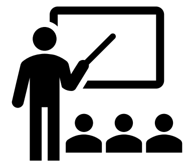
Part 8 Training assessment

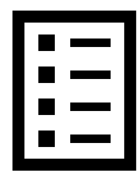
How do you know what training is needed?



In order for your agency to perform at its best, the staff working there need to perform at their best. Given the differences in staff, the differences in agencies, and the differences in organizations – that often means doing more training than what is is required by policy or by the state WIC office. Part of your job is to determine what training is needed for staff to perform their job well and keep your clinic running at peak performance. There are lots of ways to figure out what training is needed.

Assessing training needs may be done on either the individual staff person level or at the group level for staff in your agency.

Assessing agency training needs



Sometimes many staff within an agency have the same training needs. When these are identified, you are likely going to need to plan staff training for the whole group. Here are several ways you can assess agency training needs.

Local agency reviews
Each agency is reviewed by a WIC State Compliance Reviewer every 2 years. The results of that review are summarized in a report that is sent to your coordinator and agency administrator. Any problems or deficits are listed in the report as "findings" or as "recommendations." This information can be used to identify training needs.

- Review the reports to identify issues that staff training could improve.
- Review the last several reports to see if there are patterns, such as the same finding is repeated in more than one report.
- Work with your agency coordinator to identify the highest priority issues to address with training.
- Consider contacting your assigned state nutrition consultant about providing technical assistance to help resolve any identified concerns.

Agency self-evaluations
On years they are not being reviewed by the state, local agencies are required to do a self-evaluation similar to the local agency review. Any issues or concerns that are identified during the self-evaluation may require training.

- Reviewing the results of the self-evaluation may help you identify training that can be done prior to the next local agency review, which may prevent future findings.
- Your coordinator may ask you to help conduct the self-evaluation.
- Your required annual observation of certifiers can be a part of the self-evaluations.

Other assessments

- The state WIC office sometimes conducts assessments of an aspect of local clinic operations or ask agencies to complete a specific assessment. For example, the annual Nutrition Services Plan may ask your agency to conduct an assessment covering one aspect of providing nutrition services. The results of these assessments may help you identify training needs.
- Consider asking staff what areas they would like to develop further or they need support to improve.

Learning activity

Locate and review your agency's most recent state review report and talk with your coordinator about what is included.

Assessing individual staff training needs

Each staff person is unique and will have their own strengths and areas that can be developed further. Identifying staff that would benefit from specific coaching or support can improve the whole teams morale and performance.

Staff observations
Observing staff as they perform their work is the most direct way to assess what they need to improve. While the state requires a minimum of 1 observation per year, many agencies do more frequent observations. This is especially true of newer staff. Here are some considerations:

- Schedule observations on a regular basis, such as monthly or quarterly.

- Try to observe staff doing a variety of activities, for example, different appointment types.
- Use one of the observation guides with scoring criteria. The criteria provide concrete expectations that make it easier to identify specific skills to work on. The guides also can be used to communicate expectations to staff.

Use the competency models

As mentioned earlier, there are competency models for every key position in WIC. The competency models describe what someone in that position should be able to do. That means you should be able to observe them using the necessary knowledge to take appropriate action.

For example, in the certifier competency model:

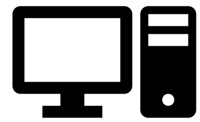
Certifier Competency model	•11 core areas, including #3 Principles of Life-cycle nutrition.
Principles of Life-cycle nutrition	•Includes multiple knowledge areas, such as infant nutrition, child nutrition, and prenatal nutrition.
Infant Nutrition Competen-cies	•Identifies the impact of infant development on feeding. •Understands the nutritional needs of infants. •Makes correct recommendations regarding infant feeding. •Educates participants about nutrition-related problems experienced by infants.
Requires knowledge from	•Breastfeeding Levels 1 and 2 modules •Infant Feeding and Nutrition module, Infant Formula module •Baby Behaviors and Responsive Parenting courses.
Counseling	•When observing, you would hear counseling that reflects the required knowledge.

To use the competency models to assess training needs:

- You will need to be familiar with the content before you can assess whether a staff person meets the competency requirements.

- The competencies covered in each training module or online course are listed on the completion form. You may find that even after a staff person has completed the training, there are competencies that they need to work on.
- Consider selecting one competency area to focus on when observing experienced staff.

Chart reviews



Entering accurate and complete documentation in the data system is an important skill WIC staff must demonstrate. Regular review of participant charts will help you identify areas where a staff person needs to improve their documentation.

- Consider using the state Participant Record Review tool to complete chart reviews.
- Review the charts of participants seen by every certifier and of a variety of categories and appointment types. The tool lists reports that you can use to identify different types of participant charts to review.
- When looking at charts, think about what you would need to know if you were the next person to see the participant. Would you know how to follow-up? Remember "If it isn't written in the chart, it didn't get done."

Readiness to change

Staff are all different, and their openness to making any changes will also be different. This difference is often referred to as their "stage of change." For example, if a person is really ready to make a change but just hasn't gotten started, that stage of change is called "preparation." These people need much different support than someone who is in "pre-contemplation" who is not interested in changing. Making a guess at what stage of change a staff person is at may help you decide what training strategies would work best for them. The Stages of Change Overview and Strategies for Staff document describes some of these differences.

- Use the document to help you identify which stage of change a staff person is in.
- Select one of the training strategies suggested for the stage of change you think the staff persom may be in.

What you need to do

Regularly assess the training needs in your agency.