

2023 Outreach Grant Projects

NOVEMBER 2023

The Minnesota WIC program provided submitted an operational funding grant proposal to USDA Food and Nutrition Services for \$25,000 to support local agencies with WIC promotion and outreach efforts.

Ten local agencies completed projects with this funding, spending a total of \$21,988.12 to fulfill their local agency outreach needs and increase WIC program awareness and participation.

Becker County WIC



Cost: \$2,890

Goal: Increase awareness in the community about WIC and eligible WIC clients.

Summary:

- Digital Billboard (10x30 foot)
- Location -Hwy. 10 in Detroit Lakes, on frontage road, next to Walmart.
- Ad run on both sides facing East and West.
- 1,435 spots/day or 10,045/week running 24 hours/day.
- Dates - May 1 - August 27, 2023.
- Posted on Becker County Facebook page.

Evaluation: The ad was intended to promote WIC for the entire community and possibly even encourage non-WIC participants to choose more fruits and vegetables with the bright colored graphics. However, it likely reached and/or sparked interest for families in the surrounding communities or across the state since we are a summer vacation destination along with a larger shopping community for other counties.

City of Bloomington Public Health Division



Cost: \$3,000.00

Goal:

Use promotional materials to recruit, retain, and support clients in WIC and the Peer Program, and in the new Mobile Health Hub. Some funding used to purchase milk storage bags and handheld pumps.

The target population was Bloomington, Edina, and Richfield residents who are eligible for WIC.

Summary:

- Purchased promotional items: tote bags, onesies, bibs, burp cloths, and breastfeeding supplies.
- Bloomington Baby Resource Fair at Bloomington Pond Early Learning Center: April 11, 11-1 p.m. First ever event held in collaboration with Early Childhood Family Education services, targeting parents or caregivers who are pregnant or parenting a baby up to 12 months old. Five peer counselors and a WIC clerk had lots of breastfeeding and healthy nutrition information at the Public Health resource table. Enrolled ten new families into WIC. Over 200 attendees.
- Immigration Event at St. Stephens Lutheran Church in Bloomington: August 19, 1-4 p.m. Provide resources for new Americans. Two WIC staff present. Four new families enrolled, another 25 received information about WIC services, nutrition, and breastfeeding.
- Annual World Breastfeeding Month Peer Picnic at Richfield Community Center: August 8, 5:30-7 p.m. About 50 people attended. Most were already clients of WIC peer counselors,

but some were family members and friends who took note of this supportive service. All six peer counselors and three WIC staff were present. There was breastfeeding information, raffle prizes, music, games, and food.

Evaluation:

Increase in enrollment in WIC and peer breastfeeding. Our total WIC participation in July of 2023 was 2,234 and went up to 2,276 in August. Peer referrals totaled 19 in June, 21 in July, and 25 in August.

Lessons learned:

- Challenge on time involved supporting some peer staff who were unfamiliar with developing or following a program budget with specific purchasing guidelines. The staff said they learned a lot. Peers live in the service area themselves, so this is considered an asset to build these skills in community residents.
- WIC staff heard clients appreciated the care and concern expressed by peer counselors and employees. They said the extra special gifts of promotional items, “really means something.”
- A suggestion for the future is to include more examples of the different ways to utilize this funding. It’s helpful to hear what other agencies do and their learnings.
- BPH staff appreciated the opportunity to use this funding in a way we typically do not get to explore due to limited budgets. Thank you to MDH WIC for the opportunity.

Brown County



Cost: \$2,997.00

Goal: Bring awareness to our WIC program services at local community events.

Summary:

