COVID-19: Documenting Challenges Faced by California Families with Children 0-5 Years Old on WIC
INTERVIEW GUIDE (English)

Introduction
Hi, my name is [insert name] and I’m from the University of California calling on behalf of the WIC Program. Thank you for responding to our text and agreeing to participate in this interview today about WIC and COVID-19. We are calling to hear more about how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected your family and your ability to access WIC. We want to learn about your experiences to help improve access to the WIC program and other services that may help during this time. We are not trying to sell you anything. The interview should take about 35-45 minutes. In appreciation for your time, we will send you a $25 gift card by mail, text or email when you complete the interview. We encourage you to provide your opinions. Please know that your participation is entirely voluntary. If there are any questions that you do not want to answer or have no opinion about, please let me know and we will go to the next question. If you choose to end the interview before it is done, or if you choose not to participate, there will be no penalties or any loss of WIC benefits you may already be receiving. If you have any questions, you may contact WIC at 1-888-942-2229 or Dr. Lorrence Ritchie, the co-principal investigator at (510) 642-3589. For study purposes, the conversation will be recorded. This will help us ensure that we do not miss any important information you share with us What you say will be confidential, meaning we will not be sharing any information about you with others. Do you have any questions before we get started? (Answer questions; if says now not a good time, ask for date and time to reschedule interview; if no longer interested or does not want to be recorded, thank for time and do not continue with the interview.)

Q0  Do you agree to participate in this interview today?  
No (Record if reason given why not; End call)
Yes, (continue)
Did not pick up (add how many times you have tried to contact, (ie second attempt)

• As we go, I will move through different topics so I don’t keep you for too long.
• There are no right or wrong answers. We’re just interested in your thoughts.

First, I’m going to ask you a series of questions and response options for each question. I will ask you to choose one response or to select all that apply.

Q00  CONTROL Question: Mark yes if WIC is offering additional money for Fruits and Vegetables during Pandemic.  
No
yes

COVID Impacts

Q1. How concerned do you feel about COVID? [Stanford Q1 modified]. Would you say…  
(read responses):
Not at all concerned
A little concerned
Moderately concerned
Very concerned
DK/Ref

