
Hilary Dockray
September 2019
Overview

- Why digital tools for WIC participants
- Creating the toolkit
- Top takeaways
- Where to find the toolkit
Why digital tools for WIC participants
WIC participants already use and like digital tools

- Many WIC participants are **Millennials** and **Post-Millennials**.
  - Smartphone adoption rates in 2019:
    - 96% for ages 18-29
    - 92% for ages 30-49
  - Already use digital tools for private sector services.
- According to research, **participants like WIC digital tools and want more!**
Digital tools can make WIC even better for participants

- Can **increase participation and retention.**
  - Tools can help those with **time and transportation barriers** participate in WIC.
  - Tools can create more ways to communicate, making it **easier to stay in touch**.
- Can handle certain administrative tasks, **freeing up time together for things that benefit from a human touch**.
- Digital tools do not need to be high tech. **It is about how they are applied!**
Common challenges WIC participants may face and how digital tools can help

- **Imagine that you:**
  - Are working multiple shift-based jobs, do not know what your schedule is more than a few days out, and are busy during regular business hours.
  - **What could help:**
    - Video calling for certain appointments
    - Online or texting-based nutrition education classes
Common challenges WIC participants may face and how digital tools can help

- **Imagine that you:**
  - Are trying to grocery shop with your crying toddler, do not know which brand or size of an item is eligible for WIC, and dread what might happen at checkout if you choose wrong.
    - **What could help:**
      - WIC shopping assistance apps
Creating the toolkit
Why the toolkit was created

- **The issue:**
  - The National WIC Association and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities heard from WIC agencies that they faced barriers to getting digital tools for their participants.

- **The solution:**
  - Create a practical resource to equip WIC agency staff, no matter a person’s role, with information and tips on how to pursue and implement digital tools for participants.
Creating the toolkit

- **Partnership between:**
  - Alluma (formerly Social Interest Solutions)
  - Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
  - The National WIC Association

- **Our approach:**
  - Listened and learned from those who are deep in the work through extensive literature review and one-on-one interviews with WIC agency staff.
  - Created a “toolkit” with busy WIC agency staff in mind.
Acknowledgments

- Altarum Institute
- Boulder County WIC (CO)
- California Children’s National Hospital/Medical Center (D.C.)
- Community Medical Centers, Inc. (CA)
- Davidson County WIN (TN)
- Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)
- Greater Baden Medical Services WIC Program (MD)
- Maricopa County DPH WIC Program (AZ)
- Michigan WIC
- Mississippi WIC
- National WIC Association Evaluation Committee
- New York WIC
- Osage Nation WIC (OK)
- USDA’s Food & Nutrition Service
- Washington D.C. WIC
- West Virginia WIC
Top takeaways
Start off right

- Instead of assuming, ask staff and participants what they think!
  - What problems are participants currently facing?
  - Is a digital tool the right solution?
  - Will this work well with staff workflows?
- Involve staff to get their buy-in.
- Involve staff and participants the whole way.
Things to consider for procurement

- Where will near-term and long-term funding come from?
- What does the agency need from a vendor?
- **Custom** or **Commercial Off The Shelf (COTS)**?
  - Custom is tailored, but potentially more money and effort.
  - COTS is not tailored, but potentially less money and effort.
- How would a tool impact MIS and/or EBT?
  - Will a tool interface with existing IT systems?
  - Will it cost extra money now or later?
- Any benefits to forming a purchasing consortium?
Choose user-friendly tools

- **In general, tools should have:**
  - Clear and simple design
  - Intuitive navigation
  - Easy to read text
  - Accessible design for those with disabilities
  - And more
Choose tools that work for the agency’s specific users

- In addition to general usability, determine what else a tool must have for an agency’s specific users.
  - For example, **does a tool come in the languages participants use?**

- And to keep improving tools for users, **learn from a tool's usage data!**
  - Know what you want to collect and why.
  - Collect a baseline to compare against later.
  - Make adjustments.
Must work well for mobile

