Appendix D2:
Email to SA with Info Packet and Schedule Call

OMB Control No: 0584-XXX
Expiration Date: XX/XX/XXXX

Dear [WIC State Agency Director],

This is a follow-up to the notification from FNS (attached) regarding the WIC Nutrition Assessment and Tailoring Study (WIC NATS). FNS has contracted with Westat to conduct this study.

This study will provide FNS with a comprehensive understanding of the WIC nutrition risk assessment process and the ways in which participant benefits are tailored to address the individual needs of WIC participants. Findings from this study will be used to improve the nutrition service delivery and identify best practices in the nutrition assessment and tailoring process associated with participant and staff satisfaction, improved efficiency, and reduced staff burden. The attached study brochure and Frequently Asked Questions resource provide information that will be helpful to you and your staff. Please review it and share it with the appropriate individuals at the SA.

Your SA and the other SAs selected have a critical role in ensuring the success of this study. We welcome you as part of the study team, and we look forward to working with you as a partner in this important study.

At this time, we would like to schedule a call with you or the appropriate representative from your SA to discuss the plans for the study, what we will need from you, and your questions. At your earliest convenience, please call our study team at 1-855-598-2492 or email us at WICNATS@westat.com to let me know of times when you are available to discuss the study and your SA's participation. We look forward to working with you and the [STATE] WIC program on the WIC NATS.

If you have any questions about the study please contact the Westat Study Team at: WICNATS@westat.com or 1-855-598-2492. The FNS representative for this study is Alexander Bush (Alexander.Bush@usda.gov).

Thank you for your support of this important FNS study.

Sincerely,

Westat Study Team

This information is being collected to assist the Food and Nutrition Service in obtaining a comprehensive and detailed description of the WIC nutrition risk assessment process and the ways in which participant benefits are tailored to address the assessment results.

This is a voluntary collection and FNS will use the information to improve the delivery and tailoring of WIC services and increase satisfaction of both staff and participants. This collection does request personally identifiable information under the Privacy Act of 1974. 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 9 minutes (0.15 hours) 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 Service, Office of Policy Support, 1320 Braddock Place, 5th Floor, Alexandria, VA 22314 ATTN: PRA (0584-xxxx). Do not return the completed form to this address.

Study Information Sheet

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service is sponsoring a study to obtain information about the WIC nutrition risk assessment process and the ways in which Program benefits are tailored to address the individual needs of WIC participants. Information will be gathered from existing datasets and documents, a web-based survey, observations of the clinic flow as well as nutrition risk assessment sessions, and interviews with the Site Director and WIC risk assessment staff, and WIC participants. Findings will be used to improve nutrition service delivery and identify best practices in the nutrition assessment process associated with participant and staff satisfaction, improved efficiency, and reduced staff burden.

What are the research objectives?

- Provide in-depth descriptive information on how a large, diverse sample of local WIC agencies perform the WIC nutrition risk assessment.
- Systematically describe how local WIC agencies use the nutrition assessment information to tailor program benefits.
- Investigate relationships between WIC nutrition services processes and the clinic experience, participant and staff perceptions, and overall clinic flow and efficiency.
- Identify practices that facilitate the use of nutrition assessment information to tailor benefits and are associated with participant and staff satisfaction.

What is the data collection plan?

- 10 selected State Agencies (SAs) will be contacted in [Mid-2020] to join the study. They will be asked to provide policy documents and MIS data.
- All Local Agencies (LAs) within the 10 selected SAs will be invited to complete a web-based survey in [Late-2020/Early-2021].
- 30 LAs will also be asked to provide information about their clinics as well as policy and procedure documents.
- 30 local WIC sites (1 per LA) will be selected to participate in a week long site visit, beginning in [Early-2021].
- About 500 WIC participants at the 30 selected local WIC sites who consent will be observed during their nutrition risk assessment session and invited to participate in an interview in beginning in [Early-2021].
- The final study report will be published in Fall, 2022.

Who is conducting the study?

Under contract with USDA/FNS, Westat, an employee-owned research corporation located in Rockville, MD, is leading the study. Additional team members include:

- Insight Policy Research, Arlington, VA
- PHFE WIC, City of Industry,

CA

- Gabor & Associates, Bethesda, MD

Where do I get more information?

