

Outreach Activity Guide for Local Agencies

The purpose of this guide is to provide local agencies with a variety of options for outreach activities. It is by no means a list of activities that local agencies *must* complete, but merely a broad list of ideas for outreach. Some activities may not be applicable to all individual local agencies. However, many of the ideas listed here may serve as a springboard for developing a local agency-specific outreach plan agency-specific outreach plan.

This checklist covers:

- Person-to-person outreach.
- Targeting specific groups, such as Head Start or Migrant organizations.
- Creating referral systems.
- Utilizing media.
- Increasing program accessibility.
- Potential partner organizations

Encourage person-to-person outreach.

- Ask participants to bring friends and family members who may qualify for WIC benefits. Provide written materials for them to give to a friend or relative.
- Host special contests like "Bring A Friend to WIC." The participant who refers the most eligible people to WIC in a specified time wins prizes that have been donated by local businesses.
- Hire WIC participants or volunteers to be outreach workers to recruit women from local communities.
- Remind participants of appointments ahead of time. Make special efforts to get women who missed appointments back, including making phone calls or mailing letters.

Target specific groups and families.

- Create targeted messages to include in the agency's annual media release. Target children to keep them on the program after one year of age.
- Create targeted messages for pregnant women to get them on the program as soon as possible.

- Seek out places where these target audiences may have a presence, such as churches, social services offices, doctor's offices, daycares, schools, and community organizations. Provide outreach material and training to staff for referral opportunities.

Create intra-agency referral systems.

- Ask local Medicaid staff if the local WIC agency may set up a table in their office once a week to make appointments while their clients wait. Provide literature for potential participants, as well as Medicaid staff. Then reciprocate; invite Medicaid staff to take applications at WIC offices.
- Care Management for At-Risk Children (CMARC), and Care Management for High-Risk Pregnant Women (CMHRP) workers routinely work with clients who may be WIC-eligible. Provide them with information and materials on WIC and discuss their role in getting potential eligible participants into WIC.
- Hold a brown bag or potluck lunch honoring staff in another department. Give a short presentation about WIC and thank them for working so closely with the local WIC agency.
- Provide an in-service or lunch and learn presentation on WIC to immunization staff, public health nurses, school lunch staff and/or school nurses, and community and migrant health workers.

Ask the medical community to refer.

- Meet with doctors who are Medicaid providers or manage large practices, such as obstetricians, pediatricians, and family practice physicians.
 - Explain the eligibility criteria, the benefits of the WIC Program, and how they can refer people to WIC.
 - Provide them with outreach materials and your agency's contact information.
- Share WIC information with childbirth educators, midwives, and maternity and childbirth centers.
- Ask local pharmacists to include WIC information with prenatal and Medicaid prescriptions.
- Talk about WIC with local hospital staff such as social workers, OB and emergency-room nurses and physicians, and administrators. Tell them about WIC and ask them to refer potential clients. Leave outreach materials with your address and telephone number. Some agencies perform in-hospital certifications to new mothers upon delivery.
- Talk with pediatricians, OB/GYN, and family practice physician's offices about the WIC Program. Provide WIC brochures, bookmarks, and WIC Program fact sheets so they can

educate their clients about the WIC Program. Provide outreach posters to clinics. Use the sample outreach letter to physicians in your outreach efforts. Visit <https://www.nutritionnc.com/wic/outreach-resources.htm> to utilize outreach resources.

Build community partnerships that include referral systems.

- Place a booth at a local store or shopping mall to explain WIC, who it serves, and how to make appointments. Ask permission from the store manager.
- Send information home with students who participate in the school lunch or summer feeding program.
- Create an in-school program for teen moms or develop a way to bring these young women to WIC regularly without missing school.
- Establish a relationship with local university and community college's student health services.
- Ask churches and other faith-based groups to spread the word about WIC. Make sure all churches in your area have WIC flyers or brochures for potential clients.
- Work with Head Start, childcare centers, Smart Start coalitions and other agencies that serve potential WIC applicants.
- Establish a WIC Growth Task Force for the community. Task Force members should include key leaders from the community who serve potential WIC clients, the medical community, and women who are WIC-eligible. Address infrastructure issues and better integration of community resources related to WIC growth.
- Join community coalitions or advisory boards in your community. Make known that you work for the WIC Program. Share information about WIC to let other board members know about the services the Program offers.
- Present WIC information to many different organizations, businesses, and clubs. Offer training to appropriate personnel to inform about WIC which includes a description of the WIC Program, eligibility criteria, the location of local agency and outlying sites (including addresses and telephone numbers), USDA Nondiscrimination Statement, and a contact person.
- Send thank-you notes to all who refer potential clients to WIC. Let them know they are performing an important community service.
- Talk to your public affairs officer about utilizing social media. Establish a Facebook page or Twitter account for your agency. Reach out to different social service organizations on these social media sites. Their participants may be potential participants for your program. Try to update or post to the social media site one time per week.

Produce print and broadcast media pieces.

- Put posters, flyers, or brochures where participants will be. Consider grocery stores, laundromats, childcare centers, resale and thrift shops, maternity shops, church fellowship halls, university student centers and employment offices. Please refer to Chapter 4 in the WIC Program Manual for information about the required non-discrimination statement.
- Use bus cards that travel targeted routes or billboards. They have worked well in many locations.
- Ask local newspapers, television, local cable access stations, and radio stations to play public service announcements and cover stories about your clinics. Get the WIC story in the news. If you expand your hours, open a Saturday clinic, or hire new staff, let people know. Emphasize that WIC is a nutrition program for working families! Make your clinics accessible to working families. Please refer to WIC Program Manual Chapter 10, Attachment 2 for more information about working with the media.

Make WIC user friendly and accessible.

- Provide waiting room toys or activities for children. Ensure a routine for cleaning the toys and the area where toys are kept.
- Minimize waiting time to get an appointment and during clinic visits.
- Encourage staff to attend customer service training at local community colleges
- Ask clients, “What time works best for you?” when scheduling return appointments
- Provide extended hours during lunch, the evening, early morning, or on the weekend.
- Increase the number of sites that offer WIC services.
- Recommend that participants use proxies to pick up food benefits.
- Refer participants to transportation resources.

Organizations for Outreach and Referral

- Community Care of North Carolina/Carolina ACCESS (Medicaid managed care network)
- Child Development Agencies
- Children’s Developmental Services Agency (CDSA)

- Community Action Agencies
- Cooperative Extension: Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP).
- Healthcare Services:
 - Care Coordination for Children Services (CC4C)
 - Family Planning
 - Immunization Services
 - Pregnancy Care Management (PCM)
 - Prenatal Care
 - Well Child Care
 - Pediatric Dental Offices
 - Physicians
 - Rural Health Centers
- Department of Social Services
 - Eligibility Intake Workers
 - Work First Counselors
 - Child Support Enforcement
 - Food and Nutrition Services
 - Medicaid Program NC Health Choice
- Domestic Violence Shelters
- Employment Security Commission
- Faith Based Organizations
- Farmers Markets
- Food Bank
- Food Pantries / Meal Programs
- Head Start
- Child Care Centers
- Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO's)
- Homeless Shelters
- Hospital Birth Center Staff
- Hospital Outpatient Clinics

- Housing Authorities
- Hunger Network / Food Security Organizations
- Indian Tribal Organizations
- Legal Services
- Low-Income Citizen Organizations
- Mental Health Centers
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker's Association
- Organizations that support breastfeeding women
- Substance Abuse Treatment and Counseling Centers
- Smart Start Partnerships
- Urban Indian Organizations
- University or community college student health center