

Inviting Partners to WIC to Address Food Insecurity

This document is meant to be used as a guide to support your efforts in strengthening partnerships with local food security partners. There are many different ways in which you can strengthen these partnerships and learn more about each other’s services. This guidance replicates the Partnerships Café’ activity that was hosted during the Food Insecurity Train-the-trainer workshop.

**Activity:** Host a partner agency at WIC to learn more about that partner’s program and how they can benefit WIC families. Facilitate a discussion on barriers and opportunities to strengthening the partnership.

**Purpose:** A deeper understanding of the work our partner agencies do can mean more meaningful referrals for our WIC families. A facilitated in-person discussion is one efficient way to address barriers and opportunities to partnership and access each other’s programs.

**Desired Outcome**:

* WIC staff have a better understanding of **[insert name of partner agency here]** and feel comfortable making a referral, if appropriate
* WIC staff and **[partner agency staff]** have the opportunity to talk through barriers to accessing each other’s resources, and opportunities to strengthen the partnership
* **[Partner agency]** better understands the WIC program

**Questions before you host:**

* Which partner agencies in your community support food insecure families?
* Which of those agencies are you interested in bringing to WIC to address food insecurity?
* Will the format be a round-table discussion, a more formal presentation, or something different? How much do you want the partner agency to present? How much time do you want to have for discussion?
* How much background knowledge does this partner have about WIC?
* When would you like to host this event?

Guidelines to Provide the Partner Agency

*Below is some guidance for the partner agency you are planning to host. You can use the below language once the visit is scheduled to help you prepare for a worthwhile visit.*

“Thank you for your willingness to strengthen our partnership around food security. We are looking forward to your visit. Please prepare a **[insert desired length of presentation]** presentation, including what your role is in the organization, an overview of **[partner agency],** and a few main points you’d like WIC to know about your services.

Guiding questions for the discussion:

* “What does **[partner agency staff]** want WIC staff to know”
* “What do WIC staff want **[partner agency]** staff to know”
* Challenges or barriers to accessing each other’s programs
* Opportunities for partnership and collaboration

If you have outreach materials or materials WIC staff could use to refer to your agency, please bring **[insert # ]** copies.”

Preparing for the Partner Visit

* How will you record what is discussed?
* If the meeting is longer than 2 hours, will there be light refreshments served?
* How will you ensure sustainability of the partnership?
* How will information be shared with staff who miss this meeting, or new staff that are hired after this activity?

**Other ways to strengthen partnerships**

* Participate first-hand. Volunteer with the partner agency. Visiting a food bank, for example, is a great way to see first-hand how to access this partner’s services. Similarly, going through the SNAP or OHP application can be eye-opening for staff who have never done so before.
* Flip the above activity and visit your partners to give a presentation on WIC.
* Use the checklist on strong partnerships that is part of the Participant Guide of the Food Insecurity training as a guide!