

Ask the Community First Survey Results: WIC Participants

Demographics:

- 165 responses: 29 WIC staff, 136 non WIC staff
- 86.5% of respondents (141) are current WIC participants, 6% of respondents (10) were former WIC participants
 - 11% of respondents (18 people) also identified themselves as community members
- 96% of respondents were female with just 4% of responses coming from males

Other MCH programs

- The majority of respondents were not affiliated with other MCH programs (85%); however
 - 10 survey respondents indicated that they were Black Infant Health staff members
 - 6 CalFresh staff members
 - 5 community non-profit staff members
 - 2 Adolescent Family Life Program staff members
 - 2 Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Program staff members
 - 1 Nutrition Education Obesity Prevention Programs staff member
 - And 2 other organizations were mentioned: First 5 Alameda and Healthy Black Families
- 71% of survey respondents are current or former participants in CalFresh
- 9% of respondents are current or former participants in the Black Infant Health Program

WIC Participation

Only 6% (10 respondents) have never participated in WIC. The rest of respondents have participated for varying lengths of time with the largest percentage having participated for 5 or more years (23.5%)

Race/Ethnicity and Language

5% identified as Hispanic/Latino/a (8 respondents). The large majority of respondents identified as African-American (90.2% or 148 respondents). 12 respondents identified as biracial (7.3%), with all other races having fewer responses. Nearly 100% of respondents said that they spoke English “very well.”

Question Analytics: (asterisk indicates: remainder responded with ‘Not sure’)

A **large majority** of respondents agreed with the following statements:

- “I see a lot of different types of people at WIC.” 82% agreed. 15% disagreed with this statement.*
- “I feel that WIC meets the needs of people who are different races/ethnicities.” 83% agreed. 7% disagreed with this statement.*
- “I feel that WIC meets a wide variety of different needs for young families.” 87% agreed. 7% disagreed.*
- “I feel comfortable and included at my WIC clinic.” 86.5% agreed. 7% disagreed.*

*remainder responded with ‘not sure’

A majority of respondents agreed with the following statements:

- “I feel that WIC is aware of my cultural customs and practices.” 63% agreed. 20% disagreed.*
- “I feel that WIC is sensitive to my cultural customs and practices.” 60% agreed. 14.6% disagreed. 25% were unsure.
- “I feel that the racial/ethnic diversity of my local WIC office staff reflects the diversity of my community.” 57% agreed. 32% disagreed.*

A large majority of respondents disagreed with the following statements:

- “At my local WIC site, I have experienced what I feel is discrimination based on my being African-American.” 16% agreed. 75% disagreed.*
- “At my local WIC site, I have experienced other forms of discrimination.” 13.5% agreed. 78.5% disagreed.*

About half of respondents disagreed with these statements:

- “I often wonder why there are not more WIC staff members who look like me.” Nearly half of respondents agreed with this statement (46%) while 50% disagreed.*
- “I often wonder why there are not more families who look like me at WIC clinics.” 36% agreed. 55% disagreed.*
- “My local WIC office needs to improve how it works with African-American women and families.” 35.5% agreed. 50.3% disagreed.*

Respondents gave more varied responses for these statements, with high ‘not sure’ response rates:

- “I feel that the racial/ethnic diversity of State WIC staff reflects the diversity of California.” 47.5% agreed. 34% disagreed. 18.3% were not sure.
- “California State WIC needs to improve how it works with African-American women and families.” 37.4% agreed. 44% disagreed. 18.4% were not sure.

*If percentage does not add to 100%, remainder responded ‘not sure’

Alternate Interpretation:

Things that WIC is doing well! (High agreement with positive statements and low agreement with negative statements)

- “I see a lot of different types of people at WIC.” 82% agreed.
- “I feel that WIC meets the needs of people who are different races/ethnicities.” 83% agreed.
- “I feel that WIC meets a wide variety of different needs for young families.” 87% agreed.
- “I feel comfortable and included at my WIC clinic.” 86.5% agreed.
- “At my local WIC site, I have experienced what I feel is discrimination based on my being African-American.” 75% disagreed.
- “At my local WIC site, I have experienced other forms of discrimination.” 78.5% disagreed.

