



# Colorado WIC Wellness Coordinator System

## *Summary of Roles*

The Colorado WIC Wellness Coordinator System brings state and local WIC agencies together to address early childhood obesity through WIC services in Colorado. Each local agency, or a regional group of local agencies, identifies a Wellness Coordinator, who is responsible for fulfilling a defined role to advance early childhood obesity prevention and wellness in WIC. The Wellness Coordinators are supported by a system of collaboration and learning developed and overseen by Colorado WIC Program staff at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

This summary document briefly describes the roles of all involved parties of the Colorado WIC Wellness Coordinator System. Some local agency roles listed in this summary document are noted as “advanced roles”. These are additional roles local agencies may adopt if time and capacity allows. Roles not identified as “advanced roles” are considered basic roles necessary to achieve the desired outcomes of the system. The Colorado WIC Wellness Coordinator System concept paper describes these roles in more detail, how they relate to one another, and the objectives they intend to meet.

### **Wellness Coordinator roles:**

#### **Basic roles (commitment of approximately 5-6 hours per month on average):**

- Participate in regular Wellness Coordinator and state agency calls approximately every 6 weeks initially, and less frequently once the system is well established.
- Represent the interest of the local agency by providing feedback and recommendations during statewide decision making processes related to early childhood obesity prevention or wellness.
- Serve as the early childhood obesity prevention subject matter expert and a wellness role model and advocate for the local agency.
- Train and mentor clinic staff members on various topics and state initiated policies and procedures related to early childhood obesity prevention and wellness.
- Facilitate necessary communication as needed with staff members in their local agency.
- Assist in the local agency adoption and implementation of consistent messages and state initiated policies related to early childhood obesity prevention and wellness.
- Coordinate wellness activities for WIC families, which may be activities of existing annual nutrition education plans, or other activities.

#### **Advanced roles:**

- Coordinate wellness activities for local agency staff members.

- Develop and maintain active community partnerships with local public health and early childhood programs, health care providers, and appropriate community organizations.
- Maintain strong community referral systems and documentation of referrals that support healthy eating and active living for WIC families.
- Intentionally connect clients with community resources for chronic disease prevention, such as the Diabetes Prevention Program or other similar services in the community.
- Identify opportunities for alignment between wellness initiatives and activities of the Local Agency Breastfeeding Coordinator and the Local Agency Retail Coordinator.

### **Local agency management roles:**

#### **Basic roles:**

- Identify at least one staff member to serve as the Wellness Coordinator. Agencies may work in partnership with other local WIC agencies to identify a regional Wellness Coordinator to fulfill the role for more than one local agency.
- As needed, obtain and sustain support from all levels of management (agency director, clinic supervisors, contracting agency management) for the Wellness Coordinator to fulfill his/her role.
- Design the work load of the Wellness Coordinator to allow work time that is devoted to activities related to the role (estimated to be approximately 5-6 hours per month on average).
- Build expectations and accountability measures into the performance evaluation plans for the Wellness Coordinator (state agency will provide sample language).
- In collaboration with the Wellness Coordinator, establish a system to ensure accountability among local agency staff members for minimum expectations related to early childhood obesity prevention, healthy eating, active living, and wellness (state agency will provide sample language for performance evaluations).

#### **Advanced role:**

- If finances allow, allocate funds in the operating budget to support the lead role designation for the Wellness Coordinator (advanced local agency role).

### **State agency roles:**

- Coordinate state agency and Wellness Coordinator collaborative activities and facilitate regular communication among all parties.

- Establish structured and inclusive decision-making processes that involve the Wellness Coordinators, WIC Nutrition Services Advisory Group, and state staff, for use when statewide direction or policy changes related to early childhood obesity prevention or wellness are needed.
- Establish and use methods and channels of communication among state agency staff and Wellness Coordinators.
- In collaboration with Wellness Coordinators, develop a set of competencies for Wellness Coordinators and local agency staff members.
- Provide written and clear expectations for local agencies and the Wellness Coordinators regarding the Wellness Coordinator system and role, including options for flexibility to meet the needs of local agencies of all sizes and capacities.
- Create training plans for Wellness Coordinators and provide training to build their subject matter expertise related to obesity prevention in inter-conception, prenatal, and early childhood periods.
- Provide written and clear expectations for the Wellness Coordinators' training and mentoring of local agency staff members. Provide materials and resources for Wellness Coordinators to use in training local agency staff members.
- Provide clear guidance for Wellness Coordinators regarding implementation of specific policies related to early childhood obesity prevention, consistent messaging, and special activities in local agencies.
- Maintain active state partnerships with public health programs, early childhood initiatives, health care organizations, and other entities to achieve a consistent early childhood obesity prevention approach throughout Colorado.
- Align statewide WIC early childhood obesity prevention efforts with other initiatives, where appropriate.