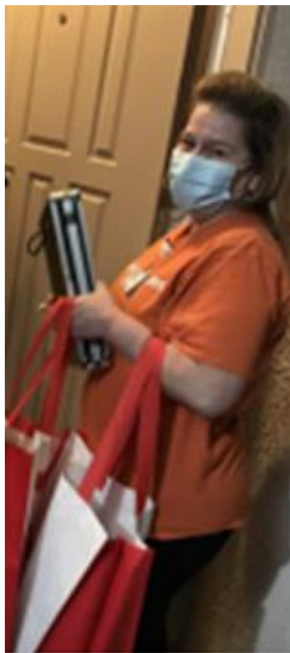
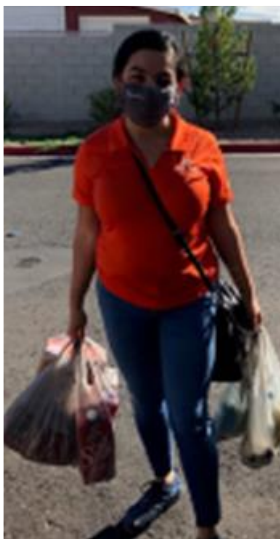


# Nevada Women, Infants, and Children CARES Shopping and Delivery Program



Provided by Dignity Health and Catholic Charities



Department of Health and  
Human Services  
Division of Public and Behavioral Health

Final Report  
January 2021



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# Acknowledgements

The Nevada Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH) would like to thank the following partners for their work and support as shopping agencies:

- **Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada (CCNN)**
- **Three Square Food Bank (TS)**
  - **TCMI Church**
  - **East Valley Family Services**
  - **HopeLink of Southern Nevada**
- **Nye Community Coalitions (NyECC)**
- **St. Rose Dignity Health**
- **Carson City Health and Human Service (CCHHS)**



*Special thank you to all the dedicated Nevada WIC Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada (ITCN) WIC agency employees who continue to work tirelessly to meet the needs of Nevada WIC participants, and for their amazing ability to pivot services effectively and efficiently amid the COVID-19 pandemic.*

*Without our great shopping agencies and WIC clinics, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) shopping and delivery of WIC foods program would not have been possible.*

## *Prepared by*

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# Introduction

*The WIC Program is a Special Supplemental Nutrition Program funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).<sup>1</sup> WIC aims to safeguard the health of low-income pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women and children under the age of 5 years by providing supplemental nutritious foods, health referrals, nutrition education and breastfeeding education and support.<sup>1,2</sup>*

*The WIC food package is designed at the federal level based on the latest nutrition guidelines to promote optimal health.<sup>2,3</sup> WIC foods are tailored to meet the nutrient needs of each participant. WIC foods are prescribed based on age, pregnancy, and breastfeeding status.<sup>3,4</sup> To further ensure optimal health special formulas and dietary needs can be prescribed/tailored to a WIC package with appropriate approval.<sup>4</sup>*



Nevada participants redeem prescribed WIC foods through an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card at select WIC approved retailers across the state.<sup>5</sup> Nevada WIC implemented EBT cards in 2010, replacing the use of paper vouchers.<sup>5</sup> The transition from vouchers to EBT has made it easier for participants to utilize their food benefits.

Using an EBT card is similar to use of a debit or credit card.<sup>6</sup> This method provides a safer, more discreet experience while offering more flexibility in the way a family can shop.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic>

<sup>2</sup> <https://nevadawic.org/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/fr-030414>

<sup>4</sup> [https://wicworks.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/WIC%20Food%20Package%20Policy%20Guidance%20Mar2018\\_508c.pdf](https://wicworks.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/WIC%20Food%20Package%20Policy%20Guidance%20Mar2018_508c.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-electronic-benefits-transfer-ebt>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-fact-sheet>



## WIC Shopping During COVID-19

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated WIC redemption challenges. Nationwide reports of empty grocery shelves with many key WIC items, including infant formula, pushed challenges of WIC shopping into the spotlight.<sup>7</sup> The USDA allowed states to apply for various program flexibilities through a waiver process. Nevada received six (6) USDA waivers between March-April 2020 to continue safe WIC services. Two (2) of the six (6) waivers Nevada received were food package specific and intended to help families redeem more food items. Additionally, the state office temporarily expanded its food allowance policy; increasing the variety of federally allowed foods in the states WIC package.

Even after additional WIC foods were added, more flexibilities on packages implemented and grocery stocking concerns were addressed, WIC food redemption continued to drop. A significant drop in redemption was seen from February-March 2020 with continued drops in the following months.

*For more information on the Nevada WIC waivers, redemption and participation data during COVID-19, see the [2020 Nevada Food Security Report: Combating the Statewide Hunger Crisis](#). The first installment of the 2020 Nevada Food Security Report covers program activities and data from March-May 2020. Three (3) addendums to this report are upcoming and all together will cover data and information from March 2020-March 2021.*

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.nwica.org/blog/blog-post-wic-shopping-in-the-covid-19-emergency#.X\\_OaStZFyUm](https://www.nwica.org/blog/blog-post-wic-shopping-in-the-covid-19-emergency#.X_OaStZFyUm)

# THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON NEVADA WIC REDEMPTION



4,304 Adult Nevada WIC participants responded to a survey regarding WIC redemption since beginning of COVID-19 pandemic, administered the week of August 3, 2020

## WIC FOOD REDEMPTION SINCE MARCH 2020

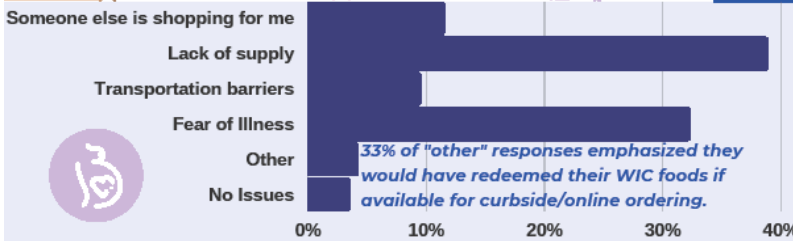
56% always redeemed their WIC benefits

32.9% Sometimes  
4.4% Rarely  
5.1% Never  
1.6% unsure

"It's been **harder to find all the foods** or milk products allowed for our family and we also do a lot of our grocery shopping online for pickup, due to us **not wanting to expose ourselves or children** too much (we have a son who is asthmatic) and **we cannot apply the card when checking out.**"



## REASONS FOR NOT REDEEMING

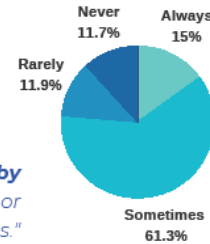


"I have been doing online pick up for my shopping needs, but I cannot get my WIC items. I'm less likely to use WIC because I'd rather not risk going into a store. I'm 3 months pregnant, my son has a blood disorder, and my mother in law who lives with us has lymphoma."

## WIC FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN DURING PANDEMIC

"There has been a shortage of milk, cheese, and eggs. I hate going shopping because I'm so afraid of bringing the virus home to my two year old."

"It's been incredibly **difficult to get what my baby needs** when at the store due to shortage of formula or shortage of employees to open up cases."



