Creating WIC Messages

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National WIC Association
Why talk about WIC?
Talking about WIC can help...

- Improve client recruitment
- Encourage Congress to enact positive policies to support the implementation of WIC communities across the country
- Increase public support for the program, which affects the above
Talking about WIC: Workshop Outline

2016 Key WIC Messages

Personalizing your messages based on your knowledge and experience

Combining messages, stories and data

Tailoring messages to different audiences
2016 WIC Key Messages

• “WIC: strengthening families, strengthening communities, strengthening America”

• “WIC is grounded in science, efficiency, and compassion”

• “WIC has strong bi-partisan support”
Talking Points:
WIC: Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities and Strengthening America
WIC Strengthens Families: WIC’s Four Service Pillars

- Healthy Foods
- Nutrition Education
- Breastfeeding Support, including Peer Counselors
- Health Care Referrals
WIC Strengthens Families: Positive Outcomes

- Improved health behaviors
  - Diets
  - Breastfeeding rates
- Improved health outcomes
  - Birth outcomes
  - Children arrive to school ready-to-learn
- Healthcare savings
WIC Strengthens Families

• Cutting participants from the program will have negative consequences
WIC Strengthens Communities

• Healthy children and families
• Dollars spent in local economies
• Minimum stocking requirements improve food access for all
• WIC clinics are a trusted community resource and a gateway to other health and social services
WIC Strengthens America

• WIC supports vulnerable populations at critical times of growth and development

• Kids come to school ready-to-learn with the opportunity to reach their potential

• WIC helps address national public health concerns, such as obesity

• Fewer nutrition-related illnesses and low birth weight babies save health care costs

• Healthier children and healthier adults mean more productive workforce

• WIC supports active military families
Talking Points:

WIC is grounded in science, efficiency, and compassion.
WIC is grounded in science, efficiency, and compassion

• WIC food package undergoes rigorous scientific review every 10 years to meet the specific nutritional needs of mothers and children

• Over 40 years of science-based nutrition has contributed to improved health outcomes

• Efficient management

• Effective service delivery

• Entrepreneurial

• Cuts would impact core program components and undermine essential outcomes

• Trained professional and paraprofessional WIC staff provide tailored support to families
Talking Points:
WIC has strong bi-partisan support
WIC has strong bi-partisan support

- Historically bi-partisan supported and championed
- Admired across political, ideological, ethnic, and socio-economic groups, and voters overwhelmingly oppose cutting funding for WIC
- Clients are thankful for the program
How do you talk about WIC?
Personalizing WIC Messages

You are the experts!

You bring a unique perspective!

You know WIC’s value, first hand!
Who needs to know that WIC has value?

- Potential clients
- Decision-makers
Establishing the Value of WIC

- What is WIC?
- How does it add value?
Focus Your Communications

• Your role in WIC is unique

• You can speak first hand to certain messages

• Focus on these
From your unique perspective how does WIC add value?

• Think about this in the context of the key messages:
  
  – WIC: strengthening families, strengthening communities, strengthening America

  – WIC is grounded in science, efficiency, and compassion

  – WIC has strong bi-partisan support
Support Your Message with User-Friendly Data and Stories

• Appeal to logic, reason and emotion

• Frame and package info:
  – The **KISS** - *Keep It Simple Sweetie!* – method is always best
  – Font should be large enough to read
  – Colors should be easy to see
  – The illustration should be easily read online
State WIC Profiles

How WIC Impacts the People of Massachusetts

ROLE OF THE WIC PROGRAM
With a firm commitment to safeguarding and advancing the nutrition status and health of mothers and children and to promoting breastfeeding in the U.S., the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) works within each state to improve healthcare access for low and moderate income women and children with or at risk of developing nutrition-related health problems, including obesity and type 2 diabetes. WIC provides nutrition education and healthy foods enabling families to make lifelong healthy eating and lifestyle choices. The foods in the WIC food packages are specifically selected for their nutritional value to supplement the dietary needs of participants to ensure good health, growth and development. See how WIC impacts the people of Massachusetts.

