



Coordinating SNAP and Nutrition Supports to Reduce Child Hunger



Kansas Spotlight: *Forming Connections Between SNAP and WIC to Tackle Food Insecurity*

Together, the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) and Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) are working to design and build a sustainable process to improve cross-enrollment for families eligible for both the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

By the end of the grant period, data matches between SNAP and WIC—as well as targeted outreach—will be integrated within the ongoing business processes of the agencies to help streamline the experience of accessing nutrition supports for clients. These functions will contribute to the agencies’ shared goal of reducing rates of food insecurity in Kansas. The project will allow DCF and KDHE to:

Increase Participation in SNAP and WIC Through Targeted Outreach

Automated data matching will help the agencies identify SNAP recipients who are likely eligible for WIC, and vice versa. The agencies will then send families information about the program they are likely eligible for and instructions on how to apply.

Track Applications

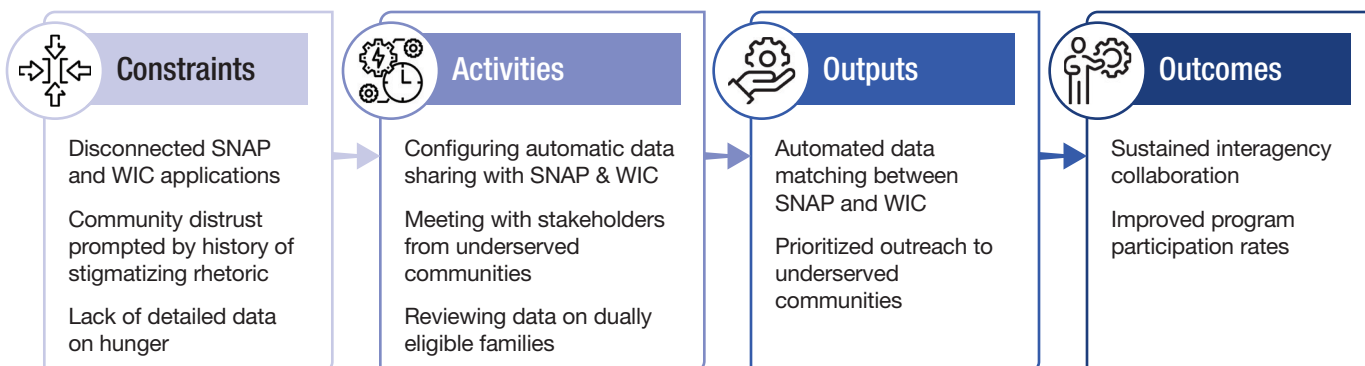
DCF and KDHE will track tailored outreach from referral to successful enrollment on a regular basis to understand outcomes of SNAP and WIC data sharing.

Monitor County and Zip Code Level Data

The project team will geographically track SNAP and WIC participation rates broken down by race and ethnicity information provided by clients. These data will inform approaches to combat racial and ethnic disparities in rates of food insecurity. The agencies will focus efforts on seven counties with significant Black and Hispanic populations – Finney, Ford, Geary, Grant, Sedgwick, Seward and Wyandotte – and four federally recognized tribal areas in Kansas, Prairie Band of Potawatomi Nation, the Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska, Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska, and the Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas.

Logic Model

Purpose: Increase enrollment in SNAP and WIC.



Background and Context: *Building Off Kansas' Coordinated Approach to Enhancing Supports*

Since 2019, Kansas has taken concerted measures to improve cross-agency collaboration and provide more holistic support to families in accessing the benefits for which they qualify. Several recent actions are indicative of the state's commitment to improving benefits access and streamlining outreach, enrollment and participation requirements for families.

Building Joint Eligibility Systems

Over the past decade, continual improvements to eligibility systems have enabled DCF and KDHE to reduce barriers to access for Medicaid (including CHIP), SNAP, TANF, the Low Income Energy Assistance Program, and childcare supports.

Forming a Food Supports Working Group

A collection of state agencies and food banks has met regularly during the COVID-19 pandemic to determine how they can work together more efficiently. This group also works together to identify gaps in nutrition supports that may be contributing to higher rates of food insecurity.

