

August-September 2014 Update

The project continues to move forward as scheduled. State IT team members from DII, AHS and the Health Department worked through September to stand up the servers that will host the Ceres MIS, and “talk” with the Xerox EBT host system. Preparation also commenced for loading the Ceres application for testing. Most of the new hardware (PCs, laptops, etc) that will be needed in the District Offices has been delivered, and IT staff is busy readying it for use by WIC staff.

As announced last month, Rutland District Office will serve as the pilot site for Ceres and eWIC. Following a three month pilot, an evaluation, and upon receipt of a “Go” from USDA/FNS, rollout is scheduled to begin in October 2015, with each of the eleven remaining offices rolled out in a two-week cycle. The tentative roll-out schedule is:

Order	Month/Year	Local Agency
Pilot	May 2015	Rutland
2	October 2015	Bennington
3	October 2015	Springfield
4	November 2015	Brattleboro
5	November 2015	White River
6	December 2015	St. Johnsbury
7	January 2016	Newport
8	January 2016	Morrisville
9	February 2016	St. Albans
10	February 2016	Burlington
11	March 2016	Barre
12	March 2016	Middlebury

The conversation plan for legacy clinic data has been completed and test runs completed as well. Data on current participants will be pre-loaded for each District Office the week before their “go live.” All data on WIC retail vendors is already in Ceres, and ready for use in testing.

The User Acceptance Testing (UAT) plan is nearly complete, and much of the work of the state staff and our Ceres and eWIC contractors is gearing up for the testing phase. UAT will extend from January through March 2015, and the core testing team will be representatives from the District Offices, who will then become the DO Ceres “SuperUsers,” providing support for their colleagues during roll-out and into ongoing operation.

State staff and the Ceres contractor, Ciber, worked diligently in August and September to finalize the Training Plan and Training Materials for Ceres. Staff staff, UAT testers, and state Help Desk staff will undergo the one-week intensive training for Ceres users the first week in January. During roll-out, the first week of the roll-out cycle will include this intensive training for each DO.

Planning is also taking shape for how participants will be introduced to retail shopping (instead of home delivery) for their WIC food benefits, and using an eWIC card. Rutland DO will begin to implement the pilot participant education materials and plans in January 2015, allowing a six-month education period before Rutland WIC participants’ cards become active for their July 2016 food benefits.