

FNS Recruitment Letter to Sampled Local WIC Agencies

Dear [Name of Local WIC Agency 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.

We are writing to ask for your participation in this important work. Using a randomized selection process, we have identified 16 Local WIC agencies (LWAs) from across the country for possible participation in this study. Your LWA is one of the 16 selected agencies that are being invited to participate.

The study design, activities, and timeframe are described in the enclosed Information Sheet. Data collection will begin in [early/late Month] to allow us time to get a snapshot of breastfeeding before you implement the new food package. We expect all data collection to be completed nine months following your implementation of the Interim Rule. Data collection will include:

1. **Staff telephone interviews** with you and certain LWA staff, (e.g., your breastfeeding promotion coordinator, CPAs/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. The interview will be scheduled when it is most convenient and will last approximately 60 minutes.
2. **Face-to-face staff interviews** with you and staff in your agency will be conducted 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. **Participant telephone interviews** of approximately 100 WIC pregnant/postpartum mothers 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.

We are making every effort to minimize the burden of this study on you and your agency staff. In addition, participating LWAs will receive \$4,000 to help offset the additional administrative burden from partaking in the study.

Within the next few weeks, a study coordinator from Abt Associates will contact you to provide more information about the process for participating. We have informed your State WIC

Director that your site was one of the 16 selected, and you may already have heard that you would be asked to participate in this study.

Your cooperation and support for this study will make an important contribution in helping us understand the effects of the Interim Rule on your local agency as well as on breastfeeding practices among the women you serve. 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).

We look forward to your assistance with this study.

Sincerely,

PATRICIA N. DANIELS
Director
Supplemental Food Programs Division
Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture

JAY HIRSCHMAN
Director
Special Nutrition Programs
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Enclosure

CC: State WIC Directors, Regional Offices