Why do civil rights requirements apply?

- WIC is a Federally funded program – WIC benefits and administrative costs are funded by the Federal government.
- A Civil Rights assurance statement must be incorporated in all agreements for WIC services.
- To receive Federal financial assistance, an agency needs to sign assurances promising to comply with Federal civil rights requirements.

Participants will be able to:

- Collect ethnic and racial data about applicants
- Apply the public notification policy
- Follow procedures for accepting complaints
- Describe the monitoring process for compliance with civil rights policies, including compliance reviews and resolution of noncompliance
Participants will be able to:

- Uphold the responsibility for accommodation of people with disabilities
- Apply the policy to provide language assistance to limited English proficient persons (LEP)
- Recognize and practice good customer service
- Recognize and practice good conflict resolution
- Describe the protections provided for Faith Based Organizations

Who should be trained?

- All who work with Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) funded programs must be trained.
- Front line workers (including volunteers) and supervisors must receive annual training.
- New employees and volunteers must be trained before providing WIC Program services.
- Local agencies are responsible for training their subrecipients (if applicable) annually.

Civil Rights Training

- Collection and use of data
- Effective public notification systems
- Complaint procedures
- Compliance review techniques
- Resolution of noncompliance
- Requirements for reasonable accommodation of persons with disabilities
- Requirements for language assistance
- Conflict resolution
- Customer service
What are the civil rights requirements for WIC?

- To not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age
- Reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity is prohibited

- To conduct annual training for front line workers and supervisors
- To provide public notification which includes displaying the “And Justice for All...” poster and conducting outreach to underrepresented communities

What are the civil rights requirements for WIC?

- To collect and report data on race and ethnicity
- To accommodate people with disabilities
- To provide qualified, competent language assistance for people with limited English proficiency (LEP)
- To cooperate with Federal and State reviewers and investigators by answering questions honestly and providing requested documents
What are the civil rights requirements for WIC?

- To understand complaint procedures and know where to refer people who want to file a civil rights complaint
- To provide equal opportunity for faith based and community based organizations to participate as appropriate
- To conduct compliance reviews and promptly resolve noncompliance issues
- To resolve conflicts and provide good customer service

What are the sources of these requirements?

- Title VI – Civil Rights Act of 1964: Race, color, national origin
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972: Sex
- Age Discrimination Act of 1975: Age
- Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987: Race, color and national origin

What are the sources of these requirements?

- Sections 504 & 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: Disability
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990: Disability
- Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2008: Disability
More Sources

- Executive Order 13166 & USDA LEP Policy Guidance
- The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996
  - DOJ Memorandum dated 1/28/99, “Policy Guidance Document: Enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Related Statutes in Block Grant Type Programs.”
- USDA Department Regulation 4330-2

More Sources

- USDA regulations at 7 CFR 15 et seq.
- USDA regulations at 7 CFR 16 et seq. (faith based)
- WIC regulations at 7 CFR 246
- USDA regulations at 28 CFR 42
  - Appendix D

State Civil Rights Resources

- Director of Office of Civil Rights: Lamont Goins
- LEP and 504 Federal Program Administrator: Keith Kitch
- See Civil Rights Resources Handout
What is discrimination?

Discrimination is the act of distinguishing one person or group of persons from others either intentionally, by neglect, or by the effect of actions or lack of actions based on their perceived or actual protected bases.

