Attachment D-1 WIC Participant Focus Group Guide (English)

Focus Group Moderator Guide
WIC Text Communications Participant Groups
Target Time ≈ 90 minutes of discussion &
respondents asked to log on 30 minutes before start time

I. Introduction   (15 min: 15)

A. Moderator introduction
B. Remind respondents to be in a quiet place
C. If you need to step away, do so briefly and come back as soon as possible
D. Anonymity
E. Rules for participation online (all opinions count, want to hear from all, no wrong answers)
F. Grab a piece of paper and a pen or pencil
G. Research Topic -- We have invited you all here because you are participants in the WIC program, so we'll focus on your child(ren) under age 5. We're going to talk about different methods that programs and brands might use to share information with you.

H. Introduction – [SHOW SLIDE WITH INTRO PROMPTS]: Please share your first name, the state you live, and who shares your household (people, pets, plants, etc.)
  a. To start things off, give me a word or phrase that you would use to describe your day yesterday. (Quick probe: why did you choose that word?)
  b. Please also share if you are currently expecting or if you are a first-time mom.

II. Brand Communications   (25 min: 40)

A. Let's get started by talking about how you communicate with companies, brands, and providers such as your healthcare providers, government programs, and other service providers across all areas of your life. [MODERATOR NOTE: MINIMIZE BRAND CONNECTIONS (INCLUDE ONLY TO GROUND THE RESPONDENTS)].

a. What are all the ways you engage with providers, healthcare, products, or brands? [IF NEEDED, PROVIDE EXAMPLES]: For example, think about a product or brand you really like. You might follow the company on social media or sign up to receive emails with updates from them. Thinking about service providers or programs, you might sign up to receive appointment reminders, upload documents, or send messages to your healthcare provider or government programs.

b. [IF NOT COVERED UNAIDED, PROBE]: How are you most likely to sign up to receive information from companies, brands, or programs – email, WhatsApp, text messaging, social media follow/subscribe? [IF NEEDED]: Which apps or programs do you currently use for these communications?

   i. What are the advantages of receiving communications via email? What are the downsides?

   ii. What are the advantages and disadvantages of WhatsApp?

   iii. What are the advantages and disadvantages of interacting with brands or companies online through their website or social media accounts?

   iv. What are the advantages and disadvantages of receiving text messages? What role does texting play in your communication? How does that compare to email or social media?

   v. Apart from receiving texts from programs or providers, have you ever used texts to initiate communication – such as asking a question, requesting an appointment, or signing up for a program or service? What are the pros and cons of this use of texting?

   vi. How do you feel about 2-way texting communication with a program or service provider? [IF NEEDED]: For example, you receive a text and have the opportunity to reply, or you send a text and receive a reply from the provider? What are the pros and cons of this?

B. Thinking just about opting in to receive text messages from a service provider or program – What typically motivates you to enroll in text communications?

   a. How often do you feel that agreeing to receive text messages is required in order to receive a particular benefit vs. a choice you make because you want to hear from them? How do you feel about that?

      i. What kinds of benefits have brands or programs/services offered that felt worth it to sign up for texts?

      ii. What would need to be offered from a service provider or program (e.g., your healthcare provider or a government program) to motivate you to enroll?

      iii. What brands or programs have you decided not to accept texts from? What led you to say no?

    iv. Have you ever signed up and regretted it after? What made you feel that way?

    v. For those programs you have taken the step to unsubscribe, what led you to do that?

C. I'd like you to think about all of the text messages that you have opted to receive from products, service providers, or programs (not individual people you know). [POLL]: Using this scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means "I am open none of this type of text" and 5 means, "I am open to all of this type of text" – type your rating in the box and submit.

    a. Personalized Content (i.e. Birthday or child development milestones)

    b. Reminders

    c. Educational materials

D. [SHOW RESULTS]. Let's talk about the text messages you receive from brands, service providers, or programs that you actually open and read. In general, what kind of information, offers, and content are you most likely to open and read?

    a. What words or topics generally catch your attention the best? Why is that?

    b. How do you feel about texts that are customized with your name?

        i. How about with your child(ren)'s name?

    c. If you received a link to a website or video in one of these texts, what would most likely interest you enough to follow the link?

