

WIC Outreach Morsel Series Community Assessment

December
2012

Welcome to the final installment in the WIC Outreach Planning Series, Community Assessment. This is one of six focus areas to support local agencies in developing a strategic, comprehensive outreach plan to build and sustain caseload, and improve delivery of service.

Community Assessment – One Approach & Getting Started

Conducting a community assessment can provide a snapshot of where your WIC program is reaching, or not reaching, families in your community. It can also reveal how your program may be perceived, as you have conversations with local partners. Information collected from a community assessment can provide valuable insight when creating or updating your outreach plan.



This past summer the state collaborated with Salud Medical Center to provide a unique learning opportunity for a bilingual Portland State University (PSU) student intern, Armando. Armando's learning objectives included: 1) *assessing current outreach activities for Salud WIC, and 2) providing recommendations for reaching new WIC participants.* His first priority in identifying outreach to new participants involved **understanding what was happening in the service area.** His approach included the following:

- Meeting with key people at the Department of Human Services (DHS) offices;
- Connecting with larger Spanish-speaking churches in the area; and
- Creating a partner database on Google maps. This map shows the location of referral organizations in relation to WIC clinic sites. (A slice of this map is included in the graphic above. The green houses=WIC, the blue bubbles=partners, and the TV frames=radio stations.)

Some follow up from Armando's assessment included radio spots, with one focusing on preventing anemia with iron and vitamin C foods. The radio station is now interested in participating in quarterly programs with WIC! The partner database link on Google is being used by Salud sites in both Oregon and Washington to identify near-by partners.

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This approach to assessment was specific and appropriate for the Salud community, and pieces of it may be appropriate for your area as well. To get started with you own community assessment, here are a few first steps:

1. Identify and create a list of all community partners that may touch potential WIC participants. If your service area is large, start with one or two key agencies (DHS, Head



Start, or other health department programs). Be sure to write down partners you communicate with regularly, in addition to those you have yet to reach. Collect addresses and a main contact for newly identified partners. Use *Table A – Identifying Community Partners* to begin, or create your own list in an excel file.

2. Send a letter to your list of partners along with the WIC Annual Report, and an NWA calendar (if supplies still exist). Contact them and set up time to talk about ways to strengthen communication and referrals between your agencies. Use the *Letter for Partners Template* to get started (note the high lightened areas are for your local information).

If you are interested in learning more details about the Salud assessment and outreach project, please contact Nhu at (971) 673.0050 or at nhu.h.to-haynes@state.or.us.

A special thanks to Lynnetta Doellefeld and the Salud staff for being amazing mentors for the PSU intern!

Table A - Identifying Community Partners

It is important to establish partnerships within your community to ensure good communication, cooperation, and mutual referrals. Use this template to begin creating a centralized location for your community partner list. Here are some organizations to consider adding to your list: Head Start, food pantry, hospital, DHS office (SNAP and OHP), OSU Extension, family shelters, health department programs (immunization, Mother’s Care, family planning, etc.) and health care providers to name a few!

Community partners contact list:

Organization & Address	Contact person	Phone number	Email	Notes/Last visit
Sample: Head Start 123 Jump St, Newport OR zip	Sample: Julia Joos Coordinator	Sample: xxx-xxx-xxxx	Sample: jjoos@headstart.org	Sample: Aug 2012 – Met with Julia and Jill to discuss data exchange. Check back Feb 2013.

Date

Dear Partner of WIC,

Happy New Year! The Oregon Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) has had an exciting year, and we wanted you to thank you for being a part of it. Add local accomplishments here or you can use something general like this..... This last year WIC launched new awareness campaigns throughout the state in support of breastfeeding, and have updated numerous online nutrition education resources.

Thank you for supporting WIC, as we continue to better serve our community. We appreciate all that you do to refer families to WIC and have included a:

- World of Tastes on my Plate, 2013 WIC wall calendar; and an
- Oregon WIC Annual Report

WIC is proud to be working alongside you and other community partners to emphasize *Healthy foods, Healthy messages, and Healthy families*. Thank you for your ongoing support of WIC as a vital part of public health and an essential nutrition education program.

Please feel free to contact me directly if you have any questions. I, and the staff at the Blank County WIC program, look forward to your continued partnership in the New Year!

Sincerely,

Name & Contact Information

WIC County Coordinator