

**ASSESSMENT OF**  
**California Women, Infants and Children (WIC)**  
**Nutrition Program Goals for Federal Fiscal Year 2011**

The major goals of the California (CA) WIC Program for FFY 2011 are to:

1. Assist local WIC programs to increase the number of participants served each month, by fully utilizing WIC funds to improve access to program services.
2. Complete the planning needed to implement an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) system and to replace WIC's management information system (MIS).
3. Implement and expand breastfeeding peer counseling programs throughout the state including establishing the infrastructure for long-term support.
4. In partnership with the California WIC Association (CWA), implement the Academy for Participant-centered Leadership (APL), to implement a systems-based participant services system.
5. Implement the infrastructure for statewide videoconference capability.

To accomplish these goals, the CA WIC Program has established the following FFY 2011 program objectives:

**Goal One:** Assist local WIC programs to increase the number of participants served each month, by fully utilizing WIC funds to improve access to program services.

Objective I: Identify WIC-eligible populations throughout California that are not receiving WIC services, using analyses of various data sources (e.g. Birth Statistical Master File, WIC ISIS data and surveys).

Assessment: In partnership with the California Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health (MCAH) Division, CA WIC provided every local WIC agency maps of their individual county(s) identifying areas of unmet need as determined by the density of women who are eligible for, but not enrolled in WIC during pregnancy. This information was based on matching 2008 California birth data with WIC ISIS data. CA WIC established an advisory group consisting of local agency representatives, state staff and epidemiologists from MCAH to determine the best way to maximize the use of these maps. Based on the recommendation of this advisory group, CA WIC hosted several webinar trainings for local agency staff to learn how to interpret and use the maps. Several local agencies opened new WIC sites or modified staffing and/or hours of operation in existing sites based on the identified areas of unmet need.

Objective II: Coordinate outreach efforts, strengthen partnerships and enhance program linkages between WIC, other State programs and community health programs serving the populations identified to be in the most underserved areas and groups.

Assessment: CA WIC participated in six State Nutrition Action Plan (SNAP) meetings in an effort to strengthen state level partnerships with other federally funded nutrition programs for the purposes of meeting the needs of low income families. Partnering programs included CalFresh, SNAP-Ed, Department of Education, Network for a Healthy California, and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program. CA WIC also

encouraged local WIC agencies to actively participate with their local community health partners to develop and implement County Nutrition Action Plans (CNAP). This year three of the CNAP programs introduced single application approaches for families to apply for food and nutrition program services. At the 2011 California WIC Association Annual Conference, CA WIC hosted a session with CalFresh representatives to strengthen linkages between these two programs, share nutrition messaging and discuss strategies for increasing enrollment in both programs.

CA WIC also continued the activities of the California Healthcare Community Partnership (HCP) by bringing local agencies together to design a toolkit that may be used by local agencies to train staff on how to work with their local medical providers to promote WIC participation and breastfeeding promotion and support. It is anticipated that this toolkit will be available by the end of 2012.

**Objective III:** Support projects that improve local agency operations and enhance facility design via site assessment and technical assistance.

Assessment: CA WIC issued one-time grants to facilitate local agency improvements and to support education initiatives. CA WIC established a Participant Centered Leadership (PCL) team to foster positive site environments and enhanced participant-centered client activities. State staff shared the results of these activities at both the state and national conferences this year. Over fifty projects of statewide, regional, and local significance were completed and with the results posted to the WIC website.

CA WIC engaged local agency directors in the sensitive process of using peer reviews and outside consultants to assess the quality of local agency education programs and facilities. CA WIC surveyed the participants to obtain feedback on the new ideas. Through site visits and technical assistance, WIC staff assessed how the new changes made a difference to WIC participants with a specific focus on participant satisfaction and program participation.

The CA WIC Program continues to integrate a participant-centered approach into the technical assistance process. This is being accomplished by assessing current participant-centered services, and developing tools and a mentoring program that will encourage participant-centered skills among staff who work directly with local WIC agencies. Staff have identified areas where internal communication can be improved and are working together to create processes to make this happen.

**Goal Two:** Complete the planning needed to implement an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) system and to replace WIC's management information system (MIS).

**Objective I:** Complete a business analysis and compile essential business requirements for a MIS replacement system.

Assessment: The CA WIC Program entered into a contract with Maximus Inc. to conduct the business analysis and compilation of the essential business requirements towards the creation the federally required Implementation Advance Planning Document (IAPD) for MIS Replacement (55% completed). Maximus is charged with the submission and successful acceptance of the IAPD by October 2011. Information from this effort will be the foundation of the State required Feasibility Study Report (FSR, 10% complete) to be submitted in early 2012.

Objective II: Submit and receive USDA approval of the Implementation Advanced Planning Document (IAPD) for a new MIS replacement system.

Assessment: Due to the fact that USDA has stated that no current State Agency Model systems can be utilized as viable options for MIS replacement, a more complete and full IAPD is now underway. CA WIC is anticipating that WIC will have the completed IAPD approved by October 2011.

Objective III: Prepare and release a Request for Offer (RFO) to implement the new MIS replacement system.

Assessment: The CA WIC Program will release a RFO after acceptance of the FSR and (possibly) Budget Change Proposal (BCP). The FSR/BCP combo will be submitted in July 2012 and if accepted, CA WIC should receive project funding approval in July (or when the state budget is signed) 2013. Once state budget approval is obtained, CA WIC will release a Request for Proposal (RFP) to get vendor proposals for the replacement system.

Objective IV: Initiate the planning with the California State Treasurer's Office (STO) to implement an EBT system.

