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## 360.40

### Outreach

#### Overview

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**Introduction** Outreach activities are intended to help ensure that those individuals at greatest risk are aware of WIC services. Coordination of efforts with MH, CH, FP, Public Health Nursing, and EPSDT through county-level agreements to exchange referrals is required.

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**In this policy** This policy contains the following information.

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## General Guidelines

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### Hospital-based agencies and clinics

To encourage pregnant women and mothers with newborns to participate in WIC, local WIC agencies that operate within or in coordination with a hospital must provide written information about the WIC Program to potential WIC participants who receive inpatient or outpatient services (OB, postpartum, well-child, etc.) at the hospital.

Reference: CFR 246.6f(1-2)

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### Coordinate services

WIC agencies are expected to collaborate with Maternal Health, Child and Adolescent Health, Family Planning, and I-Smile providers if another agency in their community provides those services.

WIC agencies are required to coordinate services through county-level agreements with the Department of Human Services, which administers Food Assistance, FIP, EPSDT, and Medicaid. See Policy 360.20 for additional information.

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### Outreach materials available

The following materials are available from the state WIC office:

- Two types of brochures:
  - For potential participants, in both English and Spanish, and
  - For other professionals, to explain WIC and encourage referrals

Note: See Policy 340.15 for ordering information.

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### Ordering outreach materials

Available materials are stored at the Iowa State Distribution Center and must be ordered by filling out the ISU Distribution Center Order Form on the WIC WebPortal at <https://idph.iowa.gov/WIC-Portal/Resources>.

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### Outreach to minorities

To ensure that members of minority groups are informed of program benefits, WIC agencies must make annual contacts with minorities or other groups serving minorities in their service area.

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## General Guidelines, Continued

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### **Outreach to immigrants**

The following statements may be useful for outreach materials targeted to immigrant populations.

#### English

Participation in WIC does not affect your immigration status. WIC participation does not render your family a “public charge” and is not reported to INS.

#### Spanish

La participación en WIC no afectará su estado migratorio. WIC no le rinde a usted ni a su familia como “carga pública” y no reporta a la oficina de INS.

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### **TTY deaf services**

An individual who is deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind, or speech disabled uses a Text Telephone (TTY) to type their conversation to a Communication Assistant (CA), who then reads the typed conversation to a hearing person. The CA relays the hearing person's spoken words by typing them back to the TTY user. Relay Iowa provides this service and can assist potential participants in contacting the WIC office.

When developing outreach materials, include the Relay Iowa number 1-800-735-2942 (English) or 1-800-264-7190 (Spanish). More information can be obtained at <http://www.relayiowa.com/>.

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### **Using positive breastfeeding messages**

All outreach activities with programs, individuals and organizations should include positive breastfeeding messages that reinforce WIC’s position that breastfeeding is the preferred infant feeding method.

To assist agencies in relaying positive breastfeeding messages, the state WIC staff works to ensure that positive breastfeeding messages are included in:

- Staff orientation programs and materials,
  - Participant orientation programs and materials,
  - Printed and audiovisual materials for professional audiences, and
  - Printed, audiovisual and display materials for potential participants.
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## Ideas for Outreach Activities

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### Educate about WIC at every opportunity

Take advantage of any opportunity to inform the public and potential participants about WIC:

- Participate in special events in your community, such as health fairs or early childhood fairs.
- Have an open house at your agency.
- Cooperate in community projects.
- Speak at prenatal classes, family life science classes, women's clubs, or other community organizations.
- Have WIC listed in community health and social service resource guides.

Provide in-service training for health professionals and their clerical staff. When you speak about the WIC Program, take breastfeeding and nutrition education materials to distribute. Make follow-up calls periodically to see if more materials or cards are needed.