## CONCERNS FROM WIC RECIPIENTS

"I have been doing online grocery pick up because I don't want to expose my kids, myself, or my husband."



"Family member has an auto immune disorder which makes us have a **tough choice** when stores **do not allow WIC items to be redeemed through pick-up.**"

33% fear illness becoming sick from shopping

"I have nobody to take care of my baby so I can't go to the store with out **risking his health.**"



are food insecure as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nevada.

The Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health is committed to combating the statewide hunger crisis.

Questions regarding WIC and survey results?

EMAIL: [WICGENERAL@HEALTH.NV.GOV](mailto:WICGENERAL@HEALTH.NV.GOV) | VISIT: [HTTPS://NEVADAWIC.ORG/](https://NEVADAWIC.ORG/)

Survey was available in both English and Spanish

# WIC Online Ordering



Since state implementation of WIC EBT in 2010, Nevada WIC participants have experienced the safe and flexible options EBT offers versus the old paper vouchers. However, WIC EBT has not been able to keep up with technology changes and need of participants. COVID-19 concerns have brought WIC purchasing limitation to the forefront. WIC EBT still requires purchases to be made inside a WIC approved store by either the head of household or a previously designated proxy indicated in the Nevada WIC Management information System (MIS), WIC Information System for Health (WISH).

Per USDA Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), 7 CFR 246.12 [h] [3] [vi], *for printed food instruments and cash-value vouchers, the vendor must ensure the participant, parent or care taker of an infant or child participant, or proxy signs the food instrument or cash-value voucher in presence of the cashier. In EBT system, a Personal Identification Number (PIN) may be used in lieu of signature.*<sup>8</sup> This makes it difficult to include an online ordering and delivery option for WIC participants. A curbside pick-up model has been explored in certain counties and states as a way to limit time in the store, and still meet the in-person PIN number entry requirement or signature for paper checks/vouchers. However, this model is only possible in states with WIC only stores that invested in the necessary programming features. Nevada does not currently have any authorized WIC only stores.

In June 2020, Nevada's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needing Families (TANF) rolled out an online ordering and delivery of EBT purchased groceries program through Walmart or Amazon.<sup>9</sup> The expansion of online ordering for SNAP and TANF participants across the state, put further pressure on the Nevada WIC program to provide a safe shopping experience.

In addition to CFR limitations WIC has for online shopping, the processing functionalities on the back end of WIC are more complex than SNAP and TANF, the technology, buy-in and funding to combat this barrier continues to inhibit development and rollout of a WIC online ordering model.<sup>10</sup> The foods allowed to be purchased with WIC EBT are restricted to certain brands, package sizes and food types. WIC packages are also issued mostly by the ounce, gallon, or quart; WIC fruits and vegetables are the only monetary benefit on WIC EBT. SNAP and TANF benefits are all monetary and not restricted to certain brands or package sizes. As WIC purchases represent a small portion the store's purchases, retailers have not found it financially beneficial to adapt their online ordering systems to vet WIC only foods and link up with WIC EBT processors to verify purchases. Programming changes for this process is time consuming and can vary state by state. With a low perceived benefit to the retailer, the motivation for development is low.

<sup>8</sup> <https://ecfr.io/Title-7/Section-246.12>

<sup>9</sup> <https://dwss.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/dwssnvgov/content/SNAP/Use-SNAP-Online.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> [https://s3.amazonaws.com/aws.upl/nwica.org/fy20\\_nwa\\_factsheet\\_pickup-and-delivery-requirements.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/aws.upl/nwica.org/fy20_nwa_factsheet_pickup-and-delivery-requirements.pdf)



## CARES Act Funds for WIC Food Delivery

The CARES Act was established through the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) to provide payments to State, Local, and Tribal governments navigating the impact of COVID-19.<sup>11</sup> Payments from the CARES Act was made to states and eligible units of local government; Nevada received the small state allocation of CARES funding at \$1.25 billion.<sup>12</sup> Allocation of CARES funds requires states to provide 45 percent to local governments. Areas with populations greater than 500,000 could request direct payment from the United States Department of the Treasury.<sup>12</sup> After the requested allocations were allotted to Clark County and Las Vegas, the two areas eligible to request funds directly from the Treasury, the 45 percent for local governments, \$687,500,000 was left for the state to spend.<sup>12</sup>

Nevada DHHS looked to ensure feeding Nevadan's through the pandemic was a priority. As shopping challenges for WIC participants continued, WIC food redemption rates continued to drop. Knowing the vital nutrition benefits the WIC food package provides to in-need families, DHHS leadership was able to secure \$3.1 million of the \$687,500,000 CARES funds available for state spending. With WIC dollars not eligible for spending on delivery or shopping services, CARES funding was pertinent to the development of Nevada's innovative WIC shopping and delivery program.

The Nevada WIC team started work on service procedures, policies, and budgets in June 2020, as soon as notification of funding was confirmed. A call to partner on the program was put out to local Nevada WIC clinics and non-profit agencies across the state. With the funding coming in, the Nevada WIC team started to assemble the vital community partners who would be able to offer this service safely and effectively to WIC families statewide.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/cares/state-and-local-governments>

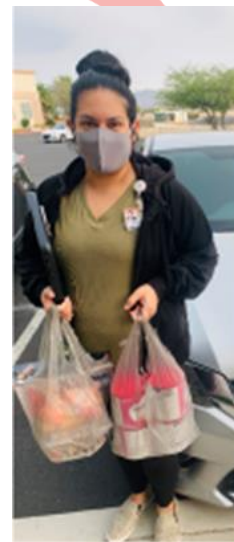
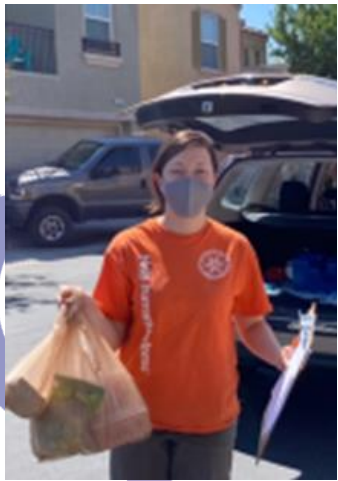
<sup>12</sup> <https://nvhealthresponse.nv.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Nevada-CARES-Act-Overview.pdf#:~:text=of%20the%20Act.%20This%20section%20of%20the%20CARES,CARES%20Act%20in%20the%20amount%20of%20%241.25%20billion.>



# WIC CARES Shopping Agencies

The Nevada WIC office first offered partnership with WIC's local agencies. Nevada WIC agencies administering WIC at the local level are well versed in WIC shopping, package variances and established participant trust. Knowing this, the Nevada WIC office wanted to rely on those strengths in the agencies that had the capacity to run a shopping program. After discussion with all local WIC agencies, the majority had a desire to participate, however, two (2) agencies indicated the capacity and were awarded funds to provide shopping and delivery of WIC foods for participants in their clinics:

- **Carson City Health and Human Services**
- **Dignity Health St. Rose- Siena Campus**



Provided by Dignity Health and Catholic Charities

With the above-mentioned WIC agencies committed to the program, the Nevada WIC office expanded the offer to other programs to ensure all families would have the ability to sign up for food delivery. The below programs were chosen based on counties served, capacity, knowledge of WIC, and desire to serve WIC families:

- **Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada**
- **Three Square Food Bank**
- **Nye County Communities Coalition**



# Policies and Procedures

Since the Nevada WIC CARES shopping and delivery program is the first of its kind, developing procedures that aligned with current federal WIC policies and all partnering agencies range of function took a lot of collaboration between the Nevada WIC office, local WIC clinics, shopping agencies, and USDA Food and Nutrition Services (FNS). Various drafts and edits were made in the months leading up to the official launch of the program. Final approval of the procedures was provided by FNS before the program start date in September 2020. The Nevada WIC office remained open to updates to the procedures as the program was initiated. However, only minor language updates were made to the procedures in October 2020. Detailed below are the procedures for shopping and delivery provided to all shopping agencies and USDA FNS.