Problem Identification: *Finding New Ways to Conduct Outreach to SNAP and WIC Participants*

Despite the progress made through these and other efforts, historically siloed data systems have limited the ability of DCF and KDHE to comprehensively address hunger in Kansas. In response, both agencies have set out to improve their collaboration and alleviate burdens on SNAP and WIC participants and administrators including:

Improving Referral Processes and Co-Enrollment

Despite collecting much of the same information, SNAP and WIC require separate applications. There is currently no data sharing system or formal referral process between SNAP and WIC in Kansas to support co-enrollment.

Rebuilding Outreach Capacity

Since regaining outreach capabilities after nearly a decade of not being able to conduct program outreach, DCF has been working with partner agencies like KDHE to expand outreach efforts and increase enrollment of eligible children and families in economic support programs.

Identifying Racial and Ethnic Disparities

Data on food security in Kansas has not historically been made available in an accessible format. DCF and KDHE seek to collect and analyze administrative and public data, disaggregated by race and ethnicity, to better monitor hunger trends across Kansas communities.






“ The pandemic has highlighted the continued issue of food insecurity nationally and here in Kansas,” Governor Laura Kelly said. “This new partnership with APhSA and No Kid Hungry will mean more young Kansans, especially those in the Black, Latinx and Indigenous populations, can access food assistance programs like SNAP and WIC which ultimately will mean a safer and healthier population. ”

Laura Kelly
Kansas Governor

Project Implementation Plan

DCF and KDHE are working together to coordinate more effective modes of data sharing between SNAP and WIC, with the overall goal of raising rates of enrollment in both programs.

 Plan	 Develop	 Implement
<p>Convene stakeholders from DCF, KDHE, prioritized counties, and outside vendors</p> <p>Draft agreements for eligibility system data sharing</p> <p>Revise interagency data sharing agreements</p>	<p>Configure automatic data sharing with SNAP and WIC</p> <p>Collect and analyze initial data on families who are eligible for both SNAP and WIC</p> <p>Design outreach plans for underserved communities and tribal areas</p>	<p>Start regular automated data matching</p> <p>Notify families included in data report about their probable SNAP or WIC eligibility</p> <p>Conduct monthly analyses of client engagement and monitor work in underserved communities and tribal areas</p>

Long-Term Goals: *Dispelling the Stigma Surrounding SNAP and WIC in Kansas*

Following the conclusion of their Coordinating SNAP and Nutrition Supports project, DCF and KDHE will continue to use automatic data sharing between SNAP and WIC to progressively increase participation in each program. After tracking enrollment rates throughout the grant period, preliminary findings will be disseminated to local, state, and federal SNAP and WIC stakeholders to drive further advancements in the accessibility of nutrition supports.

The Kansas project will focus on communities with significant Black, Hispanic, and Native American populations that face disparate levels of food insecurity. As part of this approach, small groups will be formed to engage stakeholders such as local government leaders, parents of young children, current and former SNAP participants, SNAP outreach partners, food policy council members, state legislators, and pediatricians. Soliciting feedback from these stakeholders will inform how DCF and KDHE address racial disparities in experiences of hunger as well as program enrollment during and after the close of this project. Over time, DCF and KDHE intend to incorporate the lived expertise of current and former clients into future system and program modifications. For example, DCF and KDHE are currently exploring the possibility of adding part-time staff with lived experience—hosted by community-based organizations—to offer education, outreach, and application assistance to individuals who may qualify for SNAP or WIC.

The success of Kansas’ efforts will be evaluated by the impact of tailored outreach on program participation. While difficult to measure, the team also hopes to leverage human-centered design to create outreach materials that effectively build community trust and reduce stigma associated with program participation. DCF and KDHE will collect data on the experiences of SNAP and WIC participants to assess how the programs can more aptly be framed as beneficial to child and family well-being. Participant feedback gathered through this project may also be used to inform and adapt practices associated with SNAP and WIC program implementation.

