

memo

DATE: July 21, 2021
TO: WIC Coordinators
FROM: State WIC Staff
SUBJECT: Nutrition Assessment: First in a Series

In November of 2020, USDA published updated [Value Enhanced Nutrition Assessment \(VENA\) Guidance](#). VENA is an approach to Nutrition Assessment that is participant-centered and health outcome-based, and the updated guidance contains practical information to help agencies put VENA into practice. VENA guidance was first issued in 2006.

The Nutrition Education workgroup, comprised of State Agency and Local Agency staff, discussed and evaluated the current Nutrition Assessment system. The workgroup agreed that while the current system of Nutrition Assessment and available tools are working, there is a need for staff to continue improving Nutrition Assessment skills.

Based on the release of the updated VENA guidance and discussion with the Nutrition Education workgroup, the State Office is updating the Nutrition Assessment resources we have available and providing additional resources to support staff in further developing Nutrition Assessment skills. The State Office will be releasing memos monthly in the Wednesday Update, each focusing on a different Nutrition Assessment skill. The tentative list of skills that we will spotlight include:

- Purpose of the Nutrition Assessment
- Critical Thinking
- Strengths-based Assessment
- Making assessment conversational
- Open-ended Questions
- Probing Questions
- Reflective Listening
- Streamlining assessments during appointments with multiple family members
- Transition from assessment to goal setting
- Documentation

We'd also like to have Local Agencies share what has been successful as you've worked with staff to improve Nutrition Assessment skills. What activities have you done with staff, or what resources have you shared with staff? We'd love to spotlight success stories from Local Agencies!

Please let your consultant know if there is another skill you'd like to see included. In the meantime, check out the new [WIC Nutrition Assessment](#) webpage for available resources! The memos focusing on the skills will be posted under the Skills Spotlight section of the website as they are released.

Reference – Complete Listing of Hyperlinks

Value Enhanced Nutrition Assessment (VENA) Guidance

(<https://wicworks.fns.usda.gov/resources/value-enhanced-nutrition-assessment-vena-guidance>)

WIC Nutrition Assessment

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/localagency/training/na.html>)

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