

**OUTREACH
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**MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
WIC PROGRAM
POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL**

**Policy and Procedure Number: 1.00
Effective Date: October 1, 1996
Revised Date: August 15, 2019**

SECTION: OUTREACH

SUBJECT: Local Agency Outreach

A. POLICY

1. Each local agency shall be responsible for conducting outreach activities within its respective service area.
2. The local agency shall annually prepare an Outreach Plan and submit it to the State Agency for approval.
3. The State Agency will identify the required content and provide written guidance as well as selected demographic data to assist in developing the plan.

B. PROCEDURE

1. Each local agency shall give highest priority in outreach activities to the following categories of potential participants:
 - a. Women in the early stages of pregnancy;
 - b. Migrants;
 - c. The homeless.
2. The local agency shall identify and contact agencies and organizations that have contact with significant numbers of potentially eligible persons to facilitate appropriate referrals and integration of services. These agencies and organizations shall include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Health and medical organizations;
 - b. Hospitals;
 - c. Public assistance offices, including Medical Assistance (MA), Food Supplement Program, and Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) services;
 - d. Public and private social service agencies with special concern for foster children and children receiving protective services;
 - e. Foster parents groups;
 - f. Advocacy groups for the target population;

- g. Food banks;
 - h. Homeless Shelters;
 - i. Programs for teenage parents;
 - j. Organizations providing services to alcohol or drug abusers;
 - k. Organizations providing services for special population subgroups such as Limited English Proficiency (LEP), migrants, and the homeless;
 - l. Employment service offices;
 - m. Breastfeeding promotion groups;
 - n. Religious and other community organizations in low- income areas
 - o. Affordable Care Act community organizations; and
 - p. Home visiting organizations.
3. Local agencies operating in or having cooperative agreements with hospitals shall inform potentially eligible inpatients or outpatients about the program and certify them within the hospital to the extent possible.
4. Outreach materials developed by local agency staff shall be submitted to the State WIC Office for approval a minimum of one week prior to the local agencies requested deadline.
5. Outreach activities to promote the benefits of WIC participation shall include, but not be limited to:
- a. Issuing news releases and stories; outreach materials and communications to organizations serving WIC-eligible populations and individuals;
 - b. Telephone calls, visits, and in-service training sessions with referral groups;
 - c. Public speaking engagements with other agencies and organizations;
 - d. Participation in local health fairs;
 - e. Working with prenatal care providers and others to assure enrollment as early as possible for pregnant women;
 - f. Scheduling clinics at places and times convenient for employed individuals and residents in rural areas; and
 - g. Website and social media content.
6. The availability of program benefits shall be publicly announced by the local agency and/or the State Agency at least annually through outreach materials containing at a minimum, the following information:
- a. Explanation of program benefits;
 - b. Eligibility criteria;
 - c. Address or telephone number to contact for further information; and
 - d. Non-discrimination statement.

Outreach materials shall also be in appropriate foreign languages in areas where a substantial number of people speak a language other than English.

7. All outreach activities shall be documented.
 - a. All outreach efforts shall be documented on the Local Agency Outreach Activity Log, Attachment 1.00C. The file shall contain information on all speaking engagements, contacts, news releases, etc. This log shall be kept by month and submitted as an attachment with the Annual Outreach Plan.
 - b. All outreach events shall be documented on the Local Agency Event Report Attachment 1.00D, and submitted to the State by the 5th business day of the month following the event.
8. The Local Agency Annual Outreach Plan shall be submitted to the State no later than July 1, and follow the outline in Attachment 1.00A and be enumerated as such.

Attachments

- 1.00A Local Agency Outreach Plan
 - 1.00B Self Assessment of Local Agencies
 - 1.00C Local Agency Outreach Activity Log
 - 1.00D Local Agency Event Report
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Revisions:

- 01/05 Changed "Outreach Coordinator" to "WIC Office" in B(4) and deleted "news release" requirement for Outreach Announcements B(6)
- 01/05 Deleted Attachment 1.00C – renamed Attachment 7.65A
- 01/09 B(2)(c) Changed Food Stamps to read Food Supplement Program
- 10/10 Combined Migrant Outreach report Attachment 1.00D to be included in Attachment 1.00A Local Agency Outreach Plan
- 10/10 Added section describing Outreach Log and created Attachment 1.00C
- 10/14 Revised Policy Section A to make policy objective broader, and outreach priority in B(1)(a) to "Women early in Pregnancy", (k) in B(2)
Added (o) and (p) to B(2), time requirement to B(4)
Revised documentation requirements in B(7), and language related to Annual Local Plans in B(8) and require that all local agencies follow the SFY Annual Template
Removed B(9) the detailed Migrant report
Revised Attachment 1.00A Local Agency Outreach Plan to reflect changes in policy, added more details related to partner activity, requirement to attach

copies of outreach logs and reports, community assessment, and customer service training.

