

WIC Food Packages Policy Options Study II

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

Project Overview

Insight compiled and synthesized information from State plans, food lists, and other materials for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) for this study to evaluate ongoing changes resulting from the implementation of the Interim Food Package Rule and the Final Food Package Rule. WIC provides supplemental foods for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and nonbreastfeeding postpartum women; infants; and children younger than 5. One of seven WIC food packages—specifying which foods are authorized for purchase through the program—is prescribed for each WIC participant. 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 for food packages, many details are left to the 90 WIC State agencies that administer the program.



To examine the changes each State agency made to its list of allowed foods in response to the Final Rule, Insight reviewed State plans and food lists for FY 2015. The information extracted from these documents was used to develop a database. Data from a previous study of WIC State plans and food lists were included in the database so changes in individual State agency practices over time could be analyzed.

For this project, Insight—

- Extracted data from State plans and food lists for the 90 WIC State agencies
- Built a database incorporating data from a previous study and the current data extraction
- Analyzed the list of foods allowed by each WIC State agency, especially regarding changes resulting from implementation of the Final Rule
- Analyzed the policies used by WIC State agencies and the degree to which policy options selected by the agencies have changed over time
- Developed a database appropriate for use by the public, along with supporting documentation
- Prepared a report that assessed changes in policy options and allowed foods

The results of this evaluation provided the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) with information about foods available to WIC participants across the Nation and policies that affected program participation. This study was timed to inform FNS and the Institute of Medicine as they considered the nutritional value of current WIC food packages, as well as whether additional changes were necessary.

Core Activities

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

Products

Thorn, B., Huret, N., Bellows, D., Ayo, E., Myers, R., & Wilcox-Cook, E. (2015). *WIC Food Packages Policy Options Study II*. Alexandria, VA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Policy Support.