**OMB number 0584-XXXX**
**Expiration date MM/DD/YYYY**

# Appendix C-4. Virtual Interview Informed Consent Form

## 1. Informed Consent Form

### *WIC Tribal Organizations and U.S. Territories* Study: Virtual WIC Director Interview Informed Consent

#### Background

FNS has contracted with Westat, a research organization based in Maryland, to conduct a research study entitled *WIC Tribal Organizations and U.S. Territories*. The study seeks to better understand best practices and challenges of Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs, referred to as "Tribal Organizations" by this study) and U.S. territories administering WIC as State agencies. The results of the study may inform efforts to enhance WIC program operations and services for all WIC participants. To better understand best practices and challenges, study objectives include—

- Comprehensively understanding program operations among Tribal Organizations and U.S. territories administering WIC
- Understanding the facilitators and barriers to implementation of the WIC program
- Examining reasons for differences in policy, service delivery, and operations
- Improving data gathered for the FNS annual WIC Eligibility and Coverage Rates report

The following agencies are involved in this study: all 32 Tribal Organizations administering WIC as a State agency, all 5 U.S. territories administering WIC as a State agency, 5 tribally operated local agencies, and approximately 15 geographic State agencies that share geography with a Tribal Organization.

#### What Is My Role in the Study?

We plan to interview WIC State agency or local agency directors for each participating agency. Interviews will be conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams and last up to 90 minutes. Your participation in the interview is voluntary, and your personally identifiable information will be kept private, except as otherwise required by law. We will not share the personally identifiable information you provide with anyone outside

the study team. You may refuse to answer any question, and you may stop the interview at any time. There will be no penalties if you choose not to participate in a part or the entirety of this interview.

The purpose of this interview is to learn about how Tribal Organizations and U.S. territories administer and implement WIC; program strengths and challenges; relationships between Tribal Organizations, U.S. territories, and geographic State WIC agencies; and recommendations for Federal program or policy adjustments to improve WIC for participants.

The study team will also analyze existing data provided by your agency to FNS (e.g., fiscal year 2024 WIC State Plan, Food Lists and Authorized Product Lists, food delivery portal, WIC administrative data).

## Informed Consent

Verbal consent will be obtained to record the interview to ensure we accurately capture the information you share with us. You may choose to skip any questions you do not wish to answer or answer questions off the record. The recording will not be shared with FNS or anyone outside the study team. A transcript will be shared with FNS for its restricted use. We will redact your name, title, FNS Region, and other direct identifiers from the transcript. Your name will not be used in any direct quotes included in the final report or other dissemination materials. However, the name of your WIC agency may be used in the final report or dissemination materials (e.g., to highlight promising practices). Because of the small number of staff operating WIC in these agencies, we cannot guarantee the information you share will be completely anonymous. The information you share in the interview will be summarized in aggregate.

## How Will Participant Privacy Be Protected?

All data gathered as part of this study will be used solely for the purpose of meeting the stated objectives, which aim to gain a better understanding of WIC program operations. The study team is required to—

- Safeguard participant identities, including characteristics, contact, or sensitive information at the individual level.
- Remove all direct identifiers as noted for the restricted use files and de-identify public use files for the purposes of statistical analyses, including removal or masking of all private and personally identifiable information.

- Redact transcripts to ensure individual respondents are not identified by name, title, or other direct identifiers throughout the document. No public use qualitative data files will be developed.

Study participants will be afforded safeguards as provided by the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. Sec. 552a), which requires the protection of individuals against invasion of privacy. Your locality's institutional review board or other approval body and the study team may have agreed to additional data protections. The study team will honor all requirements described in any applicable memoranda of understanding, data-sharing or data use agreements, or other documentation. Please contact the study team for more details about any data privacy agreements relevant to your agency.

## What Are the Risks of Being in This Project?

This study involves minimal risks to participants, though there is a time burden (up to 90 minutes) associated with participation. Participants may feel uncomfortable answering some of the questions, and findings from this study may not result in program or policy adjustments. Participants may terminate the interview at any time without penalty. To minimize feelings of discomfort, participants will be allowed to take breaks as needed, answer questions off the record, or skip any questions they do not wish to answer.

## What Are the Benefits of Being in This Project?

Your voluntary participation can help FNS better understand how WIC is administered by Tribal Organizations and U.S. territories. The results of the study may inform efforts to enhance WIC program operations and service to all WIC participants.

## Who Should I Contact With Questions?

If you have general questions about the study, please contact the study team (WICTTstudy@westat.com) or the FNS project officer, Dr. Karen Castellanos-Brown (karen.castellanos-brown@usda.gov).

If you have questions about your rights and welfare as a research participant, please call the Westat Human Subjects Protections office at 1–888–920–7631. Please leave a message with your first name, the name of the research study that you are calling about (*WIC Tribal Organizations and U.S. Territories*), and a phone number beginning with the area code. Someone will return your call as soon as possible.

### Public Burden Statement

This information is being collected to assist the Food and Nutrition Service in learning about

variations in WIC operations between Tribal Organizations, U.S. territories, and geographic states. This is a voluntary data collection, and FNS will use the information to enhance WIC program operations and service to all WIC participants. 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-XXX. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 0.0835 hours (5 minutes).

Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the following address: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Evidence, Analysis, and Regulatory Affairs Office, 1320 Braddock Place, Alexandria, VA 22314, ATTN: PRA (0584-XXXX). Do not return the completed form to this address.