- WIC Banner, WIC Tablecloth, Spriggles Bi-Lingual Books

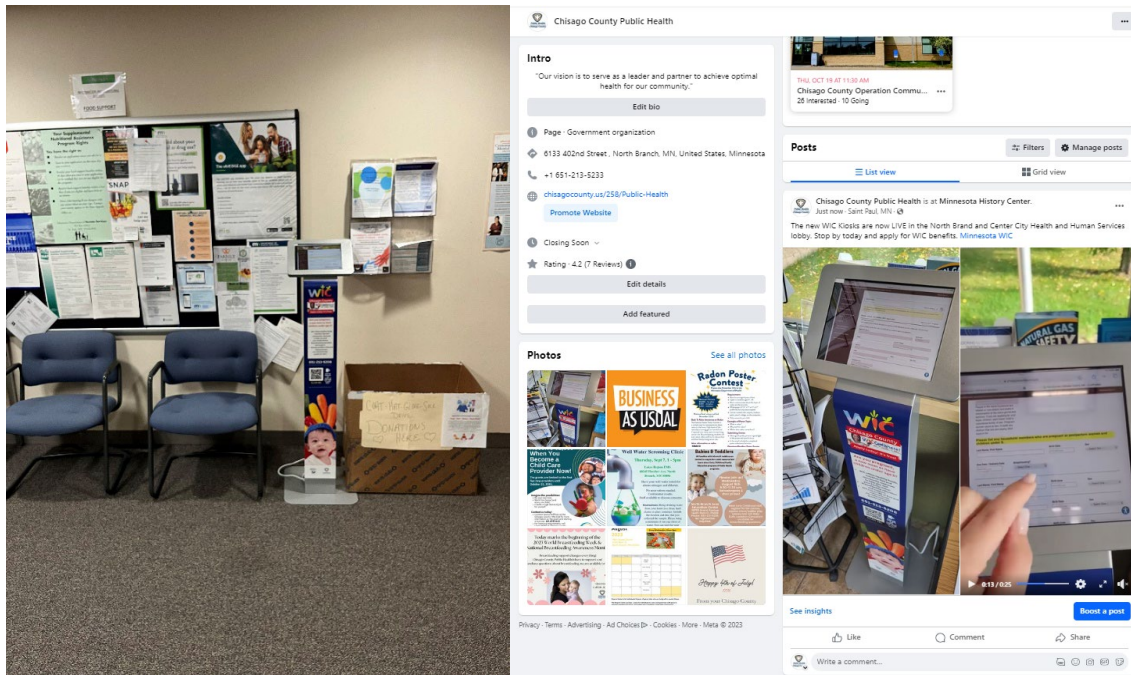
Evaluation:

Although this WIC Promotion and Outreach grant did not result in new WIC enrollees, based on survey results, we are appreciative of the opportunity to promote our outreach efforts as a potential source of participants. Banner and tablecloth can be used for other events in the future.

Lessons learned:

- Children and parents were grateful to receive a book.
- Challenging to have conversations in a public setting, staff not comfortable.
- WIC staff recognize importance of providing high quality program services to WIC participants. Such as strong customer service, patient centered care, and building relationships with families.
- WIC staff see how important it is to strengthen community partnerships. The WIC coordinator intends to provide outreach to county healthcare facilities in conjunction with C&TC annual clinic visits giving direct information to nurses and medical providers.

Chisago County



Cost: \$ 2,577.69

Goal: Promote WIC services using digital Kiosks in high traffic areas where potential WIC clients may visit.

Summary:

- 2 digital standing electronic kiosks, folding hand truck, 2 9th Gen Ipad, Apple Smart Keyboard, accessories (locks, adapter, cases, screen protectors). (Duplicate project from Aitkin County.)
- Initial plan was to use Kiosks at several summer events including the ECFE/Baby Café event that was held in August as well as several local school open houses. However, delays in purchasing and setting up kiosks changed plan.
 - Received the kiosks end of August, needed IT help with set up.
 - Ready for use Sept 13, in both of our Health and Human Services (HHS) lobby waiting rooms in Center City and North Branch locations. Required repeated internal communication to the financial workers and front desk staff to promote kiosks to sign up for WIC.
- Other potential uses for kiosks being explored with various partners.
 - Fairview OB clinic
 - Fairview Pediatric
 - Event - Annual Chisago County Operation Community Connect in October

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- Offer to local food pantries in Chisago County and at stores/pharmacies located in neighboring Isanti County where potential participants may shop.

Evaluation:

- Due to the delays, we are unable to see the data and impacts yet from the kiosks.
- WIC Coordinator plans to use the Report, How you heard about WIC, and the infoview report for New Participants, to see if it has an impact for increasing participation.

Lessons learned:

- Delays included waiting for County Board approval.
- Approval ordering items due to cost over max allowed without approval.
- Desired digital kiosk models out of stock.
- Collect more data to help understand community needs.

Human Services of Faribault & Martin Counties



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Cost: \$ 1,731.82

Goal: Increase outreach and participation within our two counties.

Summary:

- Booth rental for both fairs, WIC tablecloth, breastfeeding kits, crayons, coloring books, safe sleep kits (Eng/Spn), toddler developmental kits, brochures.
- Faribault County Fair: July 26-29
- Martin County Fair: Aug 14- 20
- Time at both fairs each day and focused extra effort on wristband days and family days. Brought brochures, WIC staff, and WIC Breastfeeding Peers on site. Handed out Eating More Fruits and Vegetables Coloring Books (English & Spanish) & crayons along with WIC clinic information.

