Landscape of Retention & Participation: An Evaluation Perspective

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Objectives

• National Drop
• Client Experience
• Definitions, Definitions, Definitions
• Examples so far
Participation Drops Nationally

2010: 10,021,136 Participants
2016: 8,815,472 Participants

## Table 4.1. WIC National-Level Coverage Rates by Participant Category: CY 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Category</th>
<th>Number Eligible</th>
<th>Number Participating</th>
<th>Coverage Rate (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infants</td>
<td>2,159,041</td>
<td>1,853,735</td>
<td>85.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total children aged 1–4</td>
<td>8,907,712</td>
<td>3,926,307</td>
<td>44.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children aged 1ª</td>
<td>2,317,916</td>
<td>1,371,604</td>
<td>59.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children aged 2ª</td>
<td>2,222,568</td>
<td>1,052,609</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children aged 3ª</td>
<td>2,215,120</td>
<td>931,748</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children aged 4ª</td>
<td>2,152,108</td>
<td>570,345</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant women</td>
<td>1,408,119</td>
<td>707,748</td>
<td>50.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Systematic Literature Review

Identify and describe local- and state-level efforts to:

1. Recruit new participants,
2. Retain certified participants; and/or,
3. Enhance the experience of current participants in WIC.

Peer Reviewed Literature (2009 - )
Grey Literature (2009 - )

Set of Items to Abstract & Summarize
Definitions

**Retention**
- “Keep those who are certified”
- Recertification
- Completion of a certification period
  - Early drop
  - Early exit

**Participation**
- Attends scheduled appointments
- Receiving referrals to other health and social services
- Redeems food benefits
- Completes nutrition education
- Receives breastfeeding support
- Use of Implemented Tools & Resources (Digital)

Timing
Recruit New Participants

- Strategic collaborations with programs serving similar population
- Outreach Coordinator, the role of a champion
- Meeting potential clients where they are
  - Head Start, child care facilities, farmers markets
Retain Certified Participants

• Targeted messaging for *particular* situations

• Multiple kinds of measures for getting at retention

• Clear operational definitions
Enhance the experience of current participants

• “[...] increasing retention in the program, by enhancing participants’ shopping experiences.”

• Based solutions on formative research

• Clear framework for evaluation

• Focused on a particular part of the participant journey
Take-Away

• Where to begin?
  – Talk with your colleagues
  – Talk with participants
  – Go beyond barriers
  – Make a plan

• Measurement
  – Clear
  – Consistent
  – Practical
Other Resources

• If digital tools are your thing...
  https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/launching-new-digital-tools-for-wic-participants#p1PreparingToAssessImpact

• National WIC Association’s Research Activities
  https://www.nwica.org/research-activities

• Colleagues here today