



POLICY BRIEF: SUPPORT FOR PERMANENT VIRTUAL SERVICES IN WIC

The National WIC Association (NWA) urges Congress to support the modernization of WIC and authorize permanent virtual certifications for the program. Under current law, WIC certification and recertification appointments must be conducted in-person.¹ Since 2020, WIC has been operating under USDA waivers allowing virtual services for all appointment types, greatly increasing access and participation.² Without Congressional action, WIC clinics may no longer be able to offer virtual certification and recertification appointments as soon as September 30, 2026. As part of this effort, Congress should pass **The More Options to Develop and Enhance Remote Nutrition in WIC Act (MODERN WIC Act, H.R. 1464)** and the **21st Century WIC Act (S.3842)**.

THE MODERN WIC ACT AND THE 21ST CENTURY WIC ACT WOULD:

1. Update WIC's physical presence requirements to allow for virtual certifications, while preserving program integrity and health screenings
2. Allow for virtual issuance of benefits on the e-WIC card

Providing virtual services is essential to meeting the needs of the population and creating a WIC program in line with other healthcare settings. According to USDA data:

- WIC participation has been increasing since 2022, near the time when virtual certifications were first allowed; prior to that, participation had been steadily declining since 2010³
- 98% of WIC agencies rated providing virtual certifications as very or extremely important⁴



¹ 42 USC 1786

² U.S. Department of Agriculture. Flexibilities to Support Outreach, Innovation, and Modernization in WIC. [Page updated: December 16, 2025]. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/modernization/flexibilities>

³ U.S. Department of Agriculture. WIC Data Tables. [Page updated: December 23, 2025]. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/wic-program>

⁴ U.S. Department of Agriculture. Conducting Remote WIC Certification Appointments During the COVID-19 Pandemic. (2023). <https://www.fns.usda.gov/research/wic/remote-certification-during-pandemic>



In December 2025, NWA conducted a survey with WIC State Directors to understand how virtual services are incorporated into their programs today. The survey showed:

- States that reported switching to almost entirely virtual appointments, such as Colorado and New York, are some of the top performers for increased WIC participation
 - New York specifically shared no-show rates decreased drastically from 14.1% in 2020 to 8.2% in 2021, then even more so to 5.1% thus far in 2026
- For some states, the majority of appointments are virtual and they have significantly shifted their operations to match this, pointing to programmatic efficiencies
- Many State Directors commented that **virtual services increase participation by reducing barriers for families such as transportation and needing to take time off work**
 - Arkansas is using virtual services to certify medically fragile patients at the hospital
 - Florida commented that virtual services are crucial with frequent weather events such as hurricanes and flooding

This issue is urgent: the waiver authorizing virtual certifications will expire as soon as September 2026, resulting in families losing access to life-changing services. With the modernization of WIC, the same, excellent standard of care is still expected. WIC will continue to provide invaluable benefits to families such as preventing infant deaths, improving maternal health, ensuring healthier births, and giving children a stronger start in life. **We urge Congress to support the MODERN WIC Act and the 21st Century WIC Act and take action to codify modern service delivery for WIC.**

