

# Coordinating SNAP and Nutrition Supports (CSNS) Impact Report:

# Kansas

September 2023



## Background & Context

The Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) were selected to participate in the first Coordinating SNAP and Nutrition Supports Cohort because of their multi-pronged, process-driven, sustainable approach to eliminating agency silos and increasing participation in both the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). Over the course of this project, DCF and KDHE collaborated closely to develop automatic data sharing between SNAP and WIC to identify eligible but unenrolled individuals and executed targeted outreach campaigns. The project team also centered the community by employing a Family Benefit Navigator – an individual with lived expertise supporting education, outreach, and application assistance for families and individuals navigating the benefits system.

## Project Description

This project focused on seven Kansas counties: Finney, Ford, Geary, Grant, Sedgwick, Seward, and Wyandotte. Over the duration of their CSNS project, the Kansas team focused on building collaborative cross-agency processes and providing outreach and support to people accessing nutrition services, with the goal of increasing the number of eligible SNAP and WIC participants enrolled across Kansas. During the project period, DCF and KDHE developed a plan and platform to share client information between agencies. This enabled agency staff to identify people who were enrolled in one program and eligible for, but not enrolled in, the other. The agencies collaborated with Accenture to develop and deploy a multi-step, multi-media outreach campaign to reach out to SNAP clients not participating in the WIC program, and vice versa. The Kansas team deepened the impact of their project by employing a Family Benefit Navigator with lived expertise who provided tailored support to families and individuals accessing nutrition services in Geary County, where a large military base is located. The project team decided to deploy a Family Benefit Navigator to Geary County where the population faces outsized process-related challenges in accessing and maintaining benefits to compliment the higher-level, data-driven client outreach enabled by their newly developed platform and outreach campaign.

## Logic Model

<p><b>Objectives</b></p> <p>Develop sustainable data sharing practices between agencies and improve outreach and enrollment strategies to increase the number of participants co-enrolled in the SNAP and WIC programs.</p>			
<p><b>Inputs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family Benefit Navigator</li> <li>• Data sharing agreement between DCF and KDHE</li> </ul>	<p><b>Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided tailored support to families and individuals accessing nutrition supports</li> <li>• Created an automated data sharing platform between SNAP and WIC</li> <li>• Targeted outreach through marketing campaigns</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outputs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community-centered outreach and enrollment practices</li> <li>• Automated data matching between SNAP and WIC</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased rates of participation in SNAP and WIC</li> <li>• Improved interagency collaboration</li> </ul>
<p><b>Impact</b></p> <p>Reduced food insecurity in Kansas through community-supported outreach and enrollment in SNAP and WIC.</p>			

## Project Approach

The first phase of the project centered around planning the logistics of executing a data sharing agreement between DCF and KDHE, including discovery of what the data sharing model would look like and solidifying a contract with Accenture to develop the data-sharing system now known as the “data lake.” This level of planning and collaboration allowed the agencies to break down pre-existing silos while working to develop sustainable initiatives that continuously cultivate their partnership.

Conversations with Accenture began early on to discuss the process of drawing information from the KEES system (DCF, SNAP) and the C-Quest system (KDHE, WIC) to house information and identify clients that are enrolled in and eligible for additional nutrition supports. The data lake pulls information from the KEES and C-Quest systems and stores the information in an alternate area that can match and extract client information for outreach purposes.

Accenture volunteered their marketing department to assist in the development and deployment of two 12-week outreach campaigns for both SNAP and WIC, geared towards SNAP participants that are not receiving WIC and vice versa. The outreach campaigns used client information from the data lake, allowing DCF and KDHE to target underserved populations. The campaign was designed to reach underserved communities in the seven priority counties: Finney, Ford, Geary, Grant, Sedgwick, Seward, and Wyandotte.

The campaign utilized email, text messaging, printed materials, and social media specific to clients in underserved areas. Additionally, campaign data was collected that highlighted which outreach sources, images, and languages had the greatest outcomes, providing additional insight into the communities being served and how to best reach them. The campaign data also showed that the targeted communities responded well to the outreach campaign and accessed the landing pages developed by Accenture, assessing their family's eligibility for SNAP and/or making an appointment for WIC.



To better meet the needs of participants, in June 2022, the Kansas team employed a Family Benefit Navigator, a contracted position of an individual with lived expertise through Delivering Change, to support families and individuals accessing nutrition services. The Family Benefit Navigator provides education, outreach, and application assistance to families and individuals who may be eligible for SNAP and WIC. They also attend local community events, rotating locations to meet participants where they are, and work to ensure that clients feel confident in applying for and navigating the benefits they are receiving. The Family Benefit Navigator also refers community members to other programs outside of SNAP and WIC that are available throughout the state, depending on the needs of the family.

