

DRAFT Abt Follow-Up Letter to Selected Local WIC Agencies

Dear [Name of Local WIC Agency Director]:

This is a follow-up letter to one you should have recently received the Food and Nutrition Service of the US Department of Agriculture (FNS). That letter asked for your assistance in a study that we have been contracted to undertake. As you may recall, the study will evaluate the impact of the new WIC food packages on breastfeeding initiation, duration and intensity among Program participants and help FNS understand how WIC can optimize these aspects of breastfeeding. This important study will collect information on how agencies are preparing for the changes made in the new food packages and what impact, if any, the new food packages have on Program participants' breastfeeding behaviors. State WIC agencies, local WIC agencies, and Program participants themselves will provide the information needed for the study. We have attached a one-page study description.

As the letter indicated, your agency was one of 16 that were randomly selected from across the country to participate in this study. We hope we can count on your agency's participation.

We would like to schedule a follow-up telephone call with you to discuss what participating in the study entails. In general, these include the following:

1. **Participating in staff telephone interviews** with you and certain LWA staff, (e.g., your breastfeeding promotion coordinator, CPA/nutrition educators, and the individual responsible for administrative data systems) about site characteristics that may affect breastfeeding rates and how your agency is preparing for implementing the new food packages. Selected LWA staff will participate in one, individual telephone interview that will be scheduled when it is most convenient and will last approximately 60 minutes.
2. **Participating in face-to-face interviews** with you and staff in your agency approximately three months after the new food packages are implemented to learn about the process of implementation and food package choices of Program participants. These interviews will last approximately 90 minutes.
3. **Assisting in providing information to approximately 100 selected WIC pregnant/postpartum mothers who will be interviewed by telephone** to gather information about breastfeeding and food package decisions. Abt Associates will recruit and interview the WIC participants, but will require assistance in identifying eligible Program participants, based on the age of their baby. Eligible women will have a baby 30 – 60 days old at time of interview. Participant interviews take 30 minutes to conduct and participants will be given a \$35 gift card for their time.
4. **Thirteen months of administrative data** on the food package choices of postpartum women to track trends before and after the rule is implemented. These data will be collected at either the State or LWA level, depending on what makes the most sense in your State.

Participation in this study is voluntary. There are no penalties if you decide not to participate. While we will do everything feasible to minimize the burden of participating in the study, we realize that this will be a busy time for you and your staff. Therefore, we are offering \$4,000 to

participating LWAs to help offset the additional administrative burden from participating in the study. We hope that you will join us in this effort.

Within the next week, a study coordinator from Abt Associates will contact you to find a time to discuss your agency's participation in the study. In the meantime, if you have any questions you can contact me at (617) 349-2664 or Ann_Collins@abtassoc.com or the data collection task leader Andrea Brand at (617) 520-3080 or Andrea_Brand@abtassoc.com. You can also use the study's toll-free number XXXXXXXX.

I hope that you can support us in this effort to look at the implementation and impact of the WIC food package changes in various sites across the country. The information will help policymakers at FNS understand the implications, if any, of the food package changes on breastfeeding practices. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Ann Collins
Project Director
Evaluation of the Birthmonth Breastfeeding Changes to the WIC Food Packages Study
Abt Associates Inc.

cc: Ted Macaluso, Chief, Special Nutrition Evaluation Branch, ORA, FNS, USDA