

2017 Texas WIC Nutrition Education Survey – Statewide Report March 2017

Summary

Purpose

The Texas WIC Nutrition Education Participant Survey, administered every two years, provides the state and local agencies with information about their clients to help agencies plan their nutrition offerings and assess client satisfaction with the WIC program services. The Participant Survey also provides evidence for WIC initiatives at the state level and descriptive data that is used to inform subsequent quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. This report summarizes the aggregate data collected from local agencies across Texas.

Methods

This summary report contains data collected from a convenience sample of current WIC participants across the state of Texas. Surveys were available in English or in Spanish during the month of February 2017. Clients could take the survey online for class credit or in the clinic on paper. Data represent viewpoints of 1,696 clients who completed the online survey and 3,353 clients who answered the paper Scantron survey while at their WIC clinic. The survey contained five sections: opinions about WIC services, family meals and activities, WIC shopping experience, technology usage, and demographics.

Results

Demographics

Online and in clinic survey respondents were comparable demographically with the exception of two characteristics: (1) the number of years on WIC and (2) the number of children in the household. Online survey respondents most frequently reported being on WIC *less than one year* while in clinic survey respondents were more likely to be on the program *three or more years*. The most frequently reported number of children for online survey respondents was *one* versus *three or more* for the in clinic survey respondents.

For both online and in clinic survey respondents the majority of WIC participants were mothers, aged 25-29, and were of Hispanic ethnicity. The most frequently reported highest level of education completed was high school diploma or GED. Approximately 60 percent of participants reported speaking English and 40 percent Spanish as the main language in the home.

The majority (64 to 76 percent) of participants were the parent/caretaker of a child over 1 year old, about half were the parent/caretaker of a baby under 12 months, and approximately 20 percent were pregnant or 20 percent breastfeeding. The most frequently reported household size was 2 to 4 people.

Opinions about WIC

The three most important WIC services as rated by WIC participants were food benefits, followed by nutrition information, and support received from WIC staff. Internet (web lessons), nutrition or health fairs, and self-paced education at the clinic were the most valued forms of nutrition education reported by WIC participants. Among the state agency's newly proposed ideas for nutrition education, fitness class and child-friendly playtime came in at the top of the list. The majority of participants agreed WIC offered classes in their language; however, 14-20 percent responded they did not always have classes at times they could attend or a choice of class topics.

Respondents gave the WIC clinic and the staff high marks (90% or greater in favor) for being friendly, welcoming, clean, relevant, and able to answer questions. Ninety-nine percent responded they would come back to WIC in the future and would recommend WIC to a friend. The area most in need of improvement was "having things for my child to do while waiting."

The top three challenges in the WIC process as rated by WIC participants were shopping for WIC foods, customer service at the grocery store, and total wait time at the clinic.

Activities and Family Behaviors

Participants were asked to mark how often the following behaviors were true for them or for their family. The percentage selecting "almost always" is indicated below.

- Mealtime with my family is enjoyable. (92%)
- I prepare meals at home. (87%)
- My family sits down to eat meals together. (78%)
- I serve a fruit or vegetable at each meal. (66%)
- My child sees me as being physically active. (60%)
- I participate in physical activities with my child. (56%)
- My child helps prepare meals at home. (range: 22% to 39%)

WIC participants ranked short cooking videos and online recipes with WIC foods as online tools they would use if made available by WIC. They were also in support ("very likely" to use) online meal planning tools and helpful health/nutrition videos from child nutrition experts and credible moms.

WIC Shopping Experience

WIC participants reported that they would prefer to learn about changes in WIC foods (1) in the WIC approved foods guide, (2) to have staff go over the changes with them at the clinic, or (3) to learn about the changes via an online class. Videos and store tours were rated in the bottom six methods of hearing about new foods.

Respondents also rated their main reasons for choosing one store over another to shop for WIC foods and the top challenges faced when shopping for WIC foods. Over 90 percent of WIC participants stated it was “very important” to them that the store they shop at has WIC foods clearly labeled and easy to find, the store has better quality fruits and vegetables, and the store has a good variety of food choices available for WIC. The number one reason participants have decided not to purchase a WIC food was confusion about brands or what foods are allowed (over 50% of WIC participants have experienced this issue). In addition, while shopping for WIC foods, over 60 percent of WIC participants stated that they selected the wrong item and were sent back for a different one at the checkout line at least once in the last 3 months.