Q2. Have you or anyone in your household been diagnosed with COVID? (Positive test, or told by medical provider they probably are positive) By household, we mean anyone living with you.  
No .....................1 (skip to Q3)
Yes .....................2
DK/Ref
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. [show if yes to Q2] How were you/your household member/s tested for COVID?</td>
<td>No......1, but told I have Yes......2 tested, <strong>Please describe</strong> DK/Ref</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. [show if yes to Q2] Are you/were your household member/s able to get medical help for COVID? <strong>(Describe)</strong></td>
<td>No ..............1 <strong>Please describe</strong> Yes ..............2 <strong>Please describe</strong> DK/Ref</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3. Have you or anyone in your household been concerned about having COVID but have not been able to get tested?</td>
<td>No ..............1 (skip to Q4) Yes ..............2 DK/Ref</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. [show if yes to Q3] Please describe your experience trying to get tested.</td>
<td><strong>Describe</strong> DK/Ref</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Q4. Due to the COVID pandemic, have you or other members of your household experienced difficulties with any of the following things? I am going to list off several items, please tell me yes or no for each item. **(read items in random order)** [Stanford Q44; Select all that apply] | Reduced wages, work hours or lost job ........................................Yes/No/DK/Ref (show Q5)  
Childcare access ................... Yes/No/DK/Ref  
Getting food........................ Yes/No/DK/Ref  
Housing.................................. Yes/No/DK/Ref (show Q6)  
Transportation................. Yes/No/DK/Ref (show Q7)  
Getting hand sanitizer or cleaning supplies... Yes/No/DK/Ref  
Getting medications, accessing healthcare or paying for medical expenses...............Yes/No/DK/Ref (show Q8)  
Getting physical activity ........Yes/No/DK/Ref (show Q9)  
Other: __________________________ Yes/No/DK/Ref |
| Q5 [Show if reduced wages/hours or lost job] Have you applied for paid sick leave or wage replacement, or unemployment benefits? | No ..............1  
Yes.............2  
DK/Ref |
| a. [show if yes to Q5] How did you learn about this? **(probe with paid sick leave or wage replacement or unemployment benefits if needed)** | **Describe** DK/Ref |
| Q6 [Show if experienced difficulty with housing] Has COVID affected your family’s ability pay rent or mortgage payments? | No........1  
Yes........2 **How have you dealt with this?** DK/Ref |
| a. [Show if yes to Q6] Did you need to stop making payments at any time? | No........1  
Yes........2 **Please describe** ______________ DK/Ref |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Housing protections have been put in place that prevent families from being evicted during the pandemic if they cannot make their rent or mortgage payments. Have these helped keep you and your family from being evicted?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7</td>
<td>[Show if experienced difficulty accessing transportation] How has COVID affected your family's ability to access transportation when needed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8</td>
<td>[Show if experienced difficulty paying for medical expenses / getting medications / accessing healthcare] How has COVID affected your family's ability to get medications?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9</td>
<td>[Show if experienced difficulty getting physical activity] How has COVID affected your family's ability to get physical activity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10</td>
<td>Schools and many childcare facilities have been closed due to COVID. Has this impacted your family?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>[Show if yes to Q10] Have you had difficulty taking care of children at home?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>[show if yes to Q10] How have you dealt with care for your children during this time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11</td>
<td>Do you have any children that were receiving meals from school right before the COVID pandemic began?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Have you received school meals and/or Pandemic EBT during the COVID pandemic?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>[Show if Yes, Pandemic EBT or both] Has receiving pandemic EBT helped your family?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Response Options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WIC participation and enrollment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13 Who in your household is currently receiving WIC? <em>(Read off options)</em></td>
<td>I am going to list off several categories, please tell me yes or no and if yes how many for each category.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pregnant woman........................................ No/ Yes___#/DK-Ref Postpartum woman ...................... No/Yes___#/DK-Ref new born to &lt;12 months. .......... No/Yes___#/DK-Ref Child age1(&lt;2 years)....................... No/Yes___#/DK-Ref Child ages 2 to 5 years......................... No/ Yes___#/DK-Ref</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q14 We are trying to understand people's patterns of participation in WIC before, and since the COVID pandemic started in March.</td>
<td>Did you join WIC for the first time during the pandemic? (If yes, PROBE: Just to confirm, you have never participated in WIC before March of 2020.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No...1 Yes, new...2 DK/Ref</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. [Show if Q14 no] Did you receive WIC in the past but stopped receiving WIC and then returned to WIC since the start of pandemic in March, 2020?</td>
<td>No...1 Yes, returned...2 DK/Ref</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Response</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Have you been receiving WIC benefits without any gaps over the last year? (If yes, PROBE: Just to confirm, you were on WIC before the pandemic started in February of 2020 and have continued to participate since the pandemic started.)</td>
<td>No...1 Yes, continuous...2 (Skip to Q23) DK/Ref</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you rejoin WIC because of a new pregnancy?</td>
<td>No...1 Yes...2 DK/Ref</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When is the last time your family participated in WIC?</td>
<td>(enter month/year, or just year if that's all she can remember) DK/Ref</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How hard or easy was it to enroll in WIC? Please describe your experience enrolling/re-enrolling in WIC, including how it compared to enrolling in other programs, if you applied to others. (probe for general experience)</td>
<td>Describe DK/Ref</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did you find out you were eligible for WIC? (Mark all that apply)</td>
<td>Friend or family member Another program. What program? _________ By calling WIC Online eligibility calculator Other: ______________________ DK/Ref</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is the first time the WIC Program has enrolled new/returning participants over the phone instead of face to face. How did you provide proof of income, proof of address, (and proof of pregnancy if needed)? (Mark all that apply)</td>
<td>Text Email Other__________ DK/Ref</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How comfortable were you sharing information this way? (Read responses)</td>
<td>Comfortable Somewhat comfortable Somewhat uncomfortable Uncomfortable DK/Ref</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you experience any other challenges enrolling in WIC remotely during the COVID pandemic?</td>
<td>No......1 Yes.....2 What things could be improved? ______________________ DK/Ref</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Q21
Why did you enroll in WIC?
*Describe________*
DK/Ref

