



# Coordinating SNAP and Nutrition Supports to Reduce Child Hunger



## New Jersey Spotlight: *Sharing Nutrition Program Data to Raise WIC Enrollment*

The New Jersey Department of Human Services' Division of Family Development (DFD) is developing an electronic database with the Department of Health (NJDOH) that will allow agencies to identify and conduct outreach to families receiving the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) who are eligible for but not currently receiving the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and vice versa. The following project activities are in service of New Jersey's vision for better coordination across nutrition supports.

### Build a Database of SNAP and WIC Program Participants

New Jersey's new database will, for the first time, centralize information on state nutrition assistance programs. Eligibility workers will be able to retrieve data on SNAP and WIC program participation from the database, improving case processing efficiency. The database will also be used by state agency leaders to inform strategic planning and outreach efforts.

### Analyze Existing Participation Gaps

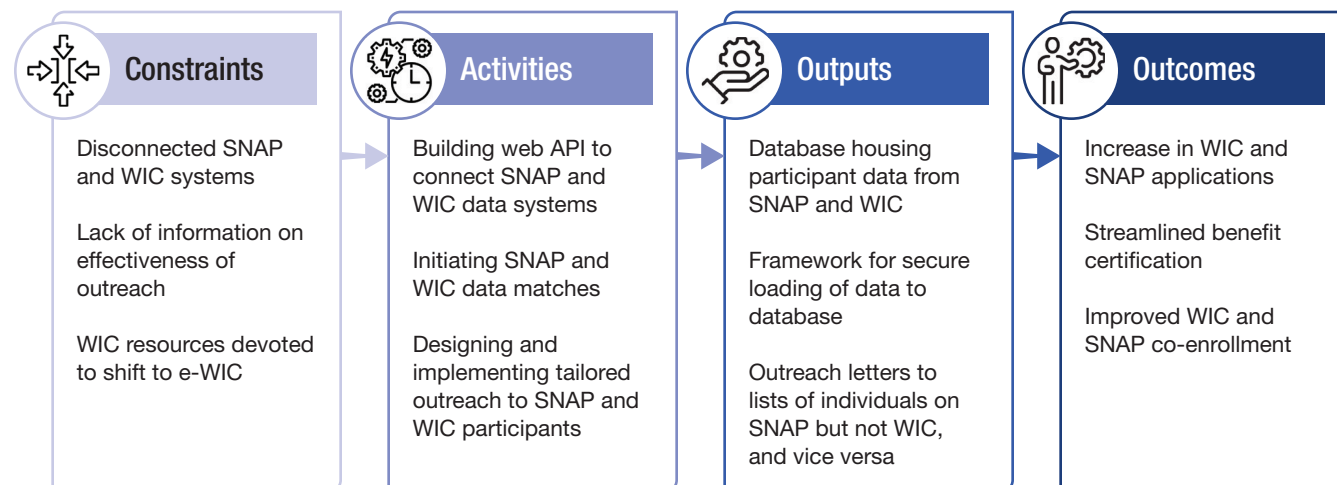
After learning more about the demographic characteristics of SNAP participants who are eligible for, but not enrolled in WIC, and those enrolled in WIC but not SNAP, DFD will be better able to identify populations facing barriers to access, and tailor support to them accordingly.

### Increase Access to WIC and SNAP

Once participant information is matched across SNAP and WIC, DFD will be able to identify families who are potentially eligible for WIC or SNAP and notify them about how to apply for the benefit that they are not currently receiving.

## Logic Model

*Purpose:* To increase co-enrollment for families that are dually eligible for SNAP and WIC.



## Background and Context: *Building On New Jersey's Food Security Initiatives*

The New Jersey Legislature recently passed Senate Bill 3945, which would establish a new Office of Food Insecurity Advocate to oversee food aid programs that are currently administered across several state agencies. In addition, New Jersey's project builds on recent progress toward modernizing benefits access in the state, including:

### WIC Modernization

New Jersey WIC is carrying out modernization efforts including the launch of a Participant Portal that new applicants can use to check eligibility, enter information, and securely upload documents. The portal sends client information to their chosen clinic, which is then received by a WIC staff person who follows up with applicants. This streamlines the certification process by making client information available to staff at the first point of contact. The Participant Portal can also be used by existing WIC participants to view upcoming appointments and update information or documents.