Technology Usage

WIC participants are using their cell phones more than any other device (i.e. computers, tablets, etc) to access the Internet; 86-90 percent have smartphones. The majority reported using text messaging and social media every day. While the majority of WIC participants do not use nutrition and health videos or online menu planning tools weekly, over half stated they use online recipes weekly followed by short cooking videos (45% using weekly).

TexasWIC.org, YourTexasBenefits.com, and BabyCenter.com were among the most popular websites visited by WIC participants.

Text message WIC appointment reminders, a phone app to help them locate WIC-approved foods, and scheduling WIC appointments online were the top three service enhancements of interest to that WIC participants, followed by text or e-mailing nutrition and infant feeding tips or text or e-mail dialogue with a WIC nutritionist or peer counselor.

For more detailed information on the survey responses, please proceed through the summary tables in this report.

Information about the Clients Who Answered the Survey**What is the main language spoken in your home?**

Main language spoken	Online Survey	In Clinic Paper Survey
English	59.7%	62.1%
Spanish	36.0%	37.1%
Other	4.4%	0.8%

During the past 5 years I have participated in WIC:

Length of participation in WIC	Online Survey	In Clinic Paper Survey
Less than 1 year	44.2%	26.9%
1 to 2 years	26.7%	31.0%
3 or more years	29.1%	42.0%

How old are you?

Age	Online Survey	In Clinic Paper Survey
Younger than 15	1.4%	0.5%
15-19	9.2%	6.6%
20-24	22.1%	27.4%
25-29	24.4%	28.3%
30-34	20.0%	21.2%
35 or older	23.1%	16.1%

What is the highest level of school you have finished?

Highest level of school completed	Online Survey	In Clinic Paper Survey
Less than high school diploma	28.7%	27.2%
High school diploma or GED	31.5%	39.4%
Some college, no degree	25.4%	23.4%
Associate, Bachelors, or Graduate or Professional degree	14.5%	9.9%

Are you Hispanic or Latino?

Hispanic or Latino	Online Survey	In Clinic Paper Survey
Yes	69.0%	72.9%
No	31.0%	27.1%

What is your race?

Race	Online Survey	In Clinic Paper Survey
White	54.9%	63.2%
Black or African American	13.9%	11.4%
Mixed race	8.0%	6.2%
Other	23.3%	19.1%

*A significant number of Hispanic, Latino, and Mexican-American participants chose the response option "other."

What is your parental status?

Parental status	Online Survey	In Clinic Paper Survey
Pregnant	17.8%	17.7%
Breastfeeding	21.3%	17.5%
Caretaker of baby < 12 months old	50.3%	46.0%
Caretaker of child over 1 year old	64.1%	75.9%

How many children do you have?

Number of children	Online Survey	In Clinic Paper Survey
0	4.8%	3.0%
1	35.4%	29.7%
2	25.1%	29.6%
3 or more	34.7%	37.7%

What is your relationship to the child(ren) in WIC?

Relationship to child(ren) in WIC	Online Survey	In Clinic Paper Survey
Mother	91.3%	94.7%
Father	0.8%	0.8%
Grandparent	1.4%	1.1%
Foster parent	0.7%	0.3%
Self, pregnant	5.1%	2.4%
Other	0.7%	0.7%

How many people live in your household?

Number of people living in household	Online Survey	In Clinic Paper Survey
1	1.9%	1.4%
2 - 4	58.8%	57.3%
5 - 7	35.6%	37.7%
8 or more	3.7%	3.7%

SECTION 1 describes participants' opinions about WIC and the services it offers.

How important are these WIC services to you?

