

## **Project: WIC Information System Program (WISPr)**

**Business Sponsor:** Division of Public Health

### **Key Dates**

Federal Funding Approval Date: October 2009

IT Development Initiation Date: January 2010

IT Development Completion Date: November 2011

Field Training: January 2011

Public Release Date: February 1, 2012

### **Business Problem**

The legacy Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) system was a fifteen year old mainframe based application designed to document eligibility and produce WIC food checks, which participants would use to purchase healthy supplemental food from local grocery stores. The legacy system structure dictated business processes and required manual data entry from paper. This was a complicated and error prone manually administered record keeping system.

WIC staff at the nine external agencies (Seven Health Districts and Two Tribal Organizations) and 58 clinics located statewide were responsible for delivering program services for the citizens of Idaho. This involved work such as creating a WIC participant/family in the legacy system, charting the developmental growth of participants, interpreting participant risk factors, searching through thousands of food packages, calculating participant's income, etc. This was mostly a manual paper process, greatly increasing the risk for human error. Regardless of the amount of training provided, human error was inevitable and difficult to discover or resolve.

Other risks involved paper document storage and retrieval, data management, caseload management, vendor management, enrollment processing, and system administration.

### **Solution**

The Division of Health needed a web based IT solution which would improve operational efficiency for the agencies and clinics, reduce errors, simplify enrollment and digitize all record keeping.

The new WISPr system provides a much more efficient process for assisting participants who come into the WIC clinic for assistance. WISPr incorporates the concept of Participant Centered Services where the system is not the focus of the interview; rather, interacting with the participant and identifying needs is the focus.

WISPr has been successful in digitizing vendor cost tables, applicant eligibility information, nutrition assessment and risk identification, automated growth charts, food package filtering, administrative reports, and enhanced system security.

### **Benefits**

With the new system, service providers can enter information as it is provided by the participant. Staff has the option to navigate from screen to screen and/or have multiple windows open for several family members and move between participant screens making the process much more efficient. Unlike the legacy system, this flexibility allows staff to interact more naturally with participants and address participant questions/concerns as they arise.

Another important benefit that comes with the new system is that it will allow the WIC program to explore electronic benefits transfer planning (having monthly benefits put on an EBT card instead of issuing paper checks) which is a federal mandate by 2020. Having benefits on a card also will help reduce the stigma that comes with using the paper checks.

### **IT Category**

Choice 1: Improving State Operations

Choice 2: Fast Track Solutions