

Nutrition Services Coordinator Responsibilities and Resources



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Introduction

Nutrition education is one of the primary functions of the WIC Program. Quality nutrition education takes planning and should be based upon evidence-based practices and standards. Information regarding foods, nutrition and healthy lifestyle choices should reflect current scientific knowledge. The responsibility for planning, developing, and implementing nutrition education at the local agency level falls to the Nutrition Services Coordinator.

WIC Nutrition Services Standards were developed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to assist state and local staff in providing quality nutrition services. These standards recommend that Local Agency (LA) nutrition services are overseen by a nutritionist. This nutritionist is defined as one who has a Master's or doctoral degree in nutrition from an accredited college or university or is a registered/licensed dietitian (RD/LD) with a minimum of 1 year of job-related experience and completion of a training program approved by the State agency on the provision of nutrition services. The standards further outline the roles and responsibilities of the Nutrition Services Coordinator.

Each LA/clinic must appoint one person to act as the local Nutrition Services Coordinator. The Nutrition Services Coordinator is the individual who is responsible for the planning, managing, implementation and evaluation of the nutrition components of the WIC Program. The Coordinator must possess the knowledge and ability to translate scientific information into practical suggestions for families. Kansas does allow local agencies to appoint someone other than a registered dietitian as the Nutrition Services Coordinator however, if the person assigned is not a registered/licensed dietitian, they must work in conjunction with the agency's RD in carrying out the assigned duties.

This guidance will provide you with the information you need to carry out your responsibilities as Nutrition Services Coordinator. If you are a new Coordinator, the guidance can provide an overview of your responsibilities. If you have been the Nutrition Services Coordinator for a period of time, the guidance may provide you with resources that will enhance how you carry out your nutrition education tasks.

Before we begin, review ADM 10.04.00 Nutrition Services Coordinator Job Responsibilities at: http://www.kansaswic.org/manual/ADM_10_04_00_Nutrition_Services_Coordinator_Job_Responsibilities.pdf

Knowledge/Skills Requirement

The Policy and Procedure Manual ADM 10.04.00 outlines the job responsibilities for the Nutrition Services Coordinator. Every WIC clinic will utilize the skills of its Coordinator to best meet their needs, however ideally, a Nutrition Services Coordinator should have the following skills to better carry out the required responsibilities:

- ***Broad knowledge of the theoretical and practical principles and practices of nutrition, dietetics, education and public health including health care ethics, case management, and care coordination***—This knowledge is usually acquired through study of nutrition or dietetics, and should include lifecycle nutrition, educational theory regarding adult and child learners, ethics and skills in coordination of services delivered to clients.
- ***Completes the required SA training modules based upon job responsibilities***--Every employee completes a training program and modules related to their work in the WIC clinic. Nutrition services coordinators may have additional training required to better meet their job responsibilities. This can include training modules and continuing education.
- ***Advanced level of knowledge of current scientific information regarding maternal and child nutrition, diet, and health***—Nutrition Services Coordinators should continue gaining knowledge on the most current evidence-based practices in maternal and child nutrition through attendance at continuing education opportunities, self-study and required training events held by the SA.
- ***Specialized knowledge of the organization of health and nutrition services in the community***—Quality nutrition services require collaboration with other community organizations and programs with similar goals. The Nutrition Services Coordinator must be knowledgeable of the services in the area and coordinate wherever possible to expand the scope and quality of the services provided to WIC families.
- ***Skill in conducting a community assessment and incorporating data into the nutrition services plan***—Before determining how to best provide nutrition services in the local WIC program, the Nutrition Services Coordinator must assess, either informally or formally, the facts and relevant information that will assist in providing quality nutrition services. The assessment process is contained within the annual Nutrition Services Plan Guidance Document (See PPM Appendix).

