



Nutrition First WIC Participant Remote Services Survey Report

December 2020

Introduction

The method of WIC service delivery rapidly changed last spring with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. WIC services are typically delivered in-person at WIC clinics. The Department of Health WIC Program and Local WIC Agencies around the state moved to offer appointments by phone and/or video call. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), who administers WIC at the federal level, granted several waivers to allow WIC to operate remotely. These waivers included waiving the requirement for in-person contact and for collecting height, weight, and hemoglobin measurements.

The Nutrition First Board of Directors felt there was an opportunity to capture information directly from WIC participants to determine how remote service delivery was working for them. We wanted to gather this information in real time while WIC participants were receiving services remotely.

In June and July as the survey was being developed, USDA had extended waivers to WIC allowing for remote services through September. We planned to use the survey results to assess participant receptiveness to remote services and to determine whether a longer waiver period during the pandemic would meet the needs of WIC participants. We also planned to use the data to make the case for or against the option of remote services after the pandemic is over.

Development

The survey was developed by a committee of Nutrition First Board Members and reviewed by the full Board and staff from the Department of Health WIC Program. Nutrition First Board Members reached out to current WIC participants to test the survey before it was opened. The survey was translated into Spanish by The Department of Health Office of Nutrition Services translation team and also tested by Nutrition First Board Members reaching out to Spanish Speaking WIC Staff.

Survey Administration

Thanks to our strong partnership with the State Department of Health WIC program, we were able to make the survey available to WIC participants through the WIC Shopper App and through a link on the DOH WIC website. The link on the

app would take participants directly to the survey on Survey Monkey. The State WIC office even put a survey they were planning on hold so that the Nutrition First survey could go out first. Local Agency WIC staff were encouraged to let participants know about the survey during their appointments.

Approximately 80% of WIC participants use the shopper app. This was identified as a constraint in that not all WIC participants would have easy access to the survey. The survey was available in Spanish, however not in other languages. An option was created for WIC staff to assist those participants who spoke neither English nor Spanish.

The survey was open and available from the WIC Shopper App from July 21 – August 31, 2020. The survey could also be accessed from the Washington Department of Health WIC webpage.

Survey Participation

- Sample size: 1264
- Confidence level: 95%
- Margin of Error: $\pm 2.75\%$.
- Spanish Survey-13 responses
- Staff assisting non-English or non-Spanish Speakers: 33 (however majority indicate participant language as English or Spanish.)

There are likely several factors contributing to the low number of the Spanish Language surveys that were completed, and this will be a consideration for future survey development and administration.

Survey Instructions/Introduction for WIC Participants: We are interested in how remote WIC services have worked for you so far, and how we can best provide you with WIC services going forward. “Remote WIC Services” means WIC appointments provided by phone and/or online with a virtual or video call instead of going to the clinic.

Your participation in this survey is optional, and each question is optional. This survey will take about 10 minutes to complete. Your responses are not linked to your name and taking the survey will not impact the WIC services you receive.

Results:

1. Were you getting WIC earlier this year (2020) before the COVID-19 pandemic?

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|-------|
| Yes | 84.75% | 1,034 |
| No | 15.25% | 186 |
| TOTAL | | 1,220 |

2. Before the pandemic, how long was your travel time to get to your WIC clinic appointment?

Asked only to those who indicated "YES" WIC before pandemic.

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------------|-----------|-------|
| Less than 15 minutes | 60.69% | 613 |
| 15 to 30 minutes | 32.97% | 333 |
| Over 30 minutes | 6.34% | 64 |
| TOTAL | | 1,010 |

3. Have you ever received WIC in the past?

Asked only to those who answered "NO" WIC this year prior to pandemic. (Q1).

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|-----|
| Yes | 55.68% | 103 |
| No | 44.32% | 82 |
| TOTAL | | 185 |

4. Why did you come back to WIC (Choose all that apply)

Asked only to those who answered "YES" to question 3.

