



**Harnessing the Power of WIC
Advancing California's Health
System Reforms**

Merced County Community Action Agency

A Referral to WIC is a Referral to Wellness

WIC is:

- Local and statewide
- Built on prevention and wellness promotion
- Focused on EQUITY and participant experience
- Community-driven
- Family-centered
- Trusted and experienced community partners
- Proven to reduce health care and social services costs
- A natural partner to advance Medi-Cal reform efforts



Watts Healthcare WIC, Los Angeles

CA WIC Program Participation



All Medi-Cal recipients are automatically eligible for WIC

Approximately one million participants/month

65% of eligible individuals

68% of eligible women

59% of eligible children

86% of eligible infants

54% of all infants born in California in 2018 were enrolled by WIC in their first year.

[WIC Eligibility and Coverage Rates 2020](#)

Statewide Health and Wellness Infrastructure

Local Organization Type	Number of Agencies	Percent of Caseload 2021
FQHC	21	20%
Native American Health Center	6	.53%
Hospital	2	2%
City Health Department	3	2%
County Health Department	41	40%
Non-profit Organization	11	35%



Investing in a Wellness Oriented Workforce

The WIC workforce is California's largest nutrition and lactation workforce. Numbering about 3,300, the employees serving at CDPH and in the WIC local agencies are exceptionally dedicated and committed to prevention and wellness promotion.

- WIC staff are culturally and linguistically aligned with local communities
- WIC staff bring lived experiences relevant to local communities
- Many WIC staff members are current or former WIC participants
- WIC staff develop long-term relationships with families (Perinatal-Early childhood-Multiple children)
- WIC staff include fathers and other partners engaged in supporting family health
- WIC agencies hire and promote from the community
- WIC staff are trusted members of the community who understand local health and social priorities
- WIC cares for the caregivers: [WIC Worksite Wellness](#)



WIC Expertise: Patient Centered Assessment, Counseling & Education



*Stanislaus County WIC,
Modesto*

- [Comprehensive nutrition assessment](#)
- Motivational interviewing
- Participant centered education and service
- Trauma informed care
- Assessment of social needs/referrals to resources
- Assessment of clinical care gaps/referrals to resources



Shasta County WIC

WIC Expertise: Technology-driven Service Delivery

Interactive texting

Video conferencing- individual education/counseling & group classes

Phone enrollment & counseling

Email contact

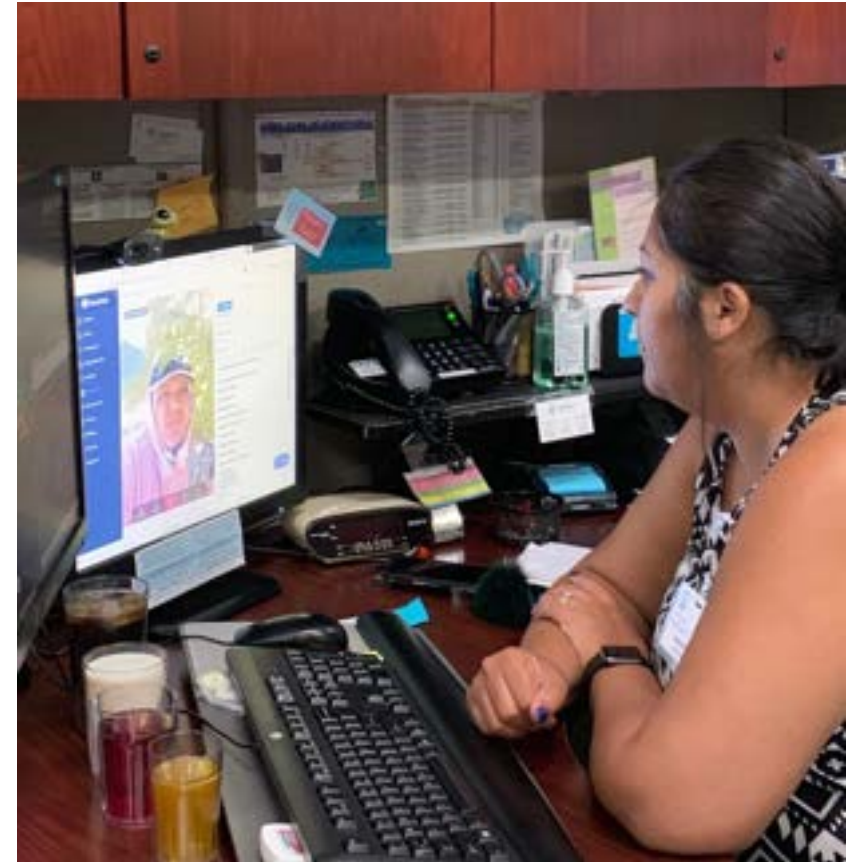
Online classes- participants and staff training