Importance of this WIC service	Very important		Somewhat important		Not important	
	Online Survey	In clinic Survey	Online Survey	In clinic Survey	Online Survey	In clinic Survey
Food benefits	97.2%	97.3%	2.4%	2.5%	0.2%	0.2%
Nutrition information	90.1%	91.8%	8.8%	7.7%	0.8%	0.5%
Support received from WIC staff	85.8%	89.4%	12.3%	9.9%	1.0%	0.7%
Learning about community resources (referrals)	70.7%	69.5%	23.2%	26.5%	6.1%	4.0%
Talking to other caregivers	55.9%	62.0%	31.4%	31.1%	12.8%	6.9%
Breastfeeding information*	55.6%	67.8%	16.2%	17.6%	7.0%	**

*For 21.3% of participants, breastfeeding information was "not applicable."

**Data for this response is unavailable.

What kind of nutrition education would you find valuable?

Value of this type of nutrition education	Very valuable		Somewhat valuable		Not of value to me	
	Online Survey	In clinic Survey	Online Survey	In clinic Survey	Online Survey	In clinic Survey
Internet (web lesson)	85.5%	62.8%	12.8%	28.6%	1.7%	8.6%
Nutrition/health fair	71.3%	68.1%	24.2%	27.1%	4.5%	4.8%
Self-paced at clinic	66.9%	66.2%	26.5%	28.7%	6.7%	5.0%
Physical activity session	66.8%	69.2%	23.6%	24.1%	9.6%	6.7%
Family-based class	65.1%	64.8%	26.7%	28.3%	8.2%	7.0%
Cooking demonstration	61.7%	61.6%	27.1%	28.3%	11.3%	10.1%
Group session at WIC	48.1%	53.3%	32.7%	33.7%	19.2%	13.0%
Gardening session	40.7%	37.1%	34.0%	38.6%	25.3%	24.3%

If WIC could provide more opportunities to meet with other moms at your clinic visit, how interested would you be in the following?

Level of interest	Very interested		Somewhat interested		Not interested	
	Online Survey	In clinic Survey	Online Survey	In clinic Survey	Online Survey	In clinic Survey
Fitness class	65.0%	65.9%	24.7%	24.9%	10.3%	9.2%
Child-friendly play time	59.8%	66.7%	29.0%	26.4%	11.1%	6.9%
Clothing or toy swap	44.7%	43.9%	33.9%	37.1%	21.4%	19.0%
Mommy meet-up groups	41.5%	48.3%	36.7%	36.2%	21.9%	15.5%
Story time at the WIC clinic	41.0%	45.1%	40.1%	39.7%	18.9%	15.3%

How well does WIC meet your needs on the following?

How well does WIC meet your needs	Great		Okay		Not so great	
	Online Survey	In clinic Survey	Online Survey	In clinic Survey	Online Survey	In clinic Survey
Teaching me about healthy food choices	82.4%	88.7%	15.9%	10.5%	1.7%	0.8%
Learning how to feed my family	79.8%	86.5%	18.0%	12.7%	2.1%	0.8%
Learning how to shop for WIC foods	73.0%	82.4%	23.1%	15.7%	3.8%	1.8%
Learning how to prepare/cook WIC foods	64.7%	73.1%	28.2%	23.5%	7.1%	3.4%
Learning how to breastfeed my baby*	53.5%	70.5%	17.3%	20.9%	1.8%	***
Providing support to breastfeed my baby longer**	51.9%	67.9%	17.6%	23.1%	2.4%	***
Helping me connect and share ideas with other parents	42.2%	48.8%	37.3%	39.2%	20.5%	11.9%

*For 27.4% of participants, "learning how to breastfeed my baby" was "not applicable."

**For 28.1% of participants, "providing support to breastfeed my baby longer" was "not applicable."

***Data for this response is unavailable.

My WIC clinic offers nutrition education...

Offering nutrition education in my language, at times I can attend, and with a choice of topics*	Yes		Sometimes		No	
	Online Survey	In clinic Survey	Online Survey	In clinic Survey	Online Survey	In clinic Survey
In my language	94.4%	94.6%	1.5%	3.6%	1.7%	1.8%
At times when I can attend	79.7%	86.3%	11.1%	11.5%	2.5%	2.2%
With a choice of topics I can choose from	82.6%	80.7%	8.0%	14.5%	3.8%	4.8%

*Online survey participants marked "not applicable" for 2.4%, 6.7%, and 5.5% for "in my language," "at times I can attend," and "with choice of topics," respectively. "Not applicable" was not a response option on the paper survey.

