



National WIC Association

NWA 2017 WIC RESEARCH UPDATE

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February 27th, 2017

2017 Washington Leadership Conference



Overview

- Why is research important to WIC?
- The current WIC research environment
- Your role in WIC research
- Staying connected to research through NWA

Why is research important to WIC?

Are we
accomplishing
our mission?

Identify
opportunities
and
challenges

Advocacy and
Funding

The WIC Story



The Role of NWA in WIC Research

- NWA is not conducting formal research
- Make recommendations for research
- Connect members to new research
- Connect members to opportunities to participate in research
- Help build connections between researchers and the WIC community



National WIC Association



The Current WIC Research Environment

Strengths

Weaknesses

Opportunities

Threats

Strengths

- Strong and long history of WIC research
- WIC is science based
- Enormous amounts of WIC data are collected routinely
- Active and growing WIC research community

Weaknesses/Opportunities

- Good research takes time!
- Need to build economic research – Return on Investment research.
- Need to build research on the impact of WIC on military families.
- Spectrum of capacity to conduct analysis on WIC data at the state and local level.

More Opportunities

- A number national organizations undertaking WIC research on a range of topics
- NASEM recommendations for research
- More states moving to EBT – currently 27 states

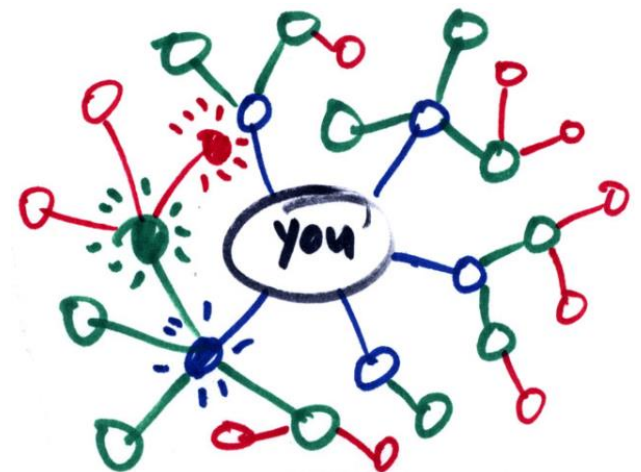
Threats

- Research is a scientific process to collect and analyze empirical evidence.
- The value of science and evidence is being challenged by some elected officials.
 - March for Science
<https://www.marchforscience.com/>
- Health impacts may not be a priority – threat if we don't diversify our arguments for WIC.

