

# Fieldnotes



## Arizona Department of Health Services - WIC Attitudes, Barriers, & Beliefs Study: Final Report

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# Executive Summary

Arizona WIC (AZ WIC) desires to understand why participants choose not to return to WIC, why WIC eligible families never enroll in WIC and what changes are needed to increase program retention and participation rates. With this information, AZ WIC and Moses Anshell will develop and implement targeted ad campaigns to raise awareness of and increase participation in the AZ WIC program.

With this goal in mind, Limetree Research conducted a mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) study. Focus group participants, in-depth interviewees, and survey respondents were recruited in both English and Spanish using a Facebook ad targeting women between the ages of 18-34, who live in Arizona and have children under the age of 5. Due to the difficulties encountered during the Spanish qualitative recruitment over Facebook, and their limited use of technology compared to English speakers, two promotoras conducted in-person recruitment and administered the survey in Spanish using android tablets to current, previous and potential WIC participants.

Six (6) online focus groups and 12 in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with previous AZ WIC participants (PRW) as well as WIC-eligible women who have never participated (NBW) in the AZ WIC program. The focus groups and interviews were conducted with English and Spanish speakers. The qualitative findings informed development of the quantitative survey which was administered online via SurveyMonkey. In total, 775 surveys were completed (689 via SurveyMonkey, 86 via promotora's android tablet).

The focus group discussion guides and in-depth interview questions used projective techniques to capture the womens' true feelings and emotions and provide valuable insight into the emotional triggers that will encourage their return to or enrollment in the AZ WIC program. Overall, findings from both the qualitative and quantitative respondents suggest that WIC is helpful, but it is perceived to be a hassle. Moreover, participation in WIC involves feelings of embarrassment and shame, often due to the stigma associated with being on a government program.

Findings suggest that to improve retention and participation rates, AZ WIC must provide great customer service and be a source of social support for Arizona moms. In addition to the tangible assistance feeding their infants and children, these women want to know that AZ WIC is there to help them and support them in their role as a mother. Moms want better customer service, an easier, less embarrassing shopping experience and information relevant to their lives today.

# Methods

Limetree Research used a mixed methods approach to understand current and previous WIC participants' (PRW) true feelings about the WIC program. A similar approach was used to understand how women who are WIC-eligible, but have never been on WIC (NBW-E), view the program. This mixed methods approach utilized qualitative and quantitative methods to:

- Determine the perceived brand of the AZ WIC program
- Determine awareness of nutrition education and breastfeeding services Arizona WIC offers.
- Understand why PRW participants decided to discontinue their enrollment in the Arizona WIC program and why NBW-E choose not to enroll in the Arizona WIC program (attitudes, emotional and logistical barriers, and beliefs)
- Determine if WIC staff are influential from current and PRW participants' standpoint (likable and credible).
- Identify emotional triggers that Arizona WIC can act upon to retain WIC participants and that will encourage NBW-E women to enroll.
- Identify what changes are needed to bring back PRW participants and to encourage NBW-E women to enroll.

In-depth interviews, focus groups and surveys were conducted in both English and Spanish.

NOTE: Current WIC participants were not included in the qualitative in-depth interviews and focus groups.

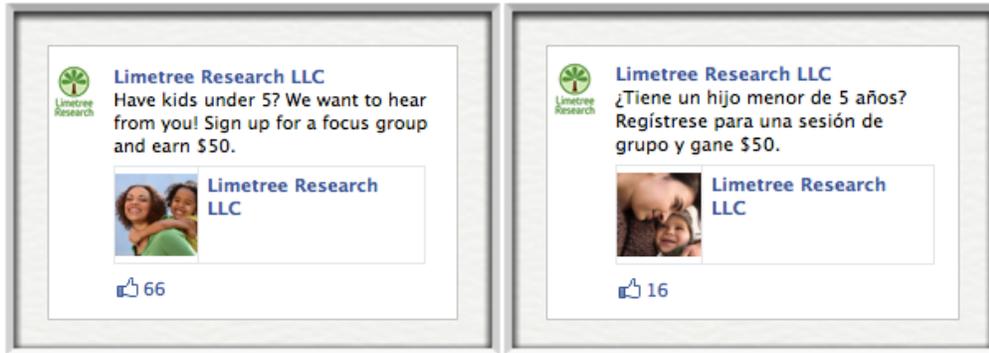
## Recruitment

### Qualitative Focus Groups and In-depth Interviews

To recruit participants for the focus groups two advertisements, one in English and one in Spanish, were placed on Facebook targeting women aged 18-34 who have children under five and live in Arizona. The Facebook ad directed these women to a brief qualifying survey via SurveyMonkey to determine eligibility for participation in a paid, online focus group. PRW-E and NBW-E women were contacted by Limetree staff via phone for a secondary screening to ensure they qualified for the project and to receive detailed information for the focus group.

The English Facebook ad generated a total of 1,500,572 impressions with 2,506 clicks and a click through rate of 0.167. This generated 416 actions, such as liking the ad or the Facebook page (See Figure 1 for sample ad images).

Figure 1.



The Spanish ad campaign was not as successful as the English Facebook ad at reaching a large of an audience of Spanish-speaking women. The Spanish ad campaign on Facebook, returned very few PRW participants and hardly any NBW-E participants. Therefore an alternate method was used to recruit focus group participants (See Spanish Recruitment section below).

Overall, 432 people (386 English, 46 Spanish) responded to the ad via Facebook. Of those who replied to the English ad:

- 116 were current WIC participants,
- 114 were previous participants (PRW)
  - 73 PRW were currently income eligible (PRW-E),
- 145 individuals had never been on WIC (NBW),
  - and 25 NBW were currently income eligible (NBW-E).

Of those who responded to the Spanish Facebook ad:

- 37 were current WIC participants,
- 6 were PRW participants,
  - 5 PRW were currently income eligible (PRW-E),
- and 3 NBW, all of whom were over the income guidelines.

A total of 14 participants were recruited for the PRW-E English language focus groups and 14 participants were recruited for the NBW-E English language focus groups. 6 of these resulted in in-depth interviews.

### **Recruitment of Spanish speakers**

Spanish-speaking previous WIC participants were recruited by phone. The Arizona Department of Health Services WIC program provided a list of PRW participants. Over 600 calls were made to locate Spanish-speakers who had the technology to participate in the online focus groups. Fourteen PRW participants were recruited and confirmed for 2 focus groups, with a show rate of 7.

Recruitment of participants for the Spanish-speaking NBW-E focus groups was a different story. Community leaders were asked to help find mothers who were income eligible but who had never been on WIC. These community leaders included: Gail Emrick, Executive Director Southeast Arizona Area Health Education Center; Claudia Ceballos, Program Assistant; Ines Pampara Director Western Arizona Area Health Education Center; and emails to all area directors. Lourdes Fernandez, Program Coordinator at the Mel and Enid Zuckermann College of Public Health, Arizona Prevention Research Center, University of Arizona; Annabelle Unanue, from the Mariposa Community Health Center Platiquemos Salud Program, and Michelle Quezada from the Maternal Child Program. Alex Valenzuela, Director of Social Work, Regional Centers for Border Health serving Yuma, La Paz and Mohave; Floribella Redondo, Program Coordinator and Maria Meza, Promotora de Salud Campesinos sin Fronteras serving Yuma, San Luis and Somerton. Lorena Verdugo, Community Health Advisor, Ventanilla de Salud and Arizona Community Health Outreach Workers Network; Lonnie Rubio, AZ WIC contact, schools, churches and friends. Additionally, focus group participants and in-depth interviewees were asked if they knew anybody who met our criteria.

After numerous calls and emails from our community leads, 18 potential focus group participants were contacted. Of these 7 were not eligible to participate, one could not receive incoming calls and 5 who even after numerous attempts to reach them did not return our calls. Due to the lack of technological resources, limited time and scheduling conflicts it was decided to replace the focus groups with in-depth interviews. A total of 5 in-depth interviews were conducted with NBW-E Spanish-speaking women.

All participants were given \$50 gift card for their participation. They could choose either a VISA or an Amazon gift card.

A total of 6 focus groups and 11 individual in-depth interviews were conducted. Of the 25 focus group participants, 16 were previous WIC participants (with 9 English and 7 Spanish-speakers) and 9 were WIC-eligible women who had never been on WIC. Of the 11 in-depth interviews, two were conducted with previous English-speaking WIC participants, 1 with a previous

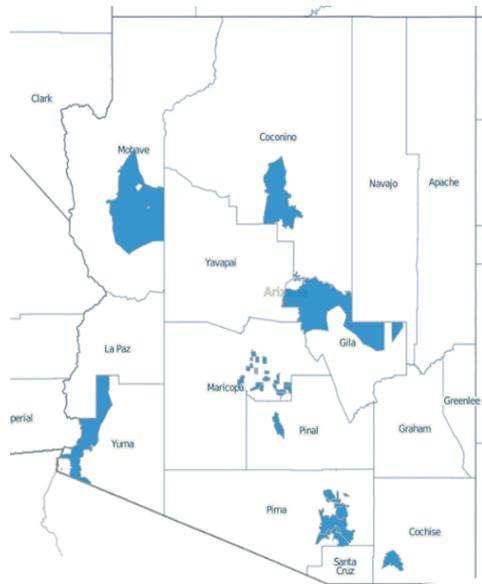
Spanish-speaking participant, 4 with English-speaking WIC-eligible women who had never been on WIC and 5 with Spanish-speaking women who had never been on WIC.

Table 1. Summary of focus groups and in-depth interview participants by language

Focus groups	English	Spanish
PRW-E	Group A: n=5 Group B: n=4	Group A: n=3 Group B: n=4
NBW-E	Group A: n=6 Group B: n= 3	
In-depth interviews	English	Spanish
PRW-E	n=2	n=1
NBW-E	n=4	n=5

The map in Figure 2 illustrates where focus groups participants live. Each of the focus groups included a mix of urban and rural participants.

Figure 2. Residential zip codes of focus groups participants



## Qualitative Focus Group and In-depth Interview Guides

The focus group discussion guides and in-depth interview questions used projective techniques to capture the women's true feelings and emotions about WIC. The guides and interview questions were developed in English and translated into Spanish by a native Spanish speaker. A guide or a set of questions was developed for each of the two groups (PRW-E and NBW-E). Some questions were similar across the groups. For example, both groups were guided through an "ideal job" exercise where they would be paid a lot of money to increase enrollment in the WIC program. Others differed by WIC enrollment status. For example, PRW-E women were asked to draw a stick figure of their WIC educator and to describe their WIC experience through a movie or novel. NBW-E were asked to help complete a story about a young woman who goes to WIC.