Think about the WIC sessions you have attended, and answer the questions below based on your experiences.

Answer the questions based on your experiences at WIC sessions	Percent who marked "yes"	
	Online survey	In clinic survey
I would come back to WIC in the future.	98.5%	99.2%
I would recommend WIC to a friend.	98.3%	99.0%
WIC staff were friendly.	95.3%	98.6%
WIC clinic was clean.	94.5%	98.2%
WIC appointment was offered at a good time of day.	94.3%	97.6%
WIC staff provided relevant and helpful information	93.9%	97.3%
When I had a question about nutrition, WIC staff could answer it.	92.7%	97.8%
WIC clinic atmosphere was welcoming.	92.1%	97.4%
When I left WIC, I felt like a great mom.	89.6%	96.2%
When I had a question about breastfeeding, WIC staff could answer it.*	77.6%	**
WIC clinic had things for my child to do while waiting.	73.9%	89.5%

*For 19.2% of participants, the response to this question was "not applicable."

***Data for this response is unavailable.

Please rate the following experiences:

Rate the following experiences	Needs improvement		Ok		Great	
	Online survey	In clinic survey	Online survey	In clinic survey	Online survey	In clinic survey
Shopping for WIC foods	24.4%	5.4%	38.6%	22.9%	37.1%	71.7%
Customer service at the grocery store	18.7%	9.8%	45.0%	32.6%	36.3%	57.5%
Total wait time at the clinic	18.4%	5.7%	46.8%	33.6%	34.8%	60.7%
Customer service at the WIC clinic	6.1%	0.9%	32.9%	11.5%	61.0%	87.7%
Options available for nutrition education	5.5%	1.0%	47.6%	21.7%	46.9%	77.4%
Application process	5.2%	2.1%	44.5%	22.8%	50.3%	75.1%

SECTION 2 asks about family meals and select healthy lifestyle activities.

Please mark how often these items are true for you.

Mark how often these items are true for you	Almost always		Sometimes		Almost never	
	Online Survey	In clinic Survey	Online Survey	In clinic Survey	Online Survey	In clinic Survey
Mealtimes with my family are enjoyable.	91.8%	91.6%	7.7%	7.9%	0.5%	0.5%
I prepare meals at home.	86.2%	89.3%	13.3%	10.1%	0.5%	0.6%
My family sits down to eat meals together.	76.2%	80.3%	21.8%	18.4%	1.9%	1.2%
I serve a fruit or vegetable at each meal.	64.0%	68.2%	34.3%	30.4%	1.7%	1.4%
My child sees me being physically active.	60.0%	60.9%	36.2%	35.5%	3.8%	3.5%
I participate in physical activities with my child.	52.0%	61.0%	42.3%	34.9%	5.7%	4.0%
I let my child help prepare foods.	21.8%	38.8%	47.9%	38.8%	30.4%	22.4%

How likely are you to use these online tools if they were made available?

Likelihood to use these online tools	Very likely		Somewhat likely		Not at all likely	
	Online Survey	In clinic Survey	Online Survey	In clinic Survey	Online Survey	In clinic Survey
Short cooking videos showing how to prepare WIC foods	75.0%	65.2%	21.7%	30.1%	3.3%	4.7%
Online recipes made with WIC foods	70.7%	70.2%	25.0%	26.1%	4.3%	3.7%
Online menu planning tools	69.3%	64.9%	26.6%	29.0%	4.1%	6.1%
Videos with experts talking about common child nutrition concerns	68.2%	64.2%	26.5%	29.3%	5.2%	6.5%
Videos of moms sharing healthy tips	65.9%	63.4%	28.0%	30.6%	6.1%	6.0%

(Excludes participants who stated they do not use online tools.)

SECTION 3 asks about the WIC shopping experience.

