



POLICY: Local WIC programs shall conduct outreach activities on a regular basis and at least annually via the local media to inform potential participants about the availability of WIC program benefits, eligibility criteria, and program locations.

PURPOSE: To ensure that no potential participant goes unserved due to lack of knowledge about the WIC program.

RELEVANT REGULATIONS: 7 CFR §246.4 ¶(a)(5)—State Plan; Requirements; Affirmative Action Plan
7 CFR §246.4 ¶(a)(7)— State Plan; Requirements
7 CFR §246.14 ¶(c)(3)—Program Costs; The Cost of Outreach Services
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OREGON WIC PPM REFERENCES: ♦225—State Outreach
♦325—Caseload Management
♦452—Civil Rights
♦460—Program Incentive Items

DEFINITIONS: *Outreach* Activities performed to communicate the availability of WIC program benefits, eligibility criteria, and program locations to potential participants in the community.

Media A channel or system of communication which is used to reach a broad community.

PROCEDURES:

Annual requirement 1.0 At a minimum, each local program must announce the availability of WIC benefits on an annual basis through a local media source (i.e. radio station, television station, local newspaper).

Documentation

1.1 Local programs shall track all outreach efforts, regardless of whether a media source chooses to use the submitted outreach material (article, PSA, etc.). Documentation provides a record of required annual outreach activities, a listing of efforts and accomplishments, and a future resource for outreach ideas.

1.2 Documentation must be available for review during the biennial WIC program review to ensure the minimum requirement is met for annual outreach through a local media source. The documentation should include the date of contact, a description of the activity, the person or organization involved, and a description of the materials provided. Keep copies of outreach materials, newspaper submissions, PSA's etc. that are developed or used by the local program.

LOCAL PROGRAM OUTREACH, cont.

- Assessment* 2.0 The staff of each local WIC program shall:
- Assess the outreach needs of their program and service area;
 - Project the extent of outreach needed to reach maximum caseload;
 - Determine how much time and money the local program can dedicate to outreach activities;
 - Consider the unique aspects of each community so that outreach activities can be tailored to meet local needs.
- Caseload management* 2.1 Select outreach activities in conjunction with current caseload management policies. Estimate the potential response to outreach activities and compare this to the local program's ability to handle increased requests for service. See ♦325—Caseload Management.
- Target populations* 2.2 Review the characteristics of the current caseload and determine who is being served. Compare these factors to census data and other sources of local demographic information. Identify underserved portions of the local population such as teen parents, specific socioeconomic groups, working families, ethnic groups, isolated communities, Medicaid recipients, migrants, or Head Start families.
- Target to highest priority first* Target outreach first to the highest priority unserved women and infants in these groups, then expand efforts as current caseload management policies permit.
- 2.2.1 Determine the best methods for reaching targeted populations. Survey WIC participants prior to initiating outreach. Ask how they found out about the WIC program. Identify and contact key people, organizations, or groups within these populations for assistance in locating and communicating with potential participants.
- Local resources* 2.3 If needed, research the availability of local resources to help with the development, distribution, and costs of outreach materials. Resources might include grants, volunteers, church groups, or philanthropic organizations that are supportive of women's, infants', and children's health issues.
- Outreach strategies* 3.0 Develop outreach strategies for target populations based on local program research, assessment, and available resources. Strategies might include marketing program benefits, developing outreach materials, or soliciting referrals.
- Marketing* 3.1 Communicate WIC information to the community. Inform the community of location changes, new services, or special events. Make announcements in appropriate languages. Use the following methods as well as social marketing theories when appropriate:

LOCAL PROGRAM OUTREACH, *cont.*

(Marketing:)

- 3.1.1 Market WIC services through local newspapers, newsletters, and radio stations. Contact television stations regarding public service announcements. Coordinate television outreach with other surrounding area programs.
- 3.1.2 Encourage participants to talk to friends and relatives about WIC services. Develop word-of-mouth or tell-a-friend campaigns.
- 3.1.3 Include WIC stuffers in local utility bills, newborn discharge packets from local hospitals, and emergency food baskets.
- 3.1.4 Send information home with students who participate in school lunch or summer feeding programs.
- 3.1.5 Include outreach information in client newsletters provided by other community agencies (e.g., Head Start, etc.).
- 3.1.6 Provide WIC outreach information to grocery store checkers when facilitating checker training.