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|--|-----------|----|
| Need for food assistance | 53.13% | 51 |
| New baby | 57.29% | 55 |
| Newly pregnant | 26.04% | 25 |
| Need for nutrition information | 4.17% | 4 |
| Need for breastfeeding support | 11.46% | 11 |
| Remote services/not having to go into clinic | 12.50% | 12 |
| Total Respondents: 96 | | |

5. How have your remote WIC appointments been conducted? (Choose all that apply.)

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|--|-----------|-------|
| Phone | 95.59% | 1,106 |
| Video call | 0.35% | 4 |
| Both phone and video calls | 1.56% | 18 |
| I have not had remote WIC appointments | 3.11% | 36 |
| Total Respondents: 1,157 | | |

6. Which would you prefer? (Choose all that apply)

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----|
| Phone appointments | 82.99% | 961 |
| Video call appointments | 8.98% | 104 |
| In-person appointments | 21.50% | 249 |
| No preference | 10.97% | 127 |
| Total Respondents: 1,158 | | |

Appointment Type Preference by Urban or Rural

| County | Phone | Video Call | In-Person | No Preference | TOTAL |
|--------|-----------|------------|-----------|---------------|-------|
| Rural | 219 (64%) | 26 (8%) | 58 (17%) | 37 (11%) | 340 |
| Urban | 492 (66%) | 57 (8%) | 131 (17%) | 71 (9%) | 751 |

7. Are phone appointments hard for you?

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Yes | 4.31% | 50 |
| No | 94.83% | 1,100 |
| I have not had a phone appointment | 0.86% | 10 |
| TOTAL | | 1,160 |

8. Would phone appointments be hard for you?

Only asked to those who had not had a phone appointment.

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |
|----------------|------------|
| Yes | 0.00% 0 |
| No | 100.00% 10 |
| TOTAL | 10 |

9. Why are phone appointments hard?

Only asked to those who indicated phone appointments are hard for them.

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| I do not have a phone to use | 8.11% 3 |
| Not enough cell phone minutes | 10.81% 4 |
| Poor connection | 40.54% 15 |
| English is not my first language | 8.11% 3 |
| Hard to find a private place to talk | 56.76% 21 |
| Total Respondents: 37 | |

10. Are video call appointments hard for you?

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|-----------|--------------|
| Yes | 15.77% | 181 |
| No | 30.14% | 346 |
| I have not had a video call appointment | 54.09% | 621 |
| TOTAL | | 1,148 |

11: Would video call appointments be hard for you?

Only asked to those who answered had not had video appointment. Q 10.

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 30.27% | 188 |
| No | 69.73% | 433 |
| TOTAL | | 621 |

12. Why are video call appointments hard?

Only asked to those who indicated video calls are hard or would be hard for them. Q 10 and 11.

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |
|---|------------|
| I do not have a device to use for a video call appointment (check all that apply) | 17.42% 46 |
| Not enough data | 17.05% 45 |
| Poor internet connection | 43.18% 114 |
| English is not my first language | 1.89% 5 |
| Hard to find a private place to talk | 49.62% 131 |
| Do not know how to use | 7.95% 21 |
| I am uncomfortable or not sure I want to be on video | 46.21% 122 |
| I would like help on how to use | 1.89% 5 |
| Total Respondents: 264 | |

Appointment Type Preference by Urban or Rural

| County | Phone | Video Call | In-Person | No Preference | TOTAL |
|--------|-----------|------------|-----------|---------------|-------|
| Rural | 219 (64%) | 26 (8%) | 58 (17%) | 37 (11%) | 340 |
| Urban | 492 (66%) | 57 (8%) | 131 (17%) | 71 (9%) | 751 |

Participant Survey Instructions for the next 7 questions:

WIC offices in Washington State started providing remote WIC services in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Spring 2020.