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## WIC Food Delivery Procedure

### **I. WIC families will fill out the consent form electronically and call designated shopping agency to finalize enrollment:**

- a. The participant should call the shopping agency once a consent form is filled out to finalize enrollment in the program. (shopping agencies have been reaching out to families who have filled out consent form but have not called the agency to increase participation and reduce confusion around the program)
- b. After the shopping agency reaches the family and confirms desire to sign up for the program the shopping agency will call the local WIC agency to ensure they received a copy of the consent form.
- c. If not, the shopping agency will share with the WIC agency and participation status will be confirmed with the WIC agency.

### **II. The WIC agency updates families electronic file and EBT card “transfer”:**

- a. WIC agency will add shopping agency as a proxy
- b. Will update electronic file to note participation in the CARES program (marking CARES in the family resource page)
- c. WIC agency will deactivate current card and work with the shopping agency to enter the new card indicated by the shopping agency
- d. The shopping agency activates the card by calling the number on the back, following the prompts, and selecting a preapprove PIN# they will then share with the employee doing the shopping.

**III. The shopper and agency will be trained on WIC shopping prior and understand all resources available if issues at the store arise and to create a shopping list.**

- a. The shopper and/or agency will use the available foods list on the WICshopper App to create a shopping list with the family.
- b. Please refer to the WICshopper app to assist at the store. The shopper may download the app and use this as assistance for verifying WIC approved items while at the store. The shopper may also use state and local agency contacts for assistance.

**IV. Once all items on shopping list, or approved alternative items are purchased through the EBT card, the shopper will deliver the items to the participant's home.**

- a. Shoppers will work with the families to schedule preapproved times and days to drop off the food items.
- b. Food items should be safely handed over to the participant.
  - a. Use of face masks, placement at least 6 feet apart from each other, left in a secure previously identified location.
  - b. Shopper confirms the participant received the items before delivery is complete.
  - c. The EBT card will be returned to designated office to be logged in for the night and stored in a lock box until shopping for this family is done again.
- c. The shopper must take a picture or collect a copy of the receipt and keep for documentation/verification.

**V. The shopper will contact the awarded agency to confirm the WIC groceries have been left at the participant's home.**

- a. Staff will ensure participant receipt.
- b. The home delivery transaction will be marked as complete and the participant ID will be logged.
  - a. Participant ID's and receipts will be used for data collection.
    - a. #of deliveries
    - b. Race/ethnic
    - c. Participant type
    - d. WIC items purchased/redemption verification

---

Additionally, applicable WIC policies were shared with the shopping agencies and adherence to the policies was required. The identified policies included:

- EBT Card Log

- Deactivated EBT Card Log
- Statement of Confidentiality
- Conflict of Interest
- WIC EBT Card Stock

All employees handling EBT cards, taking participant calls and doing shopping/delivery of WIC foods were required to read and apply the pertaining policies. Conflict of interest and confidentiality statements were signed to further ensure participant safety and program integrity.

Once shopping agencies were on board and procedures in place, the Nevada WIC office needed to ensure WIC clinics were equipped to handle the new program. Nevada's local WIC clinics were provided their own CARES shopping procedure document. Procedures at the local WIC clinics focused on appropriated documentation in Nevada WISH, reassigning EBT cards, and collaboration with the shopping agencies.

## **CARES- Participant Shopping Process Aid for WIC Staff**

Nevada has received CARES funding to be able to assist Nevada WIC families with shopping needs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Here are the links to the CARES Proxy Agreement Forms:

English: <https://nevadawic.org/cares-wic-shopping-program/>

Spanish: <https://nevadawic.org/programa-de-compras-cares-wic/>

Participating Agencies and Coverage:

### **Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada**

Coverage:

- Ron Wood Family Resource- Carson City
- Pershing County WIC- Winnemucca, Battle Mountain, Lovelock, Fallon
- Lyon County- Yerington, Dayton, Fernley, and Silver Springs
- Washoe County WIC- Reno and surrounding areas
- Community Health Alliance- Reno, Sparks, and surrounding areas
- Consolidated Agencies of Human Services- Hawthorne
- Family Resource Center of Northeastern Nevada- Elko and surrounding areas

### **Nye County Coalition**

Coverage:

- Nye County- Pahrump and Tonopah

- Little People’s Head Start- Ely, Caliente, and Alamo

### **Three Square Food Bank**

Coverage:

- Las Vegas Urban League
- Sunrise Children’s Foundation
- Nevada Health Centers
- Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada

### **Agencies doing their own participant’s shopping:**

- Carson City Health and Human Services
- Dignity Health St. Rose WIC

### **Procedures for CARES Shopping:**

- A text blast will be sent to all WIC participants with a link to complete the consent form online through the Nevada WIC Website.
- The WIC clinic and the Shopping Agency will receive a copy of the consent form through the clinic’s email.
  - The Shopping Agency will:
    - Verify all consent questions are answered. If a question was unanswered or participant replied no, the agency will:
      - Call the participant to get additional information as to why the question(s) was left blank or reasoning for not agreeing with the consent question.
      - If participant agrees to the terms after speaking to the shopping agency, the shopping agency will email the updated copy to the clinic.
        - Edits will be documented in the consent form with the name of the shopping agency’s staff member who contacted the participant and the date of when the conversation took place.
    - Call the participant to ensure the participant understands the program requirements and agrees to all the terms.
    - Call the pertaining WIC clinic to replace the EBT card and add the agency as an additional proxy.
      - Replacement of EBT card will be done a few days before the shopping occurs.
    - The Shopping Agency will complete the shopping list with each participant over the telephone.
  - The Clinic staff will:
    - Scan/upload each consent form for the family in NV WISH.

- Once the shopping agency contacts the clinic, staff will do the following:
  - Replace EBT card with the new card number the Shopping Agency will provide
  - Add the Shopping Agency as an Additional Proxy
  - Add a 'Family Referral' in NV WISH- Referring the agency who will do the shopping.