- ***Skill in presenting oral and written ideas in a clear, concise and persuasive manner to professionals and the public***—Nutrition Services Coordinators often are called upon to provide information on the WIC program or nutrition to co-workers and other community partners. It is important that the person in this position have the ability to clearly present the required information either orally or in writing as the instance requires.
- ***Experience in providing direct nutrition services to families, mothers, and children***—The Nutrition Services Coordinator should ideally have experience in providing direct WIC services to mothers and their children. In order to best design nutrition services to meet the needs of WIC families and the WIC staff, experience in the clinic setting is essential.

Responsibilities of the Nutrition Services Coordinator

Both the Federal Nutrition Services Standards and ADM 10.04.00 briefly outline various responsibilities attributed to the Nutrition Services Coordinator. In the sections that follow, we will look in more detail at these responsibilities. While the person designated as the Nutrition Services Coordinator may not in all cases complete the duties, the Nutrition Services Coordinator is responsible to see that all aspects are completed in order to assure the overall quality of the nutrition education provided to WIC families.

The normal tasks typically are done by the Nutrition Services Coordinator include:

- Write and implement the Nutrition Services Plan
- Assist in the budget planning process for nutrition services and procure nutrition education materials
- Coordinate the nutrition services at the clinic level
- Coordinate WIC nutrition services with other health department and community programs
- Design, review and coordinate nutrition education contacts and nutrition education materials for WIC clients
- Provide in-service training for WIC staff regarding nutrition education
- Provide high risk nutrition counseling (if a registered dietitian)

The following pages will provide more detailed information on these various tasks.

To provide an overview of what may need to be done in a typical year, the table below may be helpful.

A Year in the Life of a Nutrition Services Coordinator

ITEM	WHEN	RESOURCE	WIC POLICY
Nutrition Services Plan	Annually Guidance sent out in May. Gather staff input on aspects of plan and solicit assistance as needed in writing final plan.	Due November 1 to State Agency Nutritionist	Appendix 2, ADM 04.00.00
Budget/Nutrition Education Expenditures	Annually, as part of overall agency budget creation/expenditures. Procures necessary nutrition education support items as needed.	Budgets due in June to State Agency	ADM 02.02.00 ADM 02.03.00 ADM 02.03.01
Kansas WIC Conference	Annually, usually in Spring	Information Memos provide details on registration and topics. Record attendance in local agency files	ADM 11.01.00 ADM 11.02.00
Nutrition Related In-service Training	At least once per year, preferably more often	Record all in-service training in the files at the local agency	ADM 11.01.00
Meetings to Coordinate Nutrition Services	As needed	Extension, physicians, nurses, dentist, and others are potential partners in providing services and referrals	NE 04.00.00 CRT 08.00.00
Design/Review Nutrition Education Lesson Plans	Topics chosen by November each year to coincide with NSP submission. Lesson plans completed prior to implementation	May utilize online materials or lessons provided by the SA as needed	NED 03.03.01
Nutrition Education Handout Materials	Reviewed annually and new ones developed as needed.		NED 03.04.00
Assures adequate and appropriate nutrition education is offered at certifications	Continually throughout year	Observe staff during certification appointments	NED 02.00.00 NED 02.01.00 NED 03.00.00 NED 03.01.00
Assures adequate and appropriate nutrition education is offered at secondary low risk and high risk appointments	Continually throughout year	Observe staff doing low risk and high risk nutrition education appointments.	NED 02.00.00 NED 02.01.00 NED 02.02.00 NED 02.03.00 NED 03.00.00 NED 03.01.00 Ned 03.02.00 NED 03.03.00

Nutrition Services Plan

Each year, every LA is required to complete and submit to the SA a plan for how WIC services will be provided in their area. This plan called the Nutrition Services Plan (NSP) consists of three main parts:

1. Assessment of action plans for service delivery from the previous year,
2. Assessment of current WIC Program Services, and
3. Development of action plans addressing breastfeeding promotion and nutrition services for the coming year.

The NSP provides the backbone of nutrition services at the local level. Information in the plan reflects how WIC staff intends to provide quality nutrition education, excellent customer service, and work with their community. It is intended to be a living document which is referred to as the year progresses and adapted as needed to better serve WIC families.

