



# **Michigan WIC Program Outreach Tool Works**

## **GUIDELINES FOR BUILDING CLIENT & MEDIA RELATIONS**

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# 1. Purpose

The purpose of Tool Works is to provide local agencies with the necessary guidance and resources to support local outreach efforts. The WIC outreach tool kit is a handy all-in-one packet of ideas, templates and resources for performing effective WIC outreach. Outreach coordinators can select, customize, and print materials to help them conduct successful outreach campaigns.

Everyone thinks that outreach is a very simple task. We decide who we want for our programs and then we go out and get them. Sounds very easy, simple and quick to do....right? Really in actuality outreach can be just that, but we make it very hard on ourselves, by over conceptualizing outreach and its purpose.

If we don't understand the meaning of outreach, then how can we effectively implement outreach plans?

Let's look at how Webster's Dictionary defines outreach:

“To reach or go beyond; surpass; to extend outward, to reach out. Provide services beyond conventional limits, as to particular segments of a community”

## 2. Overview

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) is a very important source of health and nutritious foods and nutrition education for many pregnant women, new mothers, infants and children up to age five. The Michigan WIC Program's outreach goal is to expand and enhance collaboration between the WIC program and other state wide agencies and organizations serving WIC eligible families in order to promote local WIC referrals. An outreach committee /workgroup advises the Michigan WIC program on state and local outreach efforts, including:

- Developing and distributing outreach materials
- Having and automated WIC hotline (1-800-CALL- WIC) or (1-800-225-5942)
- Attending conferences and community events
- Working with the media

### **Outreach Committee/ Workgroup:**

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services WIC Division Outreach committee/ workgroup consist of five to ten local agency members representing WIC coordinators, nutritionists and outreach coordinators. This group meets 4 times a year to advice MDHHS in designating statewide outreach materials and shaping outreach efforts. The committee developed this outreach tool kit to help all local agencies reach WIC eligible persons, particularly and underserved, working poor, and hard to reach populations as well as improved retention of current clients.

### **3. Mission Statement**

The mission of the Michigan WIC Program is to improve health outcomes and quality of life for eligible women, infants and children by providing nutritious food, nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion and support and referrals to health and other services. To this end:

- Delivery of services and supports are to be provided in a caring, respectful, efficient and cost effective manner.
- Delivery of services shall be provided in a culturally competent and confidential manner.
- The WIC Program shall assure the broadest possible access to services, supports and food.

### **Vision Statement**

The vision of the Michigan WIC Program is to have a major impact on improving health outcomes for participants, be recognized as a national leader, and achieve excellent satisfaction as viewed by the participants and the general public.

## **4. Reaching out to the Client:** *Guidelines for Establishing Client Outreach*

### **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 programs they already have.
- Consider utilizing WIC clients or volunteers to be outreach workers to recruit women from local communities.
- Remind clients of appointments ahead of time by utilizing reminder post cards and automated calling system (MI-WIC Auto Dialer). Make special efforts to get clients who missed appointments back using the Clients Eligible for Benefits with No Future Appointment Report found in MI-WIC.

### **Target Special Groups and Families**

- Send direct mail to potential participants in local utility or telephone bills or paychecks stuffers. 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, and rural residents.
- 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.
- 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. (i.e. MDHHS, Lead, MIHP, Immunizations, etc.)
- 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 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 Michigan WIC outreach materials. Leave waiting-room materials and explain how they can get additional copies.
- Share WIC information with childbirth educators and midwives, especially breastfeeding materials.
- Ask local pharmacists to include WIC information with all 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 Michigan outreach materials. 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 or mall 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.
- Work with Head Start, day care centers and other agencies that serve potential WIC applicants.
- Establish WIC Growth Task Force for the community. Task Force members should include key leaders from the community who serve WIC eligible's, 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.

- 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

Remember the importance of simple, readable materials. WIC clients need to be able to read and understand the materials we produce. Here are some important tips for producing brochures, flyers and other informational pieces.

- Make your documents easy to read
  - Use larger point sizes such as 12 or 14 point.
  - Stick to serif type styles such as the Times Roman font.
  - Use the same type style throughout your printed page.
  - Use capitals and lowers case letters, instead of all capitals
  - Highlight with circles, arrows or underlining, rather than using all bold, italics or capitals
- Use page layout and design to increase readability
  - Keep your headings simple
  - Use lots of white space. Don't be afraid to double space.
  - When illustrating how to complete a step, keep all photos and drawings related to the step on one page or on the opposing page, so that all of the illustrations can be seen without turning the page.
  - Use bright colors.
  - Sharp contrasts between ink and paper colors are preferable for ease of reading.
  - REMEMBER to use the required non-discrimination statement on locally produced outreach materials. (See Appendix E)
- Put posters, 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
- 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.
- 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.

## **Organizations for Outreach and Referral**

- Battered Women's Shelters
- Breastfeeding Coalitions
- Community Action Agencies
- Counseling Services / Health Services for:
  - Alcohol and Drug Abuse
  - Child Service Coordination (CSC)
  - Expanded Foods and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)
  - MSUE SNAP ED
  - Family Planning
  - Immunization
  - Prenatal Care
  - Well Child Care (include Health Check Coordinators)
- Department of Human Services
  - Eligibility Intake Workers
  - Work First Counselors
  - Child Support Enforcement
  - Food Stamps Program
  - Medicaid Program/Mi-Child/Healthy Kids Program/ Plan First
  - Maternity outpatient Medical Services (M.O.M.S)
  - Children's Special Health Care Services (CSHCS)
- 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
- WIC Authorized Vendors (Grocers and Pharmacists)

## **5. Working with the Media: *Guidelines for Building Media Relations***

One way to gain public awareness and support for your WIC program is through outreach. Outreach is a mandatory requirement through United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) WIC Program as well as your local WIC program. The main purpose of outreach is to ensure that potentially eligible and high risk individuals are made aware of your WIC program and the services you provide.

Outreach can be performed several different ways. Some examples include utilizing your local media, such as newspapers, radio and television. Working with the media can also help reach potential clients who may not be aware of the important services provided by WIC. Having good relationships with the media can markedly improve the effectiveness of using them for outreach purposes.

Local WIC agencies outreach efforts can be facilitated by establishing and maintaining positive relations with media personnel. Here are 8 guidelines to remember.

1. Preparing a Media List
2. What News is Newsworthy
3. Preparing a Media Kit
4. Meeting the Local Media
5. Preparing a Fact Sheet
6. Writing a News Release
7. Holding a News Conference
8. Hosting a Media Visit/ Providing Interviews

**PLEASE NOTE:** This tool has been designed as guidelines to assist local agencies with media interactions and help support outreach efforts. While utilizing this tool, it is important to take into account any media rules and regulations specific to your local WIC agency.

