FNS WIC Research Update

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Office of Policy Support
USDA supports evidence-based decision-making.

• FNS conducts sound and rigorous research studies that help inform evidence-based policy decisions.
  – Program access
  – Nutrition and health impacts
  – Program integrity
  – Program management and cost
Research helps inform our understanding of WIC participants.

How well are we reaching the target groups?

Source: 2012 WIC Eligibles Report
Research helps us track important program policies.

**WIC Breastfeeding Policy Inventory**

- Staffing and Training
- Clinic Environment
- Outreach Activities
- Breastfeeding Aids
- Food Package Issuance
- Prenatal Participant Contact
- Postpartum Participant Contact
- Participant Breastfeeding Education
- Peer Counseling
- Breastfeeding Referrals and Coordination
- Breastfeeding Measures
WIC Agencies are working to make breastfeeding the norm.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clinic Staff Interactions with WIC Participants</th>
<th>Direct-Service State Agencies</th>
<th>Local Agencies</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assume all postpartum participants initiated breastfeeding</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treat exclusive breastfeeding as the norm</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect each mother’s infant feeding decision</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage participants to breastfeed anywhere in the clinic</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use breastfeeding-friendly language</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer breastfeeding support to participants on a walk-in basis</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote breastfeeding for as long as possible or as preferred by both the participant and her infant</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WIC Breastfeeding Policy Inventory Report
State and Local Agencies have *full-time* staff leading breastfeeding efforts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>State Agencies</th>
<th>Local Agencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breastfeeding Coordinator</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Counseling Program Coordinator</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Counselor Staff</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WIC Breastfeeding Policy Inventory Report
State and Local Agencies provide extensive breastfeeding promotion training.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New-Hire Breastfeeding Promotion Training</th>
<th>State Agencies</th>
<th>Local Agencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clerical or support staff</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent Professional Authorities</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer counselors</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIC designated breastfeeding experts</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breastfeeding coordinators</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutritionists</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of the above applicable staff except WIC designated breastfeeding experts</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WIC Breastfeeding Policy Inventory Report
The prenatal visit is a key occasion for breastfeeding promotion.

- Provided individual breastfeeding counseling: 97%
- Given information about the greater quantity and variety of foods in the fully breastfeeding food package: 88%
- Included in prenatal breastfeeding education classes: 82%
- Enrolled in peer counseling program: 82%
- Offered participation in a breastfeeding support group: 63%
- Given breastfeeding promotion kit: 42%

Source: WIC Breastfeeding Policy Inventory Report
Ongoing Study Updates

• WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling
  – Report will be released soon.

• WIC Nutrition Education Evaluation
  – Phase 2 of data collection: Summer 2015
  – Final Report: Summer 2017
Acknowledgments

• State and Local Agencies
• WIC Site Staff
• WIC National and Regional Offices
• Special Nutrition Research and Analysis Division, FNS Office of Policy Support

For more information, please visit:
http://www.fns.usda.gov/ops/research-and-analysis