- Since some may be “smartphone dependent,” it is critical for tools to:
  - Display well on all mobile devices
  - Not take up a lot or any storage space
  - Use as little mobile data as possible
Must work well for mobile

- And for websites, know your mobile compatibility terms!
  - **Mobile friendly**: Designed for computers but displays well enough on mobile.
  - **Mobile optimized**: Website has two designs, one for computers and one for mobile.
  - **Mobile responsive**: Website has one design that dynamically adapts to any screen or device.
Protect privacy and security of participants’ data

- **Design tools and business processes to limit risks** of exposing participants’ sensitive data.
- **Ask vendors** what they do to protect the privacy and security of participants’ data.
Plan for implementation

- **Prepare local agency staff and participants.**
  - Train staff on the tool
  - Create a promotion plan
  - Give staff time in their schedules to share tool with participants

- **No one-size-fits-all approach.**
  - Ask staff what would work best!
# RFP Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specifications</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planning</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Procurement considerations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Consolidate and/or integrate tools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vendor offers an all-in-one tool that covers all functions the agency wants to offer WIC participants</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Vendor offers multiple applications and users can access them all through a single sign-on (SSO)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Choosing a Product</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tools that are user-friendly for participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friendly and inviting to all users</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear and simple design</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
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## Specifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specifications</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clearly communicates privacy and security considerations reassuring users that personal information will be protected</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tools that support staff and agency processes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Allows users to pull data from tool into easy-to-read and easy-to-share reports</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Allows users to edit content easily</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Allows users to seamlessly work across digital devices</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows users to modify tool</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
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In conclusion

- Digital tools can make WIC easier and more effective.
- **Consider the whole process:** planning, procurement, choosing good tools for users, implementation, and evaluation.
- It can seem daunting but **it is doable**! The toolkit and your WIC community can help.

Contact us!
Hilary Dockray: hdockray@alluma.org
Our website: www.alluma.org
Mobile App for WIC Families

Pamela Hull PhD: Vanderbilt University Medical Center (PI)
Summer Weber PhD, RD: Vanderbilt University Medical Medical Center
Elyse Shearer PhD, RD: Tennessee State University (Co-PI)

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Vanderbilt University Medical Center
Pamela Hull, PhD (PI)
Summer Weber, PhD, RD
Doug Schmidt, PhD
Shelagh Mulvaney, PhD
Heidi Silver, PhD, RD
Tatsuki Koyama, PhD
Jessica Jones, MA
Ethan Huang, MS

Tennessee State University
Elyse Shearer, PhD, RD (Co-PI)
Veronica Oates, PhD
Prabodh Illukpitiya, PhD
Calvin Harris

233 Analytics
Chris Thompson
Development of CHEW App for WIC Program
Children Eating Well

Mobile App for WIC Families

- Supported by USDA AFRI Grant
- Developed and user-tested the CHEW app for WIC families
  - Apple (iOS) and Android platforms
  - English and Spanish
- Provides easy, practical ways to shop for WIC plus nutrition education

Intended Outcomes:

Increased:
- Redemption
- Satisfaction
- Retention

Improved:
- Dietary Intake
- Child feeding
- Home food environment
**CHEW App Development & Deployment**

**Version 1 Prototype**
- Needs assessment
- Input from WIC participants & program
- Grad student built prototype
- Iterative feedback from committee
- Tested w/ 80 users
- Post survey feedback

**Version 2 Development**
- WIC partnership
- Contract developer and userX designer
- Iterative user testing
- User interface design
- Agreement with State
- Connection with WIC server
- Data security & privacy

**Version 2 Deployment**
- Field testing
- Debugging
- Pilot county
- Matched counties – delayed control design
- Analytics on all
- Survey sample
- Dietary intake on subsample
- Sustainability plan
User experience (UX) testing for CHEW

• Qualitative Interviews
  • Participants: WIC caregivers of 2-4 year old children
  • Baseline testing: 22 participants
  • 3 follow-up rounds of iterative testing (3-4 per round)
  • 32 total interviews