Assessment: CA WIC staff began working with the STO staff in August 2010 to plan for EBT. Staff worked collaboratively to develop an Inter-agency agreement, including a scope of work. Additionally, staff attended several EBT conferences together, met bi-weekly to develop a Request for Offer (RFO), and arranged several presentations by EBT vendors.

**Goal Three:** Implement and expand breastfeeding peer counseling (BFPC) programs throughout the state including establishing the infrastructure for long-term support.

Objective I: Expand existing BFPC programs by funding local agencies that currently have a PC program in place.

Assessment: CA WIC offered expansion funds to 15 local agencies with an existing peer counseling program and the ability to grow. Of these 15 local agencies, 13 local agency peer counseling programs used the BFPC funds to hire more peer counselors and expand their peer counseling services to additional WIC clinic sites.

Objective II: Fund approximately 35 new Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Programs. Provide the necessary technical assistance, site visits, training and support to local agencies implementing a new PC program.

Assessment: Thirty-five local agencies established new BFPC programs this year. Each new agency received administrative training from CA WIC staff and mentoring from existing BFPC programs. CA WIC divided the new and existing BFPC programs into eight regions and provided technical assistance, which included site visits by CA WIC state staff. CA WIC conducted a webinar to all BFPC programs on the revised California WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Training curriculum and trained all new peer counselors.

**Objective III:** Continue to conduct BFPC workgroups to develop methods for sustaining BFPC programs through mentoring agencies, conducting community assessment and establishing regional breastfeeding liaisons.

Assessment: The Breastfeeding Peer Counseling workgroup continued to meet two days a month for nine months. Participants included local agencies with and without peer counseling programs and CA WIC staff. This group provided input on strategies for establishing, supporting and sustaining local agency breastfeeding peer counseling programs. Some of the developed strategies included mentoring, conducting the community assessment and creating regional breastfeeding liaisons. CA WIC funded seven existing peer counseling programs to mentor new agencies. Mentors helped new BFPC programs establish their programs.

CA WIC required every local agency that applied for BFPC funds to complete a community assessment. This assessment identified internal and external breastfeeding gaps. CA WIC then required the BFPC applicants to incorporate the identified gaps into their requests for funding. Local agencies committed to work on one identified gap in each area, internal and external. Seven local agencies received additional funding for Regional Breastfeeding Liaisons. Several local agencies in one area have combined their funds to work collaboratively on issues affecting the breastfeeding WIC population in their community.

**Goal Four:** Develop a systems-based approach and staff development program to improve participant-centered WIC services.

**Objective I:** Establish principles of a participant-centered services system. Develop certification process for recognizing local agencies implementing these principles.

Assessment: CA WIC Program established a set of principles titled *Platinum Principles* as part of the California WIC Program's Participant Centered Services (PCS) model which has been branded as *Platinum WIC Participant Centered Services*. CA WIC introduced local agency and state staff to the PCS model and principles at Task Force and regional meetings and also at the CWA annual conference. Some local and state staff is already using the principles by assessing how they are applying them within the different domains of the PCS model and to identify areas for improvement of WIC services within their local agencies. WIC staff attending the *Academy for Participant-centered Leadership (APL)* training use the principles to identify a problem area or opportunity that serves as the basis for their platinum project. Currently, WIC staff receives recognition for completing the APL training. Development of a formal certification process for recognizing local agencies implementing these principles is in progress until more agencies complete the Academy.

**Objective II:** Convene a workgroup consisting of state and local WIC program staff and partners/consultants (APL core) to develop training materials.

Assessment: A workgroup consisting of CA WIC staff, California WIC Association staff, and four consultants met monthly to develop the APL training process and materials. Local agency input and feedback was received through the APL Advisory Board consisting of staff representing 32 local agencies.

Objective III: Provide APL training to key state and select local agency staff through retreats, webinars, workgroup meetings, and site visits.

Assessment: Thirty-eight local agency and nine state staff members participated in the APL pilot training program, which included two 2-day workshops, one 1-day workshop, and four webinars in an eleven month period. Topics included: leadership assessment, emotional intelligence, personality and interpersonal assessments, 360 feedback, project planning and implementation, facilitating change, and conflict resolution. Local agency staff received technical assistance from their assigned APL consultant via site visits, telephone conference and electronic mail.

Objective IV: Evaluate collaboration efforts, training, resources and technical assistance to measure the effects on local WIC agency environment, program staff, and WIC participants.

Assessment: CA WIC conducted in-depth focus group sessions with local agency APL staff to evaluate the impact of the program's collaboration efforts, training, resources and technical assistance on staff's ability to develop and implement a PCS project within their own agency.

**Goal Five:** Implement the infrastructure for statewide videoconference capability.

Objective I: Procure and install video conferencing equipment at the CA WIC headquarters.

Assessment: CA WIC procured video conferencing equipment needed to communicate with local WIC agencies and regional training centers. CA WIC has installed the main components of the video conferencing system and configured and tested the system. State staff continues to work through minor configuration issues dealing with audio and visual technologies with some of the local agencies on a case-by-case basis.

Objective II: Procure and install necessary video conferencing equipment for six regional training centers.

Assessment: CA WIC has installed equipment and successfully tested the systems in four out of the six anticipated regional training centers. The other two sites are on hold pending available funding and identification of suitable sites in the northern and central valley parts of the state.

Objective III: Develop video conference-based curricula and offer video conference-based training opportunities to local agencies.

Assessment: CA WIC has developed, piloted and revised two video conference-based *WIC Nutrition Assistant (WNA)* training modules aimed to help new WIC employees become Certified Professional Authorities. The two modules include *Overview of WIC and Orientation* and *Certification*. The State is currently working on a third module focusing on *Food Instruments and Subsequent Certification*, which will be pilot tested September 2011.