At the end of the focus groups and interviews, both PRW-E and NBW-E were asked an open-ended question about how they would want to feel if they return to or go to WIC for the first time. Next, they were shown the following list of words and asked to select the one word that "spoke to their heart" about how they want to feel when they leave the WIC office. These options were based on research on emotional triggers that drive behavior conducted by Barry Feig, author of *Hot Button Marketing*. Feig suggests identifying emotional triggers that resonate with your audience and using them to encourage individuals to take action.

- Secure
- Powerful
- Liked/loved
- Influential
- Fulfilled
- Understood
- Like you belong
- Like a great parent
- Cared for
- Independent
- Smart

## Quantitative Survey

### Instrument Development

Based on the qualitative findings an online survey was developed and conducted via SurveyMonkey to examine the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and barriers to WIC program participation among Arizona WIC current, PRW and NBW. Survey items were developed in consultation with Moses and ADHS staff and were tested with 8 current WIC participants at a

clinic in Phoenix, AZ. After the survey items were finalized in English the survey was translated into Spanish. Translation was reviewed and finalized by ADHS staff.

### Survey Respondent Recruitment

Similar to the qualitative recruitment, survey respondents were recruited in both English and Spanish using a Facebook ad targeting women between the ages of 18-34, who live in Arizona and have children under the age of 5. Once individuals clicked on the Facebook ad they were directed to the online survey. Samples of the ads used on Facebook are below.

Figure 3. Sample English Facebook recruitment ad

Limetree Research LLC · 369 like this  
October 12 at 3:11pm · 🌐

Have kids under 5? We want to hear from you! Complete a short survey & enter to win \$100.

**GIFT CARD**  
**VISA**

**Limetree Research**  
www.surveymonkey.com

We want to listen to the hearts and minds of moms with at least one child under 5. Make your opinion count. Complete this short survey & enter to win \$100. Time is limited, please respond today!

Figure 4. Sample Spanish Facebook recruitment ad



The survey ad was promoted on Facebook for approximately 2 weeks. The English Facebook ad generated a total of 725,167 impressions with 2,841 clicks for a click through rate of 0.392%. There were 1,533 actions such as liking the ad or going to the survey page. Of those that clicked the link to the survey page, 495 completed the survey via the Facebook ads. In addition to the Facebook ad, people who had completed the survey for the qualitative portion of the study and were eligible for the WIC program were sent an email with a link to the quantitative survey. This resulted in 90 additional completed survey responses.

The Spanish ads generated a total of 277,180 impressions with 1,381 clicks for a click through rate of 0.498%. There were 706 actions such as liking the page or going to the survey page. Of those that clicked the link to the survey page, 92 completed the survey via the Facebook ad.

Due to the difficulties encountered during the Spanish qualitative recruitment via Facebook, and their limited use of technology compared to English speakers, two promotoras were hired to conduct in-person survey administration in Spanish. The promotoras administered surveys to current, PRW and NBW-E participants. Survey items were presented to participants on an Android tablet using iSurvey software. The survey data was stored on the Android tablet, uploaded to the cloud and downloaded for further analysis. One of the promotoras was located in Douglas, AZ and her outreach was completed at immunization clinics, outside a low-income apartment complex and at grocery stores. She would either interview participants onsite or would obtain their contact information and make an appointment to visit their homes to complete the surveys. The other promotora was located in Tucson, AZ and she conducted her surveys in churches and at the Mexican consulate. The promotoras collected a total of 86 surveys (27 current; 36 PRW; 22 NBW-E; 1 missing WIC status item).

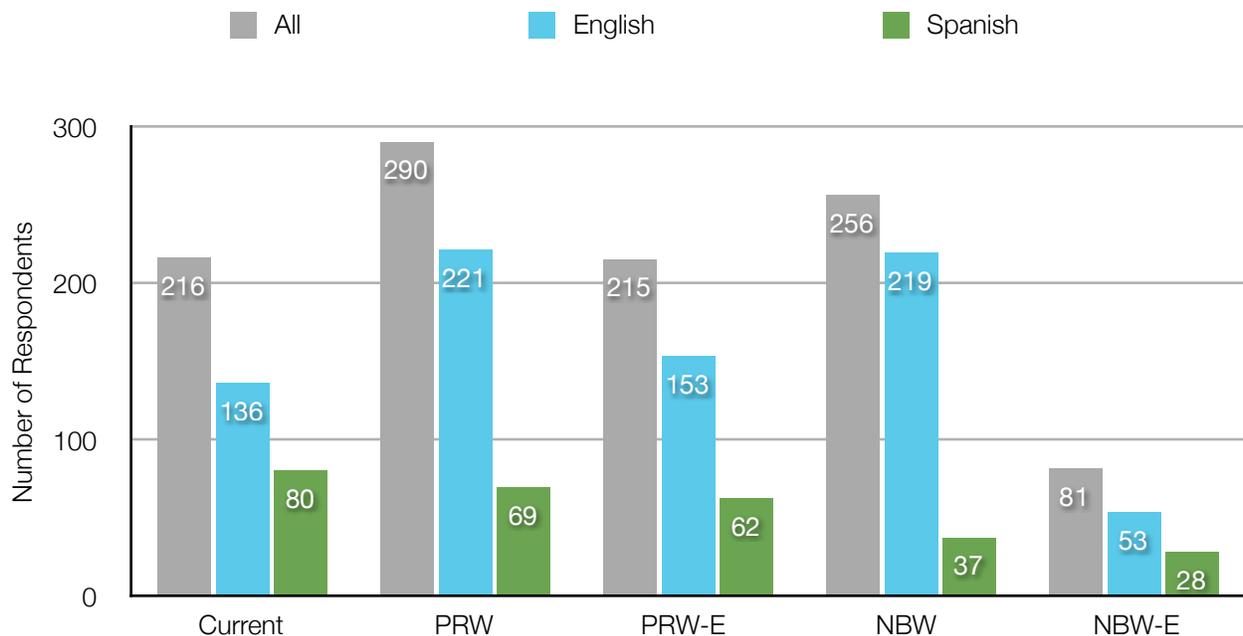
### Calls and emails

Using a phone list provided by AZ WIC, 351 PRW Spanish-speaking participants were called. From these calls, 83 PRW were directly contacted. A total of 18 emails were collected and the link to the online survey was given to 12 people. Participants who shared their email address were sent an email with a link to complete the online survey. Of these, only four completed the online survey.

### Final sample size for quantitative survey

The final sample consisted of 775 respondents. Of these, 762 indicated their WIC status. As illustrated in Figure 5, most (n=566, 74.3%) were English-speakers.

Figure 5. Have you or your child ever been on WIC?



Current= Current WIC participants

PRW= Previous WIC participants (eligible & non-eligible)

PRW-E= Previous WIC participants, currently eligible

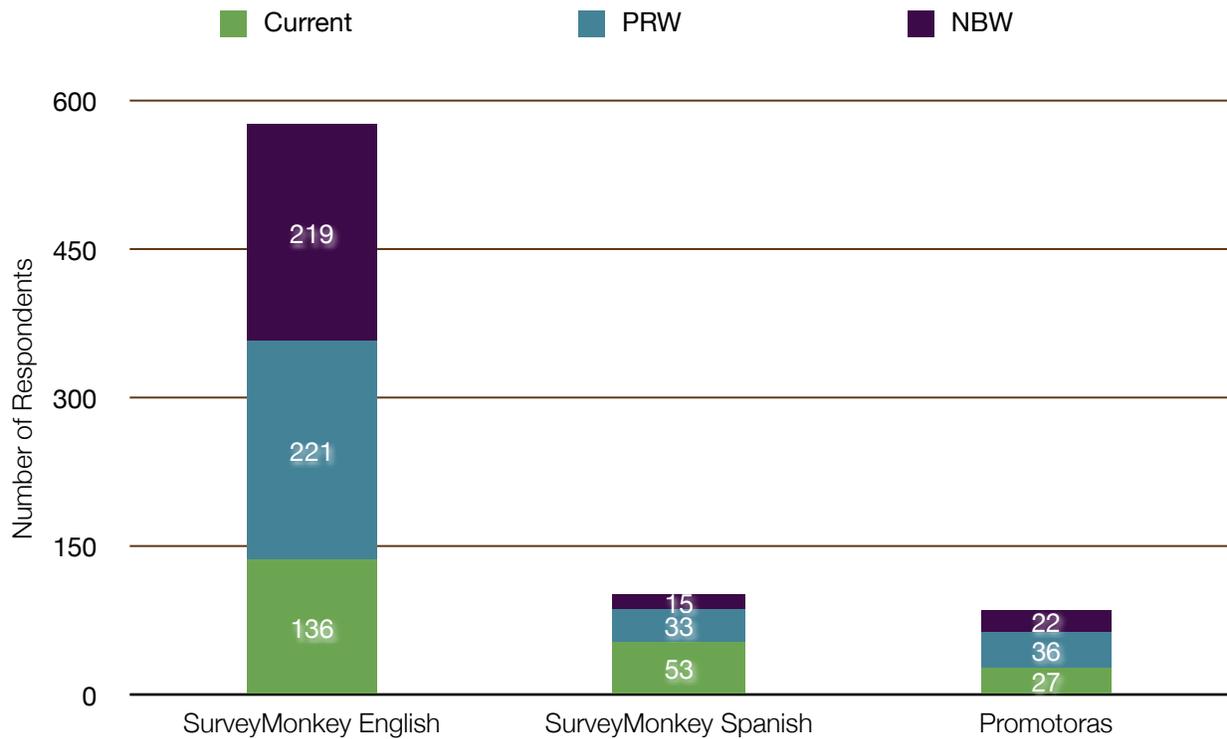
NBW= Never been on WIC (eligible & non-eligible)

NBW-E= Never been on WIC, currently eligible

### Survey Method by WIC Status

Figure 6 depicts the survey method used to collect data by survey respondents' WIC status. As shown, 677 surveys were completed online through SurveyMonkey and 81 were completed by the promotoras using Android tablets and iSurvey.

