

Abstract

Since its inception in 1972, a key purpose of the WIC Program, is to link families with health care. Now, more than ever, the WIC Program needs health care to link families to WIC, and for health care to participate in engaging and encouraging families to keep their children on WIC through age five.

This mini-grant (MG) will focus on Child Retention, specifically participants of NCHS WIC (herein referred to as WIC) from birth to age five, targeting those who also receive healthcare from an NCHS Pediatric Health Center (herein referred to as NCHS).

There will be two primary interventions throughout the course of the grant. First, we are providing an educational intervention to specific support and pediatric staff of NCHS in the form of a training consisting of 4 modules. Staff receiving this training will be considered “Clinical WIC Advocates” (CWAs) that will champion the importance of staying on WIC to parents/guardians of our target population (children 0-5) in their clinical environments. Secondly, we are developing a new position, a WIC Support Specialist (WSS) to be housed in a NCHS pediatric department.

The CWA training manual will consist of 4 modules as follows:

Module 1: WIC Basics

Module 2: Basic Nutrition

Module 3: Infant Nutrition with WIC Retention Messages

Module 4: Child Nutrition with WIC Retention Messages

The CWA training manual will be developed by the WIC Training Coordinator and submitted for State WIC Branch approval. The existing WIC Nutrition Assistant (WNA) Training Manual will be used a reference in its development. The modules will be taught by WIC dietitians. Pre and post testing of CWAs will assess their knowledge of each module.

Once trained, CWA’s will continue to reinforce WIC messaging and promote the benefits of the WIC Program at encounters with NCHS parents and guardians of WIC-aged children throughout the term of the grant. Once trained and proficient in WIC certification procedures and specific aspects of NCHS’ appointment and electronic health record databases, the WSS, will be housed in the San Marcos Pediatric Health Center (herein referred to as Pilot Clinic). The WSS will screen the daily provider appointments at the pilot clinic and cross check the demographics of these children with the WIC MIS database to ascertain if they are:

1. Active on WIC
2. Certified to participate but inactive
3. Eligible but not currently participating

After the pediatric appointment, the WSS will have a face-to-face encounter with the parent/guardian about the value of WIC and the importance of regularly monthly participation. These two innovative interventions will be the first step in integrating WIC and NCHS.

The Grant Manager will compile the data, evaluate and summarize outcomes of improved child retention measured by improvement in the rates of certified but unissued infants and children who identify NCHS as their health care provider. Retention rates at baseline, and every 6 months thereafter will be measured using the metrics software currently in place, Raptor and WIX Reports. The Grant Manager, WSS, and WIC Training Coordinator will be key personnel identified in the MG. CWA activities will be provided “in kind” by North County Health Services.