### **1. Preparing a Media List**

Compile a list of the following local media. Organize each list by market served. Some publications or stations are appropriate for some types of news, but not all.

- Print Media – newspapers, magazines, “shoppers” and other give-aways, and entertainment magazines

- Broadcast Media – radio and television stations

News staff decides what is newsworthy based on what they believe interests or affects their audiences. So, in your list, include the names, titles, addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of the following key players. Update your media list every four to six months.

- Editors for city desk, city/county government, health, lifestyle decide what goes into newspapers and edit the news.
- Reporters on relevant beats for city/county government, health, lifestyle (at small papers, these might be the same person) write the stories.
- T.V. and Radio producers decide who goes on shows/programs.
- News directors decide what goes on the air.
- Assignment editors decide what goes in the story. They are supervised by news directors.
- Public service directors review and decide which community groups, programs, or projects to promote. Serve as publication or station’s liaison to community.

## **2. What News is Newsworthy?**

Before you contact the press to cover a story, you must have something newsworthy to say. Remember your main objective for media coverage related to outreach is to raise public awareness of WIC and to increase WIC enrollment. What is newsworthy? Something.....

- New that no one has ever said or heard before.
- Timely—yesterday’s news is old news.
- That involves a public figure, celebrity, or well-known organization.
- That affects a large number of people.
- With a human-interest angle. (Success stories with women and children always score high). Include pictures with personal stories.
- Visual (for television and news photography).
- That centers around an event or happening.
- That is “good news” such as lower, statewide anemia rates that can be directly tied to WIC.
- That is a variation of a theme already receiving media attention.

- Accessible to the media—give location, time, and other important information.
- Interesting on what would otherwise be a slow news day.
- Unusual or ironic.

### **3. Preparing a Media Kit**

Preparing a media kit is a great tool to have before meeting the media. They provide media personnel with newsworthy and background information in a clear and concise fashion. Their specific purposes are:

- To start conversation with reporters, editors, or radio/T.V. staff when making initial contact or requesting time on a talk show, airing of a PSA, or story coverage.
- To distribute at a media event, such as a press conference or charity drive.

Media kits usually consist of a 9” by 12” two-pocket folder and contain any or all of the following:

- News/press release (see p.18 – Writing a News Release)
- Biographical sketch of the WIC director and/or other key personnel
- Fact sheet (see p. 17 – Preparing a Fact Sheet)
- Photographs
- Graphs and charts
- Collateral and miscellaneous items
- Contact information

### **4. Meeting the Local Media**

It is a good idea to get to know the local reporters and editors. You learn what they consider newsworthy, who to call when you have a story idea, timing of deadlines, and other useful information. In return, they learn who you are and that you are a source of good story ideas and information about the WIC Program.

Try to establish yourself as friendly to the media, but remember, a reporter’s job is to seek news. Answer their questions accurately and quickly and offer your services as a “background source” to provide information about public health programs, including WIC.

Also, offer to direct questions about other public health issues to the appropriate health department personnel. The key to developing good media relationships is *availability* and *credibility*.

Consider the following tips when developing your relationships with reporters.

- A reporter is never completely off duty. If you say something newsworthy, it could show up in the news.
- Offer to review any technical material for accuracy prior to publication or airing.
- Don't try to buy reporter's attention with gifts or flattery. Good reporters can't be bought.
- Don't tell reporters how to do their jobs or ask to see a story before it is printed.
- Don't expect reporters to think something is newsworthy just because you do.
- Don't play favorites among reporters by giving one reporter a story before the others. You may alienate too many people and get less coverage overall.

The next page discusses tips on making initial contact and establishing an ongoing relationship with media personnel.

When making initial contact with media personnel, consider the following:

- Make an appointment to introduce yourself to the appropriate reporter, editor, or the public service director, although this may be more difficult in a larger town. Mid to late morning is the best time to visit reporters and editors. They are *very* busy in the afternoons.
- Tell the reporter or editor about the WIC program and provide a media kit. Hand-deliver your media kit to the editor/s of the section's in which you wish to publicize your information.
- Depending on time available, offer one or two story ideas for consideration.
- Leave your name and phone number on a Rolodex card.

Once you have made initial contact with local reporters and editors, it is important to establish an ongoing relationship. The best way to do this is through sending out periodic press releases and holding press conferences when you have important news. Be open to visits from the media.

When you have a story you would like covered, consider the following steps:

- Identify the media personnel who handle your issue and send them a media kit.

- Call media personnel in advance of sending your information or place a follow-up call to make sure they received it. Fax the information immediately if they have not received it.
- After they have had time to review the information, re-contact the reporter or editor to determine their interest in placing a story.
- Do not hesitate to re-send the information if they have not received it or say they have not seen it.

## **5. Preparing a Fact Sheet**

Fact sheets should be included in media kits. They contain information about the WIC Program in general and about your project or clinic. The details on a fact sheet may depend on the focus of your press release or PSA. See the WIC outreach folder, *WIC Makes a Difference*, for information on the program. All fact sheets should contain the following:

- Name, location, hours, and services provided at your WIC clinic, including any recent changes.
- Key dates for special events, such as walk-in blitz clinics.
- A brief summary of the WIC Program as well as its mission and successes. (Include Medicaid savings associated with the WIC Program.)
- Information about WIC services (i.e. nutrition education, WIC foods, referral to other health and community resources, and breastfeeding support), the importance of these services for good health, and the means by which participants obtain them.
- Statistics (e.g., number of participants served last month and any recent changes, amount of food dollars spent in the community last year, number of people potentially eligible for the WIC Program, etc.).
- Eligibility requirements for the WIC Program.
- The civil rights statement. (See the MI-WIC Policy 6.01, Appendix C)
- Contact information including names, addresses, and phone numbers as appropriate.

## **6. Writing a News Release**

News releases must be.....

- Timely – News is now. Something that happened yesterday, last week, or last month is old news. If a story isn't timely, hold off. You don't want to get a reputation for wasting reporters' time.

