

Universal Interface

How to Connect MIS & EBT Systems So They Work!



Which system does what?



- Central question to all EBT-MIS integration projects
- Some example questions:
 - Who maps food packages to categories/subcategories?
 - Who provides the primary interface to maintain benefits?
 - Who provides the interface to maintain cards and cardholders?
 - Who maintains NTE prices?
 - Who manages UPC items?

Our Guiding Philosophy



- Minimize amount of data exchange
- Minimize points of failure
- Minimize potential data synchronization issues
- Let each system deal with data that is “natural” to itself
- System with most data to support a feature implements that feature
- Maintain seamless user experience
 - In many projects, this goal competes with the other goals

Some Counterpoints



- WIC authorities are accustomed to controlling their data through the MIS
- There is a perception that the EBT system is more difficult to control



Functional Area	DB of Record	User Interface	Notes
EBT Security Role Maintenance	EBT/MIS	Both	MIS Master of MIS User / EBT Master of EBT Users
Account Maintenance	MIS	MIS	EBT system maintains account demographics, but account set-up, update, and deactivation is initiated from the MIS
Benefit Maintenance	MIS	MIS	
LA / Clinic Maintenance	MIS	MIS	Would be useful in EBT system to enhance query and reporting
Retailer Maintenance	MIS	MIS	Includes peer group maintenance
Category/Subcategory Maintenance	NUPC	NUPC	
Cardholder/Card Maintenance	EBT	Either	
Reconciliation (MIS-EBT Auto-Reconciliation)	MIS	MIS	EBT will transmit a file of activity to the MIS for reconciliation with MIS daily activity
Redemption Batch File	EBT	MIS	The EBT system will make a daily activity file available to the MIS. A State Agency may choose not to use the file.
View EBT Balance / Transaction History	EBT	Either	
UPC Maintenance	NUPC	NUPC	
NTE Calculations and Maintenance	EBT	EBT	
Retailer Bank Maintenance	EBT	EBT	
Financial Settlement and Reconciliation	EBT	EBT	
Card Inventory Management	EBT	EBT	Optional / enhanced functionality



Example: Map Food Packages for EBT



- It is certainly possible for the EBT system to map the state's food packages
- However, each state may have intricacies in the way they set up food packages
- Since the MIS “owns” food package information, it is natural for the MIS to provide the mechanism for mapping

Example: Maintain Benefits



- Today, the MIS maintains the paper benefit
- The MIS determines benefits based on complex FNS and state criteria
- With EBT, food packages must be mapped to categories, subcategories, and quantities
- Since the MIS already handles these intricate criteria, the MIS should continue to maintain benefits

Example: Card Issuance



- The concept of using a card as a benefit instrument is new with EBT
- The MIS does not currently house card data
- The MIS really has no need for card data except to communicate it to the EBT system
- So, the EBT system will be responsible for issuing cards

Example: NTE Maintenance



- With EBT, the general desire is to have NTE prices calculated from historical redemption data
- The EBT system already has this information
- The MIS does not necessarily currently collect detailed item level redemption information
- Therefore, it makes sense for the EBT system to compute NTE information

Example: UPC Maintenance



- With the possible exception of formula, many MIS do not currently maintain UPCs for all WIC items
- The EBT system certainly needs this information to validate purchases
- Since many items are common across WIC agencies, an effort to maintain UPCs at the national level is underway
- This effort is known as NUPC (National UPC Database)

Interface Methods



- Web services
 - A web service is a way for systems to talk to each other
- File exchanges
- Direct screen links