Changed Attachment 1.00C from an Event Log to an Activity Log

Added Attachment 1.00D Local Agency Event Report

10/15 Updated the footer of 1.00D to reflect Nicole Slater as new contact

03/19 Revised Attachment 1.00A to clarify goals for outreach report

Updated the footer of 1.00D to reflect Ernest Le as new contact

Revised Attachment 1.10A to clarify communications that are prohibited on social media

LOCAL OUTREACH PLAN
SFY _____

Local Agency _____

Person Completing the Plan _____

Person Responsible for Implementation _____

- I. Year in Review. Write short paragraphs on the following areas describing the previous State Fiscal Year activities.
 - A. Were you able to complete your planned outreach activities?
 - B. Did your outreach activities result in contact with potential participants?
 - C. Describe outreach activities, especially noting the most successful, that were targeted to reach and enroll eligible:
 - 1) Women in the early months of pregnancy
 - 2) Migrants
 - 3) The homeless
 - D. List partners with whom you have worked and/or contacted this past year. Indicate new partners. How did you maximize outreach with these partners?
 - E. Indicate the status of any cooperative agreements with hospitals and describe related outreach efforts.
 - F. Describe how you made your annual outreach announcement.
 - G. Attach copies of your Outreach Activity Logs.
- II. Outreach Plan. Write short paragraphs on the following areas describing your plan/activities for the upcoming State Fiscal Year.
 - A. Describe your community and the process for assessing their needs as relative to your outreach goals.
 - B. Based on your community assessment, what activities will you implement to increase enrollment? Give the target population for each activity with estimated dates for implementation.

C. Describe special outreach activities that will be targeted to reach and enroll eligible:

- 1) Women in the early months of pregnancy
- 2) Migrants
- 3) The homeless

D. List new and priority existing partner organizations that you will be targeting this year.

E. Indicate any anticipated addition or change in cooperative agreements with hospitals and describe related outreach efforts.

F. Describe plans to train staff regarding outreach and customer service as related to participant retention. Include any other special activities aimed at participant retention.

Outreach Activities: Self-Assessment for Local Agencies

How do you reach the largest number of potential eligibles as easily as possible?

That's right! By doing **outreach activities** in your community. Outreach involves the community in the work we do. Outreach encourages the community to refer new eligible customers into our clinics for **WIC** services. Remember, we only succeed when customers come to **WIC** and use our services.

Outreach activities include direct outreach to potential customers as well as activities, which strengthen referral networks between **WIC** and other community services. You know best what type of outreach will work for you and your clinic--what meets the needs and population of your local community. But some outreach activities appear to work well in most communities. Check yourself to be sure you've covered the basics!

1. Have you assessed your community?

Ask yourself these questions:

- (a) Where are your potential eligibles?
- (b) Where in your community can you most likely reach pregnant women, pregnant teens, babies and young children?
- (c) Are you reaching all ethnic groups in your community?
- (d) Are you making special efforts to reach special groups within your community?

For example: Do you outreach to migrant or seasonal farm workers?
Homeless women and children?
Pregnant and parenting teens?

- (e) Have you conducted an outreach campaign specifically targeted at one of the following: a local military base, your community hospital, and a large industry/factory employing women at a minimum wage?

2. Have you created a community resource list?

The agencies and services listed below should be contacted at least once annually and more frequently if possible. Be sure that the eligibility workers and client advocates know about **WIC**, and that they are referring their customers to the **WIC** program. Answer their questions! Be sure to give them your name and the address and phone number of all your **WIC** clinics. Be certain to provide these groups with **WIC** materials that include your address, telephone number and basic eligibility guidelines.

Also, post a large map of your city, town or county and indicate the location of other agencies, shelters, emergency food pantries, other **WIC** clinics and as many services as you can include. This helps **WIC** customers visualize where services are available and make contact.