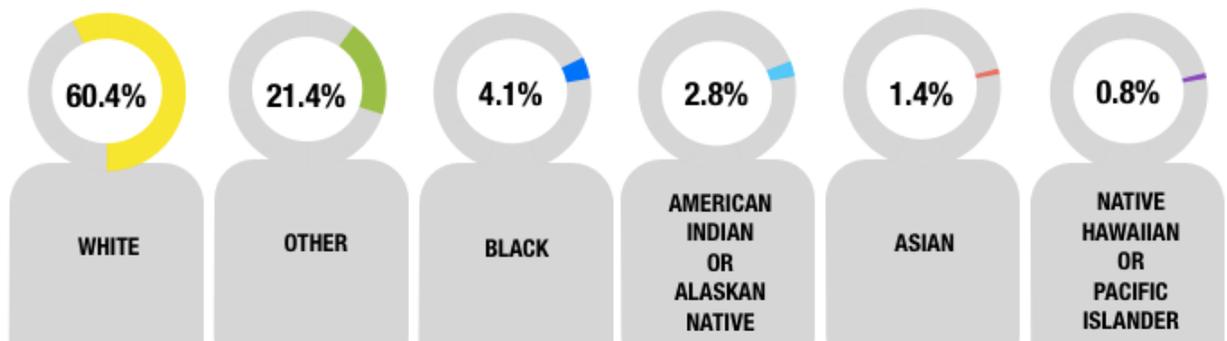
Figure 6. Survey method by WIC status



### Survey Respondents' Race

Of the 775 survey respondents, 60.4% were White, 21.4% selected other, 4.1% Black, 4% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 1.4% Asian, and 0.8% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

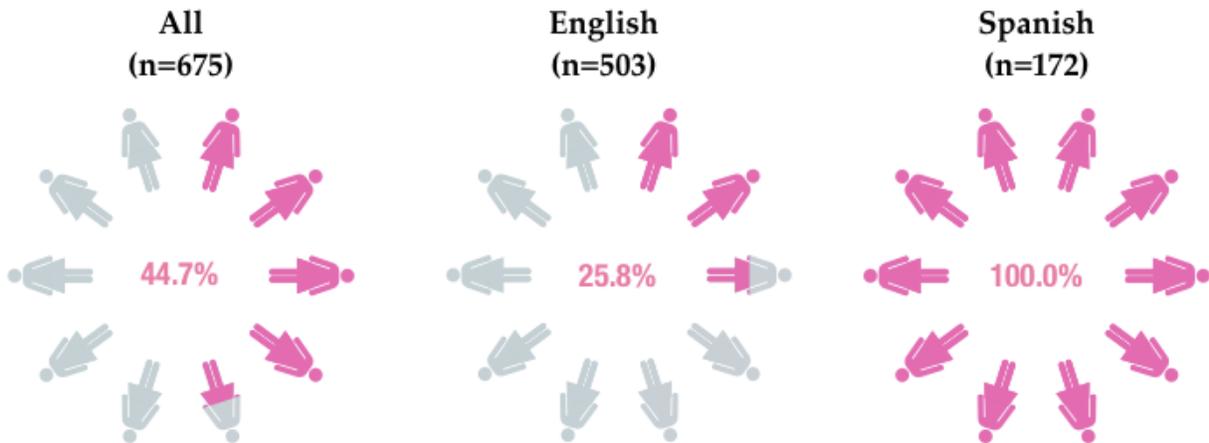
Figure 7. Race: What is your race? Please select one or more.



## Survey Respondents' Ethnicity

The ethnicity of the survey respondents is illustrated in Figure 8.

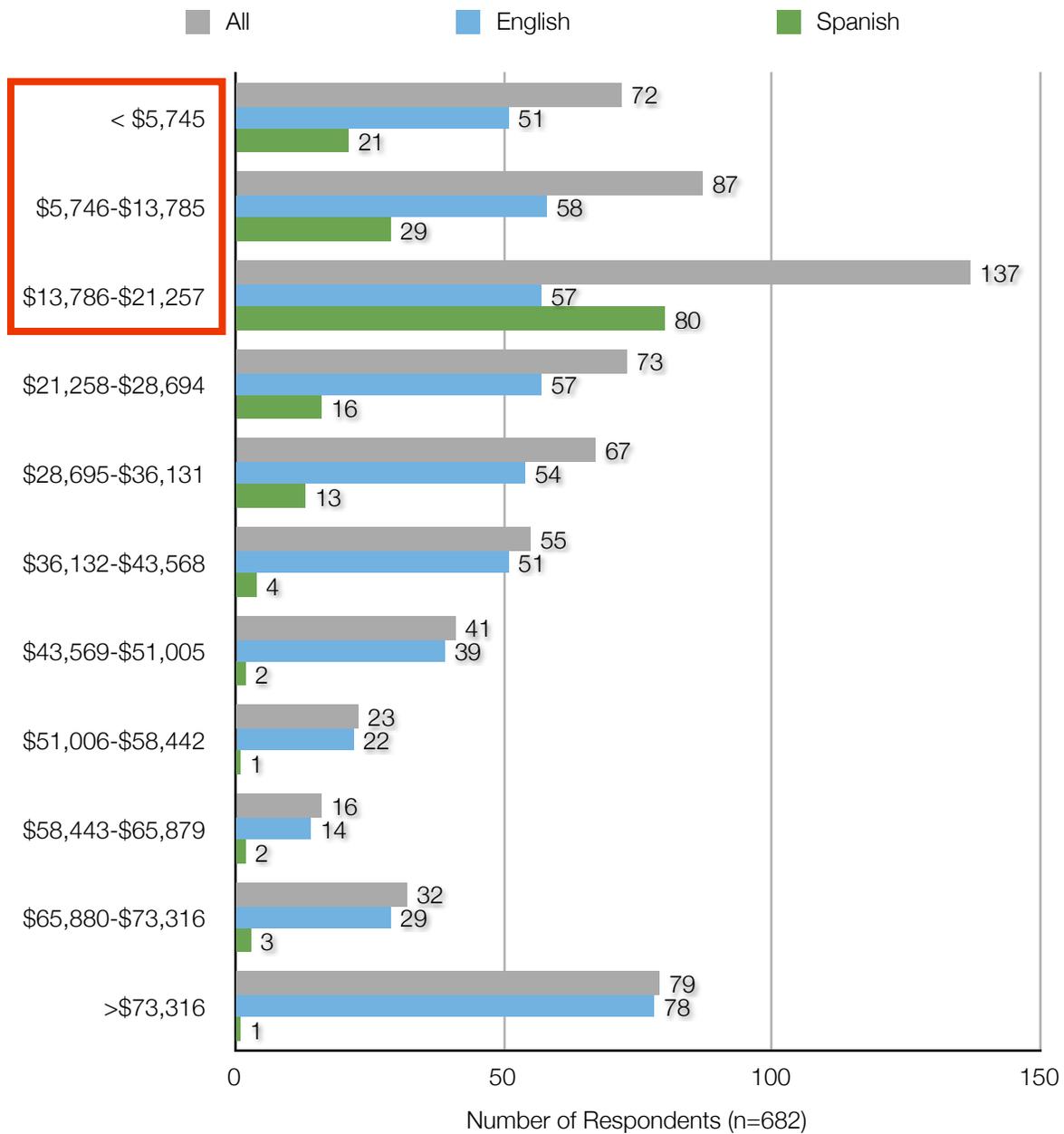
Figure 8. Ethnicity: Are you Hispanic, Latino or of Spanish origin?



## Survey Respondents' Income Categories

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their income from a list of income categories. There are a lot of very low income individuals who were recruited through Facebook. Additionally, a greater percent of Spanish-speakers selected the lower income categories.

Figure 9. Income: Please tell us your average annual household income before taxes or other deductions.



## WIC Categories

Table 2 illustrates survey respondents’ pregnancy status and age of their children. The final sample had 82 pregnant participants. Of these, 35 are categorized as NBW. Furthermore, 16 qualify for WIC based on their pregnancy and the income guidelines. These women were not added to the NBW-E category because we have no way of knowing whether they counted the pregnancy when reporting their household size.

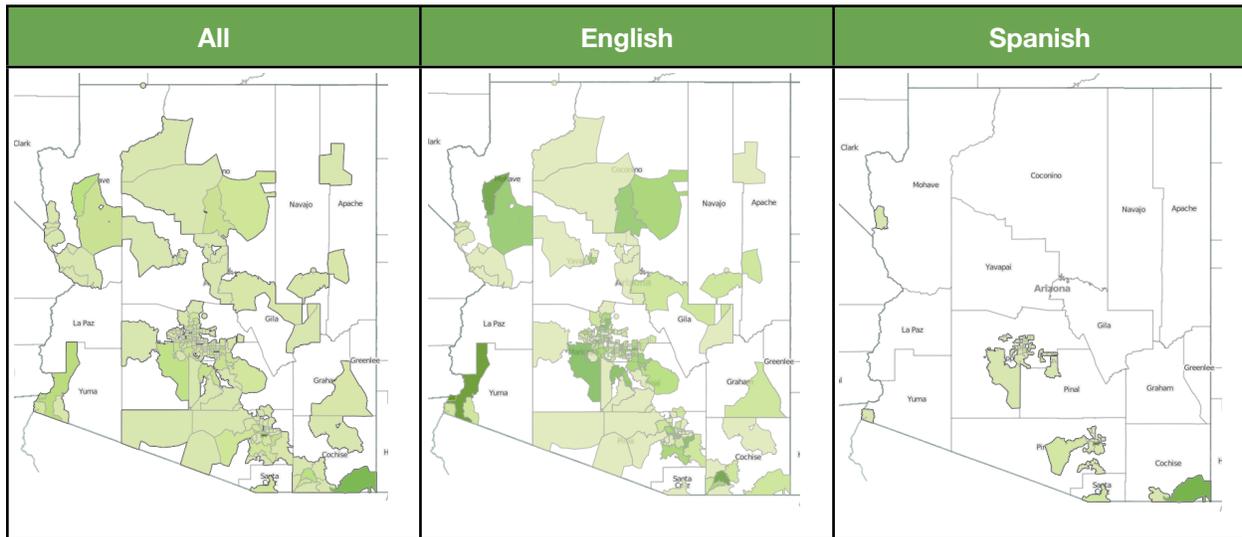
Table 2. WIC categories: Please select all of the following that apply to you:

	All		Current		PRW		NBW	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
I am pregnant	82	10.6	28	13.0	19	6.6	35	13.7
I was pregnant in the last six months	86	11.1	39	18.1	11	3.8	36	14.1
My child is younger than 1 year old	140	18.1	65	30.1	23	7.9	52	20.3
My child is 1 or 2 years old	295	38.1	84	38.9	115	39.7	96	37.5
My child is 3 or 4 years old	286	36.9	66	30.6	125	43.1	95	37.1

## Participant Zip Codes

Figure 10 illustrates the distribution of zip codes for survey respondents. As can be seen, respondents came from all over the state of Arizona. However, when looking at the distribution of Spanish-speakers most were located in the central and southern part of the state where the promotoras conducted the surveys in-person using a tablet.