- Urgent – Use interesting information and attention-getting facts to put the story in perspective.
- Brief and focused – Length should be 1 ½ to 2 ½ pages maximum. Hook the assignment editor or reporter quickly, or you may lose him or her – and your chances of coverage. Isolate the message you want to share and make it clear.
- Important to people – Tell the practical importance of your announcement. What impact will your news have on people’s lives? Include a description of the WIC Program, eligibility criteria, location of the local agency, civil rights statement, and a contact person to handle future questions.
- Authoritative – Quote appropriate experts.
- Easy to understand – Use lay terms. Scrap bureaucratic, scientific, and medical terminology when possible. If you must use any term, define it simply and concisely. Don’t assume that non-health professionals understand terms that are commonplace to you.
- Complete – Begin by answering the six basic questions of journalism – Who? What? Where? When? How? And Why? End with contact information.
- Formatted properly – Put the subject of the press release and the contact person’s name and telephone number at the top of the first page. If the press release takes more than one page, write “more” on the bottom of each sheet but the last one. For subsequent pages, repeat the contact person’s last name, the topic and page number in the upper left corner. Avoid splitting sentences or paragraphs between pages, even if it means leaving excessive empty space. Type ### centered at the end on the last page to represent the end. Remember to double-space the text (see Appendix A).
- Photo friendly – Suggest photographic possibilities. Remember to obtain consent form/s when you arrange a photo session. The media representative (newspaper, magazine, or TV station) will obtain his or her own consent forms for photos he or she takes
- **NOTE: Remember to include a non-discrimination statement at the end of all press release.**

## 7. Holding a News Conference

News conferences follow a certain style. Remember to.....

- Open with a short statement, lasting no more than 30 to 60 seconds. State the reason for the news conference and give the basic story. Say who you are and why you are there.
- Introduce key speakers. Never have more than three speakers at a press conference.

- Don't be surprised by questions. Reporters are there to ask questions. It's their job. Be sure to allow plenty of time for questions and answers. Always answer honestly and directly. If the reply requires some thought, stop and take the time to think it through. Do not brush aside a reporter's question.
- Listen closely and respond to each question. If you don't know the answer, don't speculate. Write down the question and the reporter's phone number and respond as soon as possible on that and other related information.
- Share media kits. Include vital facts or statistics, staff biographies, the text of the opening remarks.

Carefully select the location and time of the press conference. Consider:

- Location: Are the building and room easy to find?
- Timing: Is the time convenient for reporters? Mid to late morning is usually best to give reporters enough time to write their stories by deadline. Try to avoid a schedule conflict with other events.
- Parking: Is there enough?
- Space: Is the room large enough for all the reporters and their equipment?
- Electricity: Is there sufficient power for reporters' tape recorders, lighting, and sound equipment?

## **8. Hosting a Media Visit/Providing Interviews**

When a news reporter asks to visit the WIC clinic and/or to interview you....

- Be prepared! Provide supplemental information such as media kits, fact sheets and research reports. Reporters may need the information to more fully understand your program. Prior to any interview, make a list of all possible questions (including negative) the reporter may ask and develop answers carefully. This will result in conveying the information correctly and concisely, helping you avoid damaging misstatements and making you a more effective spokesperson.
- Be accessible and accommodating. Have professional experts and program recipients available for interviews and photos. Meet reporters at the door and show them where to go. Offer information as requested.
- Know media deadlines. News crews have rigid daily deadlines. If they need something, they generally need it quickly. Mid to late morning is usually convenient for a media visit or interview.

- Be concise. When you are interviewed, speak in brief, focused sentences. Use layman's terms. Stick to the subject – you need not tell everything you know, particularly if it involves proprietary or confidential information.
- Admit to bad news, if you must, but emphasize any positive aspects. Point out what has been done to rectify the negative. Use it as an opportunity.
- Never speak “off the record.” Don't say anything you don't want to see in the news.
- Don't say “no comment.” It is perceived as an indication of guilt and/or dishonesty. Tell them you will get the information and get back to them. Ask for their deadline.
- Don't take reporter's insulting questions personally. It could be a tactic to get you to react angrily. Stay calm and continue to make points rationally.
- Don't argue with reporters or lose your temper. They're only doing their jobs.
- Make sure you understand the exact question being asked. Reporters don't always ask the right questions. Ask them to repeat the question if you're not sure.
- Be honest even it hurts. It is much better than lying to a reporter. They may find out. If you don't know the answer to a question, say so. Defer to another source or offer to find out and call with an answer as quickly as possible. Don't let reporters press you into answers you don't know.
- Above all, RELAX. Advise your staff in advance when the media is coming. Ask them to act naturally and to cooperate.

### **Television Interviews**

If your local health department receives coverage by a television station and they request an interview, remember to...

- Prepare by selecting your “must air” points and stressing them in the interview. Write them out and be sure to watch the time so they all get said. Script the interviewer. Although they may not use all of it, it may help get some of your questions asked.
- First impressions are critical – establish your likableness. Smile and thank the interviewer; call the interviewer by name.
- Maintain eye contact with the interviewer – the “crossover” moment between question and answer is critical to credibility on tough questions. To lose contact could indicate evasion, dishonesty, or anxiety.
- Speak up clearly and distinctly. Maintain an even pace to word delivery. Words should not slur together, nor go too fast or too slowly.

- Color important words – Go up the scale to a higher note. This is a good way to underscore major points. Then, take a slight pause to reinforce the importance of what you’ve said.
- Do not swivel or lean to one side in the chair. Sit fairly erect with a slightly forward tilt. This will help your energy level and make you look more attentive.
- Keep your answers short, simple, and free of unfamiliar jargon. Get to the conclusion first, and then explain. (e.g., Good nutrition results in having healthier babies with fewer developmental problems. WIC contributes to good nutrition by providing...)
- Work the name of your organization into your answers, but make the interjections logical and unobtrusive (e.g., “We at the Monroe County Health Department believe...”).
- Offer to bring appropriate visual materials that could illustrate your points. Film or videotape clips are especially desirable

### **Radio and Telephone Interviews**

Frequently radio interviews are conducted by telephone. When providing radio interviews, remember to.....

- Ask whether the interview is to be aired live, live-taped, or taped. Turn off any “noise” makers in your office. Cut other telephone calls. Close office door.
- To sound alert, sit up straight in the chair or stand up.
- Don’t shout or whisper. Speak in normal tones over the telephone mouthpiece.
- Tilt mouthpiece slightly away from your mouth to avoid “popping” or “hissing.”
- Make sure you have a clear telephone line.
- Watch pauses. “Uh” sounds worse on radio than anywhere else. Silence is better.
- Avoid using numbers unless absolutely necessary. If numbers are needed, round them off.

## **6. Social Media:** ***Guidelines for building On-line Marketing***

### **Why is Social Media Important?**

Agencies can rely on social media to engage with their customers for improved citizen services and cost savings. Social Media integrates technology, social interaction, and content creation to collaboratively connect online information. Through social media, people or groups can create, organize, edit, comment on, combine, and share content, in the process helping agencies better achieve their mission goals. According to Don Crowther, a leading social media marketing expert says a highly effective social media strategy can take just 20 minutes a day for updating/maintenance.



