

Outreach Campaign: Checklist for Local WIC Agencies

The purpose of this checklist is to provide local agencies with a myriad of options for outreach activities. It is by no means a list of activities that local agencies *must* complete, but merely a broad list of ideas for outreach. In fact, some of the suggested activities may not be applicable to your agency. However, many of the ideas listed here may serve as a springboard for developing your own outreach ideas.

This checklist will cover the following areas.

- ❑ person-to-person outreach
- ❑ targeting special groups
- ❑ creating referral systems
- ❑ media
- ❑ increasing accessibility
- ❑ a list of organizations



Encourage person-to-person outreach.

Ask participants to bring friends and family members who may qualify for WIC benefits. Provide written materials for them to hand to a friend or relative.

Host special contests like "Bring A Friend to WIC." The participant who brings the most eligible people to WIC in a specified time wins prizes that have been donated. Some agencies may be able to incorporate this into the Baby Bucks Program if they have one.

Hire WIC clients or volunteers to be outreach workers to recruit women from local communities.

Remind clients of appointments ahead of time. Make special efforts to get women who missed appointments back, including making phone calls (some agencies use an automated calling system), or mailing post cards or letters.



Target special groups and families.

Send direct mail to potential participants in local utility or telephone bills or paycheck stuffers (*try DHHS #0021*). Keep in mind that some of your own staff may be eligible for WIC and do not know it!

Conduct special outreach campaigns targeted at specific groups, such as minorities, disabled individuals, migrant farm workers, homeless families, non-English-speaking participants, pregnant women in their first trimester, pregnant teens, teen moms, employed women, rural residents, to name a few.

Place doorknob hangers with WIC information in target neighborhoods or sponsor a door-to-door campaign on a Saturday to sign up women and children for appointments.



Create intra-agency referral systems.

Ask local Medicaid staff if you can set up a table in their offices once a week to make appointments while their clients wait. Then reciprocate. Invite Medicaid staff to take applications at WIC offices.

Maternal Care Coordinators (MCCs), Maternal Outreach Workers (MOWs), Child Service Coordinators (CSCs), and Health Check Coordinators routinely work with clients who may be WIC-eligible. Provide them with information and materials (*DHHS # 0020, 0066, 0066S*) on WIC and discuss their role in getting potential eligibles into WIC.

Hold a brown bag or potluck lunch honoring staff in another department. Give a short presentation about WIC thanking them for working so closely with you and your program.

Provide in-service presentations on WIC to immunization staff, public health nurses, school lunch staff, and community and migrant health workers.



Ask the medical community to refer.

Meet with doctors who are Medicaid providers (including Carolina Access and HMO's) or manage large practices, such as obstetricians, pediatricians, and family practice physicians.

Explain the eligibility criteria, the benefits to participants, and how they can refer people to WIC. Provide them with copies of the blue "WIC Makes a Difference" outreach folders (*DHHS # 1037F*). Leave waiting-room materials (*DHHS # 0021,0024*) and explain how they can get additional copies.

Share WIC information with childbirth educators and midwives. Include breastfeeding materials.

Ask local pharmacists to include WIC information (*DHHS #0021*) with prenatal and Medicaid prescriptions.

Talk about WIC with local hospital staff. Contact social workers, OB and emergency-room nurses and physicians, and administrators. Tell them about WIC and ask them to refer potential clients. Leave materials with your address and telephone number, including the "WIC Makes a Difference" outreach folders (*DHHS #1037F*). Some agencies perform in-hospital certifications to new mothers upon delivery.



Build community partnerships that include referral systems.

Place a booth at a local store or shopping mall to explain WIC, who it serves, and how to make appointments. Ask permission from the store manager.

Send information home with students who participate in the school lunch or summer feeding program.

Create an in-school program for teen moms or develop a way to bring these young women to WIC regularly without missing school.