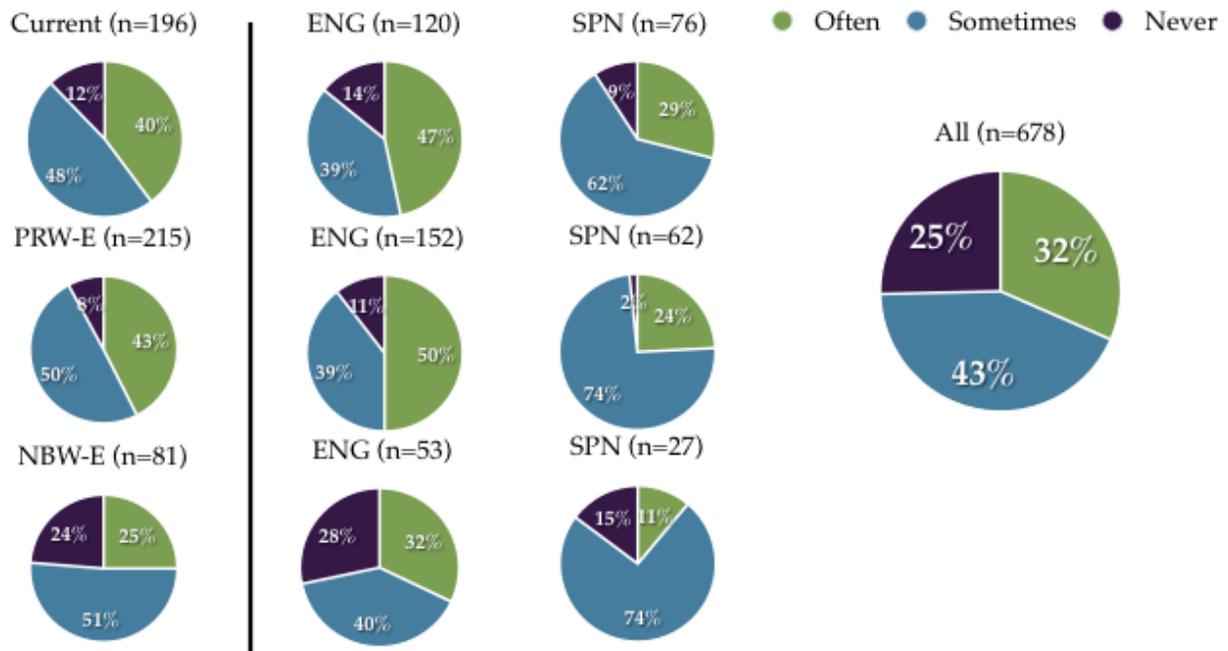
Figure 10. Distribution of respondent zip codes  
Please tell us your zip code.



## Food Security

Only 25% (n=678) of all survey respondents reported feeling food secure. It is important to note that only 12% of current WIC participants and 8% of PRW-E respondents in the sample reported feeling food secure. NBW-E are somewhat more food secure (24%). Food security varies by language such that across all WIC status categories, Spanish-speakers report higher feelings of food insecurity than their English-speaking counterparts.

Figure 11. Food security: In the past 12 months, how often did you worry that you would run out of food before you had money to buy more?



Note: The ADHS translator added the word “possibility” to the Spanish translation. The Spanish item read: “In the past 12 months, how often did you worry about the possibility that you would run out of food before you had money to buy more?”

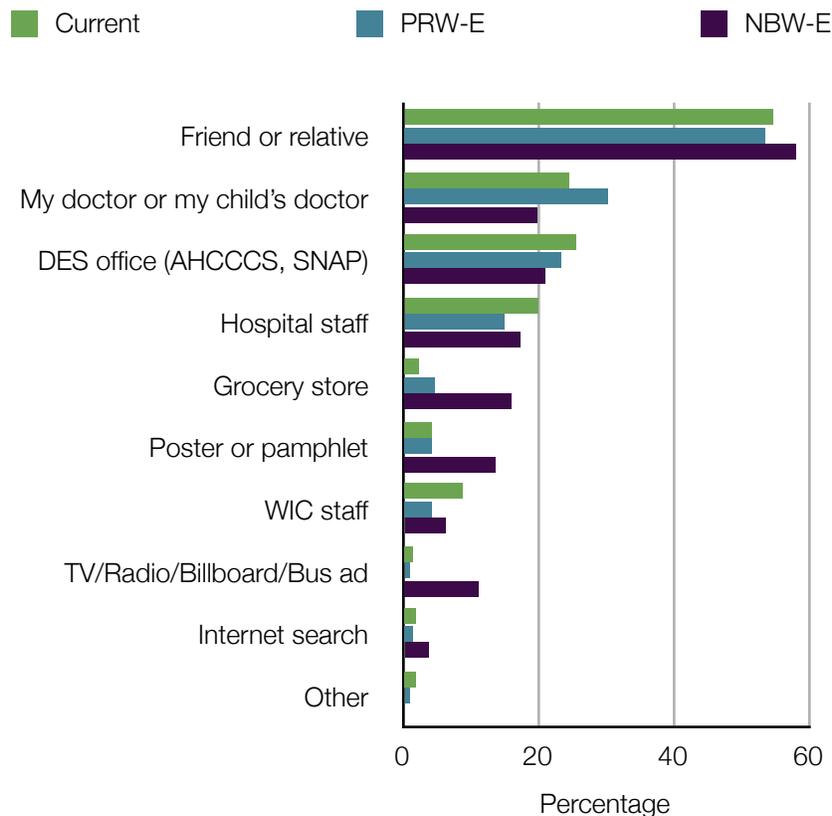
# WIC Findings

## Where Did Survey Respondents Hear About WIC?

All survey respondents were asked to indicate where they heard about the WIC program. Respondents were asked to select all places in which they have heard about WIC from the list provided. Most respondents heard about the WIC program by word-of-mouth either through a friend, relative or their doctor or their child’s doctor. Other locations that they hear about WIC include DES offices and the hospital.

NBW-E also indicated that they had heard about WIC at the grocery store. Outreach methods to inform people about the program such as posters, pamphlets, WIC staff, TV / radio / Billboard have had minimal impact, only reaching less than 18% of the population, whereas over 50% reported learning about WIC via word-of-mouth. Only 4.9% of NBW-E reported that they have never heard about WIC.

Figure 12. Where did you hear about WIC?

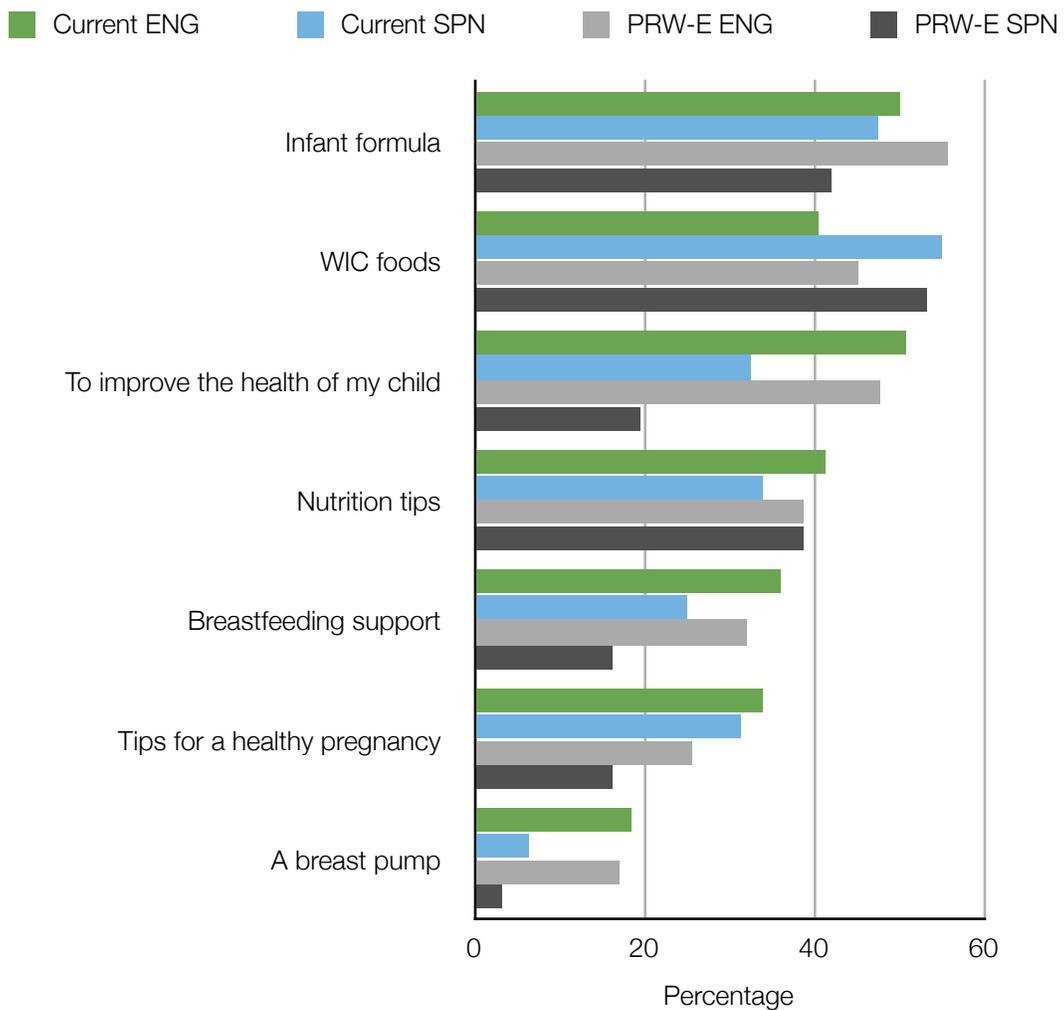


## Why do they apply?

Current and previous participants were asked to indicate why they chose to apply to WIC. Similar to the qualitative findings, formula and WIC foods were the top reasons why survey respondents applied to WIC.

*“We used it [WIC] for the formula which is the most expensive item. Then we decided to leave for other people who need it more.”*

Figure 13. I chose to apply to WIC because I wanted...



