

WEBINAR

Healthy
Eating
Research

Working with WIC: An Introduction to the National WIC Association Applied Research Framework

Tuesday, September 19

2:00-3:00 PM EST



Logistics

Participants will be automatically muted when joining

Ask any tech or logistics questions for the host in the chat bar

10 minutes of audience Q&A at the end of the session – ask questions for the presenters in the Q&A bar



SESSION OVERVIEW

MODERATED BY

Harry Zhang, PhD

Professor

School of Community and Environmental Health, Old Dominion University

PRESENTATION BY

Christina Chauvenet, PhD

Senior Manager of Research and Policy Analysis

National WIC Association

Devina Wadhwa, PhD

Program Manager – Evaluator

Arizona Department of Health Services, Bureau of Nutrition and Physical Activity Chair,

NWA Evaluation Committee

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

Overview of WIC NWA

Purpose and scope of Research Framework

Reviewing checklist for conducting research projects

Deep dive: WIC Data

Q & A

ABOUT WIC

- The Special Supplemental Nutrition program for Women, Infants, and Children
- First piloted in 1972, formally created in 1974
- Serves low-income pregnant and postpartum people, infants, and children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk
- Domestic discretionary program under the jurisdiction of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)



WHAT WIC PROVIDES

- Food packages tailored to lifestage
- Nutrition education and breastfeeding support
- Referrals to healthcare and social programs



ABOUT NWA

Founded in 1984 as the National Association of WIC Directors

- the **nonprofit** education arm and advocacy voice of WIC
- **membership association**, with WIC agencies comprising most of its membership
- **does not administer the WIC program** and is not a governmental agency

NWA'S ROLE IN WIC RESEARCH

Conducts applied research, independently and collaboratively

Creates and houses resources on WIC research on theWICHub.org

Convene Evaluation Committee supports NWA and WIC research efforts

Support WIC staff and external researchers in research projects

WHY IS RESEARCH AND EVALUATION IMPORTANT TO WIC?



Are we
accomplishing
our mission?

Identify
opportunities
and
challenges

Advocacy and
Funding

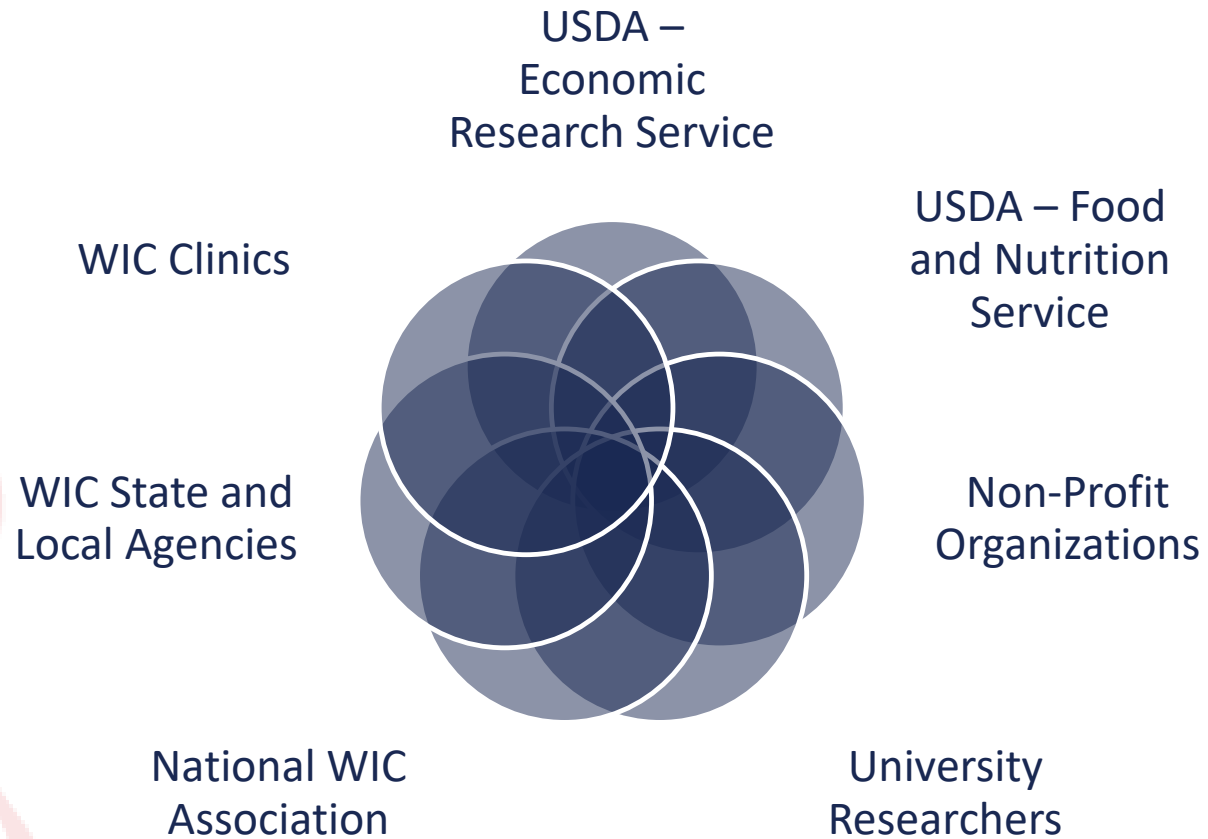


**THERE IS ALSO A BIG
PICTURE GOAL...**





WHO IS DOING WIC RESEARCH?