E. Thinking about the text messages you receive from brands/companies or programs that you might click to open, but <u>not fully read</u>, what typically makes you close the text without reading?

    a. How much influence does the <u>length</u> of the text have on your interest in reading, if any? Why?

    b. How does the tone of the text (if it's funny, includes emojis, etc.) impact whether you read it all? Why?

    c. How much impact does including images or links to websites or videos have on sparking your interest to read, if at all? Why?

F. What is an example of a text from a brand, company, provider, or program that you would be happy and grateful to receive? What makes you like it?

G. On the other hand, what is an example of one you would feel annoyed to receive? What makes you dislike it?

H. For any messages that you might receive and delete without opening – what leads you to make that decision?

    a. How much influence does the <u>sender</u> have on your interest in opening? Are there certain brands, companies, providers, or programs that you usually open and others you usually delete without reading? How do you decide?

b. How does the information in the first line or two of the text impact whether you immediately delete or click to read?

c. How much influence would including contact information such as phone numbers to call have on your interest in opening and reading? How about links to a website or information online? Texting a certain keyword back?

d. What else impacts the decision to open, delete, or unsubscribe?

I. How do you know if a text is coming from an authentic source and isn't spam?

a. What do you look for to decide whether you can trust the text itself?

b. How do you decide if it's safe to click a link provided?

II. Communications from WIC   (30 min: 70)

Let's focus now on your child(ren) under age 5.

A. When looking for advice and information for your child(ren) or during pregnancy, what are all the sources of information you rely/have relied on? These may include people, books, on-line resources, etc.

a. What makes these the best sources for you?

b. What types of information related to your child(ren) most interests you? What are some examples of child-related information you receive by text?

B. Are there some types of information you prefer to receive from a particular source? If so, please share more about that. [IF NEEDED] For example, are you happy to receive "what to expect" information for your child's milestone developments like eating solid foods from a brand that sells baby food? Would that be OK coming from a program like WIC? Would certain information need to come from your child's doctor only?

a. What information, if any, do you feel must come from a particular person or information source? What makes you feel this way?

C. How many of you (show of hands) currently receive communications from the WIC program, not just in text, but any form of communication?

D. How do you receive these messages (text/email/phone calls/app/other)?

a. Do you prefer communications from WIC to come via text, phone calls, emails, app messages? What makes you say that?

b. How do you feel about the way the messages are sent to you? What works well about that method of delivery? What are the downsides?

c. Is there certain information that makes the most sense to be received through a particular method? If so, share more about that.

d. How many of you have an app for WIC?

e. App notifications may come up at the top of your device screen, depending on your settings. Do you typically opt in to see these "push notifications" for apps?

        i.   How about on the WIC app, for those who have it? Do you receive these notifications that there's something new for you in the app, or not? Why or why not?

E.   [IF RELEVANT]: For those <u>not currently</u> receiving text messages from WIC, is this option not available in your local program, or have you chosen not to receive these texts? [IF OPTED OUT] What led to that decision?

     a.   What type of information would you expect to receive from this program, if you did agree to receive texts?
     b.   What would you like to receive in texts from WIC? What makes sense, and feels like a good fit?
     c.   On the other hand, what would not fit well coming via text from WIC?

F.   [POLL] For those who <u>are currently receiving texts</u> from WIC, considering the whole experience with what they send you, how would you rate the WIC text communications on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is Poor and 5 is Excellent? [SHOW RESULTS]
     a.   What makes you say that?
     b.   How do you know a text is from WIC?
     c.   How do text communications make you feel about WIC?
     d.   What type of information do they typically send?
     e.   Does your local WIC program include links to click for more information or to take you to the website, or not? How do/would you feel about this?
     f.   How often do you open and fully read their text messages? What leads you to that decision?
     g.   What are the most useful/appreciated texts you receive from WIC? Why is that?
     h.   What's missing? What do you wish they would send in communications with you?

G.   Thinking about when you first enrolled in WIC, what do you wish you had known when enrolling that you learned later?
     a.   How might it have helped you to know sooner?

