

# California WIC Local Agency Linkages: Information Exchanges

California WIC local agencies partner with healthcare and community programs to facilitate access to WIC services and coordinate care for program participants. The 84 local agencies shared information about their partnerships and linkages in a survey conducted during 2023. This fact sheet summarizes linkages with health information exchanges (HIE) and community information exchanges (CIE). WIC local agency access to the California Immunization Registry (CAIR) is also included.

## Key Findings

- **3 local agencies** (serving about 2.7% of eligible participants) have linkages with HIE organizations, including Serving Communities Health Information Organization, San Mateo County Connected Care, and Los Angeles Network for Enhanced Services .
- **6 local agencies** (serving about 7.2% of eligible participants) have linkages with CIE, including Unite Us (2), 211 (2), Find Help, One Degree, and Lassen Links (in process).
- **13 local agencies** (serving about 14% of eligible participants) can access participant immunization records in CAIR; access is available to all staff (9) or selected staff (4).

For FFY 2023, California WIC caseload, the number of eligible women, infants, and children who could participate in WIC and receive benefits, was 1,017,450. Source: California Dept. of Public Health

## Information Available from HIEs and CIEs

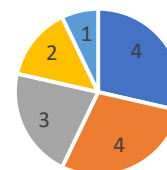
### HIEs

All 3 HIE linkages provide WIC with access to:

- Demographic information (e.g., name, address, birthdate)
- Weight and length/height measurements and hematocrit/hemoglobin test results
- Medical conditions (e.g., diabetes, reflux)
- Pregnancy and delivery information
- Immunization information
- Primary provider name
- Medi-Cal coverage status

All WIC staff can access the HIE in 1 agency, while 2 agencies designate specific WIC HIE users.

### Information Available In CIE Referrals



- Demographic Information (address, phone number, birthdate)
- Name of Referring Provider/Organization
- A Customized "WIC View" for Certification
- Weight, Height/length, Hematocrit/Hemoglobin
- Medi-Cal Coverage Status

## Implementation

- Business Associate Agreements are in place for HIE linkages in 2 agencies; data privacy/security agreements are signed by all staff in the 3rd agency. Partnership agreements, a memorandum of understanding and/or data privacy/security agreements are used for CIE linkages in 4 agencies.
- Training is provided by the HIE or CIE organizations for 5 agencies. Other agencies provide the training "in house".
- 3 agencies update CIEs to indicate a referral was received, the individual could not be contacted, or it is closed; other agencies do not make updates to CIE. Only 1 agency makes participant referrals through a CIE.

## Benefits and Challenges

- Can strengthen healthcare access partnerships for perinatal care, well-child visits, and immunizations.
- Access to information needed for WIC certification reduces the burden on applicants/participants.
- May shorten certification appointments and facilitate phone or video appointment options.
- Increased referrals from health care and other community organizations using a CIE.
- WIC privacy policies require written release to share participant data with providers or referral sources.
- Establishing HIE and CIE linkages, setting up new processes and training WIC and healthcare staff requires time, effort and potential costs.
- Multiple HIEs and CIEs operate in California making it confusing to pursue linkages.