The Nutrition Services Coordinator is responsible for soliciting information from all WIC staff and coordinating the writing, submission and implementation of the Nutrition Services Plan. In April or May each year, the SA distributes the NSP Guidance document which provides an outline for the development of the NSP. This document is also found in the KDHE Website at: http://www.kansaswic.org/local_agencies/. The Nutrition Services Coordinator should share the guidance document with all WIC staff; make appropriate assignments if others are to complete key sections related to their job responsibilities; and gather all necessary information to complete the NSP prior to the required submission date. It is appropriate to have staff other than the Nutrition Services Coordinator complete some sections and action plans based upon their job responsibilities. The NSP should reflect the plans each local agency has to provide quality nutrition services in the upcoming calendar year (January-December) The NSP is due to the SA assigned Nutritionist by November 1st of each year. The NSP may be submitted to the SA either electronically as an attachment to an email, or sent through regular mail channels.

After reviewing the plan, the assigned SA Nutritionist will notify the Nutrition Services Coordinator of any necessary revisions and the final approval of the plan. By January, the Nutrition Services Coordinator should have a plan in place to begin implementation of the action plans she developed and set up a staff in-service to inform all staff of their responsibilities in implementing the plan. Throughout the year, the Nutrition Services Coordinator will be the person who should monitor progress on all plans, revise or change actions to improve outcomes and work with staff to identify areas for improvement in the coming year.

The NSP provides the Nutrition Services Coordinator an opportunity to think creatively about the nutrition education services in their clinic. By taking time to plan for the future year, local agencies can design and plan for higher quality nutrition services. For instance, a local agency may decide to:

- ✓ Host a breastfeeding baby shower
- ✓ Redesign the current clinic space to be more family friendly
- ✓ Plan to host a large nutrition education event
- ✓ Begin a collaboration with other organizations such as Extension to assist in providing nutrition education
- ✓ Begin providing food demonstration classes
- ✓ Plan a redesign of the building to provide for group nutrition education offerings
- ✓ Offer web-based nutrition education

Remember that the only limitation in the nutrition services plan and your action plans is your own imagination and efforts.

Throughout the year, the Nutrition Services Coordinator will be the person who should monitor progress on all plans, revise or change actions to improve outcomes and work with staff to identify areas for improvement in the coming year. This may require the Coordinator to work with other staff who were have completed various sections of the plan to assure that monitoring of results occurs.

Budget Planning for Nutrition Services

The level of responsibility that the Nutrition Services Coordinator has for nutrition service budget planning will vary with each agency. In some agencies, the coordinator may plan and complete the entire budget process for nutrition services including nutrition education materials. In other agencies, the coordinator may have input into the budget process regarding nutrition education and its associated costs but may not directly be responsible for the budget completion and submission.

Budgets are due to the SA by June of each year. Prior to this date, the SA will send out guidance regarding completing the budget summary documents and provide any special information regarding special projects or infrastructure requests. Budget policies in the Policy and Procedure Manual describe WIC-allowable expenses.

Ideally, the Nutrition Services Coordinator should review the guidance with the WIC Coordinator and provide input into what nutrition service expenditures may occur in the upcoming federal fiscal year. As part of the budget planning process, the Nutrition Service Coordinator can review the Nutrition Services Plan and the action plans to be carried out in the coming year which may require expenditures that should be included in the budget.

Among items to consider including would be: salaries and benefits for employees; nutrition education reference materials; training opportunities on nutrition education and breastfeeding; supplies utilized in providing nutrition education classes or special events; nutrition education materials for WIC clients; equipment that may be needed to carry out nutrition education (demonstration tables, projectors, flip charts, etc). The Nutrition Services Coordinator may also want to contact the assigned SA Nutritionist to identify any upcoming training or items that should be included in the budget summary.

After the budget is submitted to the SA and approved, the Nutrition Services Coordinator should work in conjunction with the WIC Coordinator to assure that expenditures are made within the parameters of the budget plan. Some Nutrition Service Coordinators may find it helpful to track expenditures throughout the year so that items that need to be purchased are not overlooked or delayed. This spreadsheet can also provide a starting point for the next year's budget planning process.

