

APPENDIX E:
**Cover Letter for Guidance to WIC State Agencies Providing
Participant Data**

APPENDIX E
WIC PARTICIPANT AND PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS STUDY 2016/2018
COVER LETTER FOR GUIDANCE



United States Department of Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

[DATE]

OMB Number: 0584-XXXX

Expiration Date: XX/XX/XXXX

Dear WIC State Agency Director:

3101 Park
Center Drive
Alexandria, VA
22302-1500

As required by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), biennial reporting for the [STUDY YEAR] WIC Participant and Program Characteristics Study (PC[STUDY YEAR]) is now underway. Included with this letter is: 1) your copy of the [STUDY YEAR] "Guidance for State Agencies Providing Participant Data" (Guidance) for April [STUDY YEAR], the reference month for PC[STUDY YEAR], and 2) your WIC State Agency contact request form. Please complete and return the contact request form by [DATE] through email to [CONTRACTOR EMAIL], or fax to [CONTRACTOR FAX].

The success of PC[STUDY YEAR] depends on a speedy response from WIC State agencies!

The widespread demand for PC tabulations requires that all WIC State agencies submit PC[STUDY YEAR] data as soon after April [STUDY YEAR] as feasible. State agency cooperation in this effort will expedite data tabulations and help ensure that all deadlines are met.

There are no substantial changes to the PC[STUDY YEAR] data request; file formats and documentation are the same as for [PREVIOUS PC DATA COLLECTION YEAR]. However, FNS plans to publish an additional report on the food packages prescribed to participants, so there will be an added emphasis on the quality of data submitted on Food Package Type and the details of food packages.

Our contractor, [CONTRACTOR], will continue to have overall responsibility for PC[STUDY YEAR] and will handle all communication with State agencies and receive all file submissions and documents.

What State Agencies Need to Provide

The Guidance provides States with what they need to know about submitting PC[STUDY YEAR] data. Some details are provided below.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0584-XXXX. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 15 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

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First, to facilitate processing of the PC[STUDY YEAR] data, State agencies will need to submit two documents in advance of the actual data. These two documents, due by [DATE], just before the reference month of April [STUDY YEAR], are:

- **Nutrition Risk Worksheet.** State agencies will need to specify whether nutrition risk data will be provided using the Federal nutrition risk codes agreed upon by FNS and the National WIC Association (established via FNS Policy Memorandum 98-9; Nutrition Risk Criteria), or State agency codes. Agencies using State agency codes must provide a crosswalk between their codes and the Federal nutrition risk codes. In January [STUDY YEAR], [CONTRACTOR] will provide you with the Nutrition Risk Worksheet to complete and return. For your convenience, the information your State agency provided for PC[STUDY YEAR] will also be included.
- **Food Code Documentation.** State agencies will need to provide a translation of the food package codes used by your agency into specific food items and quantities prescribed to WIC participants. While State agencies may provide these data in a food package format or an item-quantity format, **the item-quantity format is preferred.**

Second, State agencies will need to download routinely collected information from their existing automated client and management information systems to produce and submit by [DATE]:

- **Data File containing the Minimum Data Set (MDS) and any Supplemental Data Set (SDS) items available**
- **Data Transmittal Worksheet**, located in Section VI of the Guidance.

The April data submission from State agencies should contain information for all participants on WIC master lists or participants listed in WIC operating files who are certified to receive WIC benefits in April [STUDY YEAR]. The Guidance provides a specified format and instructions for compiling the data.

Data Reporting Checklist

Date	Data Reporting Activity
[THREE MONTHS BEFORE REFERENCE MONTH]	[CONTRACTOR] sends the Nutrition Risk Worksheet and WIC Local Agency Directory (LAD) to State agencies and updates contact information.
[ONE MONTH BEFORE REFERENCE MONTH]	State agencies submit the Nutrition Risk Worksheet and Food Code Documentation to [CONTRACTOR]
[ONE TO THREE MONTHS AFTER REFERENCE MONTH]	State agencies submit data file with MDS and any SDS items available and the Data Transmittal Worksheet for PC[STUDY YEAR] to [CONTRACTOR].
[THREE MONTHS AFTER REFERENCE MONTH]	Final deadline for State agencies to submit data file with MDS and any SDS items available.

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Please do not hesitate to contact [CONTRACTOR] with any questions or comments you have during the PC[STUDY YEAR] data collection period. [CONTRACTOR] may be reached by telephone at [CONTRACTOR PHONE], by email at [CONTRACTOR EMAIL], or by fax at [CONTRACTOR FAX].

Thank you for your cooperation. Your timely response will make PC[STUDY YEAR] a success.

Sincerely,

DEBRA R. WHITFORD
Director, Supplemental Food Programs Division
Food and Nutrition Service