

## Disaster Plan

- I. The State WIC Office prepares as much as is practical and feasible for potential emergencies, disasters and supply chain disruptions- particularly those impacting infant formula. The WIC Program is not intended to be a first-response disaster assistance program. WIC will cooperate and communicate with disaster relief agencies.
- II. Disasters or other events most likely to disrupt WIC services or food delivery in Utah include: pandemics, formula recalls, supply chain disruptions, cyber-attacks, technical or internet outages, and civil unrest or war. Natural disasters such as large-scale earthquakes are possible. Weather related disasters in Utah are normally local events and/or short term in nature. All of these must be considered in disaster planning.
- III. A local emergency is defined as any situation that threatens the continuity of state or local agency WIC operations or the safety of its personnel. Emergencies include, but are not limited to, disasters and states of emergency as declared by the Governor. Local emergencies may only affect one clinic or may affect multiple clinics or the statewide food benefit issuance system.
- IV. In the event of large-scale emergencies, disasters, and supply chain disruptions impacting WIC, the Secretary of Agriculture has authority to waive some program requirements. Program requirements may be waived in the event of:
  - a. A presidentially declared major disaster as defined under Section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act, 42 USC 5121 et seq.),
  - b. A presidentially declared emergency as defined under the Stafford Act,
  - c. A public health emergency declared by the Secretary of Health and Human Services under Section 319 of the Public Health Service Act (42 USC 247d),
  - d. A renewal of such a public health emergency, and
  - e. A supply chain disruption as declared by the Secretary of Agriculture.
- V. The Utah WIC Program will follow the Utah Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Department of Government Operations, Division of Technology Services (DTS) continuity of operations plans and be subject to any orders by the governor and department leadership.
- VI. Communications Plan
  - a. Designated emergency contacts include:

- i. WIC Director
    - ii. Nutrition Coordinator
    - iii. Vendor Manager
    - iv. Operations Manager
  - b. The public/media can reach these individuals via the phone number listed on the Utah WIC website, 877-942-5437, or the general email address, wic@utah.gov. Emails and calls will be forwarded to these state WIC leaders. FNS Southwest Region staff, state leaders and vendor partners are provided the contact information, including mobile phone numbers, to reach these individuals directly.
  - c. The Utah WIC website, wic.utah.gov, Alerts and Updates page is updated regularly with any pertinent and critical information regarding Utah WIC operations.
  - d. Utah uses a contractor, Teletask, to send mass text messages to program participants. This service would be used to convey critical information to affected participants. The WICShopper app is also used by Utah WIC and provides push notifications and banners to share important updates.
  - e. The Utah WIC program manager will contact the Food and Nutrition Service, Southwest Region leadership to report on the status of the Utah WIC program and its operations.
- VII. Through DHHS executive leadership, Utah WIC will coordinate with state emergency services (Office of Preparedness and Response), FEMA and other organizations such as food banks, Red Cross, etc.
- VIII. Continuation of Benefits
- a. Utah will apply for and follow waivers for:
    - i. Physical presence,
    - ii. Collection of anthropometric data and bloodwork,
    - iii. Collection of eligibility documentation,
    - iv. Issuance of cards,
    - v. Replacing cards and supplemental foods.
  - b. VOCs will be issued by clinic staff to all participants that may be evacuated outside the state of Utah.
  - c. If waiver conditions change, this plan will be updated or our disaster response may differ.
- IX. Benefit issuance and redemption

- a. Plan to access program records:
  - i. The Utah WIC MIS, Vision is hosted in the AWS cloud. If Vision went down, it would be transferred to another AWS site.
  - ii. As an essential program (Tier 2) according the DTS security plan, network connectivity would be restored for the state network within 7-28 days. The state network is not required to run the Vision system.
  - iii. Many local WIC agencies have back-up power available such as generators.
  - iv. WIC clinic building access is not required to resume operations. Vision can be accessed and benefits issued from alternate locations using laptops, etc.
- b. The state office will communicate with local WIC staff through the WIC SharePoint site and through email to provide status updates and provide alternate operating procedures. Webinars may be held as needed.
- c. EBT cards cannot be used outside of the State of Utah, however should the need arise, vendors outside the state could be contracted on an emergency basis to accept Utah WIC.
- d. Utah WIC will monitor and publicize the availability of vendors during an emergency if needed.

#### X. Vendor Management Plan

- a. All authorization, monitoring and training will be placed on hold temporarily until conditions allow. Additional vendors may be authorized in or out of state on an emergency basis if needed.
- b. Enforcement of stocking requirements will be suspended for products that are affected by a shortage, recall or disaster.

#### XI. Nutrition Services Plan

- a. Utah WIC would apply for available waivers for food substitutions and adjustments and issue such food remotely to participants.
- b. Utah is part of the NASPO infant formula contract for cost containment. This contract contains protections to provide alternate products in the event of a recall or supply chain disruption.
- c. Collecting medical documentation (refer to State Plan Section II, Nutrition Services, Anthro and Lab Procedures; State Plan Section II, VIII. Certification, Presence at Certification.)

- d. Utah WIC will follow the guidance in the CDC infant and young child feeding in emergencies toolkit to support breastfeeding during a statewide disaster.
  - e. For distribution of infant formula, exempt formula and WIC nutritionals, Utah WIC will follow the guidance in the CDC infant and young child feeding in emergencies toolkit. Utah will also work with FEMA, formula manufacturers, wholesalers, pharmacies, local hospitals and other agencies who obtain formula to distribute product directly or through retail outlets based on the supply chain status.
  - f. Utah will work with authorized vendors to limit the quantity of formula sold to individuals to extend the supply for all participants during the shortage.
- XII. Local agency emergency planning (Information about requirements for local emergency planning can be found in State Plan Section II, IV. Organization and Management, Emergency Planning).