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**From:** Wayne, Kathleen A (HSS)  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 15, 2011 3:56 PM  
**To:** HSS DPA WIC Coordinators  
**Cc:** HSS DPA WIC Anchorage; Olejasz, Aimee M (HSS); Danielle Rybicki; Barros, Nancy N (HSS); Bish, Marcey A (HSS); Peterson, Robin C (HSS)  
**Subject:** WIC Friday Update December 15

Hi Everyone,

I will be on annual leave from December 16 until December 30. Becky Carrillo will be the acting WIC Manager in my absence.

We are changing the Spring WIC Coordinator's meeting to March 28-29 to avoid any potential conflicts with Easter holiday plans or activities.

I hope you and your staff enjoy a happy and healthy holiday season.

Kathleen

1. Welcome Eric Hunter ---We are pleased to announce that **Eric Hunter** joined the WIC Vendor Unit on December 12, as an Assistant Vendor Coordinator. Eric is a U.S. Coast Guard veteran, who recently completed five years of service in Juneau in marine shipping industry support. He is passionate about the importance of childhood nutrition as the foundation for physical and mental development and excited about the opportunity to work with WIC vendors in support of this goal. Eric enjoys sailing in Southeast Alaska, ice climbing, hiking, kayaking, and performing as a percussionist with the Juneau Symphony.

As an Assistant Vendor Coordinator, Eric will focus on price sheets, vendor compliance, and vendor issues with the transition to the SPIRIT information management system. Alice Albrecht, who has been an Assistant Vendor Coordinator since 2008, will continue to administer the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), and work on Food List, vendor training, and banking issues. LAs and WIC participants may contact Sandy (465-4704), Alice (465-8630), or Eric (465-3388) about problems, MOV issues, or complaints, as we will share those responsibilities.

2. Breast Pump Supplies—To order breast pump supplies, please contact Amy George through email at [amy.george@alaska.gov](mailto:amy.george@alaska.gov). In your request, please specify which items you would like to receive and how many. Thank you!
3. What's LEAN Teleconference—please join us on February 9 from 8:15 -9:15 AM to learn about LEAN. The Division of Public Assistance has implemented a system of work that has proven to improve our services to our customers---the public and program partners. The February 9<sup>th</sup> teleconference will provide a high-level overview of the LEAN process. We will provide a second opportunity to learn about LEAN at the Spring WIC Coordinator's Meeting. The teleconference number is 1-800-281-5354 code 259225.

Nice to Know—

Alaska is ranked as the most difficult state to access affordable fruits & veggies according to this report.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jennifer Adach, 202.986.2200 x3018

## **Limited Resources Placing Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Out of Reach for Many Americans**

### **New FRAC Report Outlines Needed Strategies to Support Households' Ability to Afford Healthy Food**

Washington, D.C. – December 15, 2011 – A **new report** (pdf) by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) provides a unique look at the struggle to access healthy food that is being faced by millions of Americans, and especially low-income people.

Among all households across the years 2008-2010, 8.2 percent of respondents reported that it was “not easy to get affordable fresh fruits and vegetables.” But those with household incomes less than \$24,000/year reported such affordability and access challenges 2.5 times more frequently (13.8 percent) than those with incomes between \$60,000 and \$89,999 (5.7 percent).

The report analyzes how the struggle by households to obtain affordable healthy food presents itself by race, income, health status, and in different parts of the country. Containing data down to the congressional district, FRAC’s report – *A Half Empty Plate: Fruit and Vegetable Affordability and Access Challenges in America* – analyzes the answers given by hundreds of thousands of survey respondents to a question posed for the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index project: “In the city or area where you live, is it easy or not easy to get affordable fresh fruits and vegetables.” FRAC characterizes “not easy” answers as evidence of an affordability and access challenge.

Among the biggest differences observed were those between income groups, and for those who experienced food hardship (an inability to afford enough food based on another Gallup question). Among those in households with food hardship, 18.5 percent reported affordability and accessibility problems, while only 5.7 percent of those in households without food hardship reported such challenges.

Other findings include:

- Hispanics and Blacks reported considerably higher rates of difficulty in accessing affordable fresh fruits and vegetables, compared to Whites and Asians.
- Among people reporting poor health status, the prevalence of fruit and vegetable affordability and access challenges was four times that of people reporting excellent health status (20.0 percent vs. 5.0 percent).
- Of the top fifteen hardest hit states, four were in the Mountain Plains (MT, ND, SD, and WY), four were in the West (AK, HI, ID, and NV), and three were in the Southwest (AR, NM, and OK).
- Most of the MSAs with the 20 worst rates were in the Southeast, Southwest, and West. More specifically, four of the 20 worst MSAs were in Florida, two were in Louisiana, and two were in Oklahoma.
- 133 congressional districts had at least one in ten households with children reporting difficulty accessing affordable fresh fruits and vegetables.

“A household’s ability to access healthy food hinges on having enough resources to do so. What the data in our analysis show is that access and affordability are household economic insecurity problems

as well as community ‘food desert’ problems,” said Jim Weill, FRAC President. “The remedies have to centrally include supporting families’ ability to purchase healthier food.”

Among remedies the report proposes are: efforts at the federal level to increase the adequacy of SNAP (food stamps) benefits so they go further; rejection of recent proposals in Congress to reduce SNAP benefits; increased outreach and reduced red tape at the state level so more people receive SNAP; assuring that stores accept SNAP EBT cards and WIC vouchers; and stronger efforts at the community level to increase the number of outlets offering healthy food. “In short, all households need adequate resources to obtain a healthy diet,” said Weill.

The full report is available on FRAC’s website ([www.frac.org](http://www.frac.org)).

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### **About the Report**

*A Half-Empty Plate* contains the Food Research and Action Center’s analysis of survey data that were collected by Gallup. Gallup has been interviewing 1,000 households per day almost every day since January 2, 2008 for the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index project. People have been asked a series of questions on a range of topics including emotional health, physical health, healthy behavior, work environment and access to basic services. Specific to this report, people were asked, “In the city or area where you live, is it easy or not easy to get affordable fresh fruits and vegetables.”

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