Ask churches and other religious groups to spread the word about WIC. Make sure all churches in your area have WIC flyers or brochures for potential clients (*DHHS # 0020, 0021, 0066, 0066S*).

Work with Head Start, day care centers, Smart Start coalitions, NC Health Choice outreach coalitions, and other agencies that serve potential WIC applicants (*try DHHS # 0024*).

Establish WIC Growth Task Force for the community. Task Force members should include key leaders from the community who serve WIC eligibles, the medical community, and women who are WIC eligible. Address infrastructure issues and better integration of community resources related to WIC growth.

Present WIC information to many different organizations, businesses, and clubs. Offer training to appropriate personnel to inform about WIC which includes a description of the WIC Program, eligibility criteria, the location of local agency and outlying sites (including addresses and telephone numbers), civil rights statement, and a contact person.

Send thank-you notes to all who refer potential clients to WIC. Let them know they are performing an important community service.



Produce print and broadcast media pieces.

Put posters (*DHHS # 1033P, 1034P, 1035P, 1036P*), flyers, or brochures where participants will be. Consider grocery stores, laundromats, child care centers, resale and thrift shops, maternity shops, church fellowship halls, and employment offices (see page 6 for places to disseminate outreach materials). Please refer to Chapter 4 in the WIC Program Manual for information about the required non-discrimination statement.

Use bus cards that travel targeted routes or billboards. They have worked well in many locations.

Ask local newspapers, television, local cable access stations, and radio stations to play public service announcements and cover stories about your clinics. If you expand your hours, open a Saturday clinic, or hire new staff, let people know. Use National Nutrition Month in March and Breastfeeding Week (the first week of August) as a focus for stories involving the WIC Program. Please refer to Chapter 10, Section 3 in the WIC Program Manual for more information about working with the media.

Emphasize that WIC is a nutrition program for working families! Make your clinics accessible to working families.



Make WIC user friendly and accessible.

Provide transportation if resources permit.

Provide waiting room toys or activities for children.

Provide extended hours during lunch, the evening, early morning, or on the weekend.

Minimize waiting time to get an appointment and during clinic visits.

Increase the number of sites that offer WIC services.

Recommend that participants use proxies to pick up food instruments.
(See Chapter 8, Section 6 of the WIC Manual – Procedures for Proxies)

Mail food instruments when no other option is available for hardship cases. (See chapter 8, Section 7 of the WIC Manual - Mailing Food Instruments)

Organizations for Outreach and Referral

Battered Women's Shelters

Breastfeeding Women -- organizations for

Carolina Access (Medicaid managed care network)

Community Action Agencies

Counseling Services / Health Services for:

- ▶ Alcohol and Drug Abuse
- ▶ Child Service Coordination (CSC)
- ▶ Expanded Foods and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) -- Co-op. Ext.
- ▶ Family Planning
- ▶ Immunization
- ▶ Prenatal Care
- ▶ Well Child Care (include Health Check Coordinators)

Department of Social Services

- ▶ Eligibility Intake Workers
- ▶ Work First Counselors
- ▶ Child Support Enforcement
- ▶ Food Stamps Program
- ▶ Medicaid Program (including Maternity Care Coordinators (MCCs), Maternal Outreach Workers (MOWs))
- ▶ NC Health Choice Coalition (or Health Department designee)

Developmental Evaluation Centers (DECs)

Employment Security Commission

Food Bank

Food Pantries / Meal Programs

Headstart / Day Care Centers

Health Management Organizations (HMO's)

Homeless Shelters

Hospital Nursery Staff

Hospital Outpatient Clinics

Housing Authorities

Hunger Network

Indian Tribal Organizations

Legal Services

Low-Income Citizen Organizations

Mental Health Centers

Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Association

Physicians

Religious Organizations

Rural Health Centers

Smart Start: Contact the Local County Partnership for Children

Urban Indian Organizations

WIC Authorized Vendors (Grocers and Pharmacists)