

Sample term paper on wic program analysis

[Sociology](#), [Women](#)



WIC (Women, Infants and Children) program refers to the policy passed to safeguard the health of low-income women, infants, and children up to the age of 5 who are at a nutrition risk by providing nutritious foods to supplement their diets, information on healthy eating and referrals to health care (Oliveira et al. 2).

The policy's focus is on providing nutritional assistance to pregnant and breastfeeding women who must eat nutritional foods during the critical times of a child's growth and development, as well as providing infants with supplemental nutritional foods to prevent future developmental or medical problems for the child (Oliveira et al. 4). The policy targets the low-income earning women or family whose income is below the U. S poverty income guidelines and cannot afford meals that will guarantee a balanced diet for both the unborn child and the infant below the age of 5.

The WIC program an important program that ensures improvement in the health of pregnant mothers, women new mothers and their infants. Eating healthy meals improves the health of the child thus its growth and development and other nutrition related health issues are significantly reduced or even eliminated. High infant mortality rates have been attributed to poor nutrition by the mothers during pregnancy and breastfeeding periods (Black et al. 3). High infant mortality is both a medical and social problem and by providing proper nutrition supplement to the participants will help alleviate cases of improper child growth and development, a major cause of infant deaths. The food that is provided by WIC is only meant to be supplemental and not to cater for the entire nutritional needs.

The Supplementary Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is an alternative

program to the WIC program. SNAP provides assistance in the form of an electronic benefits card which is used to purchase food or seeds and plants that can be used for food. However it does not allow buying of prepared meals, alcohol or non-food items (Oliveira et al. 34). The participants of the WIC program are issued with vouchers that they use at authorized food stores to pick foodstuffs. The state and local organizations provide the participants with food stuffs and other medical needs.

Apart from supplemental foods, the WIC program is also designed to provide high risk nutrition counseling where the registered dieticians provide counseling to individual participants, health care referrals such as immunization, substance abuse and screening as well as breastfeeding promotion and support services. WIC is funded both by the Food Grant and the Nutrition Services and Administration (NSA) grant. The WIC provides the federal grants to states in order to finance the purchase of the supplemental foods, referrals and nutritional education.

The WIC program started in 1969, when the White House conference on Food, Nutrition and Health recommended that the needs of pregnant mothers with low income be given attention. It was after the white House receiving information from a group of physicians who were concerned by the large numbers of pregnant, young women with ailments associated with lack of food. Amendments to the legislation established the Special supplementary Food Program for Women, Infants and Children first as a pilot program and later made a permanent program in 1975. It was supported by Senator Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota. It was renamed in the year 1994 into WIC in order to emphasize its role as a nutrition program (Black et al. 2).

The WIC program involves a wide variety of stakeholders including the women, infants, children, the state agencies, National WIC Association, the federal governments and the U. S Department of Agriculture. The program has received support from the majority of the stakeholders since it has been regarded as a big success since its enactment. Huge benefits have been drawn ranging from a healthier nation to reduced mortality rates. WIC is also linked to longer gestation periods, higher birth weight and lower infant mortality ((Black et al. 42).

In conclusion, WIC program has proven over time to be one of the most successful and cost-effective nutrition services, drawing more applause than criticism from its supporters, stakeholders and critics. The implementation of the policy does bring together the political divide due to its effectiveness. Provision of nutritional assistance to the participants of this program is a big stride towards creating a healthy society.

References

Black, Maureen M., et al. Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children Participation and Infants' growth and Health: A Multisite Surveillance Study. J Pediatrics 2004 July; vol. 114 No 1.

Oliveira, Victor, Elizabeth Racine, Jennifer Olmstead, and Linda M. Ghelfi. The WIC Program: Background, Trends, and Issue. US Dept. of Agriculture, Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Report, October 2002.