

Author Full Name : Guang Ren**Received Date :** 10/21/2025 09:29 AM**Comments Received :**

Public Comment on the Waivers and State Plans (WiSP) Information Collection
Submitted to: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)
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I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed Waivers and State Plans (WiSP) information collection. As a Registered Dietitian Intern and nutrition researcher with experience in WIC program operations and evaluation, I strongly support USDA's effort to modernize and streamline how state agencies manage waivers and submit State Plans.

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) serves as one of the nation's most effective public health nutrition programs, improving dietary intake, birth outcomes, and long-term health trajectories for low-income, nutritionally at-risk women and young children. In practice, however, administrative inefficiencies and inconsistent waiver management across states can delay program innovation and reduce staff capacity to focus on participant engagement. A centralized system like WiSP has the potential to improve administrative efficiency, reduce paperwork, enhance data transparency and improve communication between USDA and state agencies.

After discussing with Alabama WIC director, Alabama WIC is in support of the tool because:

- It will reduce the recordkeeping workload for staff
- The process will be automated which helps reduce submission errors
- Agencies can review their submitted documents and track the process in real time.

We strongly support the creation of WiSP, at the same time, Alabama WIC recommends that USDA FNS consider include several key factors to ensure the system fulfills its intended purpose without creating unintended administrative burden:

1. Provide adequate, detailed and systematic training and technical assistance for the new system: offer comprehensive training modules and technical assistance before and after launch the new platform.
2. Provide Enough time for staff to learn how to use the new tool before annual state plan submissions
3. Provide the consistent technical support during the early period of time after the new system. It will minimize the disruptions in state plan submissions. In addition, provide the feedback system, the users can report errors and request modifications immediately.
4. Timely communication and updates when documents are submitted.
5. A design that simplifies documentation requirements for submissions.

In conclusion, WiSP represents an important step toward modernization and efficiency within USDA's nutrition programs. We, the Alabama WIC strongly support and appreciate USDA FNS's efforts streamline administrative processes. With the benefits from WiSP, administrative efficiency can translate into more time and resources for direct participant care, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and individualized counseling, that will benefit more WIC participants.

Thank you for considering our comments and for your continued leadership in advancing federal nutrition programs through modernization and innovation.

Sincerely,

Guang Ren, PhD
RD intern, Division of WIC
Bureau of Family Health Services
Guang.Ren@adph.state.al.us