Getting started and doing it right does take some work. Meet with your agency's Public Relations agent to learn about policies on Social Media. You can access sample Social Media Policies here:

1. Oakland County: Social Media Operating Procedures Handbook
2. Kalamazoo County Health and Community Services Department-Social Media Policy Statement & Implementing Procedures
  - i. Social Media Request Form
  - ii. Social Media Evaluation Form
  - iii. Social Media Disclaimer Statement
3. District Health Department # 10-Social Media Policy
  - i. Social Media Development Guidelines
  - ii. Social Media Guidelines for Responding to Public Comment
  - iii. Social Media Request Form

Here are the most commonly used types of Social Media:

1. Face book 101- Using Facebook to Promote County Health Organizations
2. Twitter 101-Using Twitter to Promote County Health Organizations
3. You Tube 101- Using You Tube to Promote County Health Organizations
4. Instagram 101- Using Instagram to Promote County Health Organizations
5. Texting 101- Using Texting to Promote County Health Organizations
6. HootSuite 101: Using Social Media Dashboards to Promote Public Health Messages
7. Pinterest 101: Using Pinterest to Promote Public Health Messages
8. QR Code 101: Using QR Code to Promote Public Health Messages
9. The Basics of Social Marketing How to Use Marketing to Change Behavior from the Social Marketing National Excellence Collaborative

## **Appendix A:** **Sample Press Release**

Use agency letterhead

RELEASE: IMMEDIATE (*or date, month, year, and time*)      DATE:(*date distributed*)

Contact: (*Name and telephone number of contact person for more information*)

### **WIC PROGRAM PROVIDES ASSISTANCE FOR ELIGIBLE WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN**

(*CITY*) – WIC or the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program provides supplemental nutritious foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and referrals to health care and community resources to participants. The WIC Program is available at (*insert name and location of local WIC agency*). You may apply for the WIC Program on (*insert days of the week*) from (*insert times of day*).

To be eligible a person must:

- ❖ Be a pregnant woman; a breastfeeding woman who has had a baby in the last 12 months; a woman who has had a baby in the last six months; an infant; or a child up to the fifth birthday;
- ❖ Reside in Michigan
- ❖ Meet the income eligibility scale - The gross annual household income cannot exceed 185% of the Federal poverty income guidelines - All **Medicaid, Food Stamp recipients meet the WIC income eligibility criteria.**
- ❖ Have an identified nutritional risk as determined by a health professional. Nutritional problems include anemia, poor growth, previous poor pregnancy outcome, inadequate dietary intake and other nutrition related health problems.

-MORE-

**WIC Program Provides Assistance**

Contact: *(Name and telephone number of contact person for more information)*

For more information about WIC or to make an appointment please visit *(insert local agency name and location)* or call *(insert local agency phone number)*. Or, you may call 1-800-CALL-WIC (1-800-225-5942) from 9:00am to 5:00pm Monday through Friday. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

###

CONTACT PERSON:

Contact Name—Title  
Agency  
Contact Phone

For Immediate Release

Date

**WIC HELPS \_\_\_ COUNTY FAMILIES MAKE ENDS MEET**

**(Oakland County, Michigan)** As food costs, job losses and other economic hardships mount, families are relying on the LOCAL AGENCY NAME Women, Infants and Children (WIC) supplemental food program to help meet daily needs.

The free program helps pregnant women, new mothers, infants and young children up to age five eat well and stay healthy by providing healthy foods, nutrition education and referrals for health and social services.

"It's a wonderful program. For people that struggle, or single moms like me, it would be almost financially impossible for me to not be on it," said CLIENT STATEMENT NAME.

More and more LOCAL COUNTY NAME residents feel the same. The county's total active participation for WIC has jumped 88 % just within six months INSERT LOCAL %.

“Our caseload in April 2009 was around 14,000 individuals LOCAL CASELOAD, and we closed out in October 2009 by providing food to little over 15,800 customers,” stated LOCAL AGENCY COORDINATOR NAME. Across the state, Michigan WIC serves over 200,000 moms and babies each month.

Monthly foods a family may receive from WIC include fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grain breads, breakfast cereals, milk, cheese, eggs, juice, baby foods and infant formula, although breastfeeding is highly encouraged and supported. WIC foods are worth \$30-\$112 or more per month for each participant.

“The foods we offer customers was just revamped in an effort to meet more advanced nutritional guidelines. WIC food packages now provide lower fat, higher fiber, less sugar, and more variety. Breastfeeding woman and infants receive additional or increased quantities of food,” continued COORDINATOR LAST NAME.

To qualify for WIC, families must meet income guidelines at 185 percent of the poverty level. That means a family of four qualifies by earning \$40,793 or less a year. Individuals on Medicaid or families who receive food stamps automatically qualify.

The WIC Program is a Federally-funded nutrition program of the United States Department of Agriculture.

To see if you qualify for WIC, call LOCAL PHONE NUMBER. For more information, visit LOCAL WEBSITE.

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###

# District Health Department #10

Serving the counties of  
Crawford, Kalkaska, Lake, Manistee, Mason,  
Mecosta, Missaukee, Newaygo, Oceana, and Wexford

11/1/08



## NEWS RELEASE

### **The Childhood Overweight Epidemic and Challenge: What Can Families and Communities Do?**

It is a well-known fact that overweight and obesity are critical health issues among adults in our nation. Yet the current trend among children is also alarming. The prevalence of both overweight and obesity in childhood and adolescence has doubled in the past 2 decades in the U.S. Nationally, 20-30% of children ages 2-19 years can be classified as overweight or at risk for overweight. Likewise, 36% of children (ages 1-5 years) participating in the Michigan Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Federal Food Program fit this description, according to 2005 WIC data.

With increasing rates of childhood overweight, we are beginning to see chronic “adult” diseases, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and type-2 diabetes, at younger ages. In addition, negative social stereotypes and stigmatization can cause psychological stress, contributing to low self-esteem, poor body image, and eating disorders.

Numerous factors contribute to overweight in children. These include genetics, behavioral lifestyles, and environmental influences. According to research by the University of California Cooperative Extension and the California FIT WIC Project, the best way to prevent or reduce overweight among children is to focus on environmental changes.

This means schools, families, health professionals, governmental agencies, and businesses must work together to promote environments where children have opportunities to make healthy choices and to be physically active. Schools as well as parents play a key role in creating settings where students can improve their food choices and be more active.

Ideas for promoting physical activity:

- Make it fun!
- Parents, be active and have fun with your children.
- Encourage non-competitive activities and sports for children of all skill levels.
- Limit “screen” time, including TV, computer, and video games.
- Increase school opportunities for children to be physically active.