Things that WIC could improve upon! (Relatively high disagreement with positive statements and high agreement with negative statements)

- “I feel that WIC is aware of my cultural customs and practices.” 20% disagreed.
- “I feel that the racial/ethnic diversity of my local WIC office staff reflects the diversity of my community.” 32% disagreed.
- “I often wonder why there are not more WIC staff members who look like me.” 46% agreed.

- “I often wonder why there are not more families who look like me at WIC clinics.” 36% agreed.
- “My local WIC office needs to improve how it works with African-American women and families.” 35.5% agreed.

Satisfied Question

Respondents are most satisfied with the “overall ethnic and racial diversity of my local WIC office staff” (65% of respondents are satisfied) and that “WIC has developed classes and activities that are interesting to me” (60% are satisfied).

Respondents are least satisfied with whether “WIC materials include images of people who look like me.” 30% of respondents are dissatisfied with the inclusiveness of WIC materials and images. 27% of respondents are unsure as to whether WIC conducts culturally appropriate activities that are attractive to them (very high number of ‘not sure’ responses).

About 36% of respondents agreed that there are things that get in the way of WIC better including African Americans.

The following items were most often deemed a ‘barrier’ by respondents (top 5 responses):

1. Lack of African American staff at local WIC offices (63% saw as a barrier)
2. Lack of African American staff at State WIC (55% saw as barrier)
3. Inability of WIC to conduct effective outreach into the African American community (46.5% saw as barrier)
4. Use of paper checks, rather than debit/EBT cards (46% saw as barrier)
5. Lack of transportation or transportation difficulties (41% saw as barrier)

The following items were deemed ‘not a barrier’ by a majority of respondents/therefore probably not areas for WIC to focus on:

- Difficulties qualifying for benefits? 73% of respondents said this was NOT a barrier
- Inconvenient hours/days that WIC clinic is open? 70% of respondents said this was NOT a barrier

[Entire table included at the end of this document!]

What currently helps WIC to be inclusive?

Top 3 most helpful attributes of WIC:

1. Location of WIC food stores (71% of respondents chose this as a positive WIC attribute)
2. I feel that WIC staff understand and respect me (63% of respondents chose this)
3. Types of food in WIC are known to me (57% of respondents chose this)

Least helpful? Only 18% of respondents said “My local church/religious home encourages me to participate in WIC programs”

What would help WIC to be more inclusive?

In order of most frequently chosen, top 3:

1. More African American staff (79% of respondents agreed this would be helpful)
2. Use of texting for reminders (73% agreed)
3. Posters and materials that include images of African Americans (71% agreed)

4. Food selection/recipes that are familiar (70% agreed)
5. Option for online classes (69% agreed)
6. Inclusion of fathers (68% agreed)
7. More AA breastfeeding peer counselors (65% agreed)
8. Use of EBT instead of paper checks (64.6% agreed)
9. Relationship with churches (61% agreed) – most “not sure” responses for this option ~20%
10. Location of sites close to where AA live (56%) – most ‘no’ responses for this option ~29%

Supplementary table:

Potential Barrier	Percent of Respondents who saw it as a barrier
Lack of African American staff at local WIC offices	62.61%
Lack of African American staff at State WIC	55.26%
Inability of WIC to conduct effective outreach into the African American community	46.49%
Use of paper checks, rather than debit/EBT cards	46.02%
Lack of transportation to WIC clinics or transportation difficulties	41.23%
WIC foods are hard to find on the shelves in stores	37.17%
WIC staff not understanding how African Americans might think or feel about using WIC benefits	36.84%
Not enough use of technology or convenient options (like cell phone reminders/text messages, or online class options).	35.71%
Child care is not offered at WIC clinics	35.40%
Language barriers or immigration concerns	30.36%
Not feeling comfortable participating in the WIC program	30.09%
WIC food selection is not desirable	30.09%
Waiting for and getting services takes too much time	29.73%
WIC clinics are not well located for the African American community	28.95%

WIC food stores are not well located for the African American community	27.43%
Lack of information or knowledge on where to go to get WIC Program benefits	27.19%
Feeling ashamed or shy to be seen going to a WIC program clinic	25.00%
Waiting space at the WIC clinic is limited	24.11%
Inconvenient hours/days that the WIC clinic is open	22.12%
Difficulties qualifying for benefits	15.04%