Agencies to include in a community-resource guide, and to contact:

- . TCA, Food Stamps, medical assistance programs
- . Child-support enforcement
- . Community physicians who take Health Choice patients
- . Credit counseling
- . Developmental screenings/Early Childhood Intervention
- . Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT)
- . Educational opportunities
- . Emergency food pantries
- . Family planning services
- . Free and reduced price school lunch programs
- . Head Start
- . Housing services
- . Job banks
- . Licensed child-care facilities
- . Literacy and tutoring programs
- . Community agencies, which provide parenting classes
- . Schools, community agencies that provide parenting for pregnant teens
- . Medical and dental services
- . Migrant-health services
- . Services for children and infants with special needs (children with developmental disabilities, genetic disorders, chronic illness, exposed to drugs perinatally)
- . Shelters for battered women
- . Shelters for homeless families/homeless women and children
- . Substance abuse programs (inpatient or outpatient)
- . Summer lunch program
- . Foster parent programs
- . Protective services or child welfare authorities

3. Have you talked/brain stormed outreach ideas with staff?

Everyone who works for **WIC** is responsible for outreach. The appointed outreach coordinator "coordinates" outreach activities, but must have everybody's support and hands-on assistance to be effective. Talk about what you can do within the clinic to improve the **WIC** customer's experience. Satisfied customers are more likely to bring in new participants.

4. Do you talk to your participants?

Ask staff to ask participants to talk about **WIC** to friends and family members who may be eligible for benefits. Put up a sign in the **WIC** clinic, which encourages participants to bring in new eligibles.

5. Are you contacting women who have missed their WIC appointment? Are you encouraging them to return to WIC?

Have your most diplomatic and understanding staff member contact the participant, and make it easy for her to return.

6. Have you arranged referrals with prenatal clinics?

Some local agencies station a **WIC** staff member in large prenatal clinics to make appointments for **WIC**. Make sure that you visit with prenatal nurses and remind them to please refer their customers to **WIC**. Be certain they have **WIC** materials to give their patients. Even if you are co-located, be certain to ask for referrals. With time and turnover, referrals may be overlooked.

7. Have you visited with eligibility and case workers at local Food Stamps, TCA, and social service offices?

Remember, most families receiving these benefits will also qualify for **WIC**. In many communities, this is the fastest, easiest way to get to the largest group of eligibles. Offer to provide in-service training for caseworkers and be open to receiving information about their programs. The best way to get referrals is to give referrals. Make certain that all **WIC** customers receive a direct referral to TCA, Food Stamps, and medical assistance programs.

8. Are you providing WIC information and encouraging referrals from other health programs' staff?

Contact and discuss **WIC** services and referrals with other health programs' staff, such as immunization nurses, regional nutritionists, maternal child health staff, community and migrant health workers.

9. Have you contacted physicians who see patients receiving Health Choice?

Pay special attention to the **office staff and nurses** of obstetricians, pediatricians and family practitioners. Remember to let each physician know the location of the **WIC** clinic closest to his or her office. Offer to provide materials, posters and referral forms. You may want to send thank you notes to the physicians who refer to **WIC**.

10. Are you making personal contact and designing a way of referring all Head Start participants to the WIC program?

Head Start programs usually have a registration fair just before the school year begins. It's a great time to make appointments for **WIC**.

11. Are you remembering to reach out to working women?

Remember to share **WIC** eligibility information with city and county employees or other large employers in your area who employ women. Many may be eligible for **WIC** services.

12. Have you contacted community midwives and given them WIC information for their customers?

You may wish to send a letter or postcard, which informs them about WIC services and gives your number if they want to have materials provided for their customers.

13. Remember to visit with childbirth educators.

Childbirth preparation classes offer a wide range of materials to expectant parents and often have a nutrition component. This is an excellent opportunity to include information on the **WIC** program. Be sure to inform the educators regarding the benefits of WIC participation, including the information and support available for breastfeeding mothers. Check with your local hospital or local obstetricians to see who offers childbirth preparation classes in your community.

14. Do you talk with local hospital staff about WIC?

Talk with social workers, OB nurses and emergency room nurses about WIC and ask them to refer potential clients. Leave materials with your name and address and telephone number so you can be easily reached.

15. Are you providing WIC information to staff at day care centers and licensed family day care homes in your community?

The staff will likely know who may qualify for **WIC**. Encourage them to put up posters where their clients will see them, so families have an opportunity to consider if they are eligible for **WIC** and call for more information. Names and addresses of childcare centers are available from the State Agency.

16. Build partnerships with churches and synagogues in your community.

Religious organizations are usually supportive of the **WIC** Programs. Because such organizations have community outreach programs of their own, they may have ways in which they can assist **WIC** in addition to referring potential participants. Be

certain that churches have **WIC** materials to give to families seeking assistance.

17. Contact local shelters and food assistance programs for homeless families and battered women.

Remember to include the Salvation Army, and emergency food-assistance centers, food banks and soup kitchens. Ask for their assistance in referring to the local **WIC** agency. Do not assume that they know about **WIC** or the eligibility requirements. Volunteer staff and counselors should receive information on the **WIC** Program. All shelters should have information about the **WIC** Program to give to their clients.