# Current WIC Participants

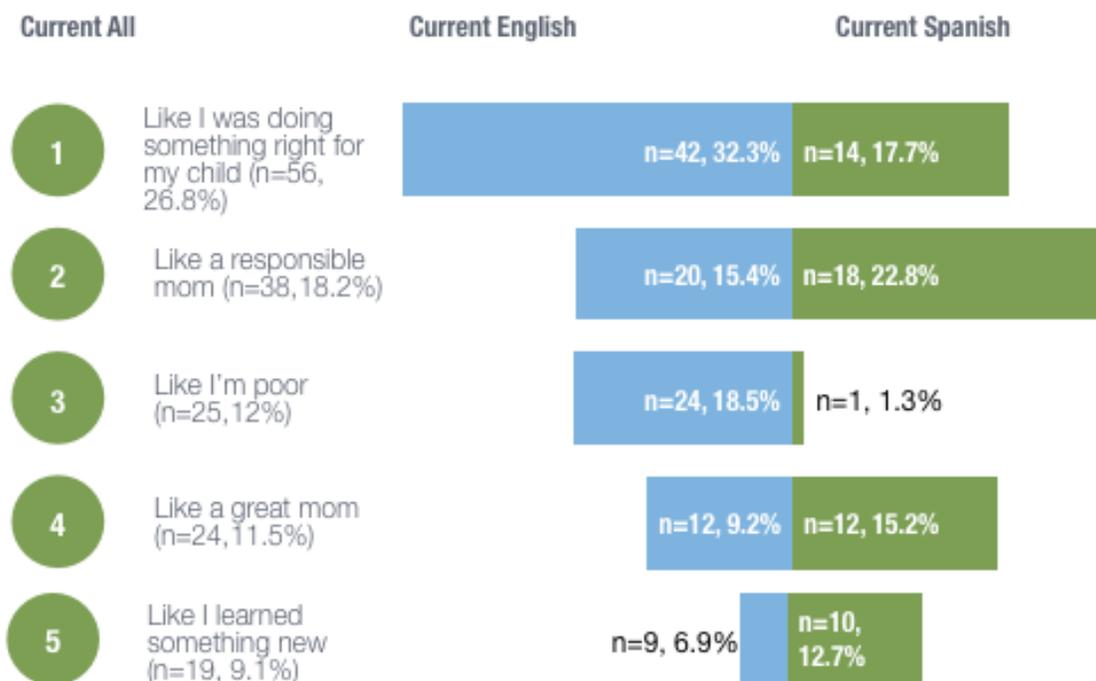
## Current participants leave WIC usually feeling...

Current<sup>1</sup> WIC participants were asked to select one option from a list of 14 items that described how they usually feel when they walk out the WIC office. The top 5 feelings are listed on the left side of Figure 14.

For English-speakers, the top feelings were different than for Spanish-speakers. For example, 32.2% of English-speakers said they felt they were doing something right for their child, while the top selection for Spanish-speakers was feeling like a responsible mom (22.8%). Additionally, 18.5% of English-speakers felt like they were poor when walking out of the WIC office, whereas only 1.3% of Spanish-speakers felt that way.

Spanish-speakers were more inclined to feel like a great mom or like they were doing something right for their child by going to WIC.

Figure 14. When I walk out the WIC office I usually feel...



<sup>1</sup> Current WIC participants were not included in the qualitative study.

### Current participants want to feel...

Current WIC participants were asked to select all that apply from a list of 14 items that described how they want to feel when they walk out the WIC office. Table 3 depicts the Top 7 choices by language (ENG and SPN). Current WIC participants want to feel like they received great service. They want social support in their role as a mom. For example, they want to feel like a great mom, like someone is helping them and like they are not alone. Additionally, when they leave WIC, current participants want to feel responsible and like they learned something new.

Table 3. When I walk out of the WIC office I want to feel...

	All		ENG		SPN	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Like I received great service	96	44.4	56	41.2	40	50.0
Like a great mom	88	40.7	63	46.3	25	31.3
Someone is helping me	81	37.5	45	33.1	36	45.0
Responsible	63	29.2	40	29.4	23	28.8
I am not alone	57	26.4	36	26.5	21	26.3
Cared about	56	25.9	34	25.0	22	27.5
I learned a skill I needed	42	19.4	25	18.4	17	21.3

# Previous WIC Participants

## **What is the perceived brand of the WIC program according to PRW focus group participants and in-depth interviewees?**

Qualitative responses from previous WIC participants indicate the perceived brand of the WIC program is comprised of the following three sentiments: 1) the program is helpful, but it is a hassle 2) it is often embarrassing and 3) there is a stigma associated with the program.

Importantly, many Spanish-speakers had a more positive view of WIC.

### **Helpful, but a Hassle**

During focus groups and in-depth interviews, previous WIC participants expressed that the WIC program was helpful, but they had to endure a hassle in order to receive the help. They appreciate the benefits (WIC foods and breast pumps) and the breastfeeding support, but feel the program is very time consuming. Examples given include a cumbersome application process, difficulty finding clinic locations, difficulty finding transportation to the clinic for their appointments and, in some clinics, waiting two or more hours for their appointment as well as appointments scheduled too far out in advance. Additionally, the process of shopping for WIC foods is both time consuming and confusing. Previous WIC participants stay on the program until they reach the point where the benefits no longer outweigh the barriers to participation. This usually happens when the child no longer requires expensive baby formula. In the words of one PRW participant:

*“Not enough foods to be worth the hassle.”*

*“We used it for the formula which is the most expensive item, then we decided to leave for other people who need it more.”*

Spanish-speakers were more inclined to perceive the WIC program as helpful, loving, family oriented program. For them, the positive aspects of their visit (great customer service and quick clinic flow) and their WIC benefits outweighed the hassles they endured. This could be explained by Spanish-speakers lower expectations about government assistance programs. Social desirability and consensus made it difficult to understand the true role of WIC in their lives, especially during the first Spanish focus group. During the second Spanish focus group and in the interviews, participants shared other experiences which were similar to the English-speakers. These previous WIC participants expressed that WIC is not always loving or happy, explaining that sometimes clinics can be frightening, staff can make participants feel lost, ignored and uncomfortable. Spanish-speaking participants endure the uncomfortableness because they value the information and food WIC provides. Similar to English-speakers, infant

formula is especially valued as this is a very expensive item they need to feed their babies, yet they cannot afford on their own.

English and Spanish-speaking participants also complained about people being mad, children crying and not so friendly staff. Some participants described their WIC experience as boring and uneventful.

### **Embarrassing and Shameful**

Many WIC experiences are --or have the potential to be-- embarrassing. Participants have endured embarrassing moments when shopping for WIC foods. Additionally, WIC staff have made them feel belittled and have been mean to participants on occasion. Other sources of embarrassment include missed appointments, which make them feel embarrassed to return to WIC and feeling ashamed and embarrassed for relying on a government assistance program.

For Spanish-speakers, not having a staff person who can communicate in Spanish has caused embarrassment. They do not feel comfortable speaking about their breastfeeding issues or how they rear their children, much less their feelings and needs in their non-natal language. Many instances of miscommunication have occurred with previous WIC participants when well-intentioned staff try to speak Spanish, only making matters worse. These language barriers have significantly impacted Spanish-speakers' decisions to return to WIC.

English-speaking previous WIC participants described WIC as reality TV with lots drama, including kids fighting and embarrassing moments at the grocery store. Despite the extreme embarrassment participants experienced at the grocery store, they were willing to "put their pride aside" because they were doing it for their children. Many described solutions to avoiding embarrassment, including finding odd hours to shop and clever ways to avoid creating a scene with their checks, such as sticking a grocery cart out far in line so other shoppers wouldn't get in their line.

### **Stigma**

Previous WIC participants explained the stigma associated with participating in WIC as a major barrier to returning to WIC. They feel WIC is for poor people who cannot afford the food items given by the program. These women feel they are taking the place of others who need it more.

*"thought had stood my place in line and thought there were others who needed it more. Didn't want to use up resources that others need."*

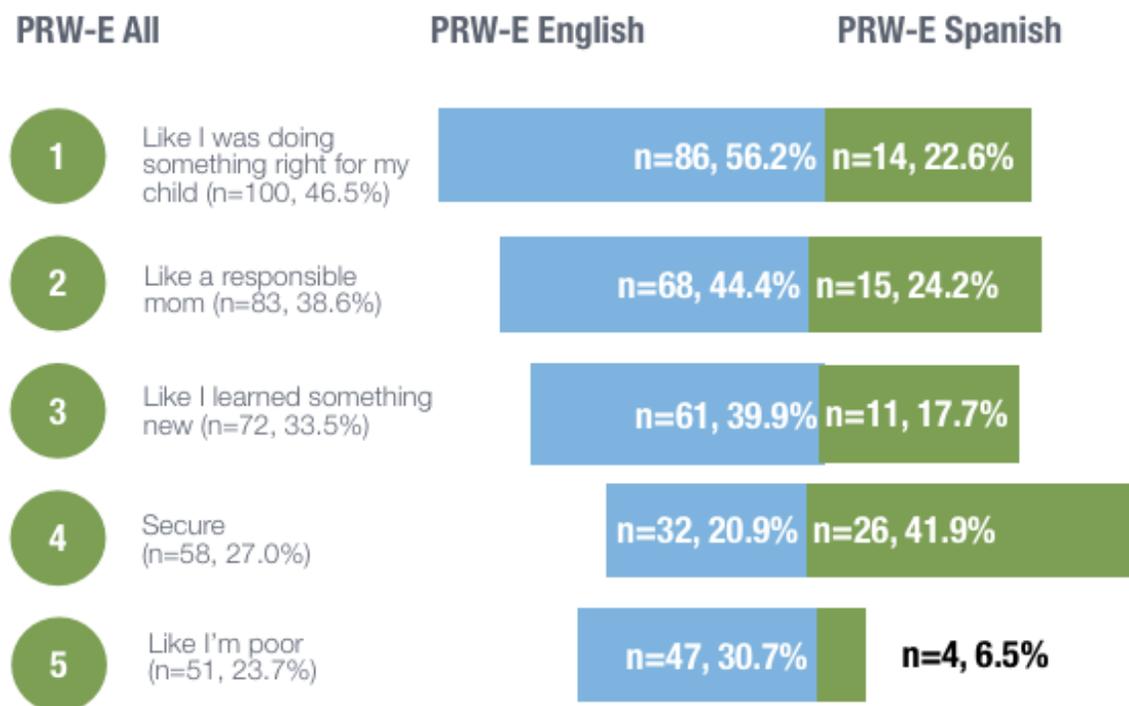
Some English-speakers were very clear that their families (including the father of their children) and friends do not approve of receiving government assistance. This makes it even more difficult for these women to get help and be on the WIC or other government assistance programs, despite it being their right.

## PRW-E participants left the WIC office feeling...

The qualitative findings were used to develop survey items designed to understand how current and previous WIC survey respondents feel/felt when leaving the WIC office, why previous WIC survey respondents left WIC, and how everyone (current, previous and those who have never been to WIC) wants to feel when (and if) they leave a WIC office.

PRW-E were asked to select one option from a list of 14 items that described how they usually feel when they walk out the WIC office. The top 5 feelings are listed to the left side of the Figure 15. The blue bars illustrate the findings for the PRW-E English-speaking participants and the green bars for the PRW-E Spanish-speakers.

Figure 15. When I walked out of the WIC office I felt...



Findings are similar to those of current WIC participants and are also similar by language. Spanish-speaking PRW-E participants were more likely to report they felt secure when leaving the WIC office. According to Spanish-speakers in the focus groups and in-depth interviews, the secure feeling is one of empowerment and is not necessarily directly tied to economic security. However, English-speakers mentioned security in terms of financial security.