Referrals - Family

Referred To - Family Referrals From WIC					
Date	Organization Type	Organization	Staff Member		
08/31/2020	CARES- WIC Shopping	Three Squares- CARES	Blanca Ayala	CARES Shopping	

- Add an alert on the active HOH or youngest child with the following statement:
  - 'FAMILY IS PARTICPATING IN THE CARES WIC SHOPPING'
  - Set an end date of 12/31/20
- At any time, the participant will have the opportunity to opt-out of CARES shopping.
  - If a participant calls the clinic to opt-out, staff will do the following:
    - Replace the CARES EBT Card assigned to the family and issue a new EBT Card., with Reason 'Returned'
    - Edit the previously set alert and 'uncheck' the 'Display as Alert'

Comments/Alerts

Record Dates 08/31/2020    3 of 3    + New    Edit    X Delete

\*Staff Member

Display as Alert

\*Expiration Date

\*Comment

- Add a new comment in NV WISH indicating participant has opted-out of the CARES shopping

- Document the Deactivated Card number in the ‘CARES-Deactivated EBT Card Log’
    - This log is to be turned in to the state office monthly.
  - Notify the Shopping Agency immediately of the participant’s decision to opt-out.
- The Shopping Agency will locate the EBT Card, document it in the ‘Deactivated EBT Card Log’ and mail all deactivated cards and deactivated card log to the Nevada WIC office on a monthly basis.
  - The Nevada WIC office will log the returned card and destroy it.

### \*Notable Preparation Steps

The Nevada WIC office took some additional preparation steps before initiation of the program that are worth mentioning but not officially outlined as a policy or procedure.

- Provided a train-the-trainer style WIC shopping training to each agency.
  - The agencies each identified employees to be “WIC shopping experts” and administer the training internally as needed.
- Communication about the start of the shopping program was sent out to all WIC vendors.
  - A “verified WIC shopper” letter was signed by the DPBH, CFCW Bureau Chief and provided to shoppers to carry in case vendors, participants and/or families wanted some addition confirmation.



Provided by Catholic Charities

# Shopping and Delivery- Agency Data

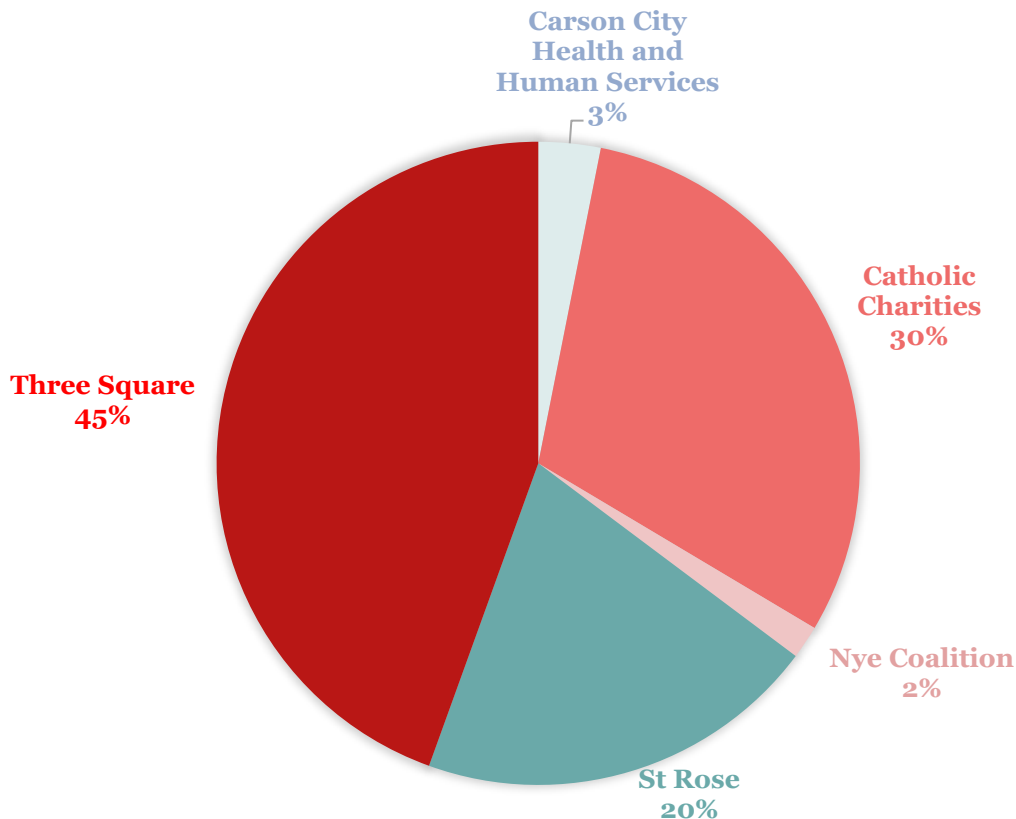


After finalization of shopping agency selection, policies and procedures, budgets and scopes of work, the WIC CARES shopping and delivery program officially launched statewide in September 2020. Participants were notified through a text blast sent through One Call Now text services, communication from local clinics and through various press releases and news stories.

Throughout the run of the program data was obtained from the shopping agencies directly. All 15 local WIC agencies and ITCN WIC agencies participating in the WIC CARES program are categorized into four (4)

main Shopping agencies: Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada Coverage, Nye County Coalition Coverage, Three Square- Las Vegas, Henderson, and surrounding areas Coverage and Agencies doing their own participant's shopping (Carson City Health and Human Services, and St Rose Dignity Health WIC).

## HOUSEHOLD DISTRIBUTION BY AGENCY





- **Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada (CCNN)**

Coverage: Washoe County, Carson City (excluding CCHHS WIC families), Humboldt County, Elko County, White Pine County, Churchill County, Pershing County, Lyon County, Lander County, Lincoln County, Douglas County, Storey County, Mineral County and Eureka County

CCNN is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting and meeting the needs of the most vulnerable throughout Northern Nevada, including rural, frontier, and tribal communities. Since 2020, CCNN is serving approximately 50,000 Nevadans monthly through their broad range of homelessness prevention services. CCNN’s programs provide nutritious food (pantry and served), rental and utility assistance, case management, benefits enrollment, senior deliveries, immigration assistance, family development, and sober living.

Implementation of the WIC shopping and delivery program with CCNN was a wonderful collaboration opportunity for the state. CCNN was able to cover 13 of Nevada’s 17 counties. With their established knowledge of the WIC program, they were able to provide additional resources to families as needed through their other programs.

