

Essential Staff Competency Tables for WIC Nutritionists

This document identifies the competencies for WIC personnel performing the duties of a Local Agency WIC Nutritionist. All WIC Nutritionists must, at a minimum, be competent in the core areas of high risk nutrition counseling and high risk nutrition resources and referrals. The core area of nutrition consultations and technical assistance, describes additional competencies that are desirable and beneficial to the local agency.

Pre-requisite competencies:

When hiring a WIC Nutritionist, individual local agencies determine pre-requisite training, credentials and/or competencies that they expect of nutrition professional. This competency model does not include those basic expectations, but identifies competencies that are necessary to perform the tasks specific to a WIC Nutritionist as outlined in [Policy 661](#).

WIC Nutritionists who also function as Competent Professional Authorities (CPAs):

If the WIC Nutritionist also functions as a CPA (determines participant eligibility and assigns food packages), they must also meet the competencies identified for the CPA in the CPA Competency Model as outlined in [Policy 660](#). The Essential Staff Competency Tables for WIC Nutritionists includes only the competencies that are different than a CPA. It is recommended that all WIC Nutritionists, whether currently performing the functions of a CPA or not, complete the CPA training modules as time permits.

The 2 core areas for WIC Nutritionist competencies include:

1. High risk nutrition counseling
2. High risk nutrition resources and referrals

Optional competencies depending on local agency resources:

3. Nutrition consultations and technical assistance

Each core area is presented in a separate table. The components of the tables and their definitions are listed below:

Core area: A particular area of skill or body of knowledge.

Knowledge required: A specific topic or content area required to achieve the competency.

Competency: Skills, actions, or behaviors related to a specific knowledge requirement.

Training methods and resources: How staff will become competent; identifies state provided materials, training or support.

1. High Risk Nutrition Counseling (Minimum Level Competencies)

Core Competency Area: *Provides individualized counseling for high risk WIC participants*

Knowledge Required	Competency	Training Methods and Resources
Counseling skills for high risk participants	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Uses critical thinking and knowledge of high risk indicators to assess participants. 2. Uses appropriate participant centered counseling techniques for high risk participants. 3. Assists participants in setting specific behavioral goals and actions to improve identified medical and nutritional risks. 4. Applies current evidence based information to education and counseling. 	<p>Chapter 1 of Dietary risk training module</p> <p>Policy 661</p> <p>Policy 820</p> <p>Policy 830</p> <p>Participant Centered Education e-Learning Modules</p>
<p>Principles of nutrition and diet therapy</p> <p>Relevant evidence-based recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Dietetic Association, the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and the International Lactation Consultant Association</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Applies accurate, up-to-date, evidence based nutrition interventions when counseling high risk infants, children, and women. 6. Provides appropriate counseling based on the nutritional requirements of infants, children and women with special health care needs. 7. Provides appropriate counseling in the use of medical formulas for the pediatric and adult population. 8. Provides appropriate counseling for preterm infants. 9. Identifies and recommends specific foods and formulas required as a result of medical diagnoses and chronic disease. 10. Recognizes interactions between drugs and foods and the nutritional implications of medications. 	<p>Life Cycle online modules</p> <p>Diet risk training module</p> <p>Nutrition risk training module</p> <p>Pediatric Nutrition Handbook, AAP*</p> <p>Washington State Department of Health Nutrition Publications</p> <p>Oregon WIC Medical Documentation Form</p> <p>Resource: Nutrition Practice Care Guidelines for Preterm Infants</p>

Knowledge Required	Competency	Training Methods and Resources
		Food-Medication Interactions*
Individual high risk care plans	11. Develops and documents appropriate high risk care plans with high risk participants. 12. Collaborates with the health care provider to coordinate nutrition care of the high risk participant.	Policy 661 Policy 765 Policy 830

*Print materials available in the local agency WIC Clinic; check with your Training Supervisor as to their location.

2. High Risk Resources and Referrals (Minimum Level Competencies)

Core Competency Area: *Accesses and utilizes resources for delivery of high risk services*

Knowledge Required	Competency	Training Methods and Resources
Availability of medical, nutritional, and social services for high risk participants	1. Makes appropriate client referrals into health care and to community resources.	Policy 880
Community and state resources	1. Maintains professional relationships/networks with other health, nutrition and social service professionals.	Participate in quarterly LAWN meetings Attend State and National WIC meetings as applicable
Therapeutic and Advanced Nutrition Resources	2. Accesses and utilizes current references and resources as needed when making recommendations to clients.	

3. Nutrition Consultations and Technical Assistance

Core Competency Area: *Provides professional nutrition expertise to the local agency. The competencies listed below are not required for all WIC Nutritionists; competencies are applicable as time and funding allow in each local agency*

Knowledge Required	Competency	Training Methods and Resources
WIC staff training	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provides training to WIC staff on nutrition topics, and local agency or state nutrition policies and procedures including appropriate referrals to the WIC nutritionist. 2. Promotes professional nutrition practices 	Policy 440
Local agency nutrition education planning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Reviews education materials for accuracy and appropriateness. 4. Collaborates with WIC Coordinator and local agency staff in preparing the annual nutrition education plan. 5. Assists with implementation and monitoring of the nutrition education plan. 6. Utilizes results from the evaluation of the nutrition education plan to monitor and support quality nutrition education programs. 7. Writes and/or reviews group nutrition education lesson plans. 	Policy 840 Policy 850
Nutrition policies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Develops nutrition policies specific to the local agency as needed. 9. Assists with development and monitoring of policies and procedures for referral of high risk participants to the WIC Nutritionist. 	Policy 420 Run TWIST High risk participant report: Client processes→Output→Reports→Nutrition Education→High risk→High risk participant listing
Consultations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Provides on-going nutrition consultation and nutrition education to local agency WIC staff. 11. Provides technical assistance and consultation to other public health department programs or other organizations as applicable. 	

References

Oregon WIC Policy Manual

<http://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyPeopleFamilies/wic/Pages/wicpolicy.aspx>

Nutrition Services Standards, USDA – FNS, October 2001

Personnel in Public Health 2009 The Association of State and Territorial Public Health Nutrition Directors

<https://www.asphn.org/>

Crosswalk of the Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals and the Essential Services, May 2010 Public Health Foundation

http://www.phf.org/resourcestools/Pages/PublicHealth_Compencies_and_Essential_Services.aspx