Similar to the current participants, many of the PRW-E English speaking respondents reported they left WIC feeling like they were poor. However, very few Spanish-speaking current and PRW-E respondents report they left WIC feeling like they were poor.

Compared to current WIC participants, PRW-E respondents reported feeling more like they learned something new when they left WIC. PRW-E respondents reported feeling “secure” when they left WIC. This was not a top item among current WIC participants.

### **Why PRW left WIC**

Survey respondents were asked to select the reasons they left WIC from a list of 21 options. Participants could select all that applied to their situation. The top reason selected by English-speaking participants was “I no longer needed help from WIC” (29.7%), yet 85% of PRW-E respondents are still food insecure. The other top reasons PRW survey respondents left WIC include “I no longer met the income guidelines” (19%) and “My child was over age 5” (18.3%). Notice that Spanish-speakers are the ones aging out of the program. Following the response options regarding eligibility, the next highest reason for leaving WIC was “It is a hassle shopping for WIC foods” (16.2% of PRW; 17.3% of PRW-E). This findings is similar to the hassles reported in the qualitative findings. Importantly, these percentages would likely be higher if there fewer response options to choose from for this survey item.

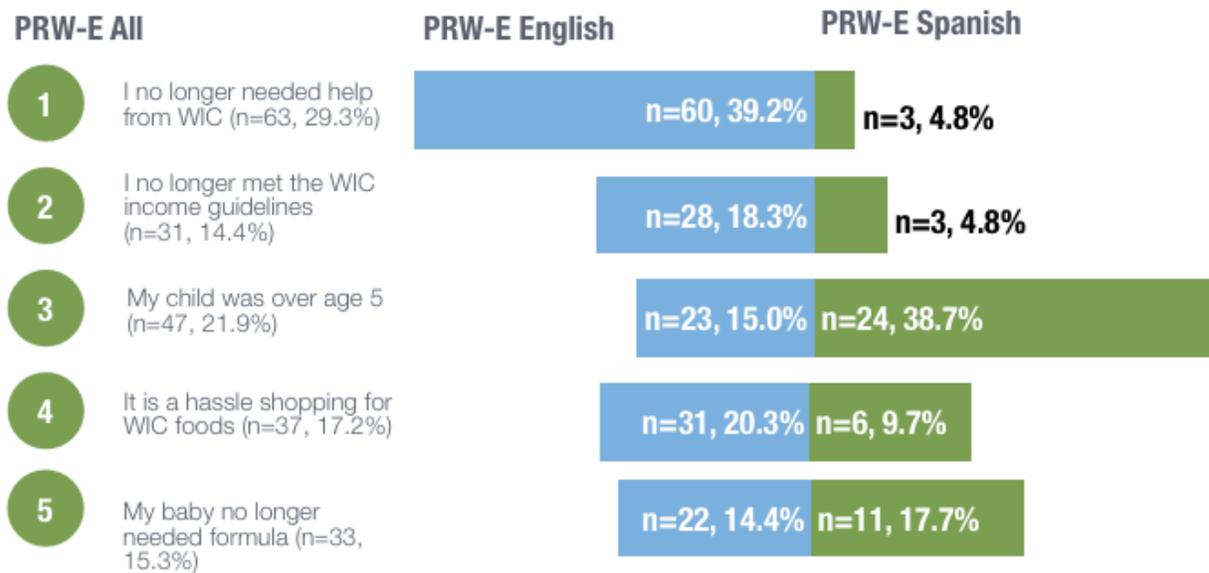
Table 4. I left WIC because...

	All		ENG		SPN	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
I no longer needed help from WIC	86	29.7	83	37.6	3	4.3
I no longer met the income guidelines	55	19.0	50	22.6	5	7.2
My child was over age 5	53	18.3	28	12.7	25	36.2
It is a hassle shopping for WIC foods	47	16.2	40	18.1	7	10.1
I thought I was taking the place of someone who needed WIC	42	14.5	34	15.4	8	11.6
My baby no longer needed formula	42	14.5	31	14.0	11	15.9
My child turned one	36	12.4	28	12.7	8	11.6
The hassle of going to the WIC office wasn't worth it.	31	10.7	31	14.0	0	0.0
I had to wait too long at the WIC office	23	7.9	20	9.0	3	4.3
The WIC location was far from me	20	6.9	15	6.8	5	7.2
WIC staff didn't respect my time	13	4.5	13	5.9	0	0.0
Going to the WIC office was embarrassing	13	4.5	13	5.9	0	0.0
The WIC staff talked down to me	11	3.8	10	4.5	1	1.4
I felt judged by the WIC staff	11	3.8	10	4.5	1	1.4
It was hard to communicate with WIC staff	8	2.8	8	3.6	0	0.0
The breastfeeding support was not helpful	5	1.7	5	2.3	0	0.0
My children don't like going to WIC	4	1.4	4	1.8	0	0.0
The nutrition information was not helpful	4	1.4	4	1.8	0	0.0
I felt that friends and family were judging me	4	1.4	3	1.4	1	1.4
I don't value what WIC offers other than the food	3	1.0	0	0.0	3	4.3
The WIC staff were rude to my children	1	0.3	1	0.5	0	0.0

## Why PRW-E left WIC

Findings for the PRW-E subgroup are similar to those of the PRW group. A higher percentage of PRW-E reported they left WIC because their baby no longer needed formula. It is interesting to note that even though Spanish-speakers seem to be aging out of the program, 17.7% of Spanish-speakers reported leaving WIC because their baby no longer needed formula. In addition, 29.3% of PRW-E reported they “no longer need WIC”, yet 85% of these individuals are food insecure.

Figure 16. I left WIC because...



## **What changes will bring PRW-E focus group participants and in-depth interviewees return to WIC?**

Similar to the survey findings noted above, PRW-E focus group participants and in-depth interviewees would return to WIC if it offered a better shopping experience, better clinic flow and faster application process, better customer service and provided participants relevant and practical information they can use.

### **Change the grocery store experience**

Both English- and Spanish-speakers indicated that they would return to WIC if the shopping experience was improved. Specifically, participants mentioned wanting a WIC debit card. They explained that the WIC debit card will make it less embarrassing, reduce stigma and make it easier to shop for WIC foods. It is important to note, however, that a WIC debit card will not solve all of the issues surrounding the WIC grocery shopping experience. For example, participants will continue to need education on shopping for WIC-allowed items in order to prevent the embarrassment of having the wrong items at checkout. Additionally, other WIC programs with debit cards have also experienced declining enrollment in their program. Other ideas to improve the grocery store experience include creating a WIC app to help participants quickly locate WIC stores and WIC foods.

### **Streamline the application process and improve clinic appearance and clinic flow**

The need to simplify the application and in-clinic process was mentioned by both English- and Spanish-speakers. In their opinion, if WIC were less of a hassle to join, enrollment rates would increase. English-speakers suggested that WIC utilize an online application process, allow pediatrician offices to submit participants' information to WIC, send WIC staff to the hospital to enroll participants after birth, and create YouTube videos showing how to enroll in WIC and what to expect at the clinic. When asked their opinion as to why those eligible for the program do not enroll, PRW-E expressed that WIC-eligibles do not know the WIC qualification guidelines. Spanish-speakers indicated that WIC-eligibles are unaware that WIC will not check participants' immigration status.

*“People don't know what they need to bring to their application appointment, it is not like food stamps they don't check your immigration status or go to your house to check it out.”*

Both English- and Spanish-speakers want WIC to update the clinic offices to make them more attractive, child-friendly, and private. Suggestions included enclosed meeting rooms where participants can meet with the nutritionist privately. In addition, several mentioned the need to update the clinic poster boards and make them appealing to moms of all ages, not just younger moms. To reduce wait times, participants would like for WIC to be open on Saturdays and provide extended hours in the evening.

### **Provide a welcoming, friendly clinic visit with great customer service**

Both English- and Spanish-speakers emphasized that while at the WIC clinic, they want to feel well-attended to and welcome. Most importantly, they want to feel as though their time at WIC was worthwhile. Participants want staff to spend more time with them during their visit; in fact, some would like to have half-hour appointments to ensure that all of their questions are answered. Participants want this extra time in order for WIC staff to understand which WIC foods their family will use in order to prevent wasting foods.

*“ I consider I am well treated when a person says hello, looks at me in the eyes, treats me with respect, they don’t raise their voice at me, answer my questions with a great attitude, if they don’t know the answer they look for a solution.”*

With regard to clinic staff, participants noted that WIC needs to hire more staff and also train staff to be more empathetic. Spanish-speakers noted that WIC needs to train staff to be welcoming and provide more bilingual and experienced staff. In their opinion, this “experienced” means the staff have their own children.

### **Participants want relevant, practical information**

Spanish-speakers, in particular, expressed that the opportunity to receive relevant and useful nutrition and breastfeeding information would bring them back to WIC. For example, participants explained that the hands on assistance and late night accessibility provided by the lactation consultant was very relevant and practical. A few English-speakers mentioned that while WIC is good at providing nutrition information, it lacks real world application.

### **Participants ideas for marketing the WIC program**

English-speakers suggested that WIC change the way the program is marketed, with a focus on reducing the stigma of being on WIC. Participants suggested creating commercials for WIC that depict women who “look like they’ve got it together and are educated.” Others want to see commercials showing kids thanking their moms for taking them to see a nutritionist at WIC. In addition, participants want marketing campaigns to emphasize that the WIC program is not food stamps and is not a program for people who are left with no other options to feed their family. Others want WIC to advertise that the program has changed for the better. Both English- and Spanish-speakers suggested that WIC use testimonials to attract others to the program. Other suggestions included using social media such as a Facebook group in order for WIC staff to answer participants’ questions online.

### **Other changes suggested by PRW-E focus group participants and in-depth interviewees**

When asked what would bring them back to WIC, several mentioned incentives such as a monthly gift card drawing for those who continue with their appointments. Other incentive ideas included a WIC recipe book. Participants would like for WIC to offer more fresh produce

for those who make their own baby food. Others want WIC to all participants to bring friends along to classes or consultations.

### What changes will make PRW-E survey respondents return to WIC?

Survey findings indicate that PRW-E participants would return to WIC if it offered a better shopping experience, better clinic flow and faster application process, and provided relevant and practical information they can use.

Table 5. I would return to WIC if it offered...

