

# Effective Ways to Promote the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program on a University Campus



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## Abstract

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program Woman, Infants, and Children (WIC) serves over eight million people in the U.S. (FNS, USDA, 2014). Since 1972, WIC has been increasing the access to healthy foods during pregnancy, postpartum and during the first five years of life, improving fetal growth, infant morbidity and children's health, preparing children for success (Grodsky, Violante, Barrows, & Gosliner, 2017).  
→ In the U.S 36% of all college students are dealing with food insecurity. Among those, 63% are students with children (Goldrick-Rab, Richardson, & Hernandez, 2017) and 50% of them are parents of children under age five (Noll, Reichlin & Gault, 2017).  
→ Student with children often experience significant financial need due to a combination of the costs related to college attendance, child care services, and basic living needs (IWPR, 2016).  
→ To increase accessibility to WIC, CSUN in collaboration with NEVHC, and the Institute of well-being opened a WIC outreach office on campus to provide some services to the CSUN community.  
→ To raise awareness about the WIC on campus and to determine effective ways to promote it different outreach activities were performed during the fall 2017/spring 2018, these included: posters displayed in high traffic areas, tabling events, MIND screen display and in-classroom presentations. Data was collected using a voluntary post-test after every in-classroom presentation.  
→ Based on preliminary data collected, class presentations are an effective way to reach students. Results also support the need to continue outreach efforts on campus to further increase awareness and promote WIC services on campus.

### About the author:

Guadalupe is pursuing a MS in Nutrition and Dietetics. She plans to continue working in community nutrition, providing education and resources to underserved populations.

Itzel plans to complete her MS in Human Nutrition and become an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) to better serve communities.

## Introduction

→ The Special Supplemental Program Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides vouchers to purchase nutritious foods nutrition education, including breastfeeding promotion and support, and referrals to health care and community services to qualifying pregnant and postpartum women, infants, and children until their fifth birthday (USDA, FNS, 2018).  
→ To be eligible to receive WIC, a family must have an income below 185% of the federal poverty line (NWICA, 2015).  
→ Funded by the USDA, WIC is one of the many strategies the government has implemented to fight food insecurity, which is defined by the USDA (2018) as the lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life.  
→ Food insecure families are forced concentrate their diet on low cost foods that are high in calories but of poor nutritional value, such as, refined carbohydrates and foods with added sugars, fats and sodium (Seligman & Schillinger, 2015).  
→ More than a third of all college students in the U.S are facing food insecurity, 63% of them are students who have children (Goldrick-Rab, Richardson, & Hernandez, 2017) and from those, 50% are raising infants and young children under the age of five. (Noll, Reichlin & Gault, 2017).  
→ With such a high number of students dealing with food insecurity, some institutions are putting into effect aid programs such as food pantries, free meals and assistance to apply to the SNAP online.  
→ Uniquely enough, CSUN in association with the Institute for Community Health and Wellbeing, and Northeast Valley Health Corporation (NEVHC) opened a WIC outreach office on campus in Fall 2005 to increase its accessibility.  
→ Following its opening, outreach activities performed during fall 2017/spring 2018 were evaluated to determine the most effective ways to promote the WIC on campus.

## Purpose

1. To increase awareness about the WIC outreach office on campus.
2. To determine effective ways to promote the WIC on campus.

## Methods

### Outreach activities

During the Fall 2017 and Spring 2018

1. Posters
2. Tabling events
3. MIND screen
4. In-classroom presentations

Data collection:

Voluntary post test after each presentation

## Results

### → Posters

- 48 poster displayed in all department offices
- 6 posters in high traffic areas on campus

### → Tabling events

- CSUN Farmers market (Every Tuesday)
- WIC outreach table (Thursdays on WIC hours)
- Parents Night at Children's Center

→ **MIND Screens** displayed throughout Fall 2017 and Spring 2018

→ **In-classroom presentations** 45 presentations

### Post-test:

→ 402 students filled out the voluntary post test.