## Results

Thousands of WIC participants that are not receiving SNAP benefits were reached through data matching between agencies and the outreach that followed. Outreach campaign data showed that the email open and click-through rates were especially high in Asian, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, and American Indian communities.

### **Number of WIC participants who received SNAP information through the outreach campaign:**

- 6,829 households reached through email
- 10,390 households reached through text messaging
- 9,782 households reached through printed mailings
- Printed mailings had the greatest impact, producing the highest engagement rate, 63%, on the landing page site.

**Number of new SNAP applications from WIC participants who received SNAP information through outreach campaign:**

- 135 SNAP applications have been linked back to households that were targeted in the seven priority counties.
- 57 of the 135 applicants were enrolled in SNAP.

**Number of SNAP participants who received WIC information through outreach campaign:**

- 4,998 households reached through email
- 6,543 households reached through text messaging.
- Text messaging generated the most activity on the landing page site; 60% of visitors could be linked back to text message outreach

**Number of new WIC applications from SNAP participants who received information through outreach campaign:**

- 36% of households enrolled in WIC over the six-month period reside in one of the seven targeted counties with weekly program enrollments spiking just three weeks after the campaign launched.
- 45 WIC enrollments were generated from the landing page site.

The Family Benefit Navigator attended community events to provide application assistance and WIC referrals in Geary County and the surrounding area. This proved to be an effective model.

**Number of new (SNAP and WIC) applications completed with the assistance of Delivering Change's Family Benefit Navigator:**

- Between August - December 2022, there were 143 individuals informed about SNAP.
- 66 were assisted with SNAP applications
- 25 were approved for a total benefits amount of \$3,659
- Between June 2022 – January 2023 117 WIC referrals were made
  - 72 WIC referrals were completed
  - 37 enrolled in WIC

## Lessons Learned

- ✓ **Executing a data sharing agreement requires a significant time investment and should be initiated as early as possible.**

Kansas' project had multiple components and partners, requiring up-front coordination. Talks between DCF, KDHE, and Accenture began early on to develop the data lake and to discuss outreach strategies. However, although data sharing agreements were ultimately executed, it would have been beneficial to have them in place at the onset of the project. The administrative process of executing data sharing agreements took longer than anticipated.

- ✓ **Targeted outreach campaigns can be a useful tool for two-way learning between agencies and the community.**

The SNAP and WIC 12-week outreach campaigns had substantial effects on the counties that were targeted, and education and promotion of the two programs was well received by the targeted communities. Wording and images used in the campaigns were intentional and carefully crafted to appeal to the targeted populations, allowing them to gain knowledge and insight, and be a strong draw to enroll in programs. Additionally, the outreach campaigns allowed the agencies to gain insight into the communities being served and were able to understand which methods of outreach have the greatest impact.

- ✓ **Creating a shared data repository across partners can significantly increase the knowledge of both parties with data that already exists.**

The data lake provides both agencies with a significant amount of data and knowledge that can be used to better serve families and individuals accessing nutrition supports.

- ✓ **Hiring individuals with lived expertise deepens the impact of community outreach and engagement and enhances states' ability to do community-driven work.**

The Family Benefits Navigator has been a tremendous asset to the community of Geary County and the surrounding areas. Providing tailored support has allowed both agencies to have more accountability and draw on lessons learned to better serve participants.

## Sustainability & Improvement

- The Family Benefits Navigator will remain in their position at Delivering Change in Geary County and will continue to rotate through community events to provide application and enrollment assistance in Geary County and the surrounding area. Additionally, the Family Benefit Navigator will continue to produce reports for both DCF and KDHE that capture information and metrics for the communities being served.
- The data lake has been key to this project's success and is a sustainable initiative that will benefit both agencies for years to come. Not only will the data lake help facilitate continued interagency collaboration, it will also allow both agencies to continuously pull data to provide targeted outreach to underserved and priority communities.
- The targeted outreach campaigns have been successful and will continue. Specifically, both DCF and KDHE will engage in a statewide flyer distribution campaign led by both SNAP and WIC eligibility workers.

### Key Takeaways

- Community engagement and support led by individuals with lived expertise results in greater knowledge of and access to nutrition programs for underserved communities.
- Interagency collaboration, data sharing, and careful, intentional planning is crucial to project and ongoing success.
- Targeted outreach through data matching and outreach campaigns provides the greatest opportunity to reach underserved communities.

### Project Library

- [Kansas Case Study: Forming Connections Between SNAP & WIC to Tackle Food Insecurity](#)

For more information about this project, please reach out to **Morgan McKinney** at [mmckinney@aphsa.org](mailto:mmckinney@aphsa.org) and **Jess Maneely** at [jmaneely@aphsa.org](mailto:jmaneely@aphsa.org).