



Food and
Nutrition
Service

December X, 2023

OMB Control Number: 0584-0524
Expiration Date: 2/28/2026

1320 Braddock
Place
Alexandria, VA
22314

Dear WIC State Agency Director:

As required by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), biennial reporting for the 2024 WIC Participant and Program Characteristics Study is now underway. With this letter, you are receiving your copy of the *Guidance for State Agencies Providing Participant Data* (Guidance). Copies of the Guidance are being provided to all WIC State agencies and the FNS Regional Offices.

This year, we have expanded the scope of WIC PC to include longitudinal data and electronic benefit transfer data. This expanded scope (PC+) will allow us to track participant-level changes, develop national measures of retention and breastfeeding duration, examine trends in food package redemption, and much more. Importantly, PC+ data will support the evaluation of WIC modernization initiatives and other research efforts. Along with the expanded scope, you should expect to see a wider range of WIC PC products to make WIC data and measures more accessible to a wider range of audiences.

The success of PC+ depends on a speedy response from WIC State agencies! Please submit PC+ 2024 data as soon after April 2024 as is feasible. State agency cooperation in this effort will expedite data tabulations and reporting and help ensure all deadlines are met.

Our contractor (Westat) will have responsibility for PC + and will handle all communication with State agencies and receive all file submissions and documents.

What State Agencies Need to Provide

The Guidance provides State agencies with what they need to know about submitting PC+ data. Some details are provided below.

First, to facilitate processing of the PC+ data, State agencies begin by submitting two documents in advance of the actual data. These two documents, due by March 18, 2024, just before the reference month of April 2024, are as follows:

- ***Nutritional Risk Worksheet.*** State agencies will need to specify whether nutritional risk data will be provided using the Federal nutritional 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 nutritional risk codes. In February 2024, Westat will provide you with the Nutritional Risk Worksheet to complete and return. For your convenience, the information your State agency provided for PC 2022 will be included.

- **Food Code Documentation.** State agencies will need to provide a translation of the food package codes used by the agency into specific food items and quantities prescribed to WIC participants. While 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 the following by July 2, 2024:

- **Monthly Longitudinal MDS and SDS items from May 2022 to April 2024**
- **Monthly electronic benefit transfer (EBT) data from July 2022 to April 2024**
- **Data Transmittal Worksheets** located in appendixes C and D of the Guidance

The data submission from State agencies should contain information for all participants on WIC master lists or participants listed in WIC operating files who were certified to receive WIC benefits at any point between May 2022 and April 2024. The Guidance provides a specified format and instructions for compiling the data.

Data Reporting Timeline

Date	Data Reporting Activity
December 2023	Westat sends <i>Guidance for State Agencies Providing Participant Data</i> to State agencies. ¹
January 2024	Westat sends the Nutritional Risk Worksheet and WIC Local Agency Directory to State agencies and updates contact information.
March 18, 2024	State agencies submit the Nutritional Risk Worksheet and Food Code Documentation to Westat
May 1–July 2, 2024	State agencies submit the PC data file and the Data Transmittal Worksheet for PC+ to Westat.
July 2, 2024	This is the final deadline for State agencies to submit the PC data file and the Data Transmittal Worksheet.

¹ To ensure receipt of the Guidance, please add the PC 2024 email address to your address book:
WICPC2024@westat.com

Please contact Betsy Thorn or Polina Zvavitch at Westat with any questions or comments you have during the PC+ data collection period. Betsy may be reached by telephone at 703-504-9488, and Polina may be reached by telephone at 571-758-5022. Questions may also be submitted to Westat by email at WICPC2024@westat.com.

Thank you for your cooperation. Your timely response will make PC+ a success.

Sincerely,

Melissa Abelev
Director, Research and Analysis,
Supplemental Nutrition and Safety Programs
Food and Nutrition Service

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 0584-0524. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 12 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, 1320 Braddock Place, Alexandria, VA 22314, ATTN: PRA (0584-0524). Do not return the completed form to this address.*