

WIC Food Packages Policy Options Study II

Client: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service

Project Overview

The goal of this study is to compile and synthesize information from Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) State plans, food lists, and other documents to help the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) evaluate the ongoing changes since implementation of the Interim Food Package Rule and in response to the Final Food Package Rule. The WIC program provides funds for specific supplemental foods for pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, infants, and children younger than 5 years of age. The specific foods for each participant are defined by 7 Federal food packages. The contents of the food packages were updated with the implementation of the Interim Rule in 2009 and again with the implementation of the Final Rule in 2014. Although these rules specify the general parameters of the food packages, many details are left to the 90 WIC State agencies that administer the program.



To examine the changes State agencies made to the foods they allow participants to obtain through WIC in response to the Final Rule, Insight will review State plans and food lists for FY 2015. The information extracted from these documents will be used to develop a database. Data from a previous study of WIC State plans and food lists will be included in the database so that changes in individual State agencies' practices over time can be analyzed.

For this project, Insight will:

- Extract data from State plans and food lists for 90 WIC State agencies.
- Build a database incorporating data from a previous study and the current data extraction.
- Analyze the foods prescribed and allowed by WIC State agencies, especially as these foods have changed in connection with the implementation of the Final Rule.
- Analyze the policies used by WIC State agencies and the degree to which the policy options selected by the agencies have changed over time.
- Develop a database appropriate for use by the public, along with supporting documentation.
- Prepare a report to assess changes in policy options and allowed foods.

The results of this evaluation will provide FNS with information about the actual foods available to WIC participants across the Nation and the policies that affect their participation in the program. This study is timed to provide valuable information to FNS and the Institute of Medicine (IOM) as they consider the nutritional value of the current WIC food packages, as well as whether additional changes are necessary.

Core Activities

Data Extraction; Database Development; Data Analysis; Report Development and Presentation; Public Use File Creation

Products

A final report will be submitted in summer 2015. In addition, a public use dataset and accompanying documentation will be made available for researchers.