

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

**September 21, 2023**

**2:00 - 3:00 pm**

**Via Teams**

The State WIC Office held the WIC Public Hearing on Thursday, September 21, 2023. Members of the public attended either via Teams or called into the hearing. 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:

**WIC Benefits**

- Several comments concerned the importance of the fruit and vegetable benefit.
  - Participants rely on the increased fruit and vegetables for their families.
  - Mothers who come off the program postpartum miss the fruit and vegetable benefit.
  - Participants are disappointed to hear that the increased fruit and vegetable amounts may not continue as the previous amounts were not enough.
- The WIC Program should always allow 20 oz loaves of bread.

**State Plan Priorities**

- Comments about shopping online and food delivery
  - Working on the online shopping experience is important for participants as transportation is an issue.
  - Families with transportation issues are disappointed with not being able to access their benefits and stop using the program.
  - Need to work on grocery delivery options for rural areas.
- Comments about coordination
  - Need to facilitate more medical data sharing through creating more Memorandums of Agreement. There should be a state level option like the MIIS, a WIC EPIC Memorandum of Agreement.
  - Programs are trying hard to enroll refugee families. Would like more coordination with SNAP and MassHealth.

**Staffing**

- It is important to look at staff equity and provide salaries to maintain experienced staff. Would like guidance on salary amounts and ranges.

- Appreciate the CDC per diem staff nutrition and program assistant help. The back up has been critical. Recommend having a pool of back up staff.
- Programs are struggling with the current employee to participant ratio. With only one nutritionist on staff, it is difficult to get participants in for services. Yet we are not allowed to hire more staff.
- With a large service area, a program does not have enough staff to serve participants. This unique situation requires extra funding to hire additional nutritionists.
- Create the position of State WIC Shelter Coordinator.

#### Marketing

- More money is needed for marketing and resources to support outreach efforts in the community.

#### Communication

- Thank you for the great support from the State. We use phone, text, and email to communicate with participants. We cannot pick up every phone call since there is a lot going on, but we respond to every email and text. Texting works well as we do not miss anything.

#### WIC Modernization

Several comments related to Massachusetts focus on using technology and supported the development of the following options:

- e-signatures
- self-check out
- going paperless
- mobile payment
- electronic Farmers' Market Nutrition Program coupons