

Appendix C3

Recruitment Letter to WIC State Agencies With Case Studies

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[DATE] Spring 2014

Dear [State WIC Agency Director],

Several months ago you were informed about the WIC Nutrition Services and Administration (NSA) Cost Study being conducted by Altarum Institute (Altarum). Sponsored by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), this study will (1) collect cost information from State and local WIC agencies to examine the impact of administrative changes on WIC NSA costs since the last WIC Administrative Costs Report in 2000; (2) provide an updated assessment of the types and categories of costs charged to WIC NSA grants and the variation of these costs among state and local agencies; and (3) review the impact of current technology-related changes in WIC program operations.

Altarum and RTI International (RTI) have received final approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to proceed with the study. We are requesting your participation in the study and thank you in advance for your cooperation and assistance in collecting the necessary data.

The following information outlines the activities for which we are requesting your participation.

1. Collect copies of local agency expenditure data used to complete the state's FFY2013 FNS 798-A report.

- We will need to collect copies of the local expenditure data that were used to complete your state's FFY2013 798-A report. For each local agency, this means the expenditures associated with each of the following categories: program management, client services, nutrition education, and breastfeeding. This information can be sent to us via email as an Excel file, Word document, or in any format in which you collect this information from the local agencies.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0584-XXXX. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 15 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

2. Query your management information system (MIS) to obtain a report of the total number of enrolled participants in each local agency for each month during FFY2013 and the total monthly participation for each local agency during FFY2013.

- Enrolled participants are those participants who, for each month, are certified to receive WIC benefits and may or may not have received food benefits for that month. We also need the participation counts for each local agency, which is the count of participants who received WIC food benefits each month. The report can be sent to us via email as an Excel file or Word document. Please identify the local agency by name and address.

3. Complete your State Agency Web survey by [DATE].

- Your State Agency's link to the survey is www.NSAcostsurvey.com. A user name and password is required to access the survey. We will send this information to you in a separate, secure email within the next 3 business days.
- The survey will take about 60 minutes to complete. For your convenience and in order to make completing the survey as streamlined as possible, we have attached a copy of the survey questions so that you may confer with other staff members prior to entering your responses. You can also print the survey from the website after logging in.
- In the event that you are interrupted while completing the survey, you are able to exit the survey at any time and re-enter at the point you left off.
- All survey questions must be answered. The final confirmation process provides summary information for review prior to final submission.
- The survey is self-guiding and has a Help menu should you encounter difficulties. You may also call our Help Desk for assistance at 800-xxx-xxxx between 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Eastern.

4. Contact your local WIC agencies about their Web survey and encourage them to participate.

- USDA FNS is conducting the study among all local agencies and is seeking full participation.
- We appreciate your encouragement of local agencies' participation in completing their survey. Our experience shows that support from the State Agency is critical in seeking local agency cooperation. We have created content for an email (attached) that you may use that encourages local agency participation in this study.
- We will contact the local agencies directly to provide them their Web survey access, user ID, and password. It will be helpful to know if your local agencies have access to the Internet to complete the online survey; for those local agencies that do not have Internet access, we will provide paper copies of the survey and will follow up with you to understand these logistics.

5. Help us to schedule the case study interview with the appropriate staff at your State Agency and with two to three local agencies.

- At the state agency level, we anticipate the key informant interview to take between 1-1 ½ hours depending on the number of staff members involved. We will plan to interview the state WIC director, state financial manager (or equivalent position), and the lead staff of state-level program components, including the vendor manager, the lead for MIS or EBT projects, the nutrition services director, and the breastfeeding coordinator.
- At the local agency level, we will need your help identifying two to three local agencies that best represent and can explain the budgeting procedures and challenges faced by local agencies in utilizing NSA funds provided to them. Altarum will conduct an interview with key informants at these local agencies on the day before and/or day after the State Agency interview, depending on scheduling and availability. We anticipate a 1 ½ - 2 hour time commitment for the local agency. Although we may have ideas of local agency selection based on location and demographics, we will call you to discuss which of your local agencies would be the best candidates to include in the Study.

6. Provide us with a point of contact to help coordinate completion of the aforementioned requested items.

- Please provide us with the name, title, email address, and phone number of the person at your State Agency with whom we can coordinate this study. We anticipate that you may have follow up questions on various details; working with one staff member to coordinate communications will help to streamline the process. Please send this staff member's contact information to NSAcoststudy@altarum.org.

This study is very important to FNS and the WIC community as a whole as it will help to explain the full range of valuable services that are performed with NSA funds. We thank you for your participation and look forward to working with you!

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Diane Phillips at diane.phillips@altarum.org or (202) 603-7142.

Regards,



Loren Bell, Project Director
Institute Fellow
Co-Director, Center for Food Assistance and Nutrition
Altarum Institute

Attached: Copy of Web survey
Copy of email content for local agency encouragement