Please rank each of the following statements:

13. Remote WIC appointments help me keep my WIC appointments.

75% Somewhat or Strongly Agree

| | STRONGLY DISAGREE | SOMEWHAT DISAGREE | NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE | SOMEWHAT AGREE | STRONGLY AGREE | NO OPINION | TOTAL | WEIGHTED AVERAGE |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|-------|------------------|
| ☆ | 8.94% 80 | 1.68% 15 | 9.27% 83 | 10.50% 94 | 64.02% 573 | 5.59% 50 | 895 | 4.26 |

14. Remote WIC appointments meet my needs

82% Somewhat or Strongly Agree

| | STRONGLY DISAGREE | SOMEWHAT DISAGREE | NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE | SOMEWHAT AGREE | STRONGLY AGREE | NO OPINION | TOTAL | WEIGHTED AVERAGE |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|-------|------------------|
| ☆ | 6.37% 57 | 1.90% 17 | 5.70% 51 | 10.61% 95 | 71.84% 643 | 3.58% 32 | 895 | 4.45 |

15. In-person WIC appointments meet my needs

66% Somewhat or Strongly Agreed

| | STRONGLY DISAGREE | SOMEWHAT DISAGREE | NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE | SOMEWHAT AGREE | STRONGLY AGREE | NO OPINION | TOTAL | WEIGHTED AVERAGE |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|-------|------------------|
| ☆ | 7.49% 67 | 5.36% 48 | 15.42% 138 | 16.31% 146 | 49.61% 444 | 5.81% 52 | 895 | 4.01 |

16. Remote WIC appointments help me feel connected to my community.

48% Somewhat or Strongly Agree

| | STRONGLY DISAGREE | SOMEWHAT DISAGREE | NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE | SOMEWHAT AGREE | STRONGLY AGREE | NO OPINION | TOTAL | WEIGHTED AVERAGE |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|-------|------------------|
| ☆ | 6.27% 56 | 4.26% 38 | 29.45% 263 | 16.69% 149 | 31.24% 279 | 12.09% 108 | 893 | 3.71 |

17. In-person WIC appointments help me feel connected to my community.

50% Somewhat or Strongly Agree

| | STRONGLY DISAGREE | SOMEWHAT DISAGREE | NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE | SOMEWHAT AGREE | STRONGLY AGREE | NO OPINION | TOTAL | WEIGHTED AVERAGE |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|-------|------------------|
| ☆ | 6.70% 60 | 3.02% 27 | 28.60% 256 | 19.11% 171 | 30.84% 276 | 11.73% 105 | 895 | 3.73 |

18. As my community reopens, I would like remote services to be offered by WIC.

78% Somewhat or Strongly Agree

| | STRONGLY DISAGREE | SOMEWHAT DISAGREE | NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE | SOMEWHAT AGREE | STRONGLY AGREE | NO OPINION | TOTAL | WEIGHTED AVERAGE |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|-------|------------------|
| ☆ | 3.80% 34 | 1.45% 13 | 11.84% 106 | 14.64% 131 | 63.80% 571 | 4.47% 40 | 895 | 4.39 |

19. After the COVID 19 pandemic is over, I would like to continue using remote WIC appointments.

75% Somewhat or Strongly Agree

| | STRONGLY DISAGREE | SOMEWHAT DISAGREE | NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE | SOMEWHAT AGREE | STRONGLY AGREE | NO OPINION | TOTAL | WEIGHTED AVERAGE |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|-------|------------------|
| ☆ | 5.25% 47 | 2.68% 24 | 12.63% 113 | 14.53% 130 | 61.23% 548 | 3.69% 33 | 895 | 4.29 |

Demographics:

20: What is your age?

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Under 18 | 0.68% | 6 |
| 18-24 | 12.70% | 112 |
| 25-34 | 49.32% | 435 |
| 35-44 | 31.63% | 279 |
| 45+ | 5.67% | 50 |
| TOTAL | | 882 |

21. Who in your family is getting WIC? (Choose all that apply.)

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-----|
| Me | 33.90% | 300 |
| My Spouse/Partner | 1.81% | 16 |
| My Child (or a child in my care) | 94.24% | 834 |
| Total Respondents: 885 | | |

22. If you (or your partner/spouse) are getting WIC, please check the descriptions that apply.

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----|
| Pregnant | 29.32% | 90 |
| Had a baby in the past year | 66.12% | 203 |
| Breastfeeding | 41.04% | 126 |
| Doesn't apply | 6.19% | 19 |
| Total Respondents: 307 | | |