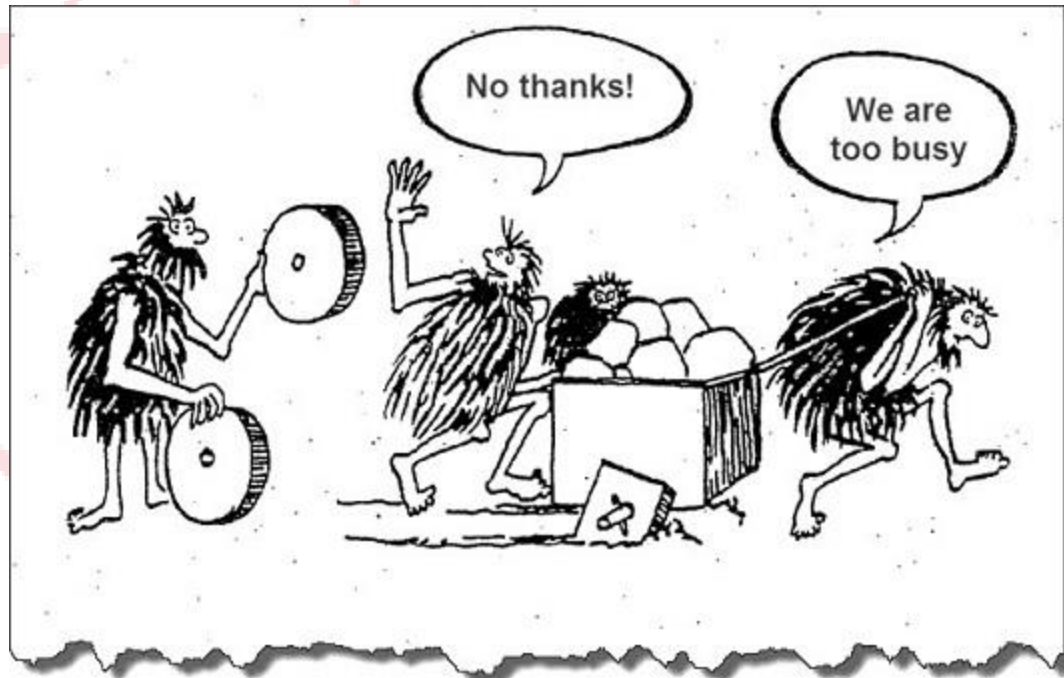


Your Role in WIC Research

- **Participating** in research
- **Shaping** the research agenda
- **Communicating** research
- **Connecting** researchers with WIC



WIC Research – Don't Miss an Opportunity!



Research=Knowledge



KA-POW!

**KNOWLEDGE IS
POWER**

2016 WIC Research Needs Assessment

- NWA Evaluation Committee.
- Highlight areas for focused research.
- Research to further bolster the four pillars of WIC services.
- 2016: women's health, obesity and data.
- Every other year.
- Research takes time.

<https://www.nwica.org/research-activities>



2016 NWA WIC Research Needs to Support an Effective and Efficient WIC Program

Overview

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) has benefited greatly from program evaluation and high quality quantitative and qualitative research focused on program impact. It is crucial that such research continues to update, reinforce, and expand the rigorous documentation of WIC's positive effects on the women, infants and young children served by the program. To date, WIC studies have been wide ranging in theme and scale and have covered issues from the impact WIC has on obesity and cognitive development, to how the WIC food package meets the cultural needs of WIC population across the country. In this document, we outline the need for focused research on women's health, the impact WIC has on obesity, and improving the quality and use of WIC data. Each of the areas of focus serve to bolster the four pillars of WIC - nutrition education, breastfeeding support, referrals to health and social services and the healthy food package.

WIC is the only USDA nutrition assistance program with legislative and regulatory requirements to provide nutrition education. Breastfeeding support and referrals to health and social services are also integral for day-to-day WIC service delivery. Research that examines the impact of these services on participant behavior change and identifies best practices continues to be essential. As WIC stays committed to providing participant centered services, considering the needs of the population WIC serves should be central to WIC research.

The benefit most widely known and associated with the WIC Program is the food package. Currently, the WIC food packages are under review by the National Academy of Medicine (formerly called the Institute of Medicine) with recommendations expected in January of 2017. USDA is required to review the food packages every ten years so that they align with the most current nutrition science and the latest Dietary Guidelines for Americans. It is essential that the nutrition community continue to rigorously examine the food and nutrient intake of low income pregnant and breastfeeding women, postpartum women, infants and children to identify the types of foods and nutrients of greatest benefit to these population groups. A myriad of questions related to the maternal and young child populations have great relevance to the program, and well designed studies, even small in scale, have great potential to impact both current and future WIC food packages.

Appropriate resources are needed to support quality WIC research and evaluation. For this reason, the NWA 2017 Legislative Agenda asks for a minimum of \$5 million to support ongoing research efforts and additional funds for grant research. Some exciting work is being supported by USDA grants and contracts. Currently, the USDA is supporting focused research on how WIC impacts nutrition in the periconception period. In addition, the USDA funded two new research centers: The Center for Collaborative Research on WIC Nutrition Education Innovations, and most recently The Center for Behavioral Economics and

NWA'S MISSION
Providing leadership to promote quality nutrition services, advocating for services for all eligible women, infants, and children, and ensuring the sound and responsible management of WIC.

As the nation's premier public health nutrition program, WIC is a cost-effective, sound investment—insuring the health of our children.

2016 Please direct all questions to NWA at 202.232.5492 1

Guidance for Planning, Conducting and Communicating a WIC Research Project



National WIC Association

NWA is the non-profit education arm and advocacy voice of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).



