)(A)(2). State agencies are also permitted to accept documentation of participation in other state-administered programs that routinely document income and have income eligibility limits at or below WIC's. See 7 C.F.R. §246.7(d)(2)(vi)(B).
- ⁹ In 2022, 80 percent of WIC applicants participated in Medicaid, SNAP, or TANF. See Polina Zvavitch *et al.*, "WIC Participant and Program Characteristics 2022," FNS, February 2024, Table 4.1, <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/wic-ppc-2022-report.pdf>.
- ¹⁰ Kessler *et al.*, *op. cit.*, Chapter 5.
- ¹¹ Sonya Schwartz *et al.*, "State Medicaid Agencies Can Partner with WIC Agencies to Improve the Health of Pregnant and Postpartum People, Infants, and Young Children," CBPP, December 20, 2023, www.cbpp.org/medicaidwicopportunities.
- ¹² See 7 CFR §246.7(d)(2)(v).
- ¹³ Danielle L. Lee *et al.*, "2025 Multi-State WIC Participant Satisfaction Survey," National WIC Association, May 2026, <https://media.nwica.org/2025%20msspss%20report.pdf>. Though the WIC agencies included in the sample come from all USDA administrative regions, the survey sample is not nationally representative. Also, the authors averaged responses by state before averaging across all 27 agencies to avoid overrepresenting states with larger sample sizes.

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- ¹⁴ Danielle L. Lee *et al.*, “Multi-State WIC Participant Satisfaction Survey,” National WIC Association, February 2024, <https://media.nwica.org/2023%20multistate%20wic%20survey%201.pdf>.
- ¹⁵ Zoë Neuberger, “WIC Case Study: Maricopa County, Arizona,” CBPP, updated June 2021, <https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/8-30-19fa-casestudies-maricopa-county.pdf>.
- ¹⁶ For example, after Colorado conducted training on an existing policy allowing the use of electronic documents for certification, the share of temporary certifications made permanent with electronic documents rose from 43 percent to 65 percent. Zoë Neuberger, “WIC Case Study: Colorado,” CBPP, August 30, 2019, <https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/8-30-19fa-casestudies-colorado.pdf>.
- ¹⁷ See 7 CFR §246.7 (o)(2).
- ¹⁸ Lee *et al.* (2026), *op. cit.*
- ¹⁹ Lorrene Ritchie *et al.*, “Multi-state WIC Participant Satisfaction Survey: Learning From Program Adaptations During COVID,” National WIC Association, December 2021, [nwamulti-state-wic-participant-satisfaction-survey-national-report-final.pdf](https://www.nwica.org/multi-state-wic-participant-satisfaction-survey-national-report-final.pdf).
- ²⁰ Schwartz *et al.*, *op. cit.*, see “Strengthening Referrals” section at <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/state-medicare-agencies-can-partner-with-wic-agencies-to-improve-the#strengthening-referrals-cbpp-anchor>.
- ²¹ Carlson *et al.*, *op. cit.*, see box on “Benefits of Early and Sustained Enrollment in WIC” at <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/wic-works-a-cost-effective-investment-in-improving-low-income-families-0#benefits-of-early-and-sustained-cbpp-anchor>.
- ²² Zvavitch *et al.*, *op. cit.*, Table 3.3.
- ²³ Under federal rules, the WIC agency must require the applicant to sign a statement specifying why they cannot provide documentation of income. See 7 C.F.R. § 246.7(d)(2)(v)(C).
- ²⁴ Unlike applicants who have income but no documentation of it, applicants with no income are not required to sign a statement specifying why they cannot provide documentation of income. See 7 C.F.R. § 246.7(d)(2)(v)(C).
- ²⁵ See Debra Whitford, “WIC Policy Memorandum #2013-3: Income Eligibility Guidance,” USDA, April 26, 2013, https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/guidance-documents/fns.wic-2013-3_Income_Elig_Guidance.pdf.
- ²⁶ See 7 C.F.R. § 246.7(d)(2)(v)(D).
- ²⁷ Ben Ward and Mia Monokovic, “Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2024,” USDA, May 2026, Table A.1, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/research/snap/characteristics-fy24>.
- ²⁸ Joseph Llobrera and Luis Nuñez, “Nearly 2 Million Young Children in the U.S. Lived in Food-Insecure Households in 2023,” CBPP, September 15, 2025, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/nearly-2-million-young-children-in-the-us-lived-in-food-insecure>.
- ²⁹ See Nava Public Benefit Corporation and the National WIC Association, “Supporting WIC Enrollment – Using technology to improve the certification experience for participants and WIC agencies,” October 20, 2020, https://media.nwica.org/wic-technology-landscape-_-final-report-design.pdf and “2023 WIC Technology Landscape Report—Using technology to improve the enrollment and certification experience for participants and WIC agencies,” April 2023, <https://media.nwica.org/2023%20wic%20tech%20report%204.5.23.pdf>.
- ³⁰ For the WIC state agencies that did not respond to a request to review the information, Table 4 includes tools found on their websites.

³¹ Lee *et al.* (2026), *op cit.*

³² *Ibid.*, Table 2. Participants surveyed who are people of color includes people who indicated they are American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Middle Eastern or North African, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, Other, or more than one.