### Q22
How did you learn how to use the WIC card? (Mark all that apply)
- Watched video
- Taught by phone
- Neither/haven’t done this yet
- Other
DK/Ref

### Q23
Were you able to download the California WIC App on your smart phone?
- No……1. **Why not? __________**
- Yes…..2
DK/Ref

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### WIC services (asked of all – new, returning and existing participants)

#### Q24
Have you talked with a WIC staff person by phone since the start of the COVID pandemic, when WIC clinics were closed to participants? (not counting when you enrolled in WIC over the phone. for anyone newly enrolled)
- No......1 (e.g. my benefits are loaded on my WIC Card and I know how to use them)
- Yes ......2
DK/Ref

#### Q25
Have you received information from WIC during the COVID pandemic by...?: (Select all that apply)(Read responses).
- Text................................. No/ Yes/ DK-Ref
- Email....................................No/ Yes/ DK-Ref
- Online website.................... No/ Yes/ DK-Ref
- California WIC app.......... No/ Yes/ DK-Ref
- Other: (specify)___________ No/ Yes/ DK-Ref

#### Q26
What have been the most helpful ways for you to get information from WIC during this pandemic?
*Describe__________________________*
DK/Ref

#### Q27
What suggestions do you have for WIC to improve communication with you during this pandemic?
*Describe__________________________*
DK/Ref

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### The next questions are about shopping for your WIC foods

#### Q28
During the COVID pandemic, where do you most often shop for WIC-approved foods? Would you say... (read responses):
- Large store with lots of check out registers
- Small store with 1 to 2 registers
- WIC store
- Have not been shopping for WIC foods (skip to Q36)
DK/Ref
### Q29
Have you had any challenges finding or purchasing any of the WIC foods since the COVID pandemic started? (I can list the WIC foods if that would be helpful (may be needed for brand new pts.)

- No......1
- Yes.....2 Please describe (NPI staff will have a list to prevent conversation on foods that aren’t WIC items)

DK/Ref

### a. [Show if yes to Q29] Don’t read off the list below unless asked. Just mark off which items

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Milk
- Cheese
- Yogurt
- Eggs
- Breakfast Cereal
- Whole grain bread, whole wheat or corn tortillas, or brown rice (this is one category of whole grain foods)
- Peanut Butter
- Beans/peas/lentils
  - 100% Juice
  - Tofu/Soy milk
- Infants < 12m:
  - Infant formula (captured later)
  - Jarred fruits and vegetables
  - Jarred meats

### Q30
Some food stores are trying to make it easier to access WIC food items during the COVID pandemic. Are food stores in your area offering any of the following? (Read options) (Mark all that apply)

- A special section in the store for WIC foods... No/ Yes/ DK-Ref
- Preordering WIC foods by phone or online for pick up at the store or curbside... No/ Yes/ DK-Ref
- Paying online for WIC foods with delivery to your home... No/ Yes/ DK-Ref
- Other, Describe________ No/ Yes/ DK-Ref

### Q31
Are you aware that because of the COVID pandemic, WIC has temporarily expanded brands and package sizes that can be purchased if the WIC food is not available at the store?

- No....1 (skip to Q33)
- Yes...2 How did you find out about this? (go to Q32)