Ideas for promoting healthy eating:

- Make healthy appealing foods available at schools, daycares, and home.
- Encourage families to eat together.
- Parents, eat healthy! Your kids are watching!

- Allow children to regulate their own food intakes. Parents are simply responsible for providing healthy meals and snacks at regular times.
- Limit access to foods with little nutritional value, such as unhealthy snacks, soft drinks and fruit flavored drinks.

Resources:

- WIC Program at [www.wichealth.org](http://www.wichealth.org) for interactive modules.
- Michigan State University Extension at [www.msue.msu.edu](http://www.msue.msu.edu).
- Team Nutrition at [www.tn.fcs.msue.msu.edu](http://www.tn.fcs.msue.msu.edu).
- CDC Overweight and Obesity at [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity).
- National Association for Sport and Physical Education at [www.aahperd.org/naspe](http://www.aahperd.org/naspe) or 1-800-321-0789.
- Michigan Department of Education, The Role of Michigan Schools in Promoting Healthy Weight; [www.michigan.gov/documents/healthyweight\\_13649\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/healthyweight_13649_7.pdf).

Remember, we all have a responsibility to foster a healthier America. Communities that are committed to preventing overweight children can do so! For more information, contact the WIC Program at your local county office of District Health Department #10:

###

11/08



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 9, 2009

For additional information contact:

Bridie Kent at (616) 632-7110 or [bridie.kent@kentcountymi.gov](mailto:bridie.kent@kentcountymi.gov)

**Health Department Urges Those Hit by Economic Downturn to Access Services**

(Grand Rapids, MI) – Michigan’s unemployment rate is hovering around 14 percent, second to none in the nation. News headlines read, “Healthcare Being Postponed Due To Economic Woes” and “Michigan Personal Income Losses Among Highest in US.” There’s no doubt that Michigan residents are facing hardships. Those who have enjoyed relative economic stability are finding themselves in an unfamiliar place. They should know that there are safety nets to make sure they can access some basic services at a low cost or free of charge.

The Kent County Health Department (KCHD) encourages residents to take advantage of the services it offers. Low-cost heart screenings, free or low-cost immunizations, free HIV and sexually-transmitted infection screening and care, and nutrition support and food vouchers for parents and infants through the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program are some of the main ways KCHD supports those in need. KCHD also oversees a program that offers uninsured or underinsured women age 40 to 64, who meet income guidelines, with free mammograms, clinical breast exams, Pap smears, and pelvic exams. Follow-up, referrals, and treatment also are provided.

“People are often surprised when they discover they qualify for our services. They think of the health department as assistance for those who can’t help themselves. That is simply not the case,” said Cathy Raevsky, Administrative Health Officer for KCHD. “I think it’s safe to say there are families out there who are not reaping the benefits of certain services, and who should be. These programs aim to give clients an advantage during difficult economic times. Many services are geared toward preventing illness down the road. Disease prevention is almost always less costly than treatment, so I encourage people to see how KCHD can help.”

While public health doesn't replace the role of a primary care physician, it can deliver some very basic services that prevent disease and promote healthy lifestyles. For more information on WIC, immunizations, and more, call (616) 632-7100 or visit [www.accesskent.com/health](http://www.accesskent.com/health) and click on "Health Department."

###

**KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to the whole of Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates five satellite clinics located in Wyoming, Kentwood, Rockford, on the Westside of Grand Rapids, and on the Southeast side of Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD and our services, visit [www.accesskent.com/health](http://www.accesskent.com/health).**

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## **Appendix B:** **Sample Outreach Letters**

### **PLACE AGENCY NAME HERE OR USE AGENCY LETTER HEAD**

In an era of change and diminishing public health services, the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program has been a constant provider for Michigan families who are at or below 185% of the U.S. Poverty guidelines, including under-employed (working poor) families, who cannot afford healthy foods, health care and immunizations.

The Michigan WIC Program provides nutritious foods, nutrition education and referrals to health and other social services to pregnant, post-partum and breastfeeding women, infants and children up to age five.

By providing WIC services, we are also saving health care dollars. For every dollar spent on a pregnant woman, it saves over **(add dollar amount here i.e. \$3.50)** in federal, state, local and private health care costs. In addition, the Michigan WIC Program helps the local economy by re-investing **(add amount here i.e. 145 million)** women, infants and children across the country. In **(County Name)** we are serving over **(Add caseload here)** participants. Because of WIC, more women and children are receiving health care, prenatal care and immunizations than ever before.

In short, WIC is a wise investment. It generates important short-term reductions in medical costs and long-term improvements in the health and productivity of children. WIC is the health-care equivalent of a triple-A rated investment, it is one of the most reliable ways the government can invest its resources

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**PLACE AGENCY NAME HERE OR USE AGENCY LETTER HEAD**

DATE:

Dear Physician/ Provider,

The AGENCY NAME (EX Kent County Health Department) WIC Program would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and referrals. As you may be aware, the AGENCY NAME (EX. Kent County Health Department) Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program has been a constant provider for COUNTY NAME (EX. Kent County) families who cannot afford healthy foods, health care and immunizations.

Currently, in COUNTY NAME (ex Kent County) we are providing services to over # of participants (EX. 20,000) WIC participants. Because of WIC, more women, infants and children are receiving health care, prenatal care, and immunizations than ever before. By providing WIC services we are also saving health care dollars. It is estimated, for every dollar spent on a pregnant woman it saves over \$3.50 in federal, state, local and private health care costs.

In an effort to strengthen our collaboration, we request your support by assuring that formula recommended or prescribed to WIC mothers, who choose not to breastfeed, is available through the Michigan WIC Program. Your cooperation will help to eliminate confusion for WIC mothers and better serve their infants' needs.

For your convenience we have provided a comprehensive list of all Michigan WIC approved infant formulas. Formula not listed cannot be provided through any Michigan WIC programs.

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at YOUR PHONE # AND EMAIL ADDRESS HERE

Sincerely,

**NAME AND TITLE HERE**

**PLACE AGENCY NAME HERE OR USE AGENCY LETTER HEAD**

DATE

Dear Parish Office,

I am writing to you today to share some hope and extend a helping hand to those in need. On behalf of the (Local Agency Name) WIC Program I would like to take a moment and share some information about our program with you.

Each month our program proudly serves over 23,000 WIC participants. Eligible participants receive monthly food benefits that allow them to purchase items such as milk, cheese, eggs, juice, wholegrain bread, infant formula, fruits and vegetables. The WIC program also provides nutrition and health education as well as other services free of charge.