Evaluation:

- Paper surveys and online QR codes in both English and Spanish. Used Survey Monkey. Able to then be entered for prize drawing of their choice: Breastfeeding Prize Pack, Safe Sleep Prize Pack, Toddler Activity Pack. Each of the packs also had WIC information inside.
 - “I finally got to meet my WIC nurse in person! I have been talking to her over the phone for the past few years and it was nice to put a face to the voice!” – Faribault County WIC Participant
 - “Thank you for being at the Fair! As a Grandpa of 5 young kids this is great to hear about all of the programs and what WIC really is!” -Martin County Grandpa (didn’t want to share name)
- “With the fair being such a popular event in our county, it was great to be able to see so many community members. It was fun seeing the kids get excited about the coloring books and crayons that we offered. It brought them over to our booth and then we were able to interact with the parents/guardians as well, which was great!”- Missy Olson, WIC CPA
- Survey results will drive future outreach efforts in the future. 57% get news/updates from Facebook shows that we can utilize our funds to boost posts and get information out to our communities. Look for other community events as word of mouth most common way people hear about the WIC program.

Lessons learned:

- Coloring books biggest hit.
- Challenge to provide adequate staffing the booth with WIC staff, Public Health Dept offered support. Fairs required booth to be staffed when open.
- Facebook advertising, posts on Facebook before and during the fairs, but boosting aspect not closely followed due to miscommunication. Recent hire of a Communications Planner will fun Facebook site, so no longer issue.
- SurveyMonkey lessons. Layout of paper survey confusing. More prefer paper survey vs QR code survey. Staff had to enter paper surveys to get a complete report. Some did not fill surveys out and just added names/info to enter the drawings.

LeSueur County



Cost: \$2, 436.30

Goal: Promote in-person WIC appointments and to make eating healthy easier and more fun for our WIC families.

Summary:

- Watching Baby Grow Calendars (Eng/Spn), My Plate Placemats, My Plate Coloring Books (Eng/Spn), Crayon Packs, muffins cups, open cups, my plates (Eng/Spn), snack bowl, forks, spoons)
- Supplies given to help support education and counseling at in-person appointments:

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- Postpartum Mom & Baby Certifications:
One “first 12 months” baby calendar with QR code to our WIC Nutrition Education Handouts to reference throughout the first year of life and beyond.
- 9-Month Midcertification:
One spoon & 1 fork
Talk about choosing meats and textures and general infant feeding practices.
- 1 year Recertification or 1 ½ year Midcertification:
Myplate placemat and 1 open cup
Talk about weaning from the bottle & easy toddler meals.
- 2 year Recertification:
Snack container
Talk about child’s appetite & provide healthy snack list.
- 3 year Recertification:
Two silicone muffin cups
Provide healthy homemade dip recipes to go with the cups.
- 4 year Recertification:
Coloring book and crayons
Myplate Plan printout

Evaluation:

- Challenging for WIC participants utilizing the ARPA waivers since not be able to give families their supplies and the education that goes with it.
- Plan to promote more in-person visits and education to families so that we can provide these supplies for them. Will mention the supplies to the family.

Ramsey County



Cost: \$ 2,993.17

Goal: Acquire promotional WIC apparel for WIC Staff to wear inside our clinics and at public events for outreach.

Summary:

- WIC fleece jackets, t-shirts, and vests for 50 staff
- **Events:** Mounds View Community Fair, Hmongtown Marketplace, CLUES, Agape, Tubman

Evaluation:

Success in staff being easily identified by the community at the events that we attend.

With comments regarding when staff aren't wearing WIC spirit wear, they have found that they often receive the question of, "who are you?" and suspicions around that. They believe that anything that shows off our WIC branding, colors, and logos are beneficial in doing outreach events.

Lessons Learned:

- WIC apparel increases staffs' feeling of belonging at WIC and staff retention. Increased staff retention may lead to sustained WIC knowledge and consistent messaging to provide WIC participants strong customer service and help increase customer satisfaction.
- We serve a high number of WIC participants and are frequently out in the community doing outreach. This increases WIC visibility.
- WIC logo on tents, tablecloths, and/or clothes increases WIC visibility.

Scott County





Cost: \$750.00

Goal: We wanted to make the new location easy to find since moved to Scott County during pandemic. None of participants had received in person services in space. Another goal of promoting and normalizing chest/breastfeeding in our WIC area.

