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General Comment

Comment on WIC Tribal Organizations and US Territories Study (FNS–2025–0039)

Researching the implementation of WIC offices in Tribal Organizations and US territories is a critical step to understanding mission success. This work is a vital step to understanding operational differences and making sure these agencies have the tools they need to succeed in the places they operate—regardless of whether it is in the US proper, on Tribal reservations, or in the US Territories.

While researching WIC office implementation, it is critical to keep in mind that WIC has well-documented customer success. Barnes, Michener, and Rains (2023) clearly show that WIC’s customer service-oriented mindset stands out compared to other programs like Medicaid, which helps build trust between clients and the government. That emphasis on supportive, personal interaction leads to higher satisfaction, better engagement, and more trust from participants. Those factors directly impact WIC’s ability to meet its core goal of improving health outcomes for women, infants, and children.

As this study moves forward, including customer satisfaction in the evaluation will aid in determining implementation success. That means examining how participants interact with staff, identifying practices that foster trust, and understanding the challenges that may limit Tribal WIC offices from delivering the same level of client-centered service. Capturing customer success will ensure the results are more useful and ensure that program improvements keep WIC’s customer service strengths at the center of its mission.

Reference:

Barnes, C., Michener, J., & Rains, E. (2023). “It’s Like Night and Day”: How Bureaucratic Encounters Vary across WIC, SNAP, and Medicaid. *Social Service Review*, 97(1).