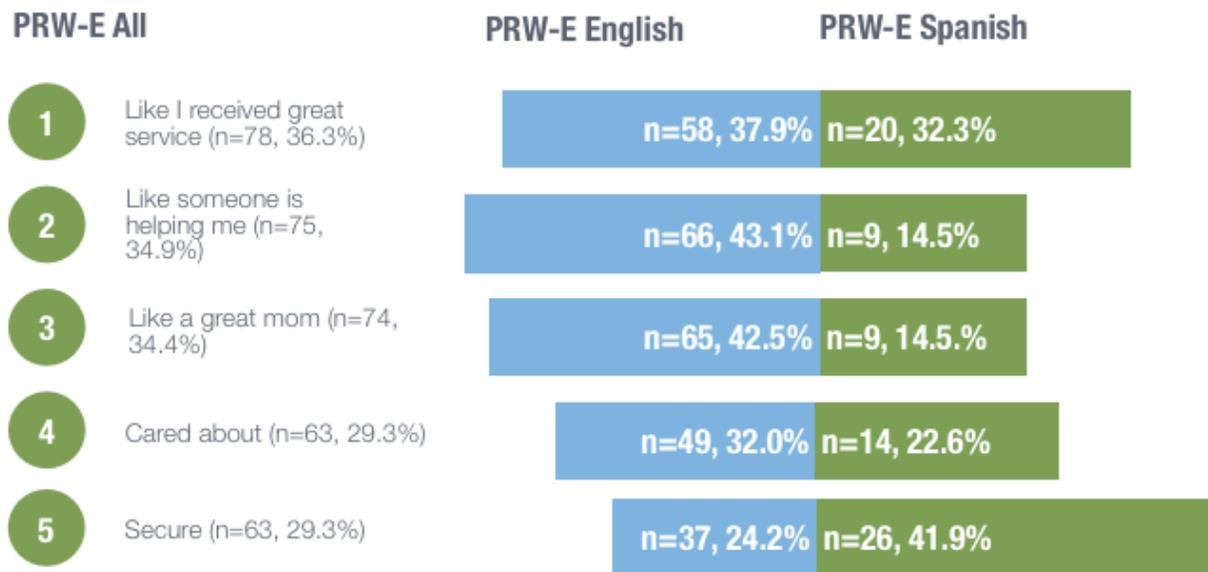
	All PRW-E		ENG PRW-E		SPN PRW-E	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
WIC debit card	108	50.2	90	58.8	18	29.0
Easier shopping for WIC foods	84	39.1	71	46.4	13	21.0
A less embarrassing grocery store experience	69	32.1	59	38.6	10	16.1
Shorter wait times	40	18.6	34	22.2	6	9.7
Faster application process	31	14.4	26	17.0	5	8.1
Tips to make feeding my family easier	29	13.5	23	15.0	6	9.7
Classes that help me with my life now	27	12.6	21	13.7	6	9.7

### How PRW-E participants want to feel when they leave the WIC office...

Survey respondents were asked to select all that apply from a list of 14 items that described how they want to feel when they walk out of the WIC office, if they were to return to WIC. The infographic below illustrates the top ways in which previous participants would like to feel if they were to return to WIC.

Findings are similar to those of current participants for the first three items. PRW-E report wanting to feel “cared about” and “secure”. Spanish-speaking PRW-E participants were more likely to report they want to feel “secure” when leaving the WIC office. In addition, all PRW-E report they want to feel “understood” (28.3%) and want to feel “responsible” (26.5%).

Figure 17. If I were to return to WIC, when I walk out of the office I would like to feel...



Furthermore, PRW-E survey respondents reported wanting to feel like they received great service and social support in their roles as moms. This begs the question, ‘Do they feel they are receiving great customer service and support?’ As evidence in the qualitative responses, PRW participants likely do not feel they receive great customer service and support, rather they report feeling embarrassed and talked down to.

PRW-E participants from the qualitative study would like to belong to a WIC family and feel that going to WIC is a normal thing to do, and that it is not a

*“poverty level thing, no shame or judgement attached to it”.*

They would also like to make sure the time spent at WIC was worth it. Ideally they would like to:

*“come away with new tools for my parenting toolbox that I can use right away”  
and “more informed as a result of going to WIC.”*

Spanish-speaking PRW-E participants want to feel happy, well-greeted, welcomed, well-served and able to trust the information they receive at WIC. Moreover, they want to feel understood in their time of need, like they are great moms, and secure (confident) about how they are rearing their children. In contrast, PRW-E English-speakers want to feel accomplished, satisfied, informed, self-sufficient, proud of themselves, and as though they are helping their families.

*“[I want to feel like I am ] accomplishing goal of providing some of the necessities I need for my home, especially those geared toward my child”.*

*“like I accomplished something, proud of myself that I went in and did it, even when it took time and gas I didn’t have, I did it for my children and get the fruits and veggies they love to eat.”*

# Never Been on WIC

## What do NBW and NBW-E focus group participants and interviewees know about WIC?

### Awareness of WIC services

Focus group participants and in-depth interviewees who are eligible for WIC, but had never participated in WIC (NBW-E) are aware of the WIC program as a place to go if you need help during pregnancy. However, they were unaware that they qualified for the WIC program and of all of the services WIC provides beyond food. Some described it as a type of food stamp program for babies. A few mentioned other services such as breast pumps and health checks. There was little to no mention of health, parenting or nutrition education. However, a few Spanish-speakers mentioned that WIC provides health information.

### Social stigma

NBW-E focus group participants and interviewees were also very aware of the social stigma associated with participation in government assistance programs and feel they can do it on their own. Additionally, they talked about the hassles and the embarrassment associated with WIC participation explaining that government programs are looked down upon by their friends and family members. Others talked about how difficult and time consuming it is to apply to WIC. Interestingly, these women see themselves as different from WIC participants. As one participant explained,

*“That program isn’t for me it’s for people who need more help than I do.”*

To understand the NBW-E perception of WIC participants, focus group attendees were asked to draw a stick figure of themselves on the left side of the paper and put something they value in their hands, something in the back that says something about their lifestyle and put a bubble coming out of their mouth that is a phrase they say often. Participants were then asked to draw a similar image of a WIC participant on the right side of the paper and put something in their hands that they value, something in the back that says something about their lifestyle and put a bubble coming out of their mouth with a phrase they say often. The following images are examples of the drawings by participants.

Figure 18. “You owe me” drawing by English NBW-E focus group participant

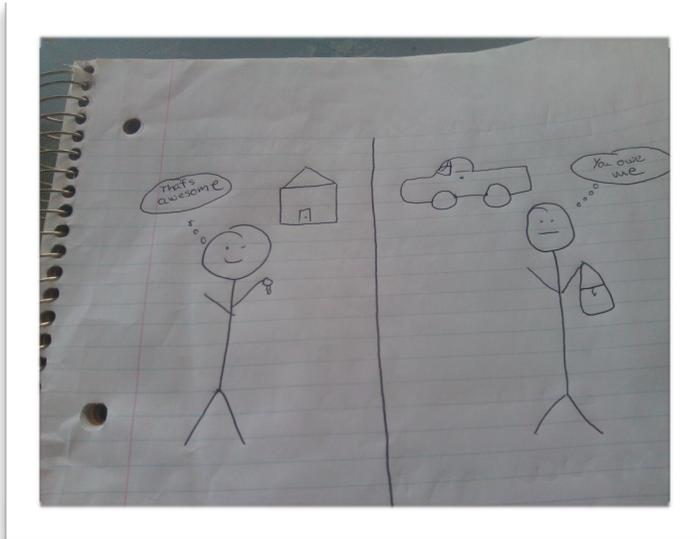


Figure 19. “Let’s get ice cream!” drawing by English NBW-E focus group participant



Most participants expressed feeling that someone who goes to WIC is similar to themselves in terms of valuing family. However, there were a few key differences that emerged. Focus group participants described WIC moms as always working, very busy and tired, not having a lot of money, having more children than themselves and being single. Additionally, a few of the interviewees and focus group participants conveyed the negative viewpoint that WIC participants take advantage of the “system”.

### **Hassle**

NBW-E focus group participants and interviewees were not aware of all of the documentation required for the WIC application. However, some had tried to join the program without luck as they mentioned having a to hold on the WIC line for more than 45 minutes or having a very long wait time (2 to 3 months) to getting the initial appointment. Some were also turned away because they forgot a piece of documentation at their initial appointment and were given another date too far away. They also mentioned their concerns over long wait times at the clinics and being mistreated by staff. In addition, they heard or experienced vicariously the other hassles such as complicated grocery shopping for WIC foods, far away clinic locations and poor customer service.

### **Embarrassment**

Several focus groups participants and interviewees mentioned shopping with a friend and how complicated and embarrassing it can be to shop for WIC foods. One mentioned attending the WIC office with a friend and feeling like “they hope no one sees them there.”

Additionally, they have heard or seen bad customer service at WIC and other government assistance programs and do not want to have to deal with it. One participant described the SNAP benefit office and that she felt WIC would have a similar environment.

### **NBW and NBW-E survey respondents’ awareness of WIC services**

NBW survey respondents were asked to indicate the services they have heard that WIC offers. Similar to the qualitative findings, NBW and NBW-E are aware that WIC offers food such as milk, cheese, bread, cereal and formula. And to a lesser extent, NBW and NBW-E are aware of the new food offerings added to the WIC package in 2009, the nutrition information and breastfeeding help and education the program provides.

Table 6. Which of the following services have you heard that WIC offers?

	NBW		NBW-E	
	n	%	n	%
Food (such as milk, cheese, bread and cereal)	197	77.0	64	79.0
Formula for babies	180	70.3	52	64.2
Food (such as fresh, frozen and canned fruits and vegetables)	136	53.1	33	40.7
Nutrition information	109	42.6	30	37.0
Breastfeeding help and education	97	37.9	24	29.6
Parenting information	81	31.6	17	21.0
Breast pumps	80	31.3	19	23.5
Health checks	57	22.3	14	17.3
Car seats	32	12.5	4	4.9
Childcare	28	10.9	6	7.4
I have never heard of WIC	17	6.6	5	6.2

### NBW and NBW-E survey respondents don't participate in WIC because...

All NBW survey respondents were asked to indicate the reasons why they don't participate in WIC. The survey item "I have not participated in WIC because...", included 14 responses options to chose from. The top three reasons why all NBW and NBW-E don't participate in WIC include: "I don't think we are eligible" (n=151, 59.0% NBW; n=36, 44.4% NBW-E), "I can do it on my own" (n=68, 26.6% NBW; n=14, 17.3% NBW-E), and "I don't know how to apply for WIC" (n=17, 6.6% NBW; n=9, 11.1% NBW-E).

### Food Security of NBW-E survey respondents

Survey findings indicate that NBW-E are more food secure (24% food secure) compared to PRW-E (only 8% food secure) and to those who currently participate in WIC (only 12% food secure). However, the fact remains that 76% of survey respondents who are eligible for WIC, but have never participated have food insecurity. These moms need the help feeding their families, yet there are not getting it from WIC. Changes are needed in order to encourage these women to enroll in WIC. To understand the changes needed to make the program more appealing to these women, we asked survey respondents how they would want to feel if they were to go to WIC.