The current state of the economy has increased the number of eligible families for the WIC Program, however many are not aware of this fact. Don't let them miss out on all that WIC has to offer. Help us help the families in (County name).

To be eligible for the program, participants must meet the income guidelines and live in Kent County. Please see the attached information, and share with your parish members, community partners, relatives, friends and neighbors.

If you have any questions or would like to see if you qualify for the program feel free to contact us at WIC Scheduling hotline at (Local Agency Phone Number).

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**PLACE AGENCY NAME HERE OR USE AGENCY LETTER HEAD**

DATE

Dear Local Area Schools,

I am writing to you today to share some hope and extend a helping hand to those in need. On behalf of the (Local Agency Name) WIC Program I would like to take a moment and share some information about our program with you.

Each month our program proudly serves over 23,000 WIC participants. Eligible participants receive monthly food benefits that allow them to purchase items such as milk, cheese, eggs, juice, wholegrain bread, infant formula, fruits and vegetables. The WIC program also provides nutrition and health education as well as other services free of charge.

The current state of the economy has increased the number of eligible families for the WIC Program, however many are not aware of this fact. Surprisingly, the percentage of young children from poor or low-income families not receiving nutrition assistance is 18% and 29%, respectively. Ensure your students and families are not missing out on the benefits WIC has to offer. Those who qualify for the School Lunch Program most often qualify for WIC as well. Help us help the families in (Local Agency Name).

To be eligible for the program, participants must meet WIC guidelines, which includes residency in (Local Agency Name). Please see the attached information, and share with your students and families, community partners, relatives, friends and neighbors.

If you have any questions or would like to see if you qualify for the program feel free to contact us at WIC Scheduling hotline at (Local Agency Phone Number)

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**Appendix C:**  
**Consent for Photos Sample**

**Release of Liability**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**By signing this form:**

- I acknowledge that my participation in the above activity is completely voluntary.
- I understand that by participating in this activity I may be recorded on video and/or audio tape and that such recordings may be broadcast on television, radio, or via the internet, and I give my consent.
- I understand that by participating in this activity I may be photographed or quoted and that such photos or quotations may be published in the newspaper, a magazine, a publication of one of the sponsoring organizations, or on the internet, and I give my consent.
- I agree to release the (Local Agency Name), its staff, agents, contractors, and programs from any liability associated with the broadcast of video or audio tape recordings or publication of photographs of my participation in this activity.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Parental Consent, if under 18: \_\_\_\_\_



### CONSENT TO PHOTOGRAPH

(In the event a photograph is taken, be sure to complete this form, including the patient's signature)

The undersigned hereby authorizes InterCare Community Health Network and the attending clinician to photograph or permit other persons in the employ of this facility to photograph \_\_\_\_\_ while under  
(Name of patient) (D.O.B)  
the care of this facility, and agrees to the use of the photograph to document:

- a medical condition
- commercial purposes, i.e. newspaper picture or health center poster
- injury  
(the negatives or prints will be stored in patient's medical record, sealed in a separate envelope, in the event they may be needed later for evidence. These photographs will be released to the police or prosecutor only when the undersigned gives permission to release the medical records)

The undersigned does not authorize any other use to be made of these photographs.

DATE \_\_\_\_\_ PATIENT'S SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

WITNESS \_\_\_\_\_

INTERPRETER'S SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

PATIENT'S PARENT / LEGAL GUARDIAN \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH**

**Photo Release Form**

I hereby consent to the use of my picture of me and my child by the State Department of Community Health and hereby release the State of Michigan and the State Department of Community Health, its agents and representatives, from any and all legal liability or claims in connection with any use of said picture, waiving any claim to consideration or damages in connection therewith.

I understand and agree that the photographs, negatives and transparencies shall remain the exclusive property of the State of Michigan for use and I hereby waive any right that I may have to inspect and approve the finished product that may be used in connection with the use of said photograph or reproduction thereof.

I hereby warrant that I have full legal capacity to execute this release.

NAME OF CHILD \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby guarantee that I am the parent or legal guardian of the minor,  
\_\_\_\_\_ and do hereby consent and grant my  
permission to all the terms and provisions of the foregoing agreement.

PARENT SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

PRINTED NAME \_\_\_\_\_

WITNESS \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix D:** **USDA Non-Discrimination Statement**

### **English Full version:**

#### **USDA Nondiscrimination Statement (Continued)**

### **For all other FNS nutrition assistance programs, State or local agencies, and their subrecipients, must post the following Nondiscrimination Statement:**

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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## Spanish Full version:

**For all other FNS nutrition assistance programs, State or local agencies, and their subrecipients, must post the following Nondiscrimination Statement:**

**Los demás programas de asistencia nutricional del FNS, las agencias estatales y locales, y sus beneficiarios secundarios, deben publicar el siguiente Aviso de No Discriminación:**

De conformidad con la Ley Federal de Derechos Civiles y los reglamentos y políticas de derechos civiles del Departamento de Agricultura de los EE. UU. (USDA, por sus siglas en inglés), se prohíbe que el USDA, sus agencias, oficinas, empleados e instituciones que participan o administran programas del USDA discriminen sobre la base de raza, color, nacionalidad, sexo, discapacidad, edad, o en represalia o venganza por actividades previas de derechos civiles en algún programa o actividad realizados o financiados por el USDA.

Las personas con discapacidades que necesiten medios alternativos para la comunicación de la información del programa (por ejemplo, sistema Braille, letras grandes, cintas de audio, lenguaje de señas americano, etc.), deben ponerse en contacto con la agencia (estatal o local) en la que solicitaron los beneficios. Las personas sordas, con dificultades de audición o discapacidades del habla pueden comunicarse con el USDA por medio del Federal Relay Service [Servicio Federal de Retransmisión] al (800) 877-8339. Además, la información del programa se puede proporcionar en otros idiomas.

Para presentar una denuncia de discriminación, complete el Formulario de Denuncia de Discriminación del Programa del USDA, (AD-3027) que está disponible en línea en: [http://www.ocio.usda.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2012/Spanish\\_Form\\_508\\_Compliant\\_6\\_8\\_12\\_0.pdf](http://www.ocio.usda.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2012/Spanish_Form_508_Compliant_6_8_12_0.pdf). y en cualquier oficina del USDA, o bien escriba una carta dirigida al USDA e incluya en la carta toda la información solicitada en el formulario. Para solicitar una copia del formulario de denuncia, llame al (866) 632-9992. Haga llegar su formulario lleno o carta al USDA por:

- (1) correo: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; o
- (3) correo electrónico: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

Esta institución es un proveedor que ofrece igualdad de oportunidades.

