



Strategic Plan

2015



Background

In February, 2015, the staff of the Montana State WIC program met for a one day strategic planning meeting. The focus of the meeting was to develop a new mission, vision and guiding principles for the State WIC Program. The process involved addressing the following questions.

Where are we now?

This question was addressed through a series of participatory exercises, the results of which are presented on the following pages.

1. Context map– State WIC Staff described various factors and trends that are currently affecting their program
2. Customers and Stakeholders– the State WIC staff named their key customers and stakeholders and outlined their needs, wants, expectations and requirements
3. SWOT Analysis– State WIC staff described their program’s internal strengths and weaknesses as well as the opportunities and threats external to their program

Where do we want to be?

Through a series of exercises, the state WIC staff developed a new programmatic mission, vision and organization vision. These key statements describe what the WIC program does, who the program serves, how the program operates, and what Montana will look like if the program achieves it’s mission. The organizational vision is the reputation that the Montana WIC program seeks to develop.

How will we get there?

Finally, the WIC staff developed guiding principles which are core beliefs and values that should guide future decision making. They also outlined key future focus areas that the program should emphasize as they move into the future.



Context Map

Demographic and Family Trends

- Non-traditional families
- Grandparents raising grandchildren
- Smaller families, but higher birth rates for lower SES
- More working families
- Self-reliance, unwilling to ask for help
- Families under stress struggling with WIC requirements
- Transportation concerns limiting ability to getting to WIC clinic

Political Factors

- Political uncertainty and potential funding cuts
- Decreased support for programs that support low income families
- Lobbying by corporations and companies related to WIC food package

Economic Factors

- Bakken oil fields helping economic situations for some families in eastern Montana, causing strain for others
- Economic recession and tightening job market
- Tightening federal budget, level funding
- Families lack awareness of helpful programs

Nutrition and Health Trends

- Confusing nutrition and health messages leading to information overload
- More food restrictions and special diets
- Increasing obesity
- Increasing fast food and advertising for unhealthy food, especially to children
- Nutrition guidelines always changing
- Food environment vs. individual choice



Customers & Stakeholders

Customers

Needs, wants, expectations and requirements

Women, Infants and Children Participants

Respect, acknowledgement that they are doing the right thing, socialization, fast appointments, walk-in, information on why they can't have certain foods

Local WIC Agencies

Better MIS function and network, job and systems training, state plan answers, correct responses to inquiries as quickly as possible.

WIC Vendors

Clarity regarding regulations, answers to customer questions, high quality customer service that is readily available, positive store environment, to know that WIC is contributing to their business, ease of use for customers (e.g. EBT)

Stakeholders

Needs, wants, expectations and requirements

Healthcare providers
 The public
 Legislative auditors
 WIC future studies
 FNS/USDA
 Nutrition and Physical Activity Program
 Immunization Program
 Maternal Child Health
 SNAP/Medicaid/TANF
 Food Security Council

Follow regulations
 Clear documentation
 Collaborate and provide referrals
 Communicate (e.g. eligibility criteria)
 Participate in special projects that promote their program focus
 Flexibility
 Outreach



SWOT Analysis

- Strong collaborations-strengthened relationships with locals and FNS
- Internal and external communication with partners improving
- High expectations
- Open to new ideas
- Cohesive group that lacks ego
- Believe in our mission
- Have in-house IT
- Ease of participation for vendors

Strengths

- Staff turn over
- Regulation-driven program
- Responding to changing regulations while trying to build a consistent program
- Lots of time and effort required to address small regulatory changes
- Ease of participation for clients (e.g. no online application, time requirements for meetings)
- Decreased participation despite economic recession

Weaknesses

Opportunities

- Interest in nutrition and obesity prevention from other sources could potentially increase funding
- Using more technology, such as Electronic Benefits Transfer, has the potential to increase participation
- Affordable Care Act funded breast pumps
- Possibility for WIC nutritionists to bill for services
- Outside partners respect WIC, see us as a good source of referral

- Funding cuts
- Difficulty recruiting qualified staff
- Political interference with scientific and public health priorities
- Negative views of our clients that oversimplify and stereotype
- Red tape and bureaucracy
- Confusion between WIC and SNAP

Threats



Strategic Plan

Mission

The Montana WIC program provides nutrition education, breastfeeding support, healthy food and referrals for women, infants and children to ensure that families in Montana are empowered to a healthy start in life.

Vision

To establish the foundation for a lifetime of health.

Organizational Vision

The Montana WIC program strives to be a model program that provides local WIC offices, vendors and other stakeholders:

- Responsive, efficient, high-quality customer service
- Creative problem solving and innovative solutions
- Ongoing partnerships in which we work collaboratively to best serve WIC clients
- A data driven, outcome focused program that is continuously improving



Strategic Plan

Guiding Principles

- We believe that all women, infants and children deserve high quality nutrition education and better access to healthy, nutritious food
- We believe that optimal nutrition in early childhood is critical to long term health
- We believe WIC clients can and should be empowered to make healthy choices
- We provide services that are participant-centered and evidence-based, while adhering to federal guidelines
- We seek to serve as many eligible people as possible
- We are a resource to local agencies and retailers, going the extra mile to ensure that they are fully equipped to serve WIC participants, they understand the reasoning behind any regulations we enforce, and that the policies we write are clear and user-friendly
- We seek to provide as much funding as possible to Local Agencies so that they can best serve clients
- We treat all stakeholders and customers with respect and dignity
- We utilize best practices that lead to improved outcomes

Key Future Focus Areas

Technology use
and mobilization

Outreach and
marketing

Data driven policy
development

Staff development
and retention

Stakeholder
engagement

Training

