

WIC Food Packages Policy Options Study II

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

Overview

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides supplemental foods for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women; infants up to age 1; and children up to age 5. Each participant is prescribed one of seven WIC food packages—specifying which foods are authorized for purchase through the program.

The food packages were updated with the implementation of the Interim Food Package Rule in 2009 and again with the implementation of the Final Food Package Rule in 2014. Although these rules specify the general parameters for food packages, many details are left to the state agencies that administer the WIC program. For this study, Insight compiled and synthesized information from state plans, food lists, and other materials to evaluate ongoing changes resulting from the Interim Food Package Rule and the Final Food Package Rule.



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 of WIC state agencies and the degree to which policy options changed over time
- Developed a database appropriate for use by the public, along with supporting documentation
- Prepared a report assessing changes in policy options and allowed foods

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

Products

Final report, *WIC Food Packages Policy Options Study II* (2015), available at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-food-package-policy-options-ii>