DK/Ref (skip to Q33)
| Q32 | Have you used your WIC Card to purchase any food items from this temporarily expanded WIC food list? | No.....1  
Yes....2 Which items? ______________________ 
DK/Ref |
| Q33 | Has the California WIC App helped you understand which foods you can buy with your WIC card? | No.....3 Haven't used WIC App (skip to Q36)  
No.....1 Other reason. Please describe  
Yes.....2 Please describe____________________ 
DK/Ref |
| Q34 | How satisfied are you with the WIC App? Would you say... (read responses): | Very satisfied  
Somewhat satisfied  
Somewhat unsatisfied  
Very unsatisfied  
DK/Ref |
| Q35 | How would you improve the WIC App? | Describe  
DK/Ref |
| Q36 | [Show if Q13 infant <12 months on the program] Have you run into challenges getting WIC-approved infant formula during the COVID pandemic? (If no, probe if using formula) | No.....1 Using formula  
No.....3 Breastfeeding/not using formula  
Yes.....2 What have you done to deal with this? (Probes to include if not shared: Have you had to water down formula, feed infant less, introduce other foods you weren’t planning to introduce yet, faced store item-limits and had to come to the store more)  
DK/Ref |
| The next few questions are about general food purchasing, not only your WIC foods |
| Q37 | Many people have been purchasing more food during the COVID pandemic to stock up. Have you stocked up on additional food because of COVID? | No.....1  
Yes....2  
DK/Ref |
| a. [Show if yes to Q37] Would you say you stocked up enough for up to 1 week, 2 weeks, or more than 2 weeks? | Enough for up to 1 week  
Enough for up to 2 weeks  
Enough for more than 2 weeks  
DK/Ref |
| Q38 | Compared to what you usually buy, have you bought more, less or about the same amount of shelf-stable foods (such as rice, dried or canned beans, or other canned or frozen goods) during the COVID pandemic? | Bought about the same  
Bought more. Why? ______________________  
Bought less. Why? ______________________  
DK/Ref |
| Q39 | Due to COVID, WIC is temporarily providing more money to WIC families for fruits and vegetables. In the past | Not enough. Please describe_______  
Just right. Describe how you used this additional money ________ |
| Month, was the increased amount... (read responses) | Too much. What made it hard for you to spend more? Describe ________
Didn’t buy. DK/Ref |
|---|---|
| Q40 | Compared to what you usually buy have you bought more, less or about the same amount of fresh fruits and vegetables during the COVID pandemic? (If bought more, probe if they think this is different from the amount they ate before) Bought about the same Bought more. Why? __________
Bought less. Why? __________
DK/Ref |
| Q41 | Compared to what you usually buy, have you changed the beverages you purchase during the COVID pandemic? (If yes, probe if drinking habits have changed or if they are just stocking up more than before but drinking the same amount) No....1
Yes....2 What were the changes and why? ________
DK/Ref |
| Q42 | Households often throw away some of the food that they buy. Compared to the amount of food you usually throw away, have you thrown away more, less, or about the same amount of food during the COVID pandemic? Throw away about the same which is very little (Mark if volunteered) Thrown away about the same Thrown away more. Why? ________
Thrown away less. Why? ________
DK/Ref |
| Q43 | I’m going to read you several statements that people have made about their food situation. For these statements, please tell me whether the statement was often true, sometimes true, or never true for your household in the last month—that is, the last 30 days. [USDA 6-item plus item on worry] a. “We worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.” Was that often, sometimes, or never true for your household in the last 30 days?” Often true Sometimes true Never true DK / Ref
b. “The food that we bought just didn’t last, and we didn’t have money to get more.” Was that often, sometimes, or never true for your household in the last 30 days? Often true Sometimes true Never true DK/Ref
c. In the last 30 days, did you or other adults in your household ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn’t enough money for food? No.....1
Yes....2
DK/Ref |
### Q44
Since the COVID pandemic have you or anyone in your household gotten free groceries from a food pantry, food bank, church, or other place that helps with free food?

| Yes | 2 |
| No | 1 |
| DK/Ref | |

### Q45
Earlier this year, before the COVID pandemic, did you or your family participate in any of the following programs (read items)? (For each program the respondent reported, ask a as applicable)

- CalFresh (also called SNAP/EBT/food stamps): yes/no/DK Ref
- CalWorks (also called TANF, pronounced tan-if): yes/no/DK Ref
- Medicaid or Medi-cal: yes/no/DK Ref

### a. [Show if yes to Q45] Are you still participating in this program?

| No | 1 |
| Yes | 2 |
| DK/Ref | |

### Q46
Since the start of the COVID pandemic, have you tried to apply for any additional assistance program besides WIC, like CalFresh (also known as EBT or food stamps) or Pandemic-EBT?

| No | 1 (Skip to Q47) |
| Yes | 2 |
| DK/Ref | |

### a. Which programs? [READ OUT EACH ONE] (For each program the respondent reported becoming newly eligible for, ask b-c as applicable)

- CalFresh
- Pandemic-EBT
- Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program
- Other