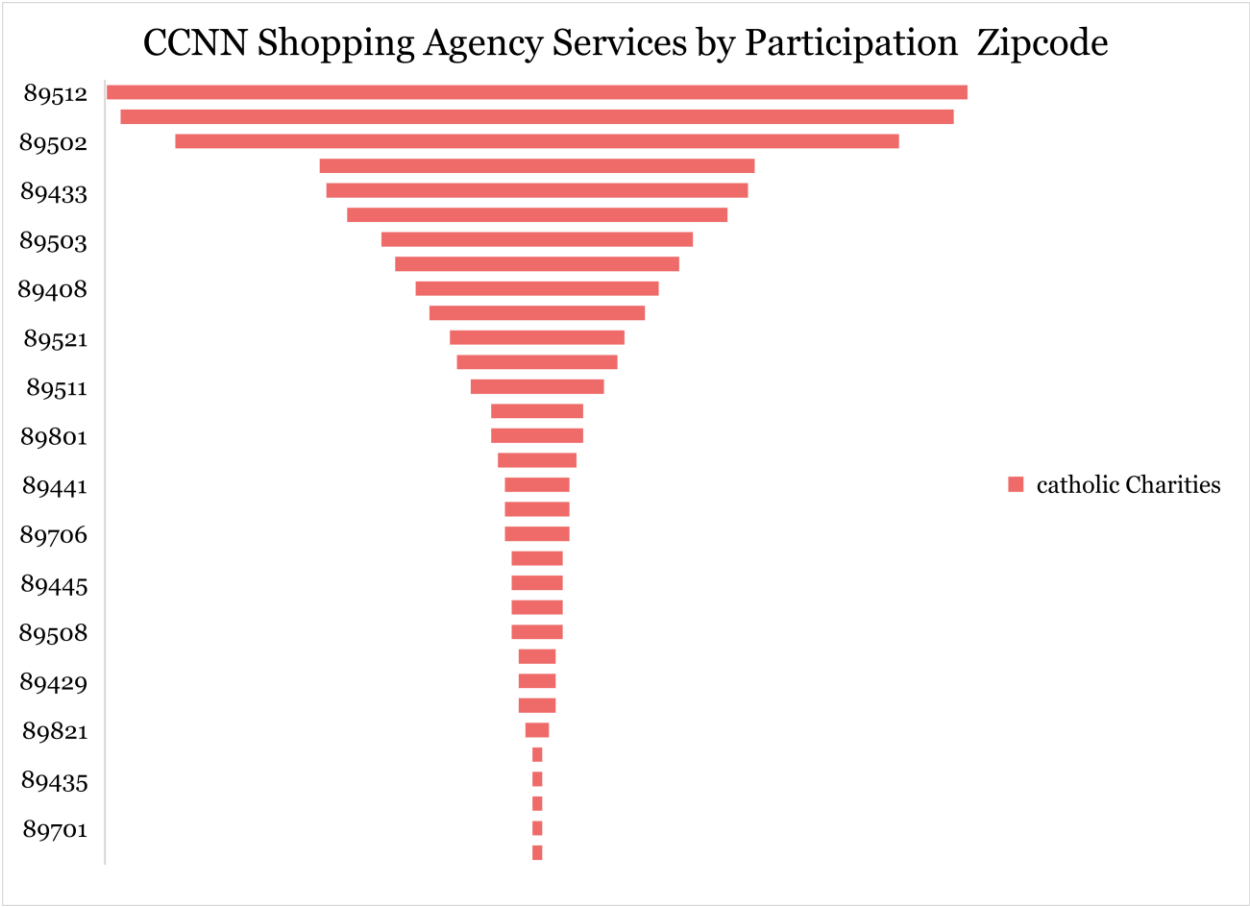
To serve Washoe County and the majority of Nevada’s rural/frontier counties, CCNN rented two (2) refrigerated trucks and hired two (2) drivers and ten (10) shoppers. Shopping trips were completed at least twice per month for participating families. CCNN’s call-center helped enroll families and collect/verify individual shopping lists.



Provided by Catholic Charities

**CCNN Participation Data**

Infants	Children	Women	Total
73	303	72	448



**Total Households: 273**

- **Carson City Health and Human Services (CCHHS)**

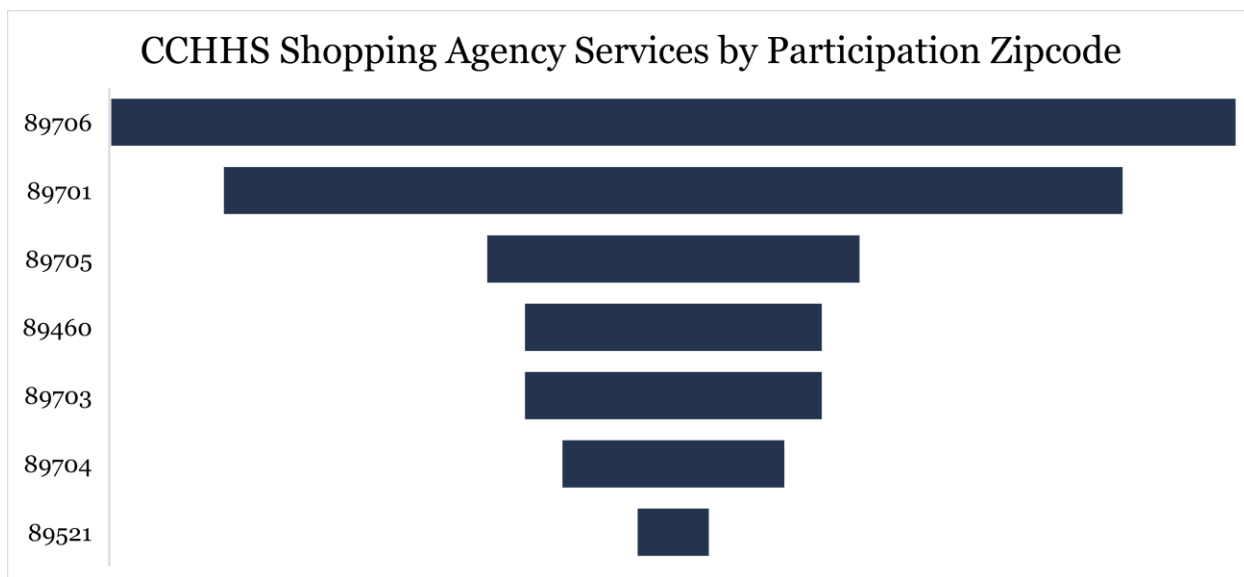
Coverage: CCHHS WIC participants

CCHHS works to improve the health of the Carson City community. By assessing community health, implementation of health interventions and increasing health awareness, CCHHS leads Nevada’s efforts to achieve public health accreditation. CCHHS also operates as a local WIC agency, serving participants in Carson City and Douglas County.

As a local WIC agency, CCHHS not only has extensive knowledge of the program and WIC foods, but they also have the benefit of established participant trust. Operating the program for their own participants, CCHHS utilized one (1) shopper and delivery person to serve their families in need of shopping assistance.

**CCHHS Participation Data**

Infants	Children	Women	Total
10	26	8	44




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**Total Households: 28**

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- **Three Square Food Bank (TS)**

Coverage: Clark County (excluding St. Rose Dignity Health WIC participants)

TS works with a network of community partners across Las Vegas and its surrounding areas to reach families at risk of hunger. The gaming industry, local businesses, non-profits, food distributors and schools have joined TS in the fight to end hunger for Southern Nevada residents.

Three Square is Southern Nevada's only Food Bank, serving Lincoln, Nye, Esmeralda and Clark Counties. Their mission is to provide wholesome food to hungry people, while passionately pursuing a hunger-free community. Three Square is a member of the Feeding America Network, the country's largest hunger relief organization. Since opening in 2007, Three Square has provided over 385 million pounds of food and earned a reputation as one of the most efficient and effective food banks in the country. Three Square has been on the forefront since the earliest days of the COVID-19 Pandemic, distributing more food to more people and adding phone lines to the existing call center.