23. If you have a child (or a child in your care) getting WIC, which describes them? (Choose all that apply.)

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----|
| Infant up to 12 months old | 35.89% | 314 |
| Child over 12 months up to 2 years | 32.80% | 287 |
| Child over 2 years up to 3 years | 25.60% | 224 |
| Child over 3 years up to 4 years | 21.60% | 189 |
| Child over 4 years up to 5 years | 14.74% | 129 |
| No Children on WIC in my family | 3.66% | 32 |
| Total Respondents: 875 | | |

24. How do you describe your Race/Ethnicity? Optional.(Choose all that apply.)

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|-----------|-----|
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 6.81% | 57 |
| Asian | 5.85% | 49 |
| Black or African American | 8.84% | 74 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 20.31% | 170 |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | 3.94% | 33 |
| Other Idigenous, First Nations or Aborininal People | 0.12% | 1 |
| White or Caucasian | 67.62% | 566 |
| Total Respondents: 837 | | |

Survey Participation by County. (Determined by ZIP Code collection. This was an optional question).

| County | Count | Percent |
|--------------|------------|---------------|
| Adams | 9 | 1.03 |
| Asotin | 6 | 0.69 |
| Benton | 34 | 3.91 |
| Chelan | 10 | 1.15 |
| Clallam | 17 | 1.95 |
| Clark | 83 | 9.54 |
| Columbia | 1 | 0.11 |
| Cowlitz | 23 | 2.64 |
| Douglas | 4 | 0.46 |
| Ferry | 1 | 0.11 |
| Franklin | 11 | 1.26 |
| Grant | 21 | 2.41 |
| Grays Harbor | 18 | 2.07 |
| Island | 11 | 1.26 |
| Jefferson | 1 | 0.11 |
| King | 124 | 14.25 |
| Kitsap | 40 | 4.60 |
| Kittitas | 5 | 0.57 |
| Klickitat | 1 | 0.11 |
| Lewis | 14 | 1.61 |
| Lincoln | 1 | 0.11 |
| Mason | 13 | 1.49 |
| Okanogan | 10 | 1.15 |
| Pacific | 2 | 0.23 |
| Pierce | 103 | 11.84 |
| Skagit | 13 | 1.49 |
| Skamania | 1 | 0.11 |
| Snohomish | 59 | 6.78 |
| Spokane | 100 | 11.49 |
| Stevens | 4 | 0.46 |
| Thurston | 31 | 3.56 |
| Walla Walla | 10 | 1.15 |
| Whatcom | 29 | 3.33 |
| Whitman | 3 | 0.34 |
| Yakima | 57 | 6.55 |
| Total | 870 | 100.00 |

A summary of written comments will be added to this report at a later date.

Using the Survey Results to Advance WIC:

Survey results will be shared with Local WIC Agencies in Washington State, and with other local and state WIC agencies across the US.

Survey results will be used in Washington State to help focus the delivery of remote services and staff training to meet program needs.

The results of the survey will help support future policy and advocacy direction to help move WIC into current times including:

- Supporting the need for continuation of remote options for service delivery.
- Supporting the need for on-line grocery shopping/curbside pick-up WIC options.
- Reducing barriers to receiving WIC and increasing participation.

Select preliminary results from the survey were used in a letter Nutrition First sent to USDA in September seeking waiver extensions throughout the pandemic. Select results were also shared with our Washington State Representative and Senators in Congress during Advocacy meetings in November.

Thank You to Washington State Local WIC Staff for encouraging participants to complete the survey.

Thank You to the Washington Department of Health Office of Nutrition Services WIC Program for posting the survey to the WIC shopper App, providing Spanish translation, assisting with data analysis and providing time on DOH WIC Update Webinars for Nutrition First to promote the survey.

If you have any questions regarding this survey and results, please contact Carolyn Conner at info@nutritionfirstwa.org or 206-450-6139.



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