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### Develop a list of agency contacts

Develop a list of other providers and organizations in your area who serve, or have a concern for, the same population as WIC. Personal contact with the organization is important so that they know where to refer clients who have questions. Leave brochures for potential participants at agencies/organizations that will distribute them or make them available for individuals to pick up. Give brochures for professionals to the providers on your list as you are distributing other information. Contacts may include:

#### Health providers/organizations

- Obstetricians, pediatricians, family practitioners and midwives
- Public health nurses
- Hospital nursing staff and dietitians in obstetrics and pediatric units
- School nurses
- Family planning agencies
- Managed care organizations and insurance entities, especially those that provide services to the Medicaid population

#### Social service providers/organizations

- Hospital social workers
  - Private social service agencies
  - Indian centers
  - Proteus or refugee assistance agencies
  - Homeless facilities
  - Unemployment office
  - Shelters for victims of domestic violence
  - Department of Human Services (DHS)
  - SNAP
  - Medicaid
  - FIP
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## Ideas for Outreach Activities (continued)

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### Develop a list of agency contacts (continued)

#### Education providers/organizations

- Head Start
- Area Education Agency—Early ACCESS Regional Liaisons
- Preschools/child care centers
- Schools
- Extension Service, especially EFNEP and FNP workers
- Colleges,

#### Other groups

- Ministers, priests and rabbis
  - Food pantries
  - Substance abuse counseling agencies
  - March of Dimes
  - Women's groups
  - Businesses that employ potential WIC participants
  - Libraries
  - Long-term care facilities
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### Make direct contacts

Make a follow-up call or send a reminder card to current participants who have missed appointments.

Call or mail information to potential participants who are served by other programs within your agency, if a signed release of information form allows.

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### Distribute materials

Distribute brochures or other printed materials in a variety of locations such as:

- Grocery stores,
- Laundromats,
- Thrift stores,
- Employers,
- Restaurants or cafes, and
- Buses.

A letter of introduction for those distributing posters is helpful. If income guideline pads are attached to the posters, check them regularly to replenish the supply.

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## Ideas for Outreach Activities (continued)

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### **Contact the media**

Consider the following tips when contacting the media.

- Radio or television stations are required to devote a certain amount of time to public service announcements. A public service announcement is more likely to be aired if a station is contacted in person rather than by mail. Paid advertising is also a possibility and can be targeted to the desired audience. However, cost is a consideration.
  - Local newspapers may print “newsworthy” stories about WIC. An in-service for newspaper staff may make them more receptive to publishing WIC stories. Letters to the editor and paid advertising are other possibilities.
  - Newsletters directed toward health or human service professionals may print an article about WIC.
  - Billboard companies may be willing to sponsor a billboard as a public service. Paid billboard advertising is also an option.
  - Social media may be an option to increase outreach efforts.
  - See page 7 of this policy for guidelines on media outreach messages.
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## Media Outreach Guidelines

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### Potential problems with media use

Outreach efforts may offend the general public if they imply that the WIC Program is soliciting or advocating participation simply to use federal funds.

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### Appropriate media use

Advertising should clearly emphasize the purpose of the Iowa WIC Program, and that eligibility is based on nutritional risk as well as income.

Example #1: Keep your children healthy and happy. You **may** be eligible for nutrition advice, health screening and nutritious foods from WIC. Call for more information.

Example #2: (Picture of woman with phone) “I thought I wasn’t eligible, so I didn’t call.” Call to find out if your family is eligible for nutrition advice and foods from WIC. Income and health criteria are used to determine eligibility.

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### Inappropriate media use

Advertising should **not** give the impression that WIC is just free food, or that people merely need to be low-income to qualify.

Example #1: Free food available for families with young children. Come to 123 Agency if your income meets these guidelines.

Example #2: Keep your tax dollars in Iowa! Free food is available from WIC. Call today to receive your share.

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### USDA/FCS policy reference

This information is based on *WIC Program Media Advertising and Outreach Efforts*, USDA/FCS memorandum MPSF-1:WC-97-12-I.

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## Documenting and Evaluating Outreach Efforts

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### **Outreach activity logs**

Keep a log of outreach activities to document outreach efforts. Documentation may include:

- Date of contact,
  - WIC staff making contact,
  - Name of organization and contact person,
  - Clientele served by this organization,
  - Number of people reached, and
  - Materials provided.
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### **Record where clients found out about WIC**

Keep a record of where clients found out about WIC to help evaluate which outreach activities are most effective. Methods include:

- Placing a record by each phone to ask those who call for information about WIC where they heard about it, and
- Surveying clients when they come in for their certification appointments.
- Recording in the “Referred to WIC by” field on the Contact/Address screen in the data system.

Note: The “Referred to WIC by” field in the data system can only be completed once. Although it can track trends of referrals to WIC, it will not indicate if returning participants are responding to a specific outreach campaign.

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