

Appendix C.
Notification Letter for Guidance
to WIC State Agencies



United States Department of Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

[DATE]

Dear WIC State Agency Director:

3101 Park
Center Drive
Alexandria, VA
22302-1500

As required by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), biennial reporting for the [STUDY YEAR] WIC Participant and Program Characteristics Study (PC[STUDY YEAR]) is now underway. Included with this letter is (1) your copy of the [STUDY YEAR] *Guidance for State Agencies Providing Participant Data* (the *Guidance*) for April [STUDY YEAR], the reference month for PC[STUDY YEAR], and (2) your WIC State agency contact request form. Please complete and return the contact request form by [DATE] through email to [CONTRACTOR EMAIL] or by fax to [CONTRACTOR FAX].

The success of PC[STUDY YEAR] depends on a speedy response from WIC State agencies!

The widespread demand for PC tabulations requires that all WIC State agencies submit PC[STUDY YEAR] data as soon after April [STUDY YEAR] as feasible. State agency cooperation in this effort will expedite data tabulations and help ensure that all deadlines are met.

There are no substantial changes to the PC[STUDY YEAR] data request; the file formats and documentation are the same as for [PREVIOUS PC DATA COLLECTION YEAR]. However, FNS plans to publish an additional report on the food packages prescribed to participants, so there will be an added emphasis on the quality of data submitted on Food Package Type and the details of food packages.

Our contractor, [CONTRACTOR], will continue to have overall responsibility for PC[STUDY YEAR] and will handle all communication with State agencies and receive all file submissions and documents.

This information is being collected from State agencies to enable the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to prepare biennial reports on WIC participant and program characteristics. This is a mandatory collection authorized under 7 CFR §246.25(b)(3). FNS uses the data from these reports to estimate budgets, submit civil rights reporting, identify needs for research, and to develop and review WIC policies and procedures. Under the Privacy Act of 1974 and the System of Record Notice FNS-8 USDA/FNS Studies and Reports, any personally identifying information obtained will be kept private to the extent of the law. 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 0584-0609. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 30 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 (0584-0609). Do not return the completed form to this address.*

What State Agencies Need to Provide

The *Guidance* provides States with what they need to know about submitting PC[STUDY YEAR] data. Some details follow. First, to facilitate processing of the PC [STUDY YEAR] data, State agencies will need to submit two documents in advance of the data. These two documents, due by [DATE], just before the reference month of April [STUDY YEAR], are as follows:

- **Nutrition Risk Worksheet.** State agencies will need to specify whether nutrition risk data will be provided using the Federal nutrition risk codes agreed upon by FNS and the National WIC Association (established via FNS Policy Memorandum 98-9; Nutrition Risk Criteria), or State agency codes. Agencies using State agency codes must provide a crosswalk between their codes and the Federal nutrition risk codes. In January [STUDY YEAR], [CONTRACTOR] will provide you with the Nutrition Risk Worksheet to complete and return. For your convenience, the information your State agency provided for PC[STUDY YEAR] will also be included.
- **Food Code Documentation.** State agencies will need to provide a translation of the food package codes used by your agency into specific food items and quantities prescribed to WIC participants. Although State agencies may provide these data in a food package format or an item-quantity format, ***the item-quantity format is preferred.***

Second, State agencies will need to download routinely collected information from their existing automated client and management information systems to produce and submit by [DATE]:

- **Data File containing the Minimum Data Set (MDS) and any Supplemental Data Set (SDS) items available**
Data Transmittal Worksheet located in Section VI of the *Guidance*

The April data submission from State agencies should contain information for all participants on WIC master lists or participants listed in WIC operating files who are certified to receive WIC benefits in April [STUDY YEAR]. The *Guidance* specifies the format and instructions for compiling the data.

Data Reporting Checklist

Please do not hesitate to contact [CONTRACTOR] with any questions or comments you have during the PC[STUDY YEAR] data collection period. [CONTRACTOR] may be reached by telephone at [CONTRACTOR PHONE], by email at [CONTRACTOR EMAIL], or by fax at [CONTRACTOR FAX].

Thank you for your cooperation. Your timely response will make PC[STUDY YEAR] a success.

Sincerely,

SARAH WIDOR
Director, Supplemental Food Programs Division
Food and Nutrition Service