Coordination of Daily Nutrition Services

Every day in WIC, nutrition education occurs. It may be a part of the counseling session at certification. It may occur in a nutrition education class, a food demonstration, or an interactive center. It may be part of a bulletin board on nutrition or breastfeeding. It may be a one-to-one counseling session with the registered dietitian. Clerical and nursing staff may also provide aspects of nutrition education. Whenever and however it happens, the Nutrition Services Coordinator is responsible to see that accurate, appropriate quality nutrition education happens.

The Nutrition Services Coordinator is responsible for translating the agency's vision for nutrition education and quality customer service into the day-to-day routine of the clinic. Through the Nutrition Services Plan, the coordinator plans how nutrition education will be handled and who will carry out various activities. The client's first impression of WIC services and nutrition education occur when the clients enter the WIC clinic and interact with staff and continue throughout their visit. It is important to set a family-friendly, customer-friendly atmosphere from the very first. At certifications, clinic staff (RN, RD) provides one-on-one counseling regarding nutritional risks, anticipatory guidance, and client concerns or questions. The Coordinator is responsible for assuring that all staff follow good counseling techniques and have sufficient training to provide accurate nutrition and breastfeeding information. The coordinator should also periodically review client records to assure that appropriate documentation of nutrition education and breastfeeding promotion efforts are being recorded in the client record.

Low risk nutrition education contacts may occur using a variety of techniques including one-on-one counseling, group classes, facilitated discussion groups, interactive nutrition education centers, self-study notebooks, and internet based nutrition education. The Nutrition Services Coordinator determines the best techniques to use in his/her clinic setting, providing sufficient variety of topics and options to meet the client's needs. The Coordinator is responsible to develop or approve the materials used in the low risk education contacts, assure that staff is documenting the contact appropriately in the KWIC system, and provide training as needed to staff who will be involved in the low risk nutrition education efforts. The coordinator should also keep up-to-date on emerging research and information regarding the best educational techniques to use with specific audiences.

High risk nutrition education must be provided in individual counseling sessions with the registered dietitian. These visits should be documented in the client's KWIC record utilizing the Nutrition Education-RD links. The Coordinator should work with the RD providing this counseling to assure that appropriate documentation is occurring and that all high risk clients are being scheduled for RD appointments in the appointment book in KWIC.

Coordination of Nutrition Services with Community Programs

No WIC program operates in a vacuum. Quality nutrition services require that WIC clinics work with other community programs to provide outreach, referrals, and to occasionally assist in providing direct nutrition education. The Nutrition Services Coordinator should be the link between the local clinic and these helping organizations.

The most common organization which assists in nutrition education is the K-State Research and Extension Department. The Extension Family and Consumer Science agent may provide low risk secondary nutrition education through the use of interactive nutrition centers, cooking classes or other types of classes on nutrition. Their expertise in food and consumer sciences can be a great asset to the WIC program, freeing up local WIC staff for other duties. If Extension staff provides a low risk nutrition education contact, the Nutrition Services Coordinator must work with that person to assure that a lesson plan, which includes all the required elements, is on file at the WIC office. Additionally, the Coordinator should assist in developing how evaluation will be accomplished and how a record of the contact will be made in the KWIC system.

If outside speakers other than Extension staff are used (for example, a dentist, IBCLC, etc), then the Nutrition Services Coordinator may be required to assist in writing the lesson plan and working to include the evaluation and goal setting requirements into the planned activity.

A local agency may also choose to host a larger event for nutrition education contacts such as a nutrition fair, or a community baby shower promoting breastfeeding. Such activities often require assistance from other organizations or persons. It would be the responsibility of the Nutrition Services Coordinator to develop the plan for the event and write a lesson plan which outlines how the activities will meet the objectives for behavior and learning. He/she would also be the point of contact to solicit help from other organizations, coordinate the event process and complete the evaluation of its success.