With TS's other programs focusing on child nutrition, senior hunger, SNAP enrollment and food rescue distribution, the WIC shopping and delivery program was a great fit to serve Nevada's largest and most populated county. TS used their established call center to assist WIC participants with enrollment and shopping list verification. Utilizing relationships with community and faith-based programs, TS was able to contract out shopping and delivery services to three (3) programs who ensured WIC families received their WIC foods safely and efficiently.

- **TCMI Church**

TCMI church is a faith-based program in Clark County who offers a variety of community services. TCMI church aims to end hunger in the Las Vegas community with their dedicated volunteers. Two (2) shoppers and drivers were used to assist in serving Las Vegas WIC families.

- **East Valley Family Services (EVFS)**

EVFS is an organization that provides support and resources for Las Vegas families in need with programs targeted to families, children, and seniors. Their mission is to assist these populations in becoming and remaining self-sufficient, healthy and socially responsible. Programs include food pantry and programs, peer parenting, healthcare hope, bears and binkies, family resource center, differential response and senior and disability resources. EVFS was able to contract with TS and serve Las Vegas WIC participants with WIC food shopping and delivery through five (5) shoppers and drivers.

- **HopeLink of Southern Nevada**

HopeLink aims to assist low-income and those experiencing life crisis who may be hit with hunger, tragedy or homelessness. Providing families with opportunities including

case management, nutrition and practical life skills and financial assistance, HopeLink operates as a full-service Family Resource Center. HopeLink was able to provide shopping and delivery of WIC foods in Clark County with seven (7) shoppers and drivers.

### TS Participation Data

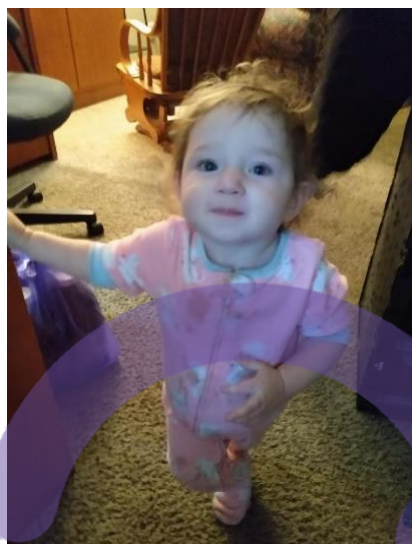
Infants	Children	Women	Total
125	388	116	629




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**Total Households: 399**

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- **Dignity Health St. Rose**

- Coverage: Dignity Health WIC participants

Dignity Health is a hospital system that works to meet many needs of the community. Dignity Health St. Rose has various community programs and is committed to promoting health through collaboration. They have three (3) campuses that also operate as Nevada WIC local agencies and was one of the two local agencies who identified the capacity to run the shopping program for their own participants.

Dignity Health WIC was the only agency that provided shopping to enroll more families than they previously planned; 82 additional families. Dignity Health leadership credited the enrollment numbers to their status as a WIC clinic. Families felt more comfortable with the use of their EBT card and communicating with agency employees. Dignity Health utilized five (five) shoppers and drivers to complete 425 deliveries.

**Dignity Health Participation Data**

Infants	Children	Women	Total
79	142	81	302



**Total Households: 182**

- **Nye Community Coalitions (NyECC)**

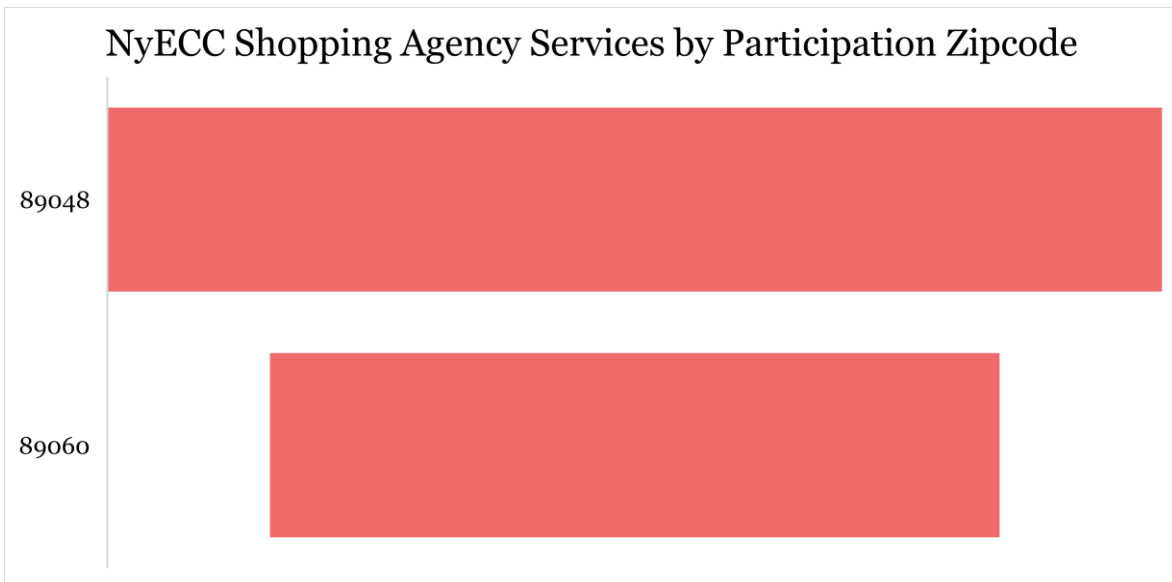
- Coverage: Nye County, Esmeralda County and Lincoln County

NyECC consists of several partner agencies representing a variety of sectors and engaging youth and adults. NyECC has helped establish science-based prevention programming in communities who had not previously had prevention efforts. Increasing knowledge and skill with local professionals, comprehensive prevention efforts continue across these counties.

As an established community program serving three (3) frontier counties, NyECC collaborated closely with the local WIC agency in their area to offer shopping services across these counties. NyECC was able to complete shopping and delivery needs of WIC foods utilizing two (2) shoppers and drivers.

**NyECC Participant Data**

Infants	Children	Women	Total
2	18	2	22




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**Total Households: 15**

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**HEALTHY FOOD  
HEALTHY KID  
HAPPY FAMILY**

# Statewide Data and Demographics

Shopping Agency	Household Count	Participation Count
Carson City Health and Human Services	28	44
Catholic Charities	273	448
Nye Coalition	15	22
St Rose	182	302
Three Square	399	629
Total	897	1445

Race	Participation Count
American Indian or Alaskan Native	98
Asian	40
Black	268
Multiple	81
Pacific Islander	30
White	840
Unknown	88
Total	1445



 Provided by Catholic Charities



# Lessons Learned

While no major updates were made to procedures after the start of the program, the shopping and WIC agencies provided continuous input on lessons learned throughout the run of the program. During initial implementation of the program, state staff, shopping agencies and key WIC clinic directors met weekly. These initial weekly meetings were important to establish the partnership between agencies and ensure all messaging was consistent. Meetings from October 2020- December 2020 were then held monthly.