Six Protected Bases for WIC

- Race
- Color
- National Origin
- Age
- Sex
- Disability

Discrimination Types

- Disparate treatment: intentional
- Disparate impact/effect: unintentional – when a policy or practice that has a disproportionate, adverse effect on a group
**Discrimination Types**

- **Retaliation** for prior civil rights activity: applies to applicant/beneficiary and his or her family, known associates, and anyone who cooperated in a civil rights investigation including agency employees

**Discrimination Examples**

- Segregated seating in waiting areas or in accommodations such as bathrooms
- Differences in waiting times based on protected class
- Treating people disrespectfully based on a protected class
- Providing a different level of benefits based on a protected class

**Discrimination Examples**

- Facilities and services that are not accessible to people with disabilities including mobility, sight, hearing, and other conditions
- Requiring a person with limited English proficiency to bring her own interpreter, or use family, friends or children as interpreters
- Failing to advise a person with limited English proficiency that an interpreter will be provided by the Agency at no cost to them
**Discrimination Examples**

- Locating a WIC clinic in an area that is not accessible to people in certain minority groups due to lack of public transportation or other factors
- Requesting extra verification or documentation from some people based on a protected class

**Not Discrimination**

- Limiting benefits to children under age five is not age discrimination
- Limiting certain benefits to pregnant and lactating women is not sex discrimination

**Racial and Ethnic Data Collection**
Racial and Ethnic Data Collection

- State agencies and local agencies are required to obtain data by race and ethnicity on potentially eligible populations, applicants, and participants in their program service area.

- Applicants shall be assured that the information is required for and used for statistical purposes only and has no effect on eligibility criteria.

- Data should be collected at the point of application.

Racial and Ethnic Data Collection

The purpose is to:

- Determine how effectively FNS programs are reaching potentially eligible persons
- Identify areas where additional outreach is needed
- Assist in the selection of locations for compliance reviews
- Complete reports as required

Race and Ethnic Categories Two Question Format

- Treat as separate categories
- Ethnicity first
- One or more racial designations is acceptable
Recording Ethnicity and Race Data

1. Ethnicity: Hispanic or Latino, or not Hispanic or Latino?

2. Race: Which one or more of the 5 categories for race are selected?

Ethnicity Choices

- Not Hispanic or Latino

- Hispanic or Latino
  - Hispanic Other
  - Hispanic Cuban
  - Hispanic Mexican American
  - Hispanic Puerto Rican

Racial Categories

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White

Reference: FNS Instruction 113-1
Informing the Applicant/Participant

- Collection of the ethnic and racial information is for statistical reporting
- It will not effect the determination of their eligibility for WIC

If collecting participant data online...

- Provisions must be made for applicants/participants to self-identify
- The ability to verify this data by some manner such as assigning a printout, must be available

Asking the Question

- There are a variety of ways to request ethnic and racial information
- The following examples offer two potential approaches
Example A - See Handout

“We need to know your ethnicity and race. Your response will not affect how we consider your application. If you prefer not to provide this information, we will need to choose an ethnicity and race category for you. Are you (is your child) of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity? What race or races are you (is your child)?”

Example B - See Handout

“We need to record your ethnicity and race. Your response will help us determine if WIC is in compliance with Federal civil rights laws. It will not affect how we consider your application. If you prefer not to provide this information, we will need to choose an ethnicity and race category for you. Are you (is your child) of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity? What race or races are you (is your child)?”

What if ethnicity and/or race are not identified by the applicant or participant?

- A program staff member must designate the applicant/participant’s ethnicity and race category.
Ethnicity and Race Data Collection

- Explain reason for data collection
- Request self identification
  - Or
  - Make designation of ethnicity and race

Confidentiality of Client Records

- Safeguards must be maintained that prevent the use of this information for discriminatory purposes

Residence

WIC participation does not require disclosure or verification of:
- Citizenship
- Immigration Status
Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and National Origin

State and local agencies and their subrecipients are required to take reasonable steps to assure “meaningful” access to their programs and activities by persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

Reference: Title VI, 7 CFR 246.8 (c) of WIC Regulations, Section VII of FNS Instruction 113-1, Executive Order 13166

Language Assistance

- Number and proportion of LEP persons served or encountered in the eligible population
- Frequency of LEP persons' contact with program
- Nature and importance of program, activity, or service provided by the program
- Resources available and costs
Language Assistance

Population data sources

- LEP Mapping Tools
  - www.lep.gov
  - http://www.lep.gov/maps/

- US Census Data
  - http://www.census.gov/2010census/data/

- American Community Survey
  - http://www.census.gov/acs/

Language Access Plan

- The language access plan helps management and front-line staffs understand their roles and responsibilities with respect to overcoming language barriers for LEP individuals.