*Please remember that the full version must be included on all WIC materials. However, in the event that the material is too small to permit the full statement (with the exception of the WIC/FMNP/SFMNP application), then it is acceptable to use the shorter statement in a print size no smaller than the text.*

**Appendix E:**  
**Local Agency Policy and Procedure Samples**

**Local Agency WIC  
 Policy & Procedure Manual**



<b>Policy Title:</b> WIC Outreach Coordinator		
<b>MDCH WIC Reference # (if applicable):</b> WIC Policy 7.01 MI-WIC Policy 6.01	<b>Revision Dates &amp; Initials:</b> 8/1/09 (CB)	<b>Page(s):</b>

**POLICY:** Kent County Health Department WIC Program Supervisor shall designate a WIC Outreach Coordinator. The WIC Outreach Coordinator shall be responsible to ensure that potentially eligible and high risk individuals receive information about eligibility for WIC services and the locations of Kent County Health Department WIC clinic sites by conducting outreach activities in accordance to MDCH WIC Policy 7.01.

**PROCEDURE:**

The WIC Program Supervisor shall be responsible to notify MDCH WIC of the person(s) designated as the WIC Outreach Coordinator and any changes there of as part of the annual Nutrition Services Plan.

The WIC Outreach Coordinator is responsible to establish and maintain contacts with in community organizations that target:

- Low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and post-partum women
- Low-income infants and/or children, especially foster children
- Homeless individuals
- Migrant Farm Workers

The WIC Outreach Coordinator will:

- Make at least one media outreach contact each fiscal year. Example County Newsletter.
- Provide outreach in the appropriate language(s)
- Increase community awareness of WIC services
- Provide WIC presentations as requested by community agencies
- Attend and Distribute WIC information at community events

- Provide awareness of the Kent County WIC Program among medical professionals by supplying WIC materials and referral forms
- Provide WIC materials throughout the community to churches, military bases, local day care centers, local food banks, low-income housing agencies
- Participate in local health fairs, especially those targeting PBNIC populations.
- Coordinate with WIC Program Supervisor and with MDCH Outreach Coordinator by attending MDCH WIC Outreach Work Group Meetings, sharing of outreach ideas and successes, and asking for support (ideas, and materials).
- Document all outreach activities in the Kent County Health Department WIC Program Outreach log located in the WIC Program Supervisors office.

The WIC Outreach Coordinator for Kent County Health Dept. is Christopher Bendekgey - WIC Program Supervisor.

**POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

	<b>PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT</b>	<b>INTERNAL DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES</b>		
<b>TITLE:</b> Washtenaw County WIC Outreach Policy		<b>PHMTAPPROVAL DATE:</b> 4/27/07	<b>POLICY #:</b> W.037	<b>Page</b> 1 <b>of 4</b>
<b>Policy Developer:</b> Gayathri Akella MS, RD, CLE		<b>Revision:</b>	<b>Cross Reference(s):</b> MDCH/WIC Policy 7.01	

**I. PURPOSE**

To assure Washtenaw County WIC Program provides adequate quality outreach efforts as mandated by the MDCH/WIC.

**II. APPLICATION**

Washtenaw County WIC Program Outreach Coordinator

**III. POLICY**

Washtenaw County WIC Program shall designate a WIC Outreach Coordinator who will ensure that potentially eligible and high risk individuals receive information about eligibility for WIC services and various locations of Washtenaw County WIC offices by conducting outreach activities.

**IV. DEFINITIONS**

WIC Outreach Coordinator: A WIC Outreach Coordinator is a professional who designs, implements, coordinates and monitors Washtenaw County WIC's outreach activities, establishes and maintains community partnerships, consults with State Agency for the purpose of both initiating and improving outreach activities at both the State and local level.

WIC Supervisor: Person responsible for the administration and maintenance of the WIC Program

Outreach Log: An outreach log is a State required document that lists information about all outreach contact/activities conducted by Washtenaw County WIC.

## V. PROCEDURES

### WHO

WIC Supervisor

WIC Outreach Coordinator

### DOES WHAT

A. Designate an Outreach Coordinator.

B. Annually, as part of the Nutrition Services Plan, the WIC Supervisor will notify the State Agency of the:

- Name of the Washtenaw County WIC Outreach Coordinator
- The working address and phone number

C. Monitor and distribute clinic "Participants Not Issued Coupon" reports to staff.

#### **I. State Requirement:**

A. Local WIC Agencies are required to conduct outreach to establish and maintain contacts with community organizations.

Outreach should target organizations that serve:

- Low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and post-partum women
- Low-income infants or children, especially foster children
- Homeless individuals
- Migrant farm workers

B. Must make at least one media outreach contact each fiscal year example: County New Letters etc.

C. Provide outreach in the appropriate language (s)

D. Document outreach contacts in an outreach log (See Exhibit A)

**Importance:** Ongoing Community Outreach is important to WIC. This offers:

- Directs potential participants to apply for WIC

- Increases community awareness about WIC services
- Keeps the community up-to-date on changes in WIC services
- Increases and maintains WIC referrals made by community agencies and or service providers.

**II. Annual Local Agency Efforts:**

A. Promote name recognition and an awareness of the Washtenaw County WIC Program among potential clients. Identify groups of women and children locally who are potentially eligible but not receiving WIC benefits such as individuals residing in group homes, shelter and other institutions.

B. Reach potential clients by building and maintaining a referral base within the public health network. Make contact and share program information and materials with professionals working in outreach for:

- Medicaid, Food Stamps, etc
- Community Health Centers
- Welfare and employment offices
- Social services agencies
- Farm worker organizations/ Migrant Centers
- Indian tribal organizations
- Organizations and agencies serving homeless individuals
- Religious and community organizations in low income areas
- Planned Parenthood, Problem Pregnancy, MIHP, Packard Community Clinic etc.
- Center for Child Bearing Years
- Immunization

C. Give presentations about WIC services to community agencies

D. Distribute WIC information at Community Events

E. Provide awareness of the Washtenaw County WIC Program among medical professionals (hospitals and clinics) by supplying WIC materials and WIC referral forms.

F. Provide WIC materials to local day care centers, PTA chapters, high school guidance counselors, school nurses vocational and adult education programs.

G. Provide WIC materials to churches, military bases, non-profit organizations such as Salvation Army or local Food Banks, Neighborhood Centers, Low-income Housing Agencies, Community Service such as Kiwanis Girl and Boy Scouts.

H. Participate in local health fairs, especially those aimed at pregnant women and target ethnic/racial groups.

I. Partner with other programs such as Head Start, LLL, U of M interns and students.

K. Coordinate with the State Outreach Coordinator by:

- Attending State WIC Division Outreach Work Group Meetings
- Asking for support (ideas, materials)
- Sharing our outreach ideas and successes.