### Improving Eligibility Determination System

New Jersey was granted two SNAP Fraud Framework Implementation Grants and two Process and Technology Improvement Grants (PTIG) that supported the development of the state's current eligibility system.

## Problem Identification: *Overcoming Technical and Financial Obstacles to Reduce Hunger in New Jersey*

Despite progress made through ongoing efforts, siloed program operations and barriers to conducting tailored outreach have limited DFD's ability to combat food insecurity in New Jersey. Past attempts to strengthen coordination between SNAP and WIC have been complicated by the fact that New Jersey is a state-supervised county-administered SNAP program and WIC is administered by local offices. Other challenges include:

### Sharing Information Between SNAP and WIC

Like many other states, New Jersey uses data systems to administer SNAP and WIC that were not designed to communicate with each other, posing barriers to co-enrollment for families eligible for both nutrition programs.

### Data-Informed Outreach

To date, DFD has not evaluated the efficacy of different contact methods like letters, emails, or texts. The division has also been developing plans to build out their online application and client portal to include text messaging functionality that could benefit from evaluations of outreach methodologies.

### Limited Bandwidth of WIC program

New Jersey's WIC agency has been focused on transitioning to eWIC to allow residents to shop with EBT cards instead of WIC vouchers. This has been a large undertaking and consumed much of the WIC agency's recent attention.






“ Our plan to facilitate electronic data exchanges between the New Jersey SNAP and WIC programs will help identify individuals and households that are not receiving benefits despite likely being eligible for them, allowing us to also use this information to verify eligibility for other benefits. Strategic partnerships such as this one represent a big step toward ensuring no child will go hungry. ”

*Sarah Adelman*  
Acting Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Human Services

## Project Implementation Plan

To address these challenges, DFD will develop a data sharing framework that automatically generates outreach lists to facilitate cross-enrollment for SNAP and WIC participants while monitoring their engagement with each program. This approach will gradually increase rates of WIC and SNAP co-enrollment in New Jersey.

 Plan	 Develop	 Implement
<p>Convene stakeholders from DFD, DOH, and contracted vendors</p> <p>Conduct technical design sessions</p> <p>Configure changes to SNAP and WIC data systems</p>	<p>Build database to house both SNAP and WIC information</p> <p>Initiate SNAP and WIC data matches and outreach</p> <p>Develop web API to streamline WIC eligibility determinations</p>	<p>Launch data exchange between SNAP and WIC to streamline case management</p> <p>Analyze participation gaps</p> <p>Release WIC web API</p>

## Long-Term Goals: *Reducing Barriers to Access and Prioritizing Equity Through Outreach*

After the conclusion of their Coordinating SNAP and Nutrition Supports project, DFD hopes to use an existing Process and Technology Improvement Grant to revamp its multi-benefit online application portal, New Jersey OneApp, and begin tracking duration from outreach to application for SNAP. Among other changes, one of New Jersey’s aspirations is to provide unique key codes in referral notices that would allow potential clients applying for SNAP to use pre-populated forms with any identifying information that DFD already has on file. Streamlining application processes in this way furthers DFD's vision of removing structural barriers to nutrition support access for New Jersey families.



DFD will analyze SNAP and WIC participation gaps regularly to inform how the agency tailors outreach to the needs of individuals and families experiencing financial hardship and hunger. Over time, testing and investing in a more sophisticated data infrastructure will offer New Jersey agencies increasingly thorough information about the clients they serve. This will not only help streamline enrollment processes, but also enable divisions like DFD to pursue more dignified, human-centered approaches to customer service and incremental refinements to outreach strategies.

Altogether, the success of New Jersey’s Coordinating SNAP and Nutrition Supports project will be measured by the creation of a functioning database of SNAP and WIC participants and the efficacy of subsequent WIC and SNAP outreach. Accurately identifying and reaching out to all SNAP households who are also eligible for WIC – and WIC participants who are eligible for SNAP – will enable DFD to increase the number of WIC and SNAP applications it receives over time and allow New Jersey to reach more eligible children and enroll individuals and families in both programs at higher rates.



For more information, please contact:  
 Jessica Maneely, Senior Policy Analyst, Technology and Analytics  
 jmaneely@aphsa.org | (571) 447-3511

American Public Human Services Association  
 1300 17th Street North, Suite 340, Arlington, VA 22209  
 (202) 682-0100 | www.APHSA.org