BUILDING NWA'S RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Research

Policy

Practice



RESEARCH FRAMEWORK CHECKLIST

1. Familiarize yourself with WIC data and WIC research gaps
2. Share your research concept with NWA and join the WIC Learning Collaborative
3. Connect with a WIC Agency as applicable
4. Build a diverse research team and advisory board
5. Implement the research project in consultation with NWA and/or WIC Agencies
6. Consider a diversity of publication and dissemination methods
7. Stay connected and keep up the partnership

TYPES OF WIC DATA

1. Publicly available datasets with WIC measures
2. Primary data collected by WIC researchers
3. Data collected and housed within WIC agencies



SECONDARY DATASETS

- Datasets that contain at least one WIC measure
- Range from WIC-specific datasets to broader public health datasets
- Can be used to answer policy and epidemiological questions
- May not require direct collaboration with a WIC agency, but communication with NWA still recommended



**WIC REDUCES INFANT
MORTALITY BY 16%⁴**

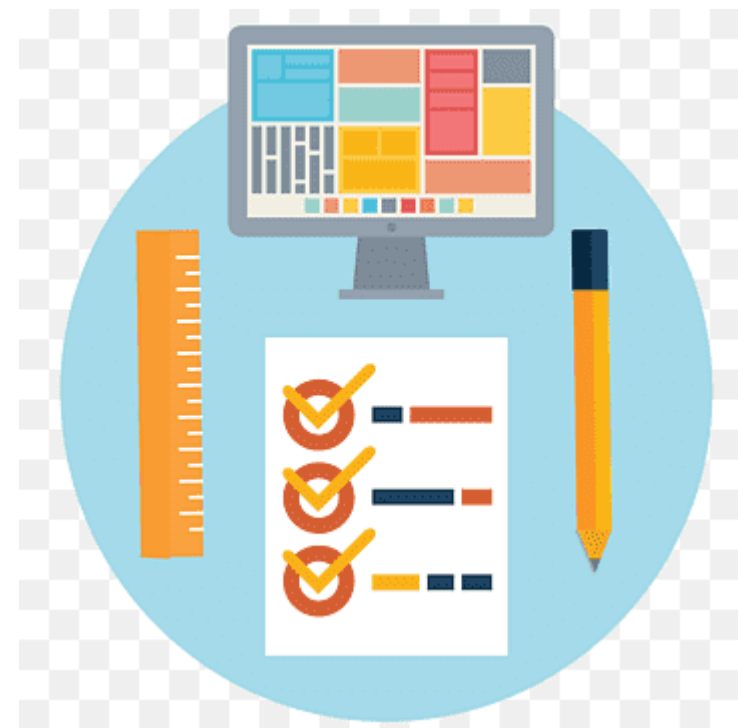
PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION

- Data collected directly by external researcher
- Requires collaboration with state and/or local WIC agency
- Should be considered alongside WIC program data and secondary datasets
- Recommended to align research question with program needs



DATA COLLECTED AND HOUSED WITHIN WIC STATE AGENCIES: TYPES OF DATA AVAILABLE

- WIC program data are not identical across States.
- Common WIC data indicators
 - Demographics
 - Risk assessment
 - Anthropometrics and bloodwork
 - Breastfeeding
 - Health assessment
 - Program referrals, and
 - Issuance and redemption data



Familiarize yourself with research gaps



WIC RESEARCH RESOURCES

- Peer reviewed research
- Consult the [NWA 2022-2023 research priorities](#)
 - + 10 priority areas deemed important to WIC that range from breastfeeding to WIC staff recruitment and retention to evaluating the CVB bump
- Explore NWA's WIC Hub
- Utilize USDA and other policy and practice organizations' resources
- Contact your local or State WIC agency

wic RESEARCH POLICY PRACTICE

ABOUT THE HUB ABOUT NWA NWA RESOURCES RESOURCE COLLECTIONS ACTION CENTRAL SUBMIT A RESOURCE TAKE ACTION Q SEARCH

LEARNING + SHARING = STRONGER

The Hub is a tool for WIC staff, researchers, and advocates to navigate and explore the world of WIC.

SEARCH THE HUB!
The hub consists of nearly 2,000 WIC research, advocacy and policy resources. Give it a try!