18. With permission from grocers, place WIC posters and materials at your local WIC vendors.

Our vendors are a valuable resource. Please check with vendors about placing outreach materials in their stores. Usually privately owned stores are more receptive to placing materials in their stores. Large vendors (e.g. Giant, Weis, etc.) may only allow a small poster on their community bulletin board.

19. Review appointment schedules for evening and or Saturday hours.

Take a moment to review your hours of operation. The working poor are in need of our services but may not be able to take advantage of them because of the agency hours. When conducting targeted outreach to the employed, emphasize the availability of evening and or weekend hours.

20. Check listing in local phone directory.

Looking for someone or someplace? Usually the first place you go is to the phone book. Please take a moment and check your local phone directory to see if the phone number listed for the WIC Program is correct.

Potential Outreach Activities

Use this list as a starting point for conducting outreach to record on your activity log.

- Breastfeeding Support
- Bus Advertisements
- Calls or mailings about missed appointments
- Church Sponsored Events
- Community Organizations serving low income
- Dental Providers
- Department of Social Services
- Email Marketing or Advertising
- Faith & Community Partners
- Food Banks
- Foster care
- Head Start
- Health Department Sponsored Event
- Homeless Shelters
- Letters or Calls to Physician Offices
- Letters or cards sent to participants(Birthday, Celebratory)
- Limited English Proficiency Organizations
- Links to WIC Web Site
- Magazine Advertisements
- Mail Advertisements
- MCHP
- Medical Assistance
- Migrants / Farm worker Organizations
- Military
- Newspaper Advertisements
- Other Advertisements
- Outreach Materials Mailed (General)
- Participation in Health Fairs, Community Day, Festivals, etc.
- Participation with Farmers' Market
- Posting information in Clinics for participant viewing
- Programs for Teen Parents
- Protective Services
- Radio Advertisements
- Radio Outreach
- Schools
- SNAP
- Staff Meetings
- Substance Abuse Programs
- TCA
- TV Advertisements
- Unemployment Offices
- Visits or Information provided to Hospitals / Clinics
- Visits or Mailings to Licensed Child Care Providers

Local Agency Event Report

Local Agency: _____

Primary Purpose of Event: Education Participant Enrollment Participant Retention
Goal of event: _____

Event Information

Event Date: _____
Event Name / Description: _____
Event Contact: _____
Contact Phone #: _____
Contact Email: _____
Event Fee: _____
Geographic Area: _____

Local Agency Information

WIC Staff Attendees: _____
Number of Hours (Include event preparation, travel, set-up and tear down): _____
Print Materials Distributed: _____
Outreach Incentive Items Distributed: _____

Attendee Information

Audience in Attendance: _____
Number of Attendees (Non WIC or Event Staff): _____

Event Evaluation

Event Accomplishments / Achievements: _____

Event Challenges / Barriers: _____

Did this event reach any of the following potential eligibles?

- Women in early stages of pregnancy
- Migrants
- Homeless

Comments:

Email report to _____@maryland.gov by the _____ business day of the following month.
When naming file use this convention: Local Agency Name, Event Report, Date

**MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
WIC PROGRAM
POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL**

**Policy and Procedure Number: 1.10
Effective Date: October 1, 2012
Revised Date: August 15, 2019**

SECTION: Outreach

SUBJECT: Social Media – Creation of WIC Local Agency Accounts

A. Policy

The term “social media” encapsulates web-based and mobile communications that facilitate the development of social and professional contacts, sharing information, and cooperation on joint activities. Social media is specially designed to exchange user-generated content.

The WIC Program utilizes social media to promote the Program, make information and resources easily accessible, and to develop a virtual community for WIC staff and clients.

Local Agencies may create social media accounts. The following procedures shall guide the development and maintenance of such accounts.

B. Procedure

1. Creation of social media accounts is optional.
2. Local Agencies shall consult with their local Health Department or parent agency for guidance prior to creating social media accounts.
3. All social media accounts shall be created with the assistance of the Communications Team at the State WIC Office.
4. The information provided through social media accounts shall align with the vision and mission of the Maryland WIC Program and present a unified message on behalf of the Program.
5. Each Local Agency shall designate an Account Administrator (individual responsible on behalf of the Local Agency for the creation and administration of accounts) and a Content Moderator (to assist the Account Administrator in the daily monitoring of the account).