If WIC made changes to the WIC foods, how would you like to learn about them? (Select top 3 choices)

How would you like to learn about changes to WIC foods	Percent marking "yes" Online Survey	Percent marking "yes" In clinic Survey
WIC approved foods guide	62.0%	65.3%
Have staff go over the changes with me at the clinic	51.4%	53.1%
Online class (computer or mobile device)	52.1%	40.7%
Online video	27.7%	28.2%
Take home DVD	13.4%	25.6%
Go on a store tour	17.0%	23.4%

(The following four tables exclude participants who stated they have not shopped for WIC foods.)

Where do you shop for WIC foods? (Mark all that apply)

Where do you shop for WIC foods	Percent Online Survey	Percent In clinic Survey
Walmart	61.7%	61.3%
HEB	53.4%	48.7%
WIC Only Stores	29.7%	23.2%
Fiesta Mart	14.5%	13.6%
Kroger's	21.0%	15.5%
Albertsons	5.4%	3.2%
Grocery Services	5.0%	3.5%
Brookshire	3.8%	8.8%
United	3.0%	4.7%
Lowes	2.8%	3.6%
None of the above	2.7%	2.6%

If you have the option to shop at more than one grocery store, how important are the following when deciding where to shop for WIC foods?

Importance when deciding where to shop for WIC foods	Very important		Somewhat important		Not important	
	Online Survey	In clinic Survey	Online Survey	In clinic Survey	Online Survey	In clinic Survey
The store has WIC foods clearly labeled and easy to find.	93.7%	92.2%	5.6%	6.8%	0.7%	1.0%
The store has better quality fruits and vegetables.	93.0%	92.4%	6.7%	7.0%	0.4%	0.6%
The store has a good variety of food choices available for WIC.	92.3%	91.5%	7.0%	7.6%	0.7%	0.9%
The store's distance from home or work.	80.8%	75.1%	15.7%	20.6%	3.5%	4.2%
The store has staff available to help me find WIC foods if I need help.	80.1%	80.9%	16.3%	15.7%	3.6%	3.3%
The store has a good selection of the non-WIC items I need.	74.1%	75.6%	21.2%	20.9%	4.7%	3.5%
The store is easy to get in and out of (parking, aisles, checkout, etc).	72.4%	74.4%	23.3%	21.1%	4.3%	4.5%
The store has a kiosk or place where I can check my WIC shopping list.	70.4%	69.0%	20.2%	22.8%	9.4%	8.2%

Are any of the following reasons you have decided NOT to purchase a WIC food? (Mark all that apply)

Reason you decided NOT to purchase a WIC food	Percent Online Survey	Percent In clinic Survey
Confusion about brands or what foods are allowed	58.2%	49.8%
Confusion about signs and labels	43.0%	34.9%
Store didn't have a WIC food I needed	33.1%	29.2%
None of the above	25.2%	22.5%
Poor customer service at the store	14.0%	13.7%

Reason you decided NOT to purchase a WIC food	Percent Online Survey	Percent In clinic Survey
Item did not scan	13.0%	15.6%
I did not want an item	12.0%	8.7%
Time it took to shop for WIC foods was too long	10.8%	6.4%
I didn't know how to prepare the food	2.5%	2.0%

In the last 3 months, have any of the following things happened to you when shopping for your WIC foods?

Happened when shopping for WIC foods	Percent Online Survey	Percent In clinic Survey
Selected the wrong item and was sent back to get a different item once you reached the checkout lane.	63.0%	62.8%
Needed a WIC item that was not there or not available	57%	53.1%
Forgot to bring the WIC shopping guide to the store	37.3%	36.9%
Selected a fruit or vegetable that would not scan	34.6%	36.0%
Felt uncomfortable in the checkout line	20.5%	18.7%
Felt uncomfortable shopping for WIC items	14.0%	11.8%

SECTION 4 is about technology use.

How often do you use these devices to access the Internet?