SEARCH SUGGESTIONS
Food package Health equity Breastfeeding Innovation

REPORT
2023 STATE OF WIC REPORT: BUILDING THE BRIDGE TO A HEALTHIER FUTURE

COMMUNICATIONS
THE SECRET INGREDIENT CAMPAIGN

ACTION CENTRAL

REPORT
2023 WIC TECHNOLOGY LANDSCAPE REPORT

REPORT
NWA 2022-2023 RESEARCH PRIORITIES

Working with WIC Agencies



WORKING WITH WIC DATA

- Due to federal regulations, only aggregated WIC data can be released.
 - Check with the WIC state agency for individual-level data.
 - Alternative options could include having WIC staff run the analysis and share the findings.
- IRB approval is typically required, but may vary across agencies.
- Data collection is ongoing



HOW TO BUILD SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIPS WITH WIC PARTNERS?

1. Center the needs and interests of the WIC program
 - Clearly communicate research objectives that are mutually beneficial
 - Be flexible
 - Develop research questions together with WIC
 - Be aware of context and policy
2. Developing a successful relationship takes time
3. Consider administrative burden
4. Identify the role of State and local agency staff in the project
5. Determine IRB requirements
6. Consider a wide variety of publication sources

Research Brief: WIC Participants' Perceptions of the Cash-Value Benefit Increase During the COVID-19 Pandemic

McKenna Halverson, M.S. & Allison Karpyn, Ph.D.

Problem Statement

Between 2020 and 2022, the part of the WIC benefit known as the Cash-Value Benefit or CVB, which provides money to spend on fruits and vegetables, increased considerably as part of the American Rescue Plan Act. CVB benefit levels increased from pre-pandemic levels of \$9/month for children and \$11/month for adults, to \$35/month for both women and children during the summer of 2021, before being adjusted in October to \$24/month for children, \$43/month for pregnant and postpartum women, and \$47/month for breastfeeding women.

We sought to understand if increases in the CVB benefit resulted in changes in WIC participants' fruit and vegetable intake, as well as overall perceptions of the benefit.

Method

- Semi-structured interviews
- 51 WIC participants in Wilmington, DE
- Focus on purchasing and consumption of fruits and vegetables, as well as their perceptions of the benefit.
- Data collected in Spring 2022 via phone.
- Recruitment occurred in supermarkets and community sites.

More WIC CVB Funding Resulted in Greater:



Purchasing of Fruits and



Consumption of Fruits and



Variety of Fruits and Vegetables



Participant perceptions of the

Appendix 3: Sample data request process for State Agencies

Note: This is an anonymized version of a current WIC State Agency request form. The data request process may vary from agency to agency, but the below provides an idea of what data request forms frequently contain.

As per federal regulations 7 CFR § 246.26, [WIC Agency name] has developed a process to request WIC data for the purposes of maintaining confidentiality. Here are the steps in the process for requesting WIC data from [WIC Agency]:

1. Communicate the intent to request data by sending an email to [State or Local Agency contact name, email]
2. Meet with State and/or Local Agencies to understand the purpose, justification, and intent of using WIC data. Please think about these questions for discussion during the meeting:
 - 2.1. Purpose of the project (i.e., for a thesis, applied project, etc.)
 - 2.2. Scientific justification for the use of WIC data
 - 2.3. Relevance to WIC (How do you see this project helping the mission of WIC?)
 - 2.4. Months and/or years for which data is being requested
 - 2.5. List of data elements requested (ex: breastfeeding history, no. of WIC participants, etc.)
 - 2.6. Levels of aggregation of data requested. Please note that data elements are typically aggregated at the Local Agency level. Aggregation levels smaller than the Local Agency often produce small numbers which potentially identifies clients. Any request that directly or potentially identifies clients will be denied.
3. Finalize data elements and levels of aggregation in collaboration with WIC.
4. Complete and sign any data agreement request forms (if applicable)
5. Depending on the complexity and time frame of the data request, please allow several weeks after the data agreement request is signed for the official release of data.

CENTERING EQUITY IN THE RESEARCH PROCESS

- 1) Attend training to develop and expand knowledge of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB) and equitable data principles
- 2) Employ principles of data equity


For NWA, data equity is a set of principles and practices that guide those that work with data, particularly data related to WIC participants, with a lens of justice and inclusivity. NWA does not view data equity as an end goal but rather as a framework for every stage of the research process, from design to dissemination.

CENTERING EQUITY IN THE RESEARCH PROCESS

- 3) Consider equity principles of funders
- 4) Create a diverse research team and acknowledge positionality
- 5) Form an advisory board for the project, starting at the stage of project creation.
- 6) Pilot research instruments with eligible study participants before data collection and compensate participants for their time.
- 7) Offer translation and interpretation services.

CONTACT INFO AND RESOURCES

- Research priorities: <https://thewichub.org/nwa-2022-2023-research-priorities/>
- Research Framework: <https://www.nwica.org/guidance-for-planning-conducting-and-communicating-a-wic-research-project>
- Secondary dataset directory: <https://thewichub.org/collection/secondary-datasets-available-for-use-in-wic-research/>
- Christina Chauvenet cchauvenet@nwica.org
- Devina Wadhera, devina.wadhera@azdhs.gov



Thank you! Questions and
discussion

