



January 11, 2008

**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

Food and
Nutrition
Service

3101 Park
Center Drive
Alexandria, VA
22302-1500

Dear WIC State Director:

As required by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), biennial reporting for the 2008 WIC Participant and Program Characteristics Study (PC2008) is now underway. Enclosed is a copy of PC2008 Guidance for States Providing WIC Participant Data for April 2008, the reference month for PC2008. Copies of this guide are being provided to all WIC State agencies and the FNS Regional Offices.

Success of PC2008 Depends on a Speedy Response From WIC State Agencies.

Widespread demand for PC tabulations requires that all WIC State agencies submit PC2008 data as soon after April 2008 as feasible. Abt Associates, the PC2008 contractor, will accept data and review file submissions beginning in May 2008. State cooperation in this effort will expedite data tabulations and will reduce contractor costs in providing data compilation services to FNS. Initial data submissions are required by **August 31, 2008**.

The enclosed manual addresses WIC participant data collection PC2008. PC2008 continues the same general protocols as PC2006, and the changes implemented in 2006 will continue for PC2008. The file layout for the Minimum Data Set (MDS) and Supplemental Data Set (SDS) is identical to that used for PC2006. As a reminder, major changes implemented in 2006 included:

- ***Local agency identification numbers***—WIC State agencies are required to use the full Local Agency ID maintained by FNS in their WIC Local Agency Directory (WIC LAD).
- ***Service site identification number***—WIC State agencies that submitted service site or clinic level data for WIC LAD are asked to include the corresponding service site IDs in their PC2008 submissions.
- ***Race/Ethnicity***—these data must be submitted using the revised specifications required by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The specifications require classification of participants based on ethnicity as well as race.
- ***Nutrition risks***—State agencies may submit up to ten (10) nutrition risk conditions for each participant.
- ***Date of blood test***—has become an MDS variable, required for all participants with reported blood measure.
- ***Food codes***—to accommodate all WIC State agencies, PC data collection allows reporting of up to fourteen (14) food codes.

In order to process State agencies' PC2008 data, Abt Associates requires two types of documentation, which will need to be returned to Abt by **March 31, 2008**:

WIC State Director

Page 2

- ***Nutrition risk worksheet***—States will need to complete this worksheet to indicate whether their data will be provided using the Federal nutrition risk codes agreed upon by FNS and the National WIC Association (established via FNS Policy Memorandum 98-9; Nutrition Risk Criteria), or State codes. State agencies that provide data using their own coding schemes will need to provide a crosswalk between their codes and the Federal nutrition risk codes. In February 2008, Abt Associates will provide you with the nutrition risk worksheet. For your convenience, information your State agency previously provided for PC2006 will be included.
- ***Food code documentation***—is required to provide a translation of the food package codes used by your State agency when prescribing WIC foods. Because coding schemes are unique to State agencies, documentation is needed for Abt Associates to translate State codes into food items and quantities prescribed to WIC participants. States have the option of providing food data in a food package format or in an item-quantity format. The item-quantity format is preferable, if at all possible.

When submitting April 2008 data to Abt Associates, please send the Data Transmittal Worksheet, included in Section VI of the enclosed manual.

Please do not hesitate to contact Ellen Bobronnikov at Abt Associates with any questions or comments you have during the PC2008 data collection period. Ellen may be reached by telephone (617-349-2718), e-mail (PC2008@abtassoc.com), or fax (617-386-8329).

Thank you for your cooperation. Your timely response will make PC2008 a success.

Sincerely,



PATRICIA N. DANIELS
Director
Supplemental Food Programs Division

Enclosure