Frequency of use of these devices to access the Internet	Most days		Occasionally		Never	
	Online survey	In clinic survey	Online survey	In clinic survey	Online survey	In clinic survey
Cell phone (including smartphones)	73.1%	79.6%	23.4%	15.4%	3.5%	5.0%
Desktop or laptop computer	26.1%	29.1%	47.6%	43.5%	26.2%	27.4%
Tablet computer (iPad, Google table, Kindle, Nook)	20.0%	30.4%	36.6%	32.2%	43.4%	37.4%
Other Internet device (iPod, Xbox, smart TV)	13.4%	20.1%	28.9%	27.9%	57.7%	52.0%

Some cell phones are called “smartphones” because of certain features they have, such as Internet access. Is your cell phone a smartphone, such as an Android, iPhone, Blackberry, or Windows phone?

Is your cell phone a smartphone	Percent Online Survey	Percent In clinic Survey
Yes	89.5%	85.5%
No	6.8%	10.2%
Don't know	2.6%	3.0%
No cell phone	1.1%	1.2%

How often do you use the following technology?

How often do you use the following technology	Every day		Occasionally		Never	
	Online survey	In clinic survey	Online survey	In clinic survey	Online survey	In clinic survey
Text messaging or texting	74.7%	79.6%	22.9%	18.0%	2.4%	2.5%
Social media sites	52.4%	55.5%	35.7%	32.2%	11.9%	12.3%
E-mail	44.1%	44.1%	44.9%	39.2%	11.0%	16.7%
Smartphone app	36.6%	44.2%	46.4%	35.4%	17.3%	20.4%

How often do you use the following technology	Every day		Occasionally		Never	
YouTube or other online videos	27.5%	34.2%	60.4%	51.9%	12.0%	13.9%
Video streaming (Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime)	18.6%	23.2%	38.4%	29.5%	43.0%	47.3%
iTunes or other music storage site	10.8%	15.8%	36.6%	34.6%	52.6%	49.6%
Webcam, Skype, or Facetime	8.4%	14.6%	38.4%	36.4%	43.0%	48.9%

Which of these do you currently view or use at least once a week? (Mark all that apply)

Which of these do you currently use at least once a week	Percent Online Survey	Percent In clinic Survey
Online recipes	57.5%	52.5%
Short cooking videos	47.6%	42.7%
Videos of moms sharing healthy tips	25.1%	20.6%
Videos with experts talking about child nutrition	21.5%	15.2%
None of the above	19.5%	*
Online menu planning tools	16.3%	9.7%

*Data for this response is unavailable.

Have you visited any of the following website for information? (Mark all that apply)

Websites visited for information	Percent Online Survey	Percent In clinic Survey
TexasWIC.org	64.1%	39.6%
YourTexasBenefits.com	59.0%	45.8%
BabyCenter.com	36.7%	25.6%
None of the above	14.3%	*
HealthyChildren.org	7.0%	6.1%
Breastmilkcounts.com	*	5.8%
Text4Baby.org	*	3.4%
SomedayStartsNow.com	0.5%	0.3%

*Data for this response is unavailable.

I would be interested in:

I would be interested in:	Percent Online Survey	Percent In clinic Survey
Receiving a text message to remind me of my upcoming WIC appointment	89.3%	88.6%*
Using a phone app that would help you shop for WIC-approved foods	81.1%	76.6%
Scheduling your WIC appointments online	75.2%	64.1%
Receiving an e-mail message to remind me of my upcoming WIC appointment	69.3%	5.5%*
Receiving nutrition and infant feeding tips via e-mail	59.8%	24.2%**
Texting my questions to a WIC nutritionist or breastfeeding peer counselor	57.2%	46.4%***
Emailing my questions to a WIC nutritionist or breastfeeding peer counselor	54.8%	22.2%***
Receiving nutrition and infant feeding tips via text message	54.7%	44.2%**
Using a live chat box to talk to a WIC nutritionist or breastfeeding peer counselor	43.6%	44.0%
Connecting with WIC on Facebook	42.6%	50.9%
Using video chat (webcam, Skype, FaceTime) to talk to a WIC nutritionist or breastfeeding peer counselor	24.2%	28.4%
Connecting with WIC on other social media sites (Twitter, Pinterest, Snapchat, Instagram)	22.5%	27.8%

*, **, *** On the paper in clinic survey, participants chose either text, e-mail, or neither, but could not mark both text and e-mail. This was corrected in the online survey where participants could select they wanted text, email, both, or neither for the items.