Development of Nutrition Education Materials and Lesson Plans

As research changes our understanding of nutrition, educational materials and information provided to clients must also be updated or revised. The State WIC Office does provide some nutrition education materials and lesson plans which can be used by local clinics in delivery of nutrition education. However, most clinics require additional materials in order to best meet the needs of their families.

The task of developing nutrition education materials usually falls to the Nutrition Services Coordinator. Before designing new materials, the coordinator should review the available materials from the State WIC office. Nutrition education pamphlets are available from a variety of sources. The WIC Publication order form found at:

http://www.kansaswic.org/manual/forms/WIC_Publications_Order_Form.pdf gives a list of materials printed by the State Agency and may be ordered as needed. Additionally, there are nutrition education materials available to be downloaded. These materials can be found at:

http://www.kansaswic.org/nutrition_education/nutrition_edu_materials.html . Nutrition coordinators may also find valuable resources at the WIC Works Resource System. State and local agencies from across the United States share their nutrition education resources on this website. It is located at:

http://wicworks.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=12&tax_level=1&tax_subject=642 .

Whether designing or acquiring nutrition education materials, the coordinator should assure that pamphlets and materials used meet her client's needs for readability, appropriateness of information and are culturally appropriate. Refer to [NED 03.04.00 Evaluation of Nutrition Education Materials](#) for the procedure to be followed.

Another significant responsibility of the Nutrition Services Coordinator is the development of lesson plans. The purpose of the lesson plan is to provide a consistent outline of the information that will be shared during a low-risk nutrition education contact. These lesson plans offer the foundation that allows any trained staff person to present the lesson in a similar manner. Each lesson plan must be written by or reviewed by the licensed dietitian employed by the local clinic.

The Policy and Procedure Manual outlines the requirements that each lesson plan must include in NED 03.03.01. Lesson plans are required for all group or individual self-study low risk nutrition education offerings. This includes group classes, food demonstrations, facilitated discussion groups, interactive nutrition education centers, and self-study notebooks. A copy of the lesson plan must be kept on file at the local clinic where the lesson is used.

A variety of lesson plans have been developed by dietitians at the State WIC Agency and are available to be downloaded from the Kansas WIC Website at:

http://www.kansaswic.org/nutrition_education/lesson_plans.html . Other lessons have been provided to local agencies in a nutrition education resource entitled *Newtrition Ideas*. These

lessons can provide a starting place for the Nutrition Services Coordinator to plan for the clinic's nutrition education needs. Other lesson plans have been provided to clinics as part of past Information memos and should be on file at the local agency. Additional resources for creating nutrition education lesson plans are also available on the WIC Works Resource System website at:

http://wicworks.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=12&tax_level=1&tax_subject=714 .

Nutrition Services Coordinators may also want to utilize the services of their local county Extension agent or others to provide some of the available nutrition education. If the lesson plans for classes or displays provided by Extension or other resource staff have been written by someone other than the WIC registered licensed dietitian, then the lesson must be reviewed and approved by the RD prior to its use in the clinic. A copy of the final lesson plan must be kept on file at the local agency. At a minimum, this review should assure:

- ✓ that the information provided is accurate and consistent with information routinely provided by WIC staff;
- ✓ Lesson plans contain all the required elements including client interaction and evaluation/goal setting; and
- ✓ Plans have been finalized for the documentation of the nutrition education in the client's KWIC record.

Some local clinics enjoy decorating the lobby or WIC service area with bulletin boards or other items that support their nutrition education efforts. In some cases, there may be a particular staff person who enjoys creating these resources and would like to volunteer to create bulletin boards or posters that link to the nutrition education topic of the month. The Nutrition Services Coordinator would work with staff to assure that the information included in the bulletin board or other items relate to the focus of the lesson for the given month. Some clinics enjoy highlighting certain programs, upcoming events or clients as a part of their bulletin board or lobby decorations. There are a variety of ideas available from the WIC Works Resource System at: <http://riley.nal.usda.gov/wicworks/bulletinboard/BBSearch.php> .