Email questions to:
WICNATS@westat.com

The United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, is conducting this study through a contract with Westat, located in Rockville. MD.

OMB Approval No. 0584-XXXX
Approval Expires: XX/XX/20XX

WIC NUTRITION ASSESSMENT AND TAILORING STUDY (WIC NATS)

OMB Approval No. 0584-XXXX
Approval Expires: XX/XX/20XX

Frequently Asked Questions Related To:

DATES AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Q. My State/local agency has an Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval requirement for studies pertaining to individuals who are participants of programs administered by the Agency. How will the study team work with my Agency to complete this process?

Westat's IRB has reviewed and approved the study. If your State or Local Agency has IRB approval requirements, we will work with you to prepare and submit the materials needed. If IRB approval is required by your State/Local Agency, we request that you determine your IRB's submission and review timelines to ensure approval can be obtained prior to the start of the study.

Q. What is the timing of seeking IRB approval in terms of the start of the study activities?

In the event your State Agency or local site requires IRB approval, it should be in place before any study activities begin (e.g. contacting Local Agencies or WIC clinics).

Q. Will Local Sites be provided with funds to participate in the study? If so, how much and how will the funds be provided?

Although we are unable to offer funds to Local Sites to participate in the study, we will provide a gift of children's books to the Local Sites to thank the staff for their participation in the study.

Q. Who are the study personnel who will be working with the State Agencies, Local Agencies and Local Sites?

Westat, headquartered in Rockville, Maryland, is the lead research organization on this study, working on behalf of the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service. Westat's partners on this project include Insight Policy Research, PHFE WIC, and Gabor Associates. Together with FNS, the Westat study team has designed the study and the data collection instruments.

Westat will begin talking with officials from the State Agencies in [Mid-2020] to provide study details and respond to questions. Westat will invite Local Agencies to complete a web-based survey in the summer of 2020, and then will contact local WIC sites to arrange for site visits beginning in [Early-2021].

Study team members from Westat and Insight Policy Research will conduct these site visits to local WIC sites.

Q. How long will the site visit last?

Site visits are expected to last five days, and will take place in one week.

Q. Our WIC agency requires all staff to be background screened. Will you pay for that screening?

Westat conducts a background screening of all study staff hired. If a local site requires additional screening (such as health screens), we will pay for the type of screening required by the State or local agency.

Q. Is it possible to obtain the details/criteria for site selection?

The sampling summary will be published on the FNS website (https://www.fns.usda.gov/) in [Late-2020] as part of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) clearance package.

STUDY REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE AGENCIES

Q. What are the State Agencies' responsibilities for the study?

State Agencies will be asked to assist with informing the Local Agencies about the study, providing a name and contact information for a local point of contact for each Local Agency, and garnering participation from the Local Agencies. Additionally, SAs will be asked to provide:

- WIC PC and MIS data for their LAs
- State WIC Plans
- Any additional documents and materials the SA disseminates to LAs to help with the nutrition risk assessment process

STUDY REQUIREMENTS FOR LOCAL AGENCIES

Q. What are the Local Agencies' responsibilities for the study?

All Local Agencies within the ten selected State Agencies will be asked to complete the web-based Local Agency Survey, providing information about their Local Agency.

Thirty (30) LAs will be selected for a second phase of the study, and will be asked to:

- Provide any program documents and tools used in the nutrition risk assessment, including guidance and training resources
- Provide information about the characteristics of each WIC clinic in their LA to assist with selection of clinics for onsite visits.
- Assist in garnering cooperation from the WIC clinic within their LA selected for the site visit.

STUDY REQUIREMENTS FOR LOCAL SITES

Q. What are the Local Site's responsibilities for the study?

All sites will be asked to accommodate an onsite visit by the Westat Study Team during which the Study Team will (1) observe the clinic environment; (2) observe the nutrition risk assessment and benefit tailoring; (3) conduct in-depth interviews with the Site Director and the staff conducting the nutrition risk assessments; and (4) conduct a semi-quantitative interview with WIC participants who had a nutrition risk assessment visit.