- Use qualified, competent interpreters and translators for all communication and translation of vital documents.

Language Assistance

- Volunteers may be used, but make sure they are qualified and competent to interpret and understand interpreter ethics - particularly confidentiality!

- Children (<18 years old) should not be used as interpreters
Language Assistance

- For resources and information visit www.lep.gov, specifically the “USDA Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding the Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Persons With Limited English Proficiency”


Protections for People with Disabilities

Disability Discrimination

- The Rehabilitation Act of 1973: Section 504 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability

- Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 also prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability

Civil Rights Training 2017
What is the definition of disability?

- A person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment.

- Major life activity means functions such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.

What is the definition of disability?

- The ADAAA expands the definition of disability to include:
  - Functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, cardiovascular, endocrine, and reproductive functions. (ADA Amendments Act of 2008)
  - Note: This is not an all-inclusive list.

Reasonable Accommodation/Modification

- “A public entity shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless the public entity can demonstrate that making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity.”

Reference: Americans with Disabilities Act Title II Regulations 28 CFR Part 35
Reasonable Accommodation/Modification

- Parking lot, entrances and exits, halls, elevators, rest rooms
- Qualified, and competent sign language interpreters, Braille signage, service animals
- Alternative arrangements for service
- Check ADA guidelines for specifics: www.ada.gov

Protection for Faith Based Organizations

- Regulation titled: “Equal Opportunity for Religious Organizations”
- Faith based organizations (FBOs) and Community based organizations (CBOs) have equal footing
Protection for Faith Based Organizations

- Discrimination prohibited against an organization on the basis of religion, religious belief or character in the distribution of funds
- Clarifies that FBOs can use space in their facilities without removing religious art or symbols

Religious Organizations and Clients of USDA-funded Programs

- Regulations protect beneficiaries:
  - No organization that receives direct financial assistance from the USDA can discriminate against a beneficiary or prospective beneficiary on the basis of religion or religious belief

Equal Opportunity for Religious Organizations

- FBOs retain their independence and carry out their mission, as long as USDA funds (or activities) do not support worship, religious instruction or attempts to convert recipients of the USDA funded program to the faith of the organization.
The purpose of public notification is to inform applicants, participants, and potentially eligible persons of program availability, program rights and responsibilities, the policy of nondiscrimination, and the procedure for filing a complaint.

What are some of the components of public notification?

- Outreach
- Displaying the “And Justice for All…” poster
- Using the non-discrimination statement on materials and websites
- Providing information that is accessible to people with disabilities
- Providing information in languages appropriate for those with LEP
- Ensuring that photos and graphics reflect diversity
Program Availability (Outreach)

» Inform potentially eligible persons, applicants, participants and grassroots organizations about WIC or changes in the WIC program

» Annual Media Release
  » WIC Eligibility Criteria
  » Program Benefits
  » Physical Address of Your Agency
  » USDA Non Discrimination Statement

“And Justice For All” Poster

» Accept WIC Applications

» Perform Certifications

» Issue Food Instruments

“And Justice For All” Poster

» Updated December 2015

» Additional copies may be ordered from the Nutrition Services Branch

Form AO-475A—Assistant Poster Revised December 2015
Nondiscrimination Statement Requirements

- Include the current nondiscrimination statement on all publications, websites, posters and informational materials used to inform the public about WIC or that identify WIC.

- The 2015 nondiscrimination statement is to be used until further updates are received from the Office of Civil Rights.

2015 Nondiscrimination Statement

"In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA."

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English."
To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992.

Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2. fax: (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Use of the Nondiscrimination Statement

- Long Version:
  - Must be used on participant notices regarding eligibility
  - Must be used on websites that mention WIC or a link to it
Use of the Nondiscrimination Statement

- “This institution is an equal opportunity provider”
- Use of the short statement is the exception rather than the rule and should be used on a limited basis.
- Do not use on notices or materials that inform applicants/participants of their eligibility status.
- Contact the Regional Civil Rights Director for review and approval before using the short statement.
- Refer to the Civil Rights Resources Handout.

Use of the Nondiscrimination Statement

- Do newspapers need to print the nondiscrimination statement in stories that they run about the WIC program?

No

Complaint Procedures and Compliance Reviews
Discrimination Complaint Procedures

- Despite your best efforts at customer service and at following the rules, some people may feel that they have been subjected to discrimination
- Everyone has the right to file a discrimination complaint
- Everyone at the WIC clinic needs to know what to do if someone wants to file a complaint

Discrimination Complaint Procedures

- Complaints may be filed for any protected bases
- Complaints may be written, verbal, or anonymous
- USDA determines whether they apply to WIC program
- Never discourage groups or individuals from filing complaints or from voicing allegations of discrimination

Discrimination Complaint Procedures

Complaints must:
- Provide complete information
- Be signed by complainant or an authorized representative
- Be filed within 180 days of the alleged act of discrimination

Complaints may be submitted:
- Fax
- Mail
- Email
Reporting a Complaint of Discrimination

- After submitting a complaint of discrimination:
  - Notify the local agency WIC Director
  - Report it to the State WIC office

- Complaints must be accepted and forwarded to USDA within 5 working days

- Confidentiality is extremely important and must be maintained.

Compliance Reviews

- The Federal, State and local governments are required to conduct reviews to determine compliance with civil rights laws, regulations and requirements.

- As a condition of receiving Federal financial assistance, it is necessary to cooperate with reviewers and to provide requested documentation.

Routine Compliance Reviews

- There are 10 areas of review:
  - Assurances
  - Public Notification
  - Racial and Ethnic Data Collection and Reporting
  - Civil Rights Complaints
  - Compliance Reviews
  - Resolution of Noncompliance
  - Civil Rights Training
  - Disability Compliance
  - Limited English Proficiency
  - Eligibility Determination
Special Compliance Reviews

- May be scheduled or unscheduled
- To follow-up on previous findings of noncompliance
- To investigate reports of noncompliance by other agencies, media, or grassroots organizations
- May be specific to an incident or policy
- History of statistical underrepresentation of particular group(s)
- Pattern of complaints of discrimination

What is Noncompliance?

“A factual finding that any civil rights requirements, as provided by law, regulation, policy, instruction, or guidelines, is not being adhered to by a State agency or local agency…”

Resolution of Noncompliance

- Corrective actions:
  - Cease inappropriate actions
  - Institute appropriate procedures

FAILURE/REFUSAL CAN RESULT IN LOSS OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE FROM ALL FEDERAL SOURCES!
Customer Service

Good Customer Service

- How we meet the needs of the people who use our services
- Focuses on treating customers the way you would like to be treated yourself
- Benefits participants and staff

Good Customer Service

- Make people feel welcomed
- Treat everyone with dignity and respect
- Do not make exceptions for people that you are not prepared to make for everyone
Good Customer Service

- Be patient
- Be polite
- Avoid sarcasm
- Be empathetic

Good Customer Service

- Be friendly
- Explain WIC policy
- Don’t be afraid to apologize
- Don’t feel you need to have the last word

Conflict Resolution

- Conflicts are inevitable, so it is best to be prepared!
  - Consider a written and posted policy for dealing with unacceptable behavior and conflicts
  - Try to explain the WIC procedures
  - Remain calm and know how to get help, especially if threats are made or if violence is possible
Civil Rights and WIC

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and institutions, and all entities doing business with the USDA, are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

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