WIC BASICS ▾ NEWS ▾ EVENTS ▾ ADVOCACY ▾ TOPICS & RESOURCES ▾ EDUCATION ▾ MEMBERSHIP ▾

TOPICS & RESOURCES

TOPICS

BREASTFEEDING

NUTRITION

WIC FUNDING AND OPERATION

WIC OUTCOMES

RESOURCES

POSITION PAPERS AND FACT SHEETS

BIBLIOGRAPHY

WIC RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

WIC JOB POSTINGS

Guidance for Planning, Conducting and Communicating a WIC Research Project

Planning a Research Project

For over 40 years WIC has been helping low-income families access healthy food, breastfeeding support, nutrition counseling and referrals to health and social services. Although WIC is one of the most researched Federal nutrition programs, there are always opportunities for meaningful research that could fill a knowledge gap and provide formative lessons for the program and new data that can support advocacy efforts. Additionally, research on WIC occurs across disciplines and topics, including, for example, nutrition, breastfeeding, food policy, public policy and behavioral economics.

If you are looking for topics to research, we recommend consulting the National WIC Associations' Research Needs Assessment, which is a list of high priority research topics for consideration by interested researchers. The latest version can be found here. In addition, there are many other research topics that are of value to WIC and those that may be valuable to a specific local context.

If you are considering planning a research project that focuses on a specific locale, we encourage you to consider the research needs of the locale you hope to conduct research within. Synergies between researchers and state and local WIC staff, enable WIC research projects to have a meaningful impact on local WIC programs. For example, WIC state administrators and local staff worked collaboratively with researchers at the University of Illinois (UIUC) to develop projects to evaluate the revised WIC food packages and identify barriers to WIC child retention. As a result, the research generated from the partnership has helped inform programmatic direction.

Conducting Research within the WIC Community

The type of research you conduct may be determined by a number of factors such as timeframe, funding, and scope (whether you are conducting research on a local, state or national level). Another important consideration when

1. Clearly communicate research objectives, both verbally and in writing, when approaching state and/or local agencies with a request for their participation. If it is not possible to communicate verbally with every potential participant due to the scale of your project, consider hosting a webinar.
2. Define who the stakeholders will be in your research project. This may be straightforward or it may be more complex depending on whether the research project is being planned and conducted by the same entity or if contractors are undertaking some aspects of the research. Regardless, all stakeholders should be clear on the roles and responsibilities.
3. Agree on the type and level of input participating State and local agencies will be asked to provide throughout the project and what form of input will be requested (interviews, advisory panel, informal phone calls, reviewing reports, etc.).
4. Be aware of local policy issues that could be of concern to states, locals and WIC participants involved in your research. For example, be aware of sensitive or contentious issues and consider what impact your research could have on policy discussions at a local and national level. If unclear about whether your research could be policy-sensitive, contact NWA or your State WIC Director to discuss.
5. Communicate with WIC staff, what new insights you think your research will contribute to the WIC program or whether the research is being performed to meet federal requirements.
6. Clearly outline what is expected of participating WIC stakeholders involved in your project.
7. Be clear on when there will be opportunities for participating WIC stakeholders to ask questions before, during and after the research takes place.
8. Provide details of the point person WIC should contact if they have questions about your research.
9. Clearly describe how you intend to use feedback provided by participating state and local agencies. For example, if you are providing an opportunity for state and local agencies or advisory panels to review documents, clearly describe how that feedback will influence next steps.
10. If requesting data from WIC state and local agencies, clearly describe the data you would like to obtain, including data fields, timeframe, and expected response time.
11. Mutually agree to how sensitive data will be used for the research. Are there any Internal Review Board or Personal Identifier Information considerations? Is an MOU required? If so, discuss how these will be addressed with all stakeholders.
12. Describe who will have access to data provided for the research, how it will be stored throughout the project lifecycle, and how the data will be handled after the research is complete.
13. Mutually agree to whether and how raw data files and analytic files can be used after the research is complete.
14. If making recommendations, ensure that they are realistic and note limitations relative to their implementation.
15. Discuss with stakeholders how you plan to disseminate study findings.

<https://www.nwica.org/guidance-for-planning-conducting-and-communicating-a-wic-research-project>

WIC Research to Practice

Quarterly WIC Research newsletter

- Hot Topic
- WIC Researcher Spotlight
- FNS Research Update
- Links to new publications/abstracts

<https://www.nwica.org/research-activities>

Check your membership page to make sure you are signed-up to receive WIC Research to Practice!

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- Kelley Scanlon, PhD **USDA-FNS Partner**



Are you from the Southwest or Southeast Region and interested in research and evaluation?

We are looking for two new Evaluation Committee consultants!

Please get in touch...

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Thank you!