Provide Staff Training on Nutrition Services

Very few local agencies have the luxury of having all of their WIC staff consist of trained, registered, licensed dietitians. Therefore, it often falls to the local Nutrition Services Coordinator to provide training to clinic staff on nutrition related topics. Every WIC staff person is required to receive a minimum of two training opportunities per year related to their job responsibilities (see ADM 11.01.00). These may occur through in-services, conferences, classes, or workshops that relate to their WIC duties. A number of topics can be used to provide in-service training to local WIC staff which the Nutrition Services Coordinator could provide. These might include:

- ✓ Review of Nutrition Services Plan-prior to writing and after the plan is approved
- ✓ Updates on specific nutrients of interest to staff and clients (Vitamin D, folic acid, etc.)
- ✓ Updates on new WIC policies related to nutrition or breastfeeding that impact service delivery
- ✓ Providing guidance regarding participant-centered nutrition education counseling techniques
- ✓ Brainstorming regarding topics for new lesson plans or written materials for clients
- ✓ Sharing information from nutrition and breastfeeding related conferences that have been attended
- ✓ Hosting an outside speaker on a nutrition related topic

Planned and scheduled training opportunities at the local level may also lend themselves to inviting others in the community members to join the meeting. For instance, if you are having training on breastfeeding support, you may wish to invite hospital or physician office nurses to join the training session.

Provide high risk nutrition counseling

Although not the exclusive job responsibility of the Nutrition Services Coordinator, providing high risk counseling often is done by the Nutrition Services Coordinator when that position is held by a registered dietitian. High risk counseling is required for any client deemed to be at “high risk” based upon the nutrition risk factors identified at the certification visit. A complete list of the risk factors identified as “high risk” by category, are available at: http://www.kansaswic.org/local_agencies/risk_factors.html and in policy NED 02.03.00. In the role of the Nutrition Services Coordinator, staff may develop additional handout materials or purchase resource which could assist them in counseling particular clients seen in their clinics.

The Nutrition Management Guidelines

(http://www.kansaswic.org/local_agencies/nutrition_guidelines.html) can provide a foundation for addressing some of the nutritional issues seen in WIC clinics. Assistance may also be needed to assure that if multiple staff are doing high risk counseling that the documentation in the KWIC client record is consistently and accurately completed.

Additional Resources

Websites of Interest:

Kansas WIC Program: <http://www.kansaswic.org/index.html>

WIC Works Resource System:

http://wicworks.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=12&tax_level=1&tax_subject=642

K-State Family Nutrition Program: <http://www.he.k-state.edu/fnp/>

Arizona WIC Program Nutrition Education Materials: <http://www.azwic.gov/nutritionEd.htm>

Iowa State Extension Snack Materials: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/food/snackideas/>

Oregon State Extension Nutrition Education Materials: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/>

California WIC Program Resources:

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Pages/default.aspx>

University of Nebraska Extension Resources: <http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/educational-resources>

National Dairy Council Educational Materials:

<http://www.nationaldairycouncil.org/educationmaterials/Pages/EducationMaterialsHome.aspx>

Washington WIC Resources: http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/WIC/nutrition_education.htm

Altarum Institute Participant-Centered Nutrition Education Resources:

<http://www.altarum.org/publications-resources-health-systems-research/WICPCEtools>

Touching Hearts, Touching Minds: <http://touchingheartstouchingminds.com/index.php>

Let's Move Campaign: <http://www.letsmove.gov/>

Nutrition/Nutrient Resources from Cathy Breedon:

http://north.sanfordhealth.org/healtheducation/speakers/cathy_breedon/pdfList.aspx

University of Illinois Nutrition Teaching Resources:

<http://wellnessways.aces.illinois.edu/Teaching.html>

Texas WIC Program Nutrition Resources: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/wichd/default.shtm>

Oregon WIC Listens Program: <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/wic/orwl.shtml>

USDA Food and Nutrition Information Center:

http://fnic.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=4&tax_level=1&tax_subject=252