Students were from the following departments:

- Biology
- Kinesiology
- Family & Consumer S.
- Health Sciences
- Child & Adolescent Dev.
- Social Work

→ **95%** were undergraduate students

→ Average age was 20 - 24 years

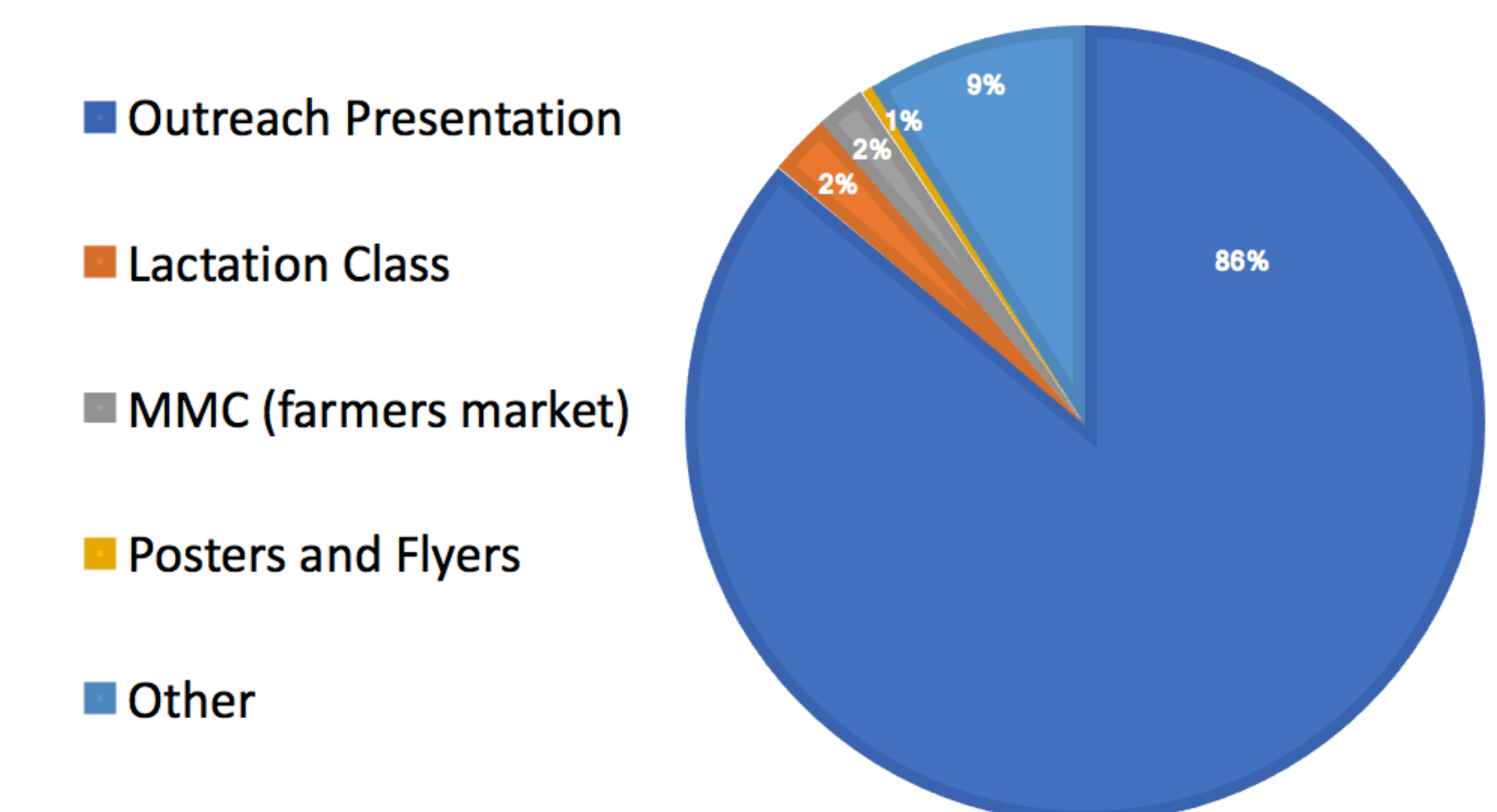
→ 86 % didn't know about the WIC outreach office on campus before the presentation.

→ The other 14% indicated they had learned about WIC on campus through the following:

1. Lactation class
2. Outreach table at CSUN Farmers market
3. Poster



### HOW DID YOU LEARN ABOUT WIC ON CAMPUS?



## Discussion

→ A WIC office on campus would be beneficial to the CSUN community by providing an accessible location on campus.

→ Of the approximately 44,000 students, faculty, and staff on campus, only about 2.5% were reached due to limited time and resources. There is a need to find different ways to reach out more members of the CSUN community.

## Limitations & Research Implications

→ Presentations were conducted only in morning classes where majority of participants were undergraduate students.

## Future Implications

Finding ways to reach out to:

- More staff/faculty
- Graduate students
- Evening classes
- Local clinics and healthcare facilities

## Conclusion

→ Based on preliminary data collection, in-classroom presentations are an effective way to reach students. However, there is a need to continue the outreach efforts to increase awareness and promote the WIC outreach office on campus.