Average Massachusetts Monthly WIC Participation October 2013 – September 2014 FY 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant Women</td>
<td>10,841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breastfeeding Women</td>
<td>6,379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postpartum Women</td>
<td>6,735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infants</td>
<td>21,156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>62,709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Participation</td>
<td>115,110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Massachusetts WIC Food and Services Benefits October 2013 – September 2014 FY 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total food and service benefits spent</td>
<td>$93,922,330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturer Cost Containment Rebate</td>
<td>$33,977,234</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Federal Food Cost</td>
<td>$59,945,076</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nutrition Service Benefits</td>
<td>$14,976,207</td>
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MASSACHUSETTS WIC PROGRAM FY 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total WIC Participants</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Eating</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breastfeeding</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Integrity</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Eating</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
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WIC PROMOTES HEALTH AND HEALTHCARE SAVINGS

HEALTHY EATING
WIC promotes nutrition education and healthy eating to help families make healthy choices. The WIC food package promotes healthy eating behaviors and contributes to healthy diets which in turn reduce obesity and type 2 diabetes.

BREASTFEEDING
WIC helps families to establish breastfeeding. The WIC food package promotes numerous health benefits to both the mother and baby. Nationally, 70% of WIC participants are breastfeeding, while Massachusetts stands at 70%. In addition, WIC is a national public breastfeeding call-in program to support breastfeeding and help families.

Program Integrity
Participants and healthcare professionals experience a safe benefit access and delivery as WIC is designed to implement and maintain a system of strict policies, procedures, and controls to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse nationwide by states and local agencies that can help reduce opportunities for waste and error or cost overruns, fraud, waste, and abuse.

VOICES OF MASSACHUSETTS WIC PARTICIPANTS

"I was a single mom of three children and 1995. At the time, I was working for a large company which was not providing me with enough money to feed my children. I turned to WIC and it was a wonderful experience. WIC was there for me when I needed help. These programs helped me and my family a lot." – WIC participant, Massachusetts

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jpearson@masshealth.gov

For further information visit masswic.org
How WIC Impacts the People of Massachusetts

Average Massachusetts Monthly WIC Participation
October 2013 - September 2014
FY 2014

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<tr>
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Massachusetts WIC Food and Services Benefits
October 2013 - September 2014
FY 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Food Benefit Value Per Participant</td>
<td>$39.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Food Benefit Spent in State (Food + Rebate)</td>
<td>$80,522,338</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manufacturer Cost Containment Rebate</td>
<td>($26,377,222)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Federal Food Cost</td>
<td>$54,145,116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition Service Benefits</td>
<td>$24,329,763</td>
</tr>
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Massachusetts WIC Funding FY 2014
(Pre-rebates)

The WIC Funding for FY 2014 graph illustrates Food Costs and the allocation of Nutrition Services Benefits in Massachusetts:

- Food (pre-rebate): 61.18%
- Nutrition Education: 7.06%
- Breastfeeding Promotion: 2.25%
- Other Client Services: 15.28%
- Program Management (Admin): 14.23%
HEALTHY EATING
WIC provides nutrition education and healthy foods to help families make healthy choices. The WIC food package includes fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy, and whole grains. The food package helps combat food insecurity, and contributes to healthy diets which aid in reducing obesity and chronic disease.

17% of Massachusetts children are food insecure.*

*Food insecurity refers to a lack of access, at times, to enough food or nutritionally adequate food.

WIC helps families combat food insecurity and nutrition-related health problems including obesity and type 2 diabetes.
BREASTFEEDING
Research shows that breastfeeding provides numerous health benefits to both the mother and her baby, helping to reduce healthcare costs. Breastfeeding lowers a child’s risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, and asthma. WIC is the largest public breastfeeding promotion program in the nation, providing mothers with education and support.

**National WIC Participant Breastfeeding Rates**

- **1998**: 42%
- **2012**: 67%

**Massachusetts WIC Participant Breastfeeding Rates**

- **1998**: 53%
- **2012**: 76%

Source: USDA 2012 WIC Participant and Program Characteristics (PC) Report. PC data allows for standardized comparisons to demonstrate overall progress. Some states collect more data than required by the PC Report and may yield different and more current results than shown.
VOICES OF MASSACHUSETTS WIC PARTICIPANTS

“I was a single mom of three children and WIC helped me survive some hard times. I knew if I didn’t have anything I always had food to feed my family.”
—WIC Participant, Massachusetts

