

2014 Idaho WIC Participation Survey

Organization/Project Lead:

Idaho WIC state agency staff developed and coordinated a participant survey project.

Background/introduction:

Idaho WIC Policy Manual Chapter 2 Administration; Section A Customer Service; page 3 states *Evaluate services yearly to ensure that clinics offer quality services. Develop a customer service questionnaire or use some other evaluation tool.*

Project Goals:

Idaho WIC state office conducted a quantitative survey to assess WIC participant demographics, perception of customer service, and impact of potential barriers for continued participation in WIC. This included survey development, administration, and compiling results including a base cross year comparison.

Methods:

Each WIC clinic received survey distribution guidelines and a set number of surveys based on a statistically significant sample size for their monthly participation. Surveys were completed during a one-month timeframe spring 2014.

All participants seen during the month timeframe were encouraged to complete a survey until there were no uncompleted surveys left. Participants had the option to decline completing a survey. Surveys were available in English and Spanish. Translators were made available for non-English speaking participants. Survey responses were kept anonymous and confidential.

Survey questions inquired about the participant's category, length of participation in the WIC Program, age and race. Other questions were related to the following areas:

- Motivators and/or barriers regarding attending their WIC appointments
- Ease of accessing clinic staff by phone
- Convenience of scheduling/rescheduling appointments
- Preferred appointment times/clinic hours
- Needs for breastfeeding services
- Voucher education and ease of use
- Preferred communication methods

To increase survey response accuracy, the response options included 'not applicable' and 'other' with a comment box.

Results:

Survey data was analyzed per clinic, local agency and state totals using graphs, crosstabs, charts and ranking tables. General conclusions are summarized below:

- The majority of survey respondents were **20-29 year old white or Hispanic moms/caregivers of children under age 5**. Most had **participated in WIC for 1-3 years**.
- **Wanting food help** was the most frequent response regarding what brings the participant back to the next WIC appointment.
- **Conflicts with work or school and lack of transportation** were the most frequent responses regarding why they weren't able to come back to a WIC appointment.
- The majority of respondents were **able to reach a live person when phoning WIC and were able to schedule an appointment time that met their needs**.
- Most participants **preferred appointment times during Monday-Friday 8:00 am – 5:00 pm**.
- **After delivering a baby, the most frequent way a WIC appointment was scheduled** was either that **clinic staff had phoned the participant or a peer counselor contacted them**.
- Results indicated the most important way WIC helps with breastfeeding is **by listening to concerns and answering questions**.
- The majority of respondents wished they had learned **more breastfeeding information during pregnancy about how to know when their milk has come in and how to know when the baby is hungry/full**.
- Most respondents indicated that **WIC clinic staff had explained how to use WIC vouchers and it was very easy to use the vouchers**.
- **Inadequate stock** was the most frequent response for challenges using WIC vouchers at the grocery store.
- **Phone calls and text messaging** were the most frequently preferred forms of WIC communication (outside of the clinic).

Summary Discussion:

The survey had limitations and potential bias due to it was only administered to WIC participants who were physically present at WIC clinics. The survey didn't capture responses from eligible WIC participants who were behind on their appointments or who had discontinued participating in the program.

Survey results indicate potential focus areas for improving WIC services are:

- Scheduling participant appointments outside of participant work/school schedules.
- Identifying local transportation assistance resources and providing referrals to those resources.
- Providing prenatal breastfeeding support/information that focuses on listening, answering questions, sharing information about milk coming in and baby hunger/fullness cues.
- Coordinating with vendors to assist with maintaining adequate stock of WIC authorized foods.
- Increasing the use of text messaging to contact WIC participants between appointments.