WIC WISE-statewide MIS

CA WIC App

CA WIC EBT card

Some WIC agencies are accessing EHR/HIE/CIE



*Community Medical Centers WIC, Stockton
Video appointment with a mom who is a
farmworker, during her break.*



The Resource Connection WIC, Amador & Calaveras counties

WIC Expertise: Nutrition Services

- Nutrition-WIC Nutrition Assistants (WNA)
 - Competency based
 - 1 year training/CDPH
- Degreed Nutritionists (DN)
 - 4-year degree
- Registered Dietitians (RDN)
 - 4-year degree, internship, registration exam, required Masters in 2024
- Graduate degrees
- Child and adult overweight & obesity prevention

WIC Expertise: Lactation and Infant Feeding Services



Riverside County WIC

- [USDA Breastfeeding Curriculum](#)
- Peer Counselor
- Lactation Educators
- Lactation Consultants (IBCLC)
 - Multi-track certification process, ongoing certification requirements
- Infant feeding assessment

Workforce Development



Dietetic Interns and CA Nutrition Corps Scholarship Recipients

CA WIC Dietetic Internships

California Nutrition Corps Scholarships

Grow Our Own Lactation Consultants

Continuing education units

Ongoing and required USDA training

Mentors for new WIC Directors

Leadership Academy

IBCLC Scholarships

Building on Statewide WIC Infrastructure to Support Medi-Cal System Reforms



*WIC office between pediatrics and women's health
TrueCare Health Center, San Diego*

Building on Statewide WIC Infrastructure: *Partnerships and Referrals*

- Support innovations to ensure accurate and complete WIC referrals.
- Facilitate electronic bidirectional referrals through EHR/HIE/CIE.
- Make bi-directional communication with providers for care coordination easier and more efficient.
- Use MCP reports on WIC referrals and collaborative QI agreements to encourage closer collaboration between MCPs and WIC local agencies.
- Implement updated MCP and WIC local agency MOU statewide to strengthen partnerships and communication.

Building on
Statewide WIC
Infrastructure:
*Expanding Provider
Capacity in
Medi-Cal*

- Streamline Medi-Cal enrollment for WIC agencies for braided USDA and Medi-Cal funding streams.
- Create an efficient path for WIC agencies to contract with managed care plans.
- Facilitate the certification process for WIC Nutrition Assistants co-train as CHWs.
- Facilitate the process for WIC staff co-train as Behavioral Peer Specialists, housing navigators, asthma management educators, and case managers.

Building on WIC Infrastructure: *Perinatal and Early Childhood Population Health Management*

- Leverage risk stratification within [WIC eligibility assessment](#) and [Nutrition Assessment](#) to inform clinical and social needs assessments in PHM.
- Build on statewide WIC workforce to expand wellness support services for perinatal and early childhood populations.
- Build on existing trusted relationships and facilitate MCP contracting with WIC staff to serve as care managers for perinatal hospital care transitions.

CWA Related Briefs:

WIC, Public Health & Health Care Reform

Engaging WIC Families

Modernize WIC



San Francisco WIC

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