• Interview Protocol
  • WIC experience
  • Using smartphone technology
  • Mental models: recipes, lists, WIC shopping
  • Feedback on draft screens

• Desirable app features
  • Cart sorting activity
  • Prioritization of features
  • Natural groupings
UX testing for CHEW

Qualitative Analysis
• Interview transcripts coded
• Constant comparative analysis

Emerging Themes
• Desire for efficiency in WIC
• Desire to maximize WIC benefits

"Trying to get it done, trying again, trying to make it efficient, trying to maximize the benefit and do it all quickly in the store- I’ll try to make it as quick as possible. Plus you know you still got to get home and do homework and get ready for school the next day and you know you don’t want to spend a whole lot of time in the store." (WIC Caregiver; parent of 2 children)

User Priorities
• Balance checking
• Bar-code scanning
• Appointments
• Recipes

"I think the ‘scan items to validate that it is WIC’, that’s a good [app feature]. I think that’s like the biggest one. Just to make sure. I have come across that a lot with just making sure that it is a WIC item. That’s like the biggest thing." (WIC Caregiver; parent of 1 child)
Overview: Mobile App for WIC Families

Recipes, meal planning, and nutrition education features are embedded in the app

Users can check WIC balance, view benefit expiration, and scan barcodes to confirm eligible foods at the store

Notifications: Nutrition tips & reminders
Implementation in WIC Program
IMPLEMENTATION IN WIC CLINICS

• Train-the-Trainer Approach
  • Tennessee State University – Cooperative Extension Program
  • Teaches individuals (WIC staff) who will then teach the end user (WIC clients)
CHEW App as Dissemination Tool
Recipes and Meal Planning
Townsend Lab: Self-Assessment Quizzes

Vali\textsuperscript{d}ated assessment tools for print and web

Family food & activity

Family meal time

Target: Low-income parents / caregivers of pre-school age children
Platform to Integrate Existing Tools: Healthy Kids & My Child at Mealtime Quizzes

- CHEW App: VUMC
- HK & MCMT Quizzes: UCDavis
Partnering with

IDENTIFY TOOL
Developed and tested for target population
Low income, diverse families
Parents of children birth to age 5
Feasible to adapt to mobile phone

ADAPT TOOL
Institutional agreement and approval by WIC
Funding for software developer
User testing and iterative development
Funding for implementation costs

EVALUATE TOOL
Pilot and implement
Innovative WIC research
Built-in app analytics
In-app pop-up questions
Separate surveys
Co-author publications

Mutually-Beneficial Partnerships with Non-Profit Organizations and Universities
OSAGE NATION WIC: TECHNOLOGIES THAT WORK

Manon Taylor, M.Ed.
Director, Osage Nation WIC
Osage Nation WIC

- ITO located in Northeast Oklahoma.
- Serve 3100 clients/month.
- 8 clinic locations
Online Nutrition Education

- Partnered with WICHealth.org in FY 2019
- First SPIRIT partner to use Quick Connect feature.
  - Collaborated with WICHealth and DXC to customize.
  - Completed lessons are automatically uploaded to client files.
  - Recognizes participant category.
Looking to the Near Future:
Online Nutrition Education

- We want to offer our clients the option to complete a lesson online and be able to phone in to receive their benefits. (max 2x/cert year)
- 86% of clientele interested.
Mobile App- my Oklahoma WIC

- Developed by WCD WIC and DXC for use by eight ITO's in Oklahoma.
- Can be used on both Apple and Android devices.
- Registration requires Spirit Household and State WIC ID (youngest member).
- No password required.
- Can be downloaded on multiple devices in the same household.
Osage Nation

SPIRIT_M&O_0270: Households Using Mobile App - Summary

9/1/2019 6:05:11 AM

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<tr>
<th>Registered</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1636</td>
<td>475</td>
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</table>
Mobile App-Benefits

- Displays the available quantity and description of the current and future household benefits.
Mobile App-Food Finder

- Helps participants find WIC allowed foods at the store.
- Once the UPC/PLU is scanned or manually entered, one of the following 5 messages will be displayed:
Mobile App - Messages

- Four types of messages are available:
  - Upcoming appointments
  - Missed appointments
  - We Miss You (schedule appointment)
  - Benefit Balance

- Push notifications
  - Appointment reminders sent two days before and day of appointment.
  - Reminders sent seven and two days before any remaining benefits will expire.
Mobile App - Store Locator
Facebook - Osage Nation W.I.C.