Q. What are the Local Sites expected to provide in terms of space and equipment for study personnel?

The local sites will be asked to provide a space where the study staff can conduct the Site Director, staff, and WIC participant interviews with as much privacy as feasible. Westat will provide any equipment needed for the site visit team to conduct the observations and interviews on site.

Q. What are the Local Site Director's specific responsibilities for the study?

The Site Director will be asked to (1) work with Westat site visit team to plan for the site visit, (2) participate in an in-depth interview during the site visit week. As part of the in-depth interview, we will ask the Site Director to provide a demonstration of the MIS in use at the site and to provide any policy or procedure documents developed by the Local Site for the nutrition assessment and tailoring process.

Q. What are the Local Site staff member's specific responsibilities for the study?

The Local Site staff members who conduct the nutrition risk assessment and benefit tailoring will be asked to (1) allow the Westat site visit team to observe the nutrition risk assessment and benefit tailoring visits for several WIC participants and (2) participate in an in-depth interview during the site visit week.

Q. What will the Local Site staff be asked to do relative to identifying/recruiting WIC participants for the study?

The Local Sites will be asked to identify WIC participants attending the clinic for a nutrition risk assessment (either an initial or recertification appointment).

Q. Is the local site responsible for providing an interpreter for Spanish-speaking WIC participants?

No, Westat will use Spanish-speaking staff for sites that need them.

WIC PARTICIPANTS

Q. What responsibilities do WIC participants have as participants have in the study?

WIC participants will be asked to allow our study team to observe the nutrition risk assessment during their visit to the WIC clinic, and then to complete a semi-quantitative interview. WIC participants may complete the interview on-site, following their WIC clinic visit, if time permits, or may schedule a telephone interview. Interviews will ask about their experience with the nutrition risk assessment, their benefits package, and their satisfaction with the process.

Q. How will WIC participants' privacy be protected?

We will obtain informed consent from all WIC participants that assure them that participating is completely voluntary, and if they choose to participate: (1) they may refuse to answer any questions; (2) they can stop participating at any time; and (3) their WIC services or other benefit will not be affected if they decide to stop participating. In addition, the consent will explain that we will take many steps and precautions to protect their privacy, assigning a study ID to their data rather than using their name; and promising not to share personal information about them with WIC or with anyone else who is not on the study staff.

Q. What incentives will be offered to WIC participants who agree to participate in the study?

Each WIC participant will receive $20.00 after she/he completes the interview. The incentives will be provided as a Visa gift card or prepaid debit card which the participants will receive by mail within 2 weeks of their completed interview.

Q. If WIC participants don't have phone access, but are interested in the study, will they be eligible?

Yes. We will provide cell phones and minutes for those who do not have home or cell phones. We will add enough minutes to the phone to complete the interview.

Q. We have a significant number of WIC participants whose first language is not English or Spanish, however, their second language is English. Will they be included?

As long as the WIC participants are able to speak and understand either English or Spanish, they will be included. If a WIC participant is unable to speak and understand English or Spanish, but has a friend or family member willing to serve as an interpreter or the clinic has a language line service available, the WIC participant can be included.

STUDY SPECIFICS AND LOGISTICS

Q. What if a selected LA or site is unable to participate?

FNS and the study team will make every effort to address challenges that may prevent a selected SA, LA, or site from participating. However, there may be circumstances that may make it very difficult for them to participate in the study. These may include changes in the EBT system used by the SA, LA or site closures, construction during the study period, or another unforeseen circumstance. In these scenarios, the study will replace the SA, LA, or site with an alternate that has similar characteristics to the original.

Q. When will onsite visits occur, how long will they take, and who will need to be involved?

The visits are planned for [Early-2021]. The visits will last five days. If State or local agency staff personnel want to observe the onsite visit, they are welcome. However, we will not collect any information from these staff. Ideally the visit will occur when a substantial number of visits requiring a nutrition risk assessment are scheduled. There is no need to change the normal schedule of services during the time of the visit.

During the site visit, the study team will provide information about the study to site staff that are present; observe the clinic flow and the nutrition risk assessment process; and interview the Site Director, staff who conduct the nutrition risk assessment, and WIC participants.