WIC Staff

A. Utilize monthly "Participants Not Issued Coupon" reports to contact WIC clients who are eligible for coupons (verify using M-TRACX) and offer appropriate appointments.

# **Appendix F:**

## **MDCH WIC MI-WIC Outreach Policy and Procedure**

### **MI-WIC POLICY** *Service Coordination and Outreach*

*MI Department of Community Health-WIC 6.01 - 1 of 2*

#### **6.0 Service Coordination and Outreach** *Effective Date: 7/7/09*

##### **6.01 Outreach**

**PURPOSE:** To ensure that potentially eligible individuals and especially those at high risk receive information about eligibility for WIC services and the location of local agencies.

##### **A. POLICY:**

1. Local Agencies shall publicly announce at least annually:
  - a. Information about eligibility criteria for participation.
  - b. Location of local agencies and phone numbers.
  - c. Institutional criteria (regarding eligibility of individuals residing in group homes, shelter, and other institutions).
  
2. Local agencies shall distribute outreach information to professional offices, agencies and organizations that provide services for significant numbers of potentially eligible persons, including:
  - a. Health and medical organizations;
  - b. Hospitals and clinics;
  - c. DHS/Michigan Works/employment offices;
  - d. Social Service agencies;
  - e. Farm worker organizations;
  - f. Indian tribal organizations;
  - g. Organizations and agencies serving homeless individuals;
  - h. Religious and community organizations in low-income areas;
  - i. Social Security offices
  
3. Local agencies shall aim outreach toward high-risk individuals, such as women early in pregnancy, homeless individuals, migrant farm workers and eligible low-income women not on Medicaid.
  
4. Local agencies shall coordinate outreach efforts with other programs, including breastfeeding promotion programs, substance abuse programs, health care providers and religious organizations.

# **MI-WIC POLICY *Service Coordination and Outreach***

*MI Department of Community Health-WIC 6.01 - 2 of 2*

5. Local agencies shall use such forms of communication as letters, leaflets, brochures, bulletins, newspapers, radio and television announcements to disseminate program information and applicable civil rights requirements to the general public with emphasis on minorities and minority organizations. Information distributed to the public shall inform participants and applicants, particularly minorities, women and grassroots organizations, of any significant program changes, such as revisions in eligibility standards, benefits and services, and the location of new local agencies or clinics, as well as hours of service.

6. All outreach materials shall include the most recent USDA non-discrimination statement.

7. Local agency outreach goals and activities shall be documented in the MI-WIC system.

## **B. GUIDANCE:**

1. Provide other agencies and organizations with materials describing the WIC Program that includes the locations and phone numbers of local agencies.

2. Local agencies that have reached maximum participation may choose to further inform potential applicants of the waiting lists and the priority system for filling vacant slots as they arise.

3. Local agencies at maximum participation should continue their outreach efforts and target the highest priority and highest risk categories.

4. MDHHS Outreach Publications can be ordered by using the E-forms ordering process.

### References:

Federal Regulations 246.4(a)

FNS Instruction 113-2

P.L. 101-147

### Cross References:

1.09 Civil Rights

## **Appendix G:** **USDA Federal Regulations**

### Sec. 246.4 State plan.

(a) Requirements. By August 15 of each year, each State agency shall submit to FNS for approval a State Plan for the following fiscal year as a prerequisite to receiving funds under this section. The State agency may submit the State Plan in the format provided by FNS guidance. Alternatively, the State agency may submit the Plan in combination with other federally required planning documents or develop its own format, provided that the information required below is included. FNS requests advance notification that a State agency intends to use an alternative format. The State Plan shall be signed by the State designated official responsible for ensuring that the Program is operated in accordance with the State Plan. FNS will provide written approval or denial of a completed State Plan or amendment within 30 days of receipt. Within 15 days after FNS receives an incomplete Plan, FNS will notify the State agency that additional information is needed to complete the Plan. Any disapproval will be accompanied by a statement of the reasons for the disapproval. After receiving approval of the State Plan, each State agency shall only submit to FNS for approval substantive changes in the State Plan. A complete and approved Plan shall include:

- (1) An outline of the State agency's goals and objectives for improving Program operations.
- (2) A budget for nutrition services and administration funds, and an estimate of food expenditures.
- (3) An estimate of Statewide participation for the coming fiscal year by category of women, infants and children.
- (4) The State agency staffing pattern.
- (5) An Affirmative Action Plan which includes--
  - (i) A list of all areas and special populations, in priority order based on relative need, within the jurisdiction of the State agency, the State agency's plans to initiate or expand operations under the Program in areas most in need of supplemental foods, including plans to inform nonparticipating local agencies of the availability and benefits of the Program and the availability of technical assistance in implementing the Program, and a description of how the State agency will take all reasonable actions to identify potential local agencies and encourage agencies to implement or expand operations under the Program within the following year in the neediest one-third of all areas un-served or partially served;
  - (ii) An estimate of the number of potentially eligible persons in each area and a list of the areas in the Affirmative Action Plan which are currently operating the Program and their

current participation, which participant priority levels as specified in Sec. 246.7 are being reached in each of these areas, and which areas in the Affirmative Action Plan are currently operating CSFP and their current participation; and

(iii) A list of the names and addresses of all local agencies.

(6) Plans to provide program benefits to eligible migrant farm workers and their families, to Indians, and to homeless individuals.

(7) The State agency's plans, to be conducted in cooperation with local agencies, for informing eligible persons of the availability of Program benefits, including the eligibility criteria for participation, the location of local agencies operating the Program, and the institutional conditions of Sec. 246.7(n)(1)(i) of this part, with emphasis on reaching and enrolling eligible women in the early months of pregnancy and migrants. Such information shall be publicly announced by the State agency and by local agencies at least annually. Such information shall also be distributed to offices and organizations that deal with significant numbers of potentially eligible persons, including health and medical organizations, hospitals and clinics, welfare and unemployment offices, social service agencies, farm worker organizations, Indian tribal organizations, organizations and agencies serving homeless individuals, and religious and community organizations in low-income areas.

## **Appendix H:** **State WIC Outreach Material**

The MDHHS WIC Division provides a vast array of state developed material that can be ordered using the E-forms process for your outreach efforts and clinic operations.

Below are some just a few examples of the publications available through MDCH WIC

Welcome to Michigan WIC brochure: DCH 1200

Michigan WIC Food Guide: DCH 237

Michigan WIC Income Guidelines: DCH: 322

Facts about WIC: DCH 314

Is Breastfeeding Right for Me: DCH 1204