

WIC Local Agency Region 3 – Interior AK Executive Summary January 17th, 2012

The WIC Region 3 Teleconference was held on January 17th, 2012 for all agencies currently providing WIC services, or interested in providing WIC services in Interior Alaska. Currently, two agencies provide WIC services in Interior Alaska: Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) and Resource Center for Parents & Children (RCPC).

One grantee, RCPC, had three representatives present on the call: Scooter Welch, Executive Director; Ann Burtness, WIC RD; and Sarah Stempek, WIC Coordinator. Narlin Smith, WIC Coordinator for TCC was also present. Staff from RCPC also submitted additional comments and questions via email.

Summary of Comments

Both RCPC and TCC reported impacts to service delivery because of their current structure. For RCPC, this is because they are currently set up to serve clients on the road system. Staff from TCC felt that their rural clients who must fly to Fairbanks to receive combined services might be adversely impacted if the WIC program is not present in the health center. Other challenges or barriers mentioned by RCPC included increased administrative burden and needing to add the infrastructure to deliver services virtually. One grantee, TCC, commented that in-kind contributions of space and related services could be lost if the agencies combined their programs. Staff from TCC was concerned that there will not be enough space allocated for a combined program in their new health center.

Staff from RCPC expressed concerns that the WIC preference for integrated services meant that the process would favor a native health organization. Staff from TCC commented that if they were not to be the lead agency, and another entity was contracting space from TCC for WIC services, that they would not be allowed to use the TCC computer systems because of privacy concerns.

The agencies commented that they had not yet had the opportunity to discuss potential service models with each other, and neither agency was certain it wanted to offer services as a lead or partner agency during the teleconference, although RCPC submitted written comments that it would like to provide services in the Fairbanks North Star Borough.

There were some questions about the requirements for a registered dietitian to be on staff. TCC noted that they did not currently have an RD, so that this new requirement would be a change. RCPC pointed out the difficulty in finding RD's in Alaska would increase staffing costs leading to decreased client services. Staff from TCC had specific questions about the degree requirements for a Local Agency Coordinator and RCPC had additional questions about staffing requirements and structure, as well as the exact boundaries of the proposed interior service region.

Analysis of Comments:

Both RCPC and TCC currently serve over 1,000 participants. TCC specifically serves Alaska Natives primarily from rural villages, while RCPC serves urban Interior WIC participants. Providing services as a lead agency could mean significant changes to the programs of either agency, and it is apparent that each agency has concerns with their capacity to provide quality services to an expanded population of WIC participants without additions to infrastructure, and changes in policy and practice.