

DRAFT FNS Recruitment Letter to Sampled State WIC Directors

Dear [Name of State Director]:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has contracted with Abt Associates to conduct a national study to evaluate the impact of the new WIC food packages, as specified under the Interim Final Rule. Specifically, FNS is interested in learning how the food package changes are affecting breastfeeding initiation, duration and intensity among Program participants. Findings from this study will provide us with valuable information about how the food package changes are positively affecting WIC mothers' decisions to breastfeed, as well as help us identify any unanticipated outcomes.

Using a randomized selection process, we have identified 16 Local WIC agencies (LWAs) for possible participation in this study. One or more of these LWAs are in your State. We are writing to ask for your assistance and support in conducting this study. During the next few weeks, we will be contacting the LWA project director(s) at [insert LWA(s)] to invite them to participate. We ask that you also contact them to encourage their involvement in this important study. For LWAs, participation entails the following:

- Having approximately three to five designated staff participate in 60-minute telephone interviews prior to implementing the Interim Rule, and follow-up in-person interviews of approximately 90 minutes three months after implementation begins. Abt Associates will work with the LWA Director to identify key agency staff with whom to speak including the person responsible for administrative data systems, the breastfeeding promotion coordinator, and CPAs/nutrition educators.
- Assisting with the recruitment of 100 Program participants (50 prior to and 50 after the Interim Rule has been implemented) to participate in telephone interviews. 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 will last 30 minutes and participants will be given a \$35 gift card for their time.
- Helping Abt Associates obtain 13-months of administrative records on food packages used by infants and their mothers to track trends in food packages prior to and after the implementation of the Interim Rule. (In your State, it may be more appropriate to obtain these records directly from the State, rather than from the LWA; Abt Associates will follow-up with you to determine the best way to obtain these records.)

We are making every effort to minimize the participation burden for LWAs, by making the process as brief and convenient as possible. In addition, each participating LWA will receive \$4000 to offset some or all of the costs (i.e., staff time) associated with their participation.

In addition to data collection from the LWA, we want to hear from you and other State WIC staff to learn more about the implementation of the food package changes in your State. Specifically, this would involve Abt Associates conducting 60-minute telephone interviews with you, the State breastfeeding coordinator, and the MIS administrator before and after your State implements the Interim Rule.

Within the next week, a study coordinator from Abt Associates will contact you to discuss the process and expectations for participating in this study. A Study Information Sheet is also enclosed for your review.

Your cooperation and support for this study will make an important contribution in helping us understand the effects of the Interim Rule on the initiation, duration, and intensity of breastfeeding among Program participants in your State. We realize that this will be a busy time for both State and LWA staff, but the information needed to conduct this study can only be provided by State and local WIC agencies. Participation in this study is voluntary. There are no penalties if you decide not to participate in the information collection.

We look forward to discussing your participation in the next few weeks. If you have any questions, you can contact Ted Macaluso by phone (703-305-2121) or email (Ted.Macaluso@fns.usda.gov).

Sincerely,

PATRICIA N. DANIELS
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U.S. Department of Agriculture

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Enclosure

CC: Regional Offices