

**APPENDIX D1**

**STUDY DESCRIPTION FOR STATE AND LOCAL WIC AGENCIES**

## Study Overview for WIC State and Local Agencies: The Third National Survey of WIC Participants (NSWP-III)

**Purpose.** The NSWP-III will continue the Food Nutrition Service (FNS)'s commitment to program integrity and compliance. The primary purposes of NSWP-III are to:

- Produce nationally representative rates of certification error and associated dollar errors from overpayments (to erroneously certified WIC participants) and underpayments (to improperly denied WIC applicants) in the WIC program;
- Understand current and former WIC participant experiences with the WIC program; and
- Systematically gather State and local agency policies, procedures, and characteristics related to certification, food instrument issuance, nutrition, and other services.

**The study is not an audit of any State or local WIC agency, nor will the study change any individual WIC participant's benefits, eligibility, or any applicant's status.** The study is required for the USDA to fulfill its obligations under the 2012 Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Improvement Act (IPERIA). The study results will help FNS better support State and local WIC agencies' implementation of certification procedures and inform policy guidance to sustain or improve WIC participant satisfaction with the program. The findings will be released in a series of publicly available reports – no State or local agency, nor any individual person who participates in the study, will be identified in these reports.

**Data Collection from State and local WIC agencies.** To complete the objectives described above, 2M Research Services and Abt will collect data from State and local WIC agencies, current and former WIC participants, and WIC applicants who did not qualify for benefits. Starting in approximately March of 2018, the researchers will ask State and local WIC agencies to:

- Complete the NSWP-III State Agency web survey. The study will invite all State agencies in the U.S., its territories, and Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs) to complete this survey about agency policies and procedures, certification procedures, food options and prices, as well as data management procedures and systems.
- Complete the NSWP-III Local WIC Agency web survey. A nationally representative sample of over 700 local WIC agencies will provide information on the services that these agencies provide to WIC participants, as well as their organizational structure, staffing, caseloads, and food distribution procedures.

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According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control 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 3 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. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services, Office of Policy Support, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 1014, Alexandria, VA 22302, ATTN: PRA (0584-xxxx\*). Do not return the completed form to this address.

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A sample of State agencies will also be asked to support the study by providing extracts of participant, food issuance, and redemption data. The research team will work closely with State agencies to coordinate applicable data sharing agreements and to minimize the burden of providing these existing data.

**Data Collection from WIC participants.** At about the same time, the research team will recruit two nationally representative samples of active WIC participants to participate in one or both of the following (each respondent will receive a \$25 Visa debit card per survey):

- Certification Survey: This in-person survey is designed to determine whether WIC participants certified no more than 6 weeks prior to the survey qualified under one of the five participant category types and met residency and income eligibility criteria (or adjunctive income eligibility); and/or
- Program Experiences Survey: Conducted in-person with some of the same WIC participants selected for the Certification Survey, and by telephone with others, this survey will collect a cross-section of recently and less recently certified participants' experiences with local staff, nutrition and other services, food distribution procedures, vendors, as well as their satisfaction with the WIC program.

Another survey effort will focus on individuals who formally applied for WIC but did not qualify. This Denied Applicant survey will determine the rate of formal denials in the WIC program as well as the incidence of erroneous denials of individuals who appear to have met eligibility criteria when they applied. Finally, the NSWP-III research team will interview a convenience sample of former WIC participants to assess any barriers to WIC program retention.

**For more information.** For questions or concerns about the NSWP-III, you may contact the research team either toll free at [XXX-XXX-XXXX] or by email: **[RESEARCH TEAM EMAIL ADDRESS]**. Alternatively, you may contact the Project Officer at FNS, Anthony Panzera, by email: **ANTHONY.PANZERA@FNS.USDA.GOV**