### b. How did you learn about this program?

- Describe
- DK/Ref

### c. Are you now participating in this program?

| No | 1 |
| Yes | 2 |
| DK/Ref | |

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**Now I have a question about COVID and immigration**
**Q47**  Before COVID, did you ever not enroll in WIC or stop getting WIC because of immigration concerns?  
| No.....1 | Yes....2 Please describe________ | DK/Ref |

I have a few multiple-choice questions about how you are feeling, as COVID has been hard for most families. (source Patient Health Questionnaire-2 (PHQ-2))

**Q48**  Over the past two weeks, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a... having little interest or pleasure in doing things (Read responses)</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Several days</th>
<th>More than half the days</th>
<th>Nearly every day</th>
<th>DK/Ref</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b... feeling down, depressed or hopeless (Read responses)</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Several days</td>
<td>More than half the days</td>
<td>Nearly every day</td>
<td>DK/Ref</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Would you like a number for someone at the LA County Department of Mental Health you can speak with: (800) 854-7771 OR TEXT “LA” TO 741741

**Thank you for sharing this information with us. I just want to ask you some final questions about you and your family. You are allowed to skip any of the questions.**

**Q49**  What is the highest level of education you have completed or the highest degree you have received? (IF HIGH SCHOOL, ASK: Did you graduate or get a GED?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No formal schooling.....................................................1</th>
<th>8th grade or less.....................................................2</th>
<th>Grades 9-12 but not a high school grad...............3</th>
<th>High school graduate/GED.................................4</th>
<th>Some college/trade school/ associate degree...............5</th>
<th>(4-year) college graduate..................................6</th>
<th>Post graduate/ professional degree ......................7</th>
<th>Don’t know.....................................................98</th>
<th>Refused..........................................................99</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Q50**  For classification purposes, we’d like to know what your racial background is. Are you White, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian or an Alaskan native, or a member of another race or a combination of these? (Mark all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>White.....................................................1</th>
<th>Black/African American .........................2</th>
<th>Asian .................................................3</th>
<th>Pacific Islander.................................4</th>
<th>American Indian/Alaskan Native ..............5</th>
<th>Hispanic/Latino...............................6</th>
<th>Other (specify) ...............................7</th>
<th>Don’t know.................................98</th>
<th>Refused.................................99</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Q51**  How many people living in your household are between the ages of: (Read off options) (if pregnant count once child is born)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0-4 years</th>
<th>5-17 years</th>
<th>18-65 years</th>
<th>65 and older</th>
<th>DK/Ref</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
**Q52**
What is your ZIP code?
______________________
**Describe**

**Closing**

**Q53**
At the end of our study, we will share overall findings with the WIC program. Do you have any suggestions for how we might share the findings with WIC participants?
**Describe**

**Q54**
Is there anything else you would like to add or any questions you have?
**Describe**

**Separate Document**

**Q55**
[IF QUESTIONS ASKED DURING SURVEY]:
It sounded like you had questions about [LIST ITEMS]. Would you like WIC to contact you and answer your questions? [IF YES, MARK THE ITEMS THEY HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT]
**WIC Card**
**WIC App**
**Protection for renters or employment**
**Expanded WIC food list**
**Other____________________**
**Participant did not have questions**

**Q55a**
Phone number
__________________

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*Thanks so much for sharing your thoughts today. You will be receiving $25 for your time. I can either mail you a gift card or email or text you an electronic gift card. Which would you prefer?*

**IF mail selected:** I am stopping the recording now and noting your address in a separate document so your none of your personal information will be connected to your survey responses. Could you tell me the name and address to send this gift card to?

First name, Last name_____________________________
Street Address______________________________________
City________________________________________________
**IF email selected:** I am stopping the recording now and noting your email address in a separate document so your none of your personal information will be connected to your survey responses. Can you please tell me the email address to send this gift card to?

Email Address  ___________________________________________

**IF text selected:** I am stopping the recording now and noting your phone number in a separate document so your none of your personal information will be connected to your survey responses. Can you please tell me the mobile phone to send this gift card to?

Mobile Phone  ___________________________________________

Thanks again for your participation in our survey!

Notes (If needed)

______________________________________________________________________________________