The first major lesson learned at the start of the program was consistent program promotion. Shopping agencies provided program promotion through press releases, media interviews and flyer distribution. WIC clinics included education on the program as part of routine referral discussions and participant contact, some provided additional press releases and media outreach. The most utilized and impactful outreach tool ended up being the state's office use of blast text messaging. One Call Now is a messaging service that has been used by the state since 2018. The primary purpose of this system has been to connect with participants through text messages statewide or by agency on WIC related topics/needs. One Call Now provided a great benefit during the shopping and delivery program as participants were texted reminders of the program along with links to the consent form at least one time per month. After each blast text, shopping agencies always saw a spike in consent forms and enrollment. Text blasts were sent during days and times in a week that would allow for the shopping agencies to prepare for the increase in calls, i.e. avoided sending texts on Fridays when call centers were closed on Saturdays and Sundays. In November 2020, Nevada's Governor issued a stay at home 2.0 order for the state, a text blast was sent to all participant's the day after that including verbiage from the stay at home order. This November text generated the largest weekly increase in participation, 167 household statewide.

In the first month of the program, shopping agencies noticed hesitancy from participants to complete enrollment in the program once the whole shopping process was explained. The elimination of the word "deactivate" when explaining the procedure for taking over shopping for the month helped to reduce some of this hesitancy. Alternate verbiage included: your agency will activate a shopping card for us, your card will not work in the months we do shopping, your card is temporarily inactive while under our care. However, the two (2) WIC agencies providing their own shopping did not have as much hesitancy with the deactivation language, most likely due to the established consistent relationship and trust in the clinic process.

Consistent communication was vital for program satisfaction. The shopping agencies established constant communication with their participants which resulted in very minimal concerns and issues. Additionally, the regular collaboration and meetings with the state office, shopping agencies, and WIC clinics established a better overall statewide implementation and result.

# Participant Feedback and Stories

*“Pre-pandemic with eight foster children it was already difficult to run into a store and get WIC items. You first had to find the approved items, often discovering the store was out, and then have to ring up each item separately for each child in the home. We often did not complete the WIC purchase each month. Then COVID came along, still with eight kids, we were now home schooling and doing curbside pickup. Therefore, we couldn’t get WIC for the first few months. This program has been amazing for our family. Having food delivered on specific days each month and the ability to get all of the items has been a blessing. I hope this program continues forever for all the parents that need this help. God bless all of you.”*

Elko, NV

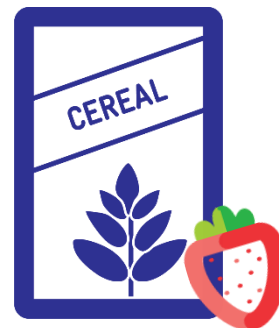
*“In 2020, we received a call from Catholic Charities informing us that they could shop and deliver food for those who were receiving WIC benefits. I instantly knew this was a service my family would benefit from and we signed up. As the mother of two young children (one is asthmatic), grocery shopping was no longer a family task.*

*Instead, my husband was doing our shopping and WIC items were a hard assignment for him since every store is different in what is approved. I truly hope and encourage you consider funding this service again. Like me, I know many families personally that are in the same situation. Having our groceries delivered to our door contact free was such amazing support to our family.”*

Reno, NV

*“My family has been hit by this pandemic in more [ways than] one: my husband losing his job, I got COVID, and was fearful for my daughter who easily gets sick. Having Catholic Charities go to the store for me so that we could stay safe and healthy has been a miracle. I don’t have to worry, and it comes right to my door. Everyone is so nice and really cares about keeping my family safe.”*

Reno, NV



*"I was informed that the WIC delivery program is ending; I want to thank you because this program was very helpful for me. I was delivered my WIC food when my family and I were in quarantine for COVID-19 and we could not leave for two months. In those two months, I received delivery and my benefits were not lost. Thank you very much for being very helpful. I do not have a car to go to the store and, as a result, I have to travel on the bus with my two young children; it is difficult for me to be in the store in these times of the pandemic. Thank you very much for this service and thank you to the people that work there they are very kind. Thank you very much for this service that you gave me, and it is a shame that it is over."*

Reno, NV

*"Catholic Charities WIC Home Delivery Program has personally helped me a lot. I am a mother of three children, and many of the times it is very difficult to go to the store to buy our WIC especially right now with COVID; it is scary to take out our children. This program is a wonderful help for all the people who are having a hard time making ends meet. All who work for Catholic Charities are very kind, respectful and very helpful. I feel sad that this program is ending, I wish it could continue. Thanks for your help these last few months!"*

Sun Valley, NV

*"I'm writing you to let you know how much Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada has helped me and my family. Just a little bit of background of our family situation: my husband is a complete and totally disabled Veteran who suffers from a very rare and debilitating disease. He's been told and advised by medical professionals that in his condition, he would not survive if he were to catch the COVID virus. We do not have extra income because I've had to quit my job to be home and be his caregiver while also caring for our two-year-old little miracle baby. Because of this, our family has been in quarantine since March 2020. Therefore, simple life necessities, like shopping for food, have been difficult for us. We have been ordering groceries online since then and there are no options at checkout for using the WIC program. When I was told that I was eligible by WIC to receive food delivery by Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada, I was so grateful and blessed to have this wonderful and selfless group of amazing people put in our lives. For the past three months, Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada has done our WIC shopping for us, helping us receive the much-needed groceries essentials for my family. We would not be able to do it without Catholic Charities. Also, for Christmas, my two-year-old was given a Christmas gift from Catholic Charities. That was a beautiful gesture of goodwill in itself, making his Christmas a little more joyful and bringing smiles to us all. In a time of uncertainty and worry, not knowing if bills will be paid or if we'll have enough food or basic necessities for our son such as diapers and wipes or enough gas to get to my husbands to and from Doctors appointments, Catholic Charities has helped keep a light on in our dark time. Each and every one whom I've had the pleasure of speaking to has been so wonderful and helpful. They speak with kindness and compassion, always. They've restored my faith and I'll forever be grateful. Thank you, WIC for helping us in our time of need and having programs like this to help ensure the needs of my family and other families out there that just need a little help to get them through difficult times. My family is grateful and appreciates you all!"*

Dayton, NV

*I am writing to inform you of my appreciation for the great and amazing service I received from TJ [EVFS shopper]. He was very friendly, outgoing and wonderful!*

*I truly felt like he cared. He always made sure I was able to call in and get the WIC delivery so I wouldn't miss out. Without him risking his health for my kids and I, I would not have been able to go get the WIC supplies. He made an otherwise very stressful situation, pleasant! He, the program is literally a life saver!!! I am so very grateful for the service rendered.*

*Thank you so much!*

Clark County, NV

*“The WIC delivery program has helped my family out tremendously. We have 3 small children and one is potty training and one is special needs. 2 of our kids are doing distance learning and i work from home at the same time. It can get pretty hectic and definitely challenging to get to the store to get our WIC needs. I appreciate this program very much as it has alleviated some of our stress and allowed us to continue doing our everyday life activities with the kids without worrying about having to take my kids into the market in the midst of a pandemic. Thank you. I really hope the program continues.”*

Clark County, NV

*“This email is to commend the WIC delivery program. I am delighted to have such grand customer service experience. Every time I’ve called, whoever answers the phone is pleasant and patient in addition to being diligent with covering the details of my order. The delivery persons have all been extremely courteous with calling to verify items and notify times of arrival. This service has helped me immensely. I am a single mother of 18-month young twins which makes going to the store a challenge in itself. When grocery stores started accepting EBT for pick-up, that helped in this pandemic but I would still have to go inside for WIC items, which defeated the purpose of ease and health safety for my small children who touch everything and won’t keep a mask on their faces. I am very grateful for WIC delivery and pleased with everyone involved.”*

Clark County, NV

A single father who lost his home and currently residing at a motel. When CCNN did his shopping, he could only take a few of his groceries because he didn't have the room in his motel refrigerator. CCNN was able to sign him up to receive monthly pantry box with shelf-stable items through their other programs and stored some of his groceries until he had refrigerator space. He was also provided a care package with diapers and wipes for his baby.