Breastfeeding is good for you too.

Osage Nation W.I.C.

About
Posts
Reviews
Photos
Videos
Community
Events

About
Settings

Future

Benefits
Food Finder
Messages

Description
Quantity
Unit
Cheese - all authori
Eggs - all authori
Breakfast Cereal All
PB/Dry/Corn Bran Pea
Infant Cereal - all
Infant Fruit & Veg
Whole Grain - All
Fruit and Vegetables

0
People Reached
0
Engagements

11 Comments 3 Shares
Facebook-Osage Nation W.I.C
Facebook-Osage Co. Breastfeeding Support
Facebook - Osage Co. Breastfeeding Support

I Need To Nurse Because...

I'm Tired
I'm Hungry
I'm Thirsty
I Need Comfort
I Hurt
I'm Growing
I'm Overstimulated
I Need Mommy

Correct / Incorrect Orientation of Valve Installation

Correct Installation

Incorrect. Loss of suction
Incorrect. Milk may back up
Incorrect. Loss of suction

Milky Mama, LLC
August 20 at 9:03 PM

Have you tried this? Let us know if you were able to pump more milk by turning your valves/membranes as pictured.
Text Messaging

- Contract with One Call Now.
- We utilize to send appointment reminders, closure notifications, and special events.
- Based on data entered in MIS system (Spirit) messages are sent to the primary number and/or email address within file.
Text Messaging

- Based on annual survey results, 79% prefer text messages to receive their appointment reminders vs. appointment cards and App.
- Can be customized to send only to certain clinics and participant categories.
- Reports are sent after each message attempt to show delivery information and statistics as well as overall lifetime usage statistics.
Surveys

◦ We utilize Survey Gizmo to compile our yearly Participant Satisfaction Survey and Farmers’ Market Survey.
◦ Survey is loaded onto iPads.
◦ The offline version has English and Spanish translations.
◦ A Report with results is instantly generated after survey is closed.
Website

The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program

Important Notice

Call 1-800-480-3189 to schedule an appointment, get directions to our clinics, or for any other information.

Mission Statement

The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program is a preventative public health nutrition program that provides nutrition and breastfeeding education, supplemental foods, and improved access to regular health care and social services to low-income, at-risk women, infants, and children.
Challenges

Deciding which company to use:
- Key features
- Flexibility (changes)
- Cost/renewal
- Will it enhance our service/program
- Will it help our clients
- Training for staff/clients
- Recommended by other States that use it
- Implementation process
- Company offers tutorial/demonstration
- Reporting capabilities
- Ease of use
- Personalization-custom messages etc.
Challenges

Cost of Technology
- Customization
  - Working with MIS
- Yearly renewals
  - Can you sustain?
- Set up
- Consortium
  - Help get cost lower
  - Upgrades/additional lessons etc. at no cost
Challenges

Navigating both Tribal policies/laws and Federal Regulations

- Procurement
- Contracts
  - AG’s office
  - Sovereignty language
- Multiple layers of signatures
Technology and Participation Numbers

1st online nutrition program implemented
Started making appts. in SPIRIT (MIS)
One Call Now set up process started
One Call Now live on July 1st
Social Media pages online (Facebook)
Implemented EBT
Rolled out MYWIC App
2nd online nutrition program implemented (started process in Oct 18)

Technology and Participation Numbers

2391 2389 2451 2549 2622 2648 2687 2791 2778 2783 2806 2801 2853 2956 2947 3060 3067

Thank You