



ENGAGING THE MEDIA TO PROMOTE WIC

Media plays a pivotal role in highlighting and elevating WIC's work so that your community can better understand and appreciate the program's contributions. WIC staff should actively promote their achievements through both the traditional press and social media channels.

TRADITIONAL PRESS

Local newspapers report on the community and regional events – they want to hear what a local program is doing to improve your town! WIC staff can submit a story for publication or pitch a story to a local reporter. You may wish to reach out to a reporter who has written on public health or similar issues before. It is important to *have a story idea ready* when you reach out to a reporter.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR/OP-EDS:

Newspapers generally will publish stories that are submitted for publication by members of the community. You can find instructions for submission on the newspaper's opinion page or website.

- » Be direct and concise – newspapers will not accept lengthy submissions. You will want to highlight your main point in the first paragraph and be clear about whatever point you are trying to convey.
- » Avoid jargon or technical language – many readers may not even know what WIC stands for!
- » Highlight stories with personal stakes that will resonate with your audience.

A reporter may also want to interview you or visit your clinic to get a better sense of the WIC program. Be prepared for an interview and make sure to use the appropriate disclaimer if you don't want to be quoted (usually by saying that the interview is *on background*). Highlight personal stories and keep things simple.

HOW TO SET BOUNDARIES WITH REPORTERS

"On background" →	Reporters generally cannot attribute what you tell them	→	WIC has a peer counselor program that has markedly improved local breastfeeding rates.
"Off-the-record" →	Reporters can attribute your statements, but in a general way	→	"WIC's peer counselors have improved breastfeeding rates in this region," said a local WIC clinic staff member.
"On-the-record" →	Reporters can attribute your statements to you directly.	→	"WIC's peer counselors have improved breastfeeding rates in this region," said Joanie Sands, a WIC clinic staff member in Springfield.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a powerful tool to engage a wide audience – including potential participants and the general public. Always conduct social media posts in a professional manner. The two main social media channels are *Twitter* and *Facebook*. Twitter limits messages to shorter lengths and active users post more frequently than other social media channels. Facebook is a bit more sophisticated and can accommodate lengthier posts. Other platforms include *Instagram*, *Pinterest*, and *Snapchat*.

You can spread your message even further by tagging other people, organizations, or concepts. The @ symbol allows you to tag another user, and then your message will show up on their social media page. The # symbol allows you to join a conversation, so that your post will show up on pages about that topic.

- » “Proud of @USDA efforts to support science-based standards in the food package!”
- » “Multiple generations of each family learn healthy habits from nutrition education at #WIC.”

WIC clinics and agencies should develop social media profiles to elevate their work to a broad audience and connect with potential participants in your area. This may require approval from a higher authority.

We encourage you to follow all NWA social media accounts. You can find us on Facebook as National WIC Association, and on Twitter as @NatWICAssoc.

You can also use social media to communicate directly with policymakers. Most policymakers have twitter accounts, and you can tweet them directly using the @ symbol.