Summary:

- 1 full color retractable banner with stand (Purchased a retractable banner and stand to have outside the entry of the lobby)
- 6 – 36X24 banners (The banners portrayed diverse families chest/breastfeeding)

Evaluation:

When in person appointments began, we started a survey on how welcoming the WIC space was related to breastfeeding and ease of finding the WIC office. The results are listed below:

We had 19 participants complete our survey. Over 50% found WIC Very Easy to find, over 40% found it Easy to find and 5% found it moderately easy to find. Of those that were breastfeeding, almost 40% found us very welcoming, 10% welcoming of breastfeeding their baby in the WIC space.

Comments left by participants were:

- “Very welcoming staff. That is appreciated!”
- “Very good”
- “It was great to be here”
- “Love the new space!! Very friendly and caring employees as well!!!!”
- “I received very clear directions on the phone regarding where to go and what to say when I got here.”
- “Good servicié”
- “Receptionist are nice and helpful”

Lessons learned:

- We did have 5% of replies rated us Very Unwelcoming. Unfortunately, they didn’t leave a comment as to what we could have done differently. It was an anonymous survey, so we

are unable to follow up. We will be discussing the results at a team meeting and will discuss this finding.

- Able to promote not only chest/breastfeeding but WIC and diversity.
- Banners in WIC space can be used for outreach events. Used at World Chest/breastfeeding Ice Cream Social in August. Feedback given stated appreciated diversity of families and pictures of breastfeeding without being in a small space, covered up. It really normalizes it.
- Reminded us signs are good, but relationship with the clients most important.
- Both signs and verbal directions helpful when participants coming to new building. Future projects expand to other sites in the county and how make new sites welcoming to the participants.

CHI St. Joseph's


Do you have a child under 5? Pregnant or breastfeeding?


WIC is a nutrition program for eligible families with children under age 5, pregnant, postpartum, and nursing women that helps families eat well and stay healthy.


WIC offers:

- Nutrition information
- Free healthy foods
- Referrals to other health or community programs
- Breastfeeding support

Connect with your local WIC agency to see if you're eligible for WIC services by filling out an application. We'll call you for an assessment to see how we can help you with WIC services.

 This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

 CHI St. Joseph's Health Community Health is your local WIC provider!
To find out more, call 218-237-5464, scan the QR code or visit www.health.state.mn.us/wicapply

 CHI St. Joseph's Health
600 Pleasant Avenue South
Park Rapids, MN 56470

 CHI St. Joseph's Health.

**WIC...
Helping build a
healthy future.**

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 MINNESOTA WIC
Health, Safety & Quality Nutrition Program



Cost: \$607.15

Goal:

Increase outreach to promote WIC services. With COVID changing the way we serve our most rural communities over the last three years, we wanted to reach out directly to the potential participants. Some of our most remote areas have households where transportation challenges and food insecurities are significant barriers to good health. Families in rural areas may not be aware of WIC services and supplemental food funding.

Summary:

- WIC postcard, printing, postage
- Mailed informational fliers directly to our rural homes via mail. We partnered with our CHI St. Joseph's marketing department. Included WIC QR code to online application.

Evaluation:

Tracking who references the mailed flyer as the reason for contacting WIC. We will use the option "Ads- Print/Radio/TV" to answer the question 'How Heard about WIC' when opening a new participant folder. The flyers went out mid-July. Our partner hospital CHI St. Joseph Health

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used the flyer image and information for Facebook page. Positive feedback was obtained about images and layout of the flyer.

Lessons Learned:

Get flyer out sooner, allowing for more time to evaluate and follow its effectiveness for this reporting.

Wright County



Cost: \$3,004.99

Goal: Help participants find new WIC clinic.

Summary:

Update exterior and interior signage at our new WIC clinic site in Monticello.

Evaluation:

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Quantitative evaluation of this project was the completion of the installation of signage. Qualitative evaluation includes the increased visibility in the Monticello community and assurance for clients of our location.

The previous tenant was a real estate company with corresponding signage so WIC clients coming to the new location had some apprehension, wondering if they were at the correct location. However, the day of the installation of our new signs, a mom stopped by and told us “I just saw the WIC sign...I’ve been meaning to call but it’s nice to come in to see about restarting my WIC...” We were able to get a new WIC card and an appointment for her children.

As our WIC local agency has returned to in-person appointments, clients coming to the Monticello site for service have remarked the signage was helpful in being confident they arrived at the right location. As we continue scheduling in-person appointments and update clients about our new Monticello location, many have remarked they have already “seen the signs.”

Lessons learned:

Challenge was staff capacity given increased caseload and being short-staffed. Even applying for funds was a challenge juggling extra responsibilities while servicing clients.