A single mother with two children was not able to get her WIC for 3 months because she was afraid to go outside due to underlying health conditions. During this time, she had to order food online and did not have the money for all her food needs. She has been out of work since the pandemic started. She was very worried about the program ending and expressed how happy she was to find out TS extended shopping.

A client who receives special formula for baby was not able to make it to their WIC office to pick up the formula due to her work schedule. Special formula must be picked up by the client at the client's WIC agency during hours of operation. Because this client works during the hours of operation, she was not able to pick up her formula. With this program, the shopping agency was able to pick up the formula for her and deliver it.

Older couple with eight foster children. Unfortunately, the entire family contracted COVID-19 and, therefore, was unable to do their monthly WIC or regular grocery shopping. Along with their WIC benefits, Catholic Charities brought them four pantry boxes full of shelf-stable and fresh groceries. We also provided them with household essentials. After their first delivery, foster mom called us thanking Catholic Charities for going above and beyond to get her family groceries to last for several days.

# Conclusion

Even though the initial duration of the shopping and delivery program was short, the need and community reach was huge. Interest and participation in the program really took off mid-November 2020. Had shopping and delivery continued to its capacity past December 2020, there is no doubt participation would have continued to increase. As shopping continued and word of mouth got around, more and more WIC families became interested. Not only were shopping agencies able to deliver the WIC foods they normally would not have been able to redeem month to month, but additional agency resources reached these families; resources families would otherwise have not known where to get. In the end these families received more than just WIC food delivery.

As the program came to a close, three (3) of the five (5) shopping agencies expressed interest in continuing the program utilizing other funding sources. Not knowing the future of the remaining CARES dollars, Nevada's WIC shopping agencies stayed committed to those families in need and moved to continue the services as long as their funding allowed. On December 21, 2020, the federal government announced extension of CARES funds, CARES 2.0. As the state was required to return all unused CARES funds to the Governor's Finance Office, the Nevada WIC Program was unable to offer a seamless transition of the program into the new year.

The three (3) agencies who continues the program without CARES funds (CCNN, TS, Dignity Health St. Rose) are all operating at different capacities and timeframes, funding dependent. The Nevada WIC office is continuing to explore CARES 2.0 funding and will request reallocation and or extension of funds as soon as available. Until WIC shopping improvements are made, the Nevada WIC office will continue to explore ways to help participants redeem WIC foods safely and efficiently.



Provided by Catholic Charities

# Appendix

## Acronym Glossary

CARES	Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security
CCHHS	Carson City Health and Human Services
CCNN	Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada
CFCW	Bureau of Child Family and Community Wellness
CRF	Coronavirus Relief Funds
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
DPBH	Division of Public and Behavioral Health
EBT	Electronic Benefit Transfer
FNS	Food and Nutrition Services
ITCN	Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada
NyECC	Nye Community Coalitions
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TS	Three Square Food Bank
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WIC	Women, Infants, and Children
WISH	WIC Information System for Health

## WIC in the News

- [Officials Encourage WIC Recipients to Schedule Deliveries](#)
- [Personalized Shopping Program Now Available for WIC Recipients](#)
- [Personal Shopping and Home Delivery Program for WIC in Nevada](#)
- [Nevada Implements Innovative Delivery Program](#)
- [Nevada to Launch Grocery Delivery Service for WIC Recipients](#)

## Resources



Catholic Charities  
of Northern Nevada



# Nevada CARES WIC Grocery Shopping & Delivery Pilot Program

## Call Center Script

**Three Square call center script is used to help maintain consistency amongst all call-center staff and to better allow the coordinator to assist the client.**

### **Opt-In:**

Did you fill out a consent form? **If NO; please STOP. Have client go online to complete consent form.**

**If Yes; continue**

### **Website link to fill out consent form:**

English: <https://nevadawic.org/cares-wic-shopping-program/>

Spanish: <https://nevadawic.org/programa-de-compras-cares-wic/>

“Before we collect any information, I would like to make sure you understand that by agreeing to the program, the WIC card you have in your possession will be deactivated and a new card number will be activated for the agency buying and delivering your groceries. If after your first delivery, you prefer to go back to shopping for yourself, please call us to un-enroll in the program, and a new card will be sent to you.”

***If client agrees, please ask; “Would you like to schedule 1 or 2 deliveries for the month of September?” If client only wants one delivery, they will get all their benefits in that one delivery.***

***Make sure you have the WIC app open to be able to input the client’s card (the old one, the one in their possession) to make sure the items wanting to order are available to them. Proceed to electronic intake form. Once question 13 is completed on electronic intake form, you may go to end of call to be able to finish with the client However, do not close the electronic intake form yet.***

**End of Call:** Our agency partner (name of agency partner) will be calling you to schedule your delivery. Please be available the day of your scheduled delivery, just in case the store does not have your requested item and the shopper needs to call you for a replacement. Lastly, remember to call us back between the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> next month to place your order in for October.



***Once you have finished with the caller. Please fill out the paper intake form. Go to Ryan to get the new WIC card number. Go back to the electronic intake form and enter the number given by Ryan. You do not need to worry about question 15 of the electronic intake form. Lastly, we need to activate the PIN number for the new card. You will call; 1-844-892-2932 to activate. Each agency partner will have their own PIN number.***

**EVFS; 0701**

**TCMI; 0702**

**Hopelink; 0703**

***For second time callers, please ask; “Was the service helpful to you and your family?”***

### **WIC Intake Form**

**A questionnaire used to onboard new WIC clients**

1. Head of household first name and last name
2. Consent form filled out. (yes or no)
3. Head of household DOB
4. Address
5. Zip code
6. Is this the zip code registered with your WIC office? (yes or no)
7. Phone number
8. Current WIC card number
9. WIC home office
  - Sunrise Children’s Foundation
  - Nevada Health Centers
  - Urban League
  - Catholic Charities
10. Which day of the week will be best for your delivery?
11. Would you prefer AM or PM?
12. January 1<sup>st</sup> delivery (grocery items)
13. January 2<sup>nd</sup> delivery (grocery items: specify date when second delivery should be done by)
14. Preferred store
15. Notes
16. Agency referred to?
  - EVFS
  - Hope Link
  - TCMI
17. (For second time callers) was the service helpful to you and your family?
18. New WIC card number
19. Did you call WIC office to activate/deactivate card? (yes or no)
20. Did you activate the PIN number for the new card? (yes or no)
21. Date receipt was sent from agency to three square