6. The Account Administrator and Content Moderator shall have a thorough understanding of public and privacy settings and the guidelines of each social media site. Also, be familiar with the available applications and web-based communities.
7. The Account Administrator must diligently investigate the social media tool, its capabilities, and structure its account accordingly.
8. Social Media accounts shall be restricted as described in Attachment 1.10A
9. A publicly available account shall be monitored continually, as described in Attachment 1.10 A.
10. Each account should have a strong password with 8 characters or greater and uses a combination of letters, numbers, and symbols.
11. Posts should be focused on WIC-related topics from reliable sources where proper credit is provided to the author. All content should be refreshed as needed, with a minimum of weekly. For best practices, see Attachment 1.10B
12. All photos uploaded onto social media applications must have accompanying photo releases for each individual that appears in the photograph. These releases must be stored on file with the Local Agency.
13. All other policies and procedures that apply to computer usage, confidentiality and privacy issues, apply to social media accounts. (P&P 7.40; P&P7.41)
14. Maintenance of WIC accounts is permitted on WIC provided computers. However, administrators and moderators should not open their WIC accounts to other applications as this may compromise the security of the account.
15. All questions shall be referred to the Communications Team at the State WIC Office.

Attachment(s):

1.10A Account Restrictions

1.10B Best Practices

References:

P&P 7.40 WOW Information Systems Usage

P&P 7.41 WOW Information Systems Security

Revisions:

8/15/2019 Revised to note change to 1.10A allowing communication with Facebook users.

Social Media Account Restrictions

Social media account restrictions and responsibilities are contingent upon the platform in which they are administered and should be followed accordingly.

1. Facebook (facebook.com/MarylandWIC)

- a. The State WIC Office Communications Team will co-administer every Local Agency page already in existence or newly created.
- b. Privacy and account settings, as formatted by the State Communications Team, shall not be altered.
- c. Only one Facebook page per Local Agency is permitted. Any pages not co-administered by the State Communications Team must be deleted.
- d. Facebook communication shall be done through the Local Agency *page*, and not through a *profile*. The Local Agency profile shall not be made public.
- e. Discussion of a participant's individual circumstances is prohibited. The Local Agency should encourage participants to call.
- f. Private messaging is prohibited. If a private message is initiated by a Facebook user, the Local Agency should reply with a standardized response which includes the Local Agency's phone number and hours of operation.
- g. Local Agencies shall monitor their page daily during the work week, with the exception of holidays.
- h. Content added by the State Communications Team shall not be deleted.
- i. The State Communications Team reserves the right to make edits, adjustments, and deletions on co-administered Local Agency pages.
- j. Local Agency page administrators shall log out before exiting Facebook, and operate the Facebook page in a separate browser window, to ensure privacy protection from outside sources, applications, and websites.

2. Twitter (@MarylandWIC)

- a. Private messaging between Local Agency Twitter account holders and the public is prohibited. If a private message is initiated by a Twitter follower, the Local Agency account holder should reply with a standardized response.

For example: "Thank you for your interest in the Maryland WIC Program. We are unable to use Twitter for private communication. For inquiries or assistance, please contact (insert *Local Agency Name* and *telephone*

number) between the hours of (insert *Local Agency hours*).

- b.** Twitter avatar shall be consistent with the Local Agency Facebook page image.
 - c.** Local Agency page administrators shall log out before exiting Twitter, and operate Twitter in a separate browser window, to ensure privacy protection from outside sources, applications, and websites.
- 3. YouTube** (youtube.com/marylandWIC)
- a.** YouTube channels are prohibited at the Local Agency level.
 - b.** Please submit video suggestions for the Maryland WIC YouTube channel to the State Communications Team via mdhwic@maryland.gov, for review. Proper credit will be noted if the video is posted.

Best Practices for Social Media Use

How can you maximize the potential impact of your social media platforms?

A variety of strategies are needed to capitalize on the endless possibilities created through social media avenues. Successful social media strategies recognize the importance of engaging the target audience with a cohesive inviting approach.

Share content from credible sources only!

Organize a system of tracking and measuring your progress.

Consistency and brevity hold the publics' attention most successfully.

Ivent a posting personality by being authentic, informative, and beneficial.

Audiences should be targeted and catered to, with the WIC mission in mind.

Limit your posts to once per day, to avoid overwhelming followers or discouraging future participation.

Make sure to offer valuable information relevant to eligible and active participants.

Exclusive content should be shared to entice users.

Do not share personal or private information that could jeopardize the safety of all parties involved.

Include only photographs, links, and videos that are consistent with the mission of WIC, and have applicable waivers on file.

Ask! If you have any questions or concerns involving social media accounts, contact the MD WIC State Office Communications Team.

Social media is the new path towards an engaged community. What are you waiting for? Get connected!