

Enhancements to the WIC Eligibility Report

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

Overview

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) distributes federal funds to 90 state, territorial, and Indian tribal agencies to provide supplemental foods, healthcare referrals, and nutrition education to nutritionally at-risk, low-income pregnant women, new mothers, their infants, and children up to age 5.

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) uses participation statistics for general reporting and budgeting, tracking program performance, and other purposes. However, participation counts alone do not facilitate a complete assessment of program performance. As a result, FNS estimates how many individuals are eligible for program benefits to better understand the program's reach and unmet nutrition assistance needs, particularly at state and participant levels. Over the past 5 years, Insight has developed estimates of WIC eligibility for FNS. In this process, Insight identified several needed enhancements to the WIC eligibility methodology to improve the accuracy of the estimates and make them more transparent and replicable.

For this project, Insight staff completed the following activities—

- Streamlined and modernized SAS programs and processes to produce estimates
- Updated and expanded the adjustment factors for multiple births and infant deaths



- Obtained information on how frequently individuals are denied WIC because of not being at nutritional risk
- Assessed the feasibility of producing coverage rates by income as a percentage of poverty
- Assessed the feasibility of updating Puerto Rico's adjustment factors
- Assessed the feasibility of incorporating Puerto Rico in national standard errors

Products

Analysis memo, data and analytic files, summary of enhancements