

**Crossroads Design, Development and Implementation WIC System
Status Report
Item 295 D of Chapter 3 of the 2012 Special Session I Virginia Acts of Assembly**

The Virginia Department of Health's Division of Community Nutrition is a partner with the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) programs in Alabama, North Carolina, and West Virginia in the Crossroads Consortium. The Consortium is one of three groups working in conjunction with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to design, develop, and implement State Agency Model (SAM) management information systems which will be available for transfer to WIC programs in other states and territories.

This report details the project's progress and is submitted pursuant to Item 295 D of the 2012 Appropriations Act. Item 295 D requires the State Health Commissioner to provide written reports annually to the Chairmen of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees on the progress of the multi-state procurement of a database formally known as the Crossroads WIC System. The written report must describe the division's efforts to ensure that through system design and procurement, adequate participant access can be achieved without the current use of slotting or other similar vendor limiting criteria and that the new system allows peer groups to be changed to reflect marketplace dynamics and ensures a more equitable vendor comparison. The Division's efforts to coordinate and collaborate with stakeholders must also be included in the report.

Development of the Crossroads system continued in 2012 and User Acceptance Testing (UAT) is scheduled for 2013. The Virginia WIC team has reviewed Functional Design Documents for each module of the Crossroads system. Subject matter experts from Virginia participated in hands-on review of the Finance, Food Maintenance, and Vendor Management screens at the Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC) facility in Overland Park, Kansas. Integration testing for partner systems began in June 2012. Work on several outstanding change requests will continue through February 2013 and the application will enter formal UAT in March 2013.

The Crossroads system will be implemented as fully Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) functional, supported by the concurrent development of eWIC. eWIC is an EBT system that includes the use of an electronic food prescription that specifies particular food items, quantities of the food items that can be purchased, the time period within which the food items must be purchased, and the maximum value associated with the food item purchases. Implementation of eWIC will include the development and implementation of business policies, processes and procedures relating to EBT as well as the implementation of an information system interface to automate the issuance, redemption and settlement of food benefits. Xerox is the EBT Processor for the Virginia WIC Program. In 2012, design of the eWIC system was completed and integration testing with Crossroads began. The Crossroads/eWIC interface has been through an initial round of integration testing and the final round is schedule to begin October 2012. The Virginia WIC Program has completed an assessment of retailer point-of-sale equipment in Virginia and is working with individual retailers to determine their specific enablement plan for accepting eWIC transactions. The Virginia WIC Program is also preparing to release a sub-grant application to point-of-sale Value Added Resellers for funding to integrate eWIC into their current systems.

In 2011, the Crossroads development contractor, CSC, requested an additional extension to the project schedule to complete several outstanding change requests. The extension, which is under review by USDA, confirms that UAT for Crossroads and eWIC will begin March 2013, pilot August 2013, and have Consortium-wide rollout December 2013.

The Division continues to hold quarterly Retailer Advisory Committee as well as monthly eWIC Retailer Workgroup meetings. Every Retailer Advisory Committee meeting includes a brief eWIC update, as well as an opportunity for retailers to ask questions related to the Program's future direction pertaining to Crossroads and eWIC. In addition, the eWIC Retailer Workgroup represents the Virginia WIC retailer community as an advocacy group to identify questions, concerns, and issues impacting retailers throughout development, testing, and rollout of eWIC.

In 2011, the Virginia WIC Program commissioned an outside consultant, Mikelson and Associates, to complete an independent analysis of the current peer group structure and make recommendations regarding the use of other standards for this business requirement. This analysis included completing structured interviews with a cross section of retailers. The executive summary of the final report was shared with retailers in June 2011. Following analysis of the results, the Virginia WIC Program announced at the Retailer Advisory Committee meeting held September 8, 2011 that it would no longer employ slots as a vendor limiting criteria and, in addition, the peer group structure would be revised to reduce the number of peer groups from 18 to 8. This change was implemented within the current WICNET management information system effective October 1, 2011. The Virginia WIC Program validated during the periodic development review (PDR) in July 2011 that the processes being implemented to eliminate slots and restructure the peer groups will continue to be supported within the Crossroads and eWIC applications. At this time, Virginia has no plans to re-implement vendor slots or limiting criteria with either WICNET or Crossroads.