“I felt supported by a group of women that encouraged me to live a healthy lifestyle while breastfeeding and making healthy food choices for me and my growing son. The most important choice that I made while on WIC was that I made a commitment to be a cook and to make foods from scratch using whole food ingredients. WIC provided a stepping stone for my family that embraced us, listened to our concerns, gave us recipe suggestions and never judged us.”
—WIC Participant, Massachusetts
Support Your Messages with Client and Service Provider Stories

• They’re unique

• Appeal to emotion

• Illustrate the value of WIC from many perspectives

• Can be used to strategically highlight specific aspects of WIC such as breastfeeding, preventing childhood obesity or other important programmatic features
Worksheet Activity: Personalizing Your Messages

• WIC Directors
• Nutritionist
• Breastfeeding support staff
• Vendor management staff
• Other WIC staff
• WIC partners
Do You Talk the Same about WIC to Everyone? Why? Why not?
Messaging to Different Audiences

• Friends and Family
• Colleagues
• Clients
• Strangers in the Grocery Store
• Media
• Community Members
• Policymakers
• Other Decision-makers
How do you talk about WIC to different audiences?

• Know your audiences’ values and interests
How do you talk to your clients about the value of WIC?
How do you talk to your family, colleagues, community members about the value of WIC?
How do you talk to the media?

Check out our Talking to the Media section in the NWA WIC Voice Toolkit

Talking to the Media

Things to Keep in Mind:

1. If you’re not a designated spokesperson, tell the reporter you are speaking to them on “background” or “off the record.” If you’re speaking on background, the information you provide may be used but won’t be attributed to you without your permission. If you’re speaking off the record, the information won’t be used.
2. If you’re not sure of something, assure the reporter you will follow up by a designated time.
3. If possible, use personal stories (either your own or those of participants).
4. Make complex explanations as simple as possible.

Avoid:

1. Jargon (in our case, particularly abbreviations – most people won’t know what PNS means or many of the other acronyms we use, so be sure to explain).
2. Too many statistics. Numbers are important and help tell stories, use stats strategically as evidence for stories instead of the other way around.
3. Hypothetical questions. If you’re asked hypothetical questions, redirect to your talking points.

After the Interview:

1. Follow-up. Thank the reporter, provide additional information if appropriate, offer to answer additional questions.
2. Watch for the story.
3. Share the story through your channels.

Note: Occasionally, we deal with very complex or controversial topics. When this is the case, it’s even more important to stay on point and it’s okay to ask to review the story before it’s published. They may not agree to the review, but in some cases they will.

February 2016

National WIC Association
### Targeting Messages to Democrats and Republicans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Progressives/Liberals/Democrats</strong></th>
<th><strong>Conservatives/Republican</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core values:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communitarian: Greater together than on our own</td>
<td>• Limited Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Everyone gets a fair shot, plays by the same rules</td>
<td>• Maximizing individual freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>More likely to champion these issues:</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased access to healthcare</td>
<td>• Strong military and national security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hunger/poverty</td>
<td>• Strong economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prevention</td>
<td>• Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Children’s health and Education</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Targeting Messages to Democrats and Republicans

Progressives/Liberals/Democrats

WIC Talking Points:
• WIC provides a holistic response to mothers and young children
• Provides nutritional health
• Families, Retailers, community, and nation all benefit

Conservatives/Republicans

WIC Talking Points:
• WIC is a hand up not a hand out
• WIC is not a dependency program
• WIC educates to make informed choices
• WIC saves Federal taxpayer dollars
Targeting Your Messages to Elected Officials

- What issues do your Members of Congress focus on?
- What interests do they have?
- Do they have a family?
- What is their political ideology?
Worksheet Activity: Tailoring Your Messages to Your Elected Officials
Examples

**Democrat:** WIC education & food package helps improve health & nutrition intake in families.

**Republican:** WIC improves family health, helping children grow smart and strong to contribute to society & the military.

**Democrat:** WIC education & food package helps improve health & nutrition intake in families.

**Republican:** WIC improves family health, helping children grow smart and strong to contribute to society & the military.

**Democrat & Republicans:** WIC provides significant return on investment. The small investment in WIC saves future healthcare dollars and results in healthier families.

**Democrat:** WIC is able to serve participants through formula manufacturers' rebates

**Both:** WIC is a lean program that yields positive health outcomes & cost savings
Questions? Comments?