H.   [IF RELEVANT]: For those moms expecting a baby, what types of information do you receive about pregnancy and newborn topics, if any?
     a.   What have you found/would you find most useful, if anything?
     b.   How do you feel about the way you receive this type of information? Is texting an appropriate way, or would you prefer a different method? Why is that?
     c.   When you think about what WIC might send to expectant mothers, what type of information would you expect to receive from the program?
     d.   What feels like a good fit with the program?
     e.   What type of content might not fit as well with WIC?

        i. What makes you say that?

I. [SHOW POTENTIAL TEXT COMMUNICATIONS RANK EXERCISE]: I have a list on the screen that includes potential text communications you might receive from WIC. I'd like you to choose the 3 most important items to you.
   a. Appointment reminders
   b. Ability to ask questions of my WIC representative
   c. Ability to interact with a chatbot to answer general questions
   d. Reminders of benefits usage/remaining monthly benefits
   e. Current or new food products available with benefits
   f. Nutrition tips, recipe/meal solutions, relevant to your child's age
   g. Links to upload documents
   h. Personalized tips to support your child's development at key milestones/every age
   i. Tips from other participants to maximize benefits
   j. Ability to schedule appointments
   k. Recertification reminders
   l. Step-by-step details about enrollment/recertification

[MODERATOR NOTE: PRIORITIZE THIS SECTION]

J. [SHOW RESULTS]: Let's look at the options that rose to the top. Those who ranked _____ at the top of your list, what is it about that idea that appeals to you?
   a. What, if anything would you like to add that could build on/improve this idea?
   b. [REPEAT FOR TOP 3-4, TIME PERMITTING]
   c. [FOR ITEMS IN THE TOP 3-4]: How **often** would you like to receive text communications on this subject? What makes that the right frequency for you?

K. We didn't choose the bottom options, but what would you say are the least important offerings? What is it about that idea that was not as interesting to you?
   a. What, if anything about that, would improve or make this a better idea?
   b. [REPEAT FOR BOTTOM 3-4, TIME PERMITTING]

L. What's missing from this list? What other ideas for services, content, or links would you recommend for WIC text communications with participants?
   a. In what ways would that benefit you?

M. For those receiving texts from your local WIC program, tell me about the sign-up process. Was this a simple opt in checkbox for all texts, or were you given an opportunity to choose between any options?
   a. What were the options you were provided, if any?
   b. [IF NOT MENTIONED, PROBE]: Were you given topics of interest to choose from? Did you have any options for how frequently you would receive texts?
   c. What options do you wish you had, if any?

N. For those <u>not receiving</u> texts from WIC, what would you like the sign-up process to include?
    a. How important are options, if at all?
    b. What options do you wish you had?

III. Text Cadence and Frequency   (15 min: 85)

A. Now that we've covered the "what" (information, content, topics) that a WIC texting program might include, let's talk about the "when".

B. For those receiving texts from your WIC program, how often do you receive their texts?
    a. How do you feel about that frequency?
    b. What makes you feel that way?

C. For those <u>not receiving texts</u> from WIC, how often would you like to receive them?
    a. What makes that sound like the right frequency?

D. When you are/were preparing to enroll a new baby, how soon before their due date would you like to receive/have received enrollment information and instructions?
    a. How many reminder texts would you like to receive, and how often?
    b. What other messages regarding enrollment would you like to receive? (For example, a confirmation of your new baby's enrollment once finalized)

E. When the time for re-certification is near, would you like WIC to send reminder texts with details, or not?
    a. How close to the deadline would you like to receive information?
    b. How many reminder texts would you like to receive, and how often?

IV. Wrap-up   (5 min: 90)

Thank you for all of the information you have provided.

A. WRITE: While I check with my colleagues to make sure they do not have any additional questions, please look at the screen and answer the question in the poll and press submit.
    a. [SHOW RESULTS ON SCREEN]
    b. In your own words, what is the most important things for WIC to keep in mind when creating or improving text communication with their participants?

Thanks again! To thank you for your time, you will receive a $75 incentive as a token of appreciation. Have a great evening.