**Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants & Children (WIC)**

**Public Hearing Minutes**

**September 13, 2024**

**2:30 - 3:30 pm**

**Via Teams**

The State WIC Office held the WIC Public Hearing on Friday, September 13, 2024. Members of the public attended either via Teams or in-person at the WIC Learning Center in Framingham. The WIC Public Hearing began with a brief overview of the program. This was followed by a review of key State Plan goals. The hearing was then opened for public comments.

The WIC Nutrition Program received the following comments:

State Plan Priorities

Staffing

* Provide local WIC program staff with higher pay. Competitive wages would support staff staying with local WIC programs for as long as they desire.
* Staff pay should be equitable.
	+ Nutritionists in the same geographic area are compensated differently
	+ Programs in same geographic area currently pay different hourly rates
* Pay program assistants more and include equitable pay language in the next Request for Responses (RFR)
* Pay staff with additional skills (e.g., language ability) more
* Consider contracting for Registered Dietitian (RD) services to increase credibility of WIC
* Re-consider the role of the Community Coordinator outreach position
	+ Tasks are more digital
	+ Could there be a regional Community Coordinator position managed by the State Office, like the regional IBCLCs?
	+ Can local WIC programs use TikTok for outreach?
* Support a route for Nutritionists to become Registered Dietitians
	+ Invest in staff development
	+ Offer more competitive wages for RDs
* Fund a full-time Family Support Coordinator at every local program

Operations

* Adjust the local WIC program funding formula to reflect current operations to increase its accuracy
* Reassess funding formula and the staff-to-participant ratio, ensuring accuracy for a more appropriate/accurate staffing plan and deployment
* Increase access to EMR systems for WIC teams; consider ability to require collaboration with health care partners to ensure EMR access
* Support/champion digital health literacy with families

Comments Submitted Online After the Public Hearing

* More fruits & veg
* More programs for new moms
* Provide diapers & wipes
* Fruits instead of juice
* More whole grain options
* Almond milk, oat milk
* More vegan options (egg replacement)
* Dairy free yogurt
* Replace milk with cheese
* 1 paid dietitian on staff (regional dietitian)