Outreach materials

- 3.2 Develop local outreach materials that are tailored to attract target populations. Make materials easy to read and understand. Use the most common language and dialect for target populations. Display culturally appropriate graphics. Describe WIC as a nutrition program that includes services for working families.

Information to include on materials

- 3.2.1 Include the following information on outreach materials:
 - Local program address and phone numbers
 - Operating hours
 - Availability of program services
 - Type of program benefits
 - Eligibility criteria
 - Non-discrimination statement and civil rights complaint procedure (see ♦452—Civil Rights).

Note: The nondiscrimination statement is not required to be printed on items that are impractical to print on because of their size or configuration (e.g., cups, magnets, pens, etc.).

- 3.2.2 The cost of outreach services is an allowable administrative and program services cost. However, items/materials used exclusively as incentives for participation and that lack a clear outreach function are not allowable costs. See ♦460—Program Incentive Items.

Places to do outreach

- 3.3 Post outreach materials such as newsletters, handouts, brochures, posters, pamphlets, or fliers in locations frequented by potential WIC participants. Refer to ♦225—State Outreach, regarding available outreach materials. Document where outreach materials are placed and revisit these sites periodically to replace and update materials as needed.

LOCAL PROGRAM OUTREACH, cont.

(Places to do outreach:)

3.3.1 WIC information might be available in the following locations:

- Grocery stores
- Churches
- Shopping centers
- Day care programs
- Farmers' markets
- Laundromats
- Libraries
- Post offices
- Community centers
- Schools
- Health clinics
- Adult and Family Service offices
- Civic organizations
- Local newspaper

Referrals

3.4 Create strong referral systems. Establish contact and maintain referral networks with clinics, agencies, and organizations that serve potential WIC participants. Present WIC information at workshops, meetings, in-services, or conferences attended by these groups. Distribute outreach materials to assist in making referrals to WIC.

3.4.1 Referrals might be solicited from the following:

- Hospitals and clinics
- Doctor's offices
- Teen parent programs
- Unemployment offices
- Adult and Family Service offices
- Food banks
- Indian tribal organizations
- Children, Adults and Families (CAF)
- Foster parent programs
- Community action agencies
- Civic and minority organizations
- Head Start programs
- Migrant farmworker organizations
- Women's shelters
- Homeless facilities
- Social service agencies
- Neighborhood councils
- Midwives

LOCAL PROGRAM OUTREACH, cont.

- Evaluation*** 4.0 WIC recommends that local programs evaluate outreach efforts. Plan future activities based on the results of evaluation.
- 4.1 Survey WIC participants prior to initiating outreach. Ask how they found out about the WIC program. Repeat the survey process following outreach activities. Compare this information to identify the most successful outreach techniques. Solicit participant ideas for effectively reaching other potential participants. ★

- REFERENCES:**
1. California WIC Program. *WIC Program Manual*, Certification Section, pp. 250-10 to 250-30. 1991.
 2. Washington State WIC Program. *Washington State WIC Manual*, Outreach: Chapter 4, Section 1, pp. 1-6. 1994.
 3. Texas WIC Program. *WIC Outreach Ideas*. 1993.
 4. Food and Nutrition Service. Memo, WRO 807-C, "Allowability of Costs for Program Incentive Items." July 28, 1989.
 5. Food and Nutrition Service. Memo, WRO 818-B, "Use of the USDA's Nondiscrimination Statement." October 1995.

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