## How NBW-E want to feel if they go to WIC...

NBW survey respondents were asked to indicate one from a list of 14 response options about how they want to feel, if they go to WIC. The top choices are listed in Table 7.

Table 7. If you were to go to WIC, how would you want to feel when you walk out the door?

	NBW		NBW-E	
	n	%	n	%
Like someone is helping me	44	19.3	21	27.3
Like I am not alone	36	15.8	13	16.9
Like I received great service	32	14.0	6	7.8
Like a great mom	28	12.3	4	5.2
Cared about	24	10.5	6	7.8
Secure	14	6.1	8	10.4

## How to encourage NBW-E focus group participants and interviewees to enroll in WIC

Both English- and Spanish-speakers indicated that in order to encourage them to enroll in WIC, the staff will need to be friendly, awesome, compassionate, and invested.

*“Encourage me, tell me I am making the right decision for my child and you support my decisions. Don’t scold me, give me good advise so I can be a better parent. It all has to do with the way (attitude) people tell you things.”*

### Streamlined, simple application process needed

Similar to the PRW-E focus group findings, NBW-E focus group participants and interviewees want a more streamlined application processes to alleviate long wait times for services. They also want a simplified enrollment process that does not require unnecessary paperwork.

### Staff and clinic changes needed

Bilingual staff are needed, particularly on the Arizona-Mexico border. If they were to go to WIC, NBW-E want warm, inviting kid-friendly clinics.

### Marketing ideas from NBW-E focus group participants and interviewees

- Both English- and Spanish-speakers suggested highlighting participant stories and testimonials in WIC outreach materials. In particular, they mentioned illustrating positive stories about how WIC has helped other moms.
- Offer classes on nutrition, breastfeeding, making your own baby food

- Provide a mom-to-mom mentoring program
- Increased outreach and partnerships with doctors offices, schools, daycares etc
- Consider home visits and going into communities to provide services
- Offer incentives or door prizes
- Increased advertising of the program

**Summary of how all women, regardless of their WIC status, want to feel when they go to WIC, whether they are returning or enrolling in WIC for the first time**

Focus group participants and interviewees were asked an open-ended question about how they would want to feel if they return to or go to WIC for the first time. Next, they were shown the a list of words and asked to select the one word that “spoke to their heart” about how they want to feel when they leave the WIC office. These options were based on Barry Feig’s research on emotional triggers that drive behavior. The words on the green leaves were either selected or came up organically during the focus group and interviews with PRW-E or NBW-E. The same list of emotional triggers, as well as the words that came up organically in the qualitative study were used to create the survey item. The words in the red leaves were selected only by PRW and NBW survey respondents while the words in the orange leaves were chosen by all participants (current, PRW, NBW), regardless of research method.

*Figure 20. How all study participants want to feel...*



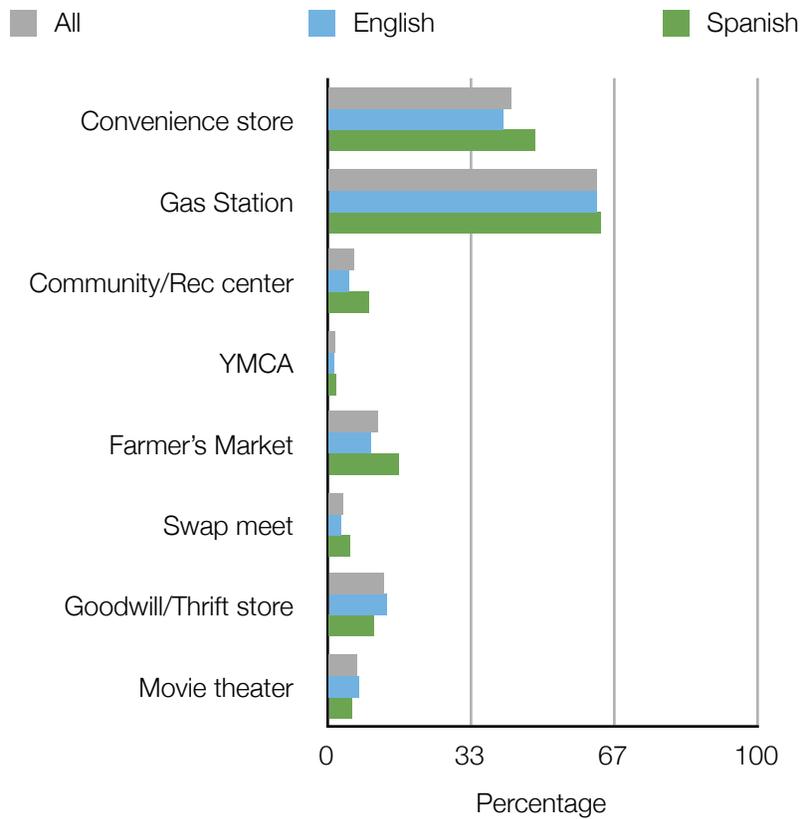
Findings suggest that all women want to feel like great moms, they want to feel they are not alone and that someone is helping them. In order to retain participants and increase participation, AZ WIC must provide great customer service within a nurturing environment and be a source of social support for Arizona moms.

# Where Do Survey Respondents Play and Shop?

## Places Visited Frequently

Gas stations and convenience stores are the places most often visited by survey respondents.

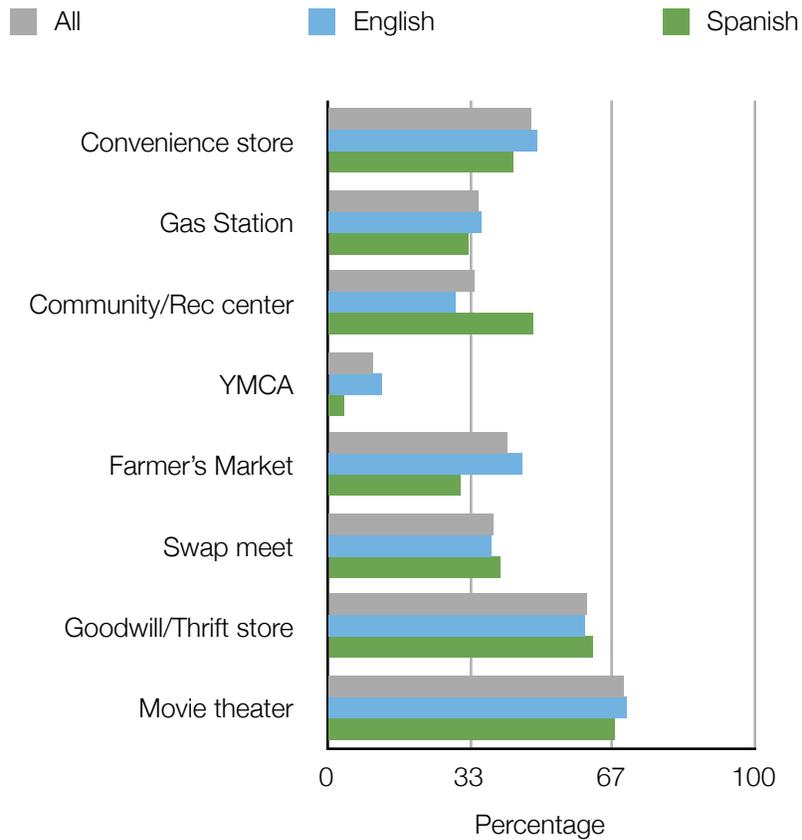
Figure 21. How often do you visit the following places?



## Places Visited Sometimes

Survey respondents reported they sometimes visit movie theaters, thrift stores, Swap meet, Farmer’s markets, and community / Rec centers.

Figure 22. How often do you visit the following places?



## Favorite Markets by Language

Survey respondents were asked to indicate which markets they visit most often. Favorite markets vary by language. Walmart is most popular among Spanish-speakers and Fry's is most popular among English-speakers.

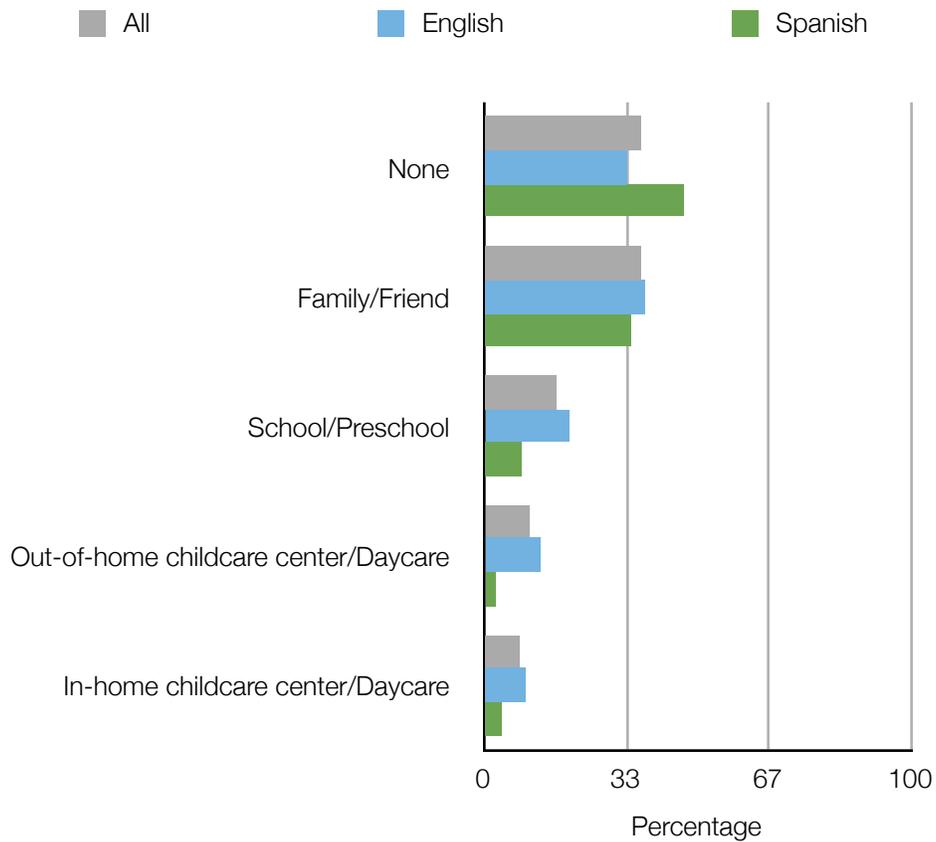
Table 8. Which one of the following markets do you visit most often?

All (n=720)	n	%
Walmart	238	33.1
Fry's	230	31.9
Food City	76	10.6
Safeway	65	9.0
English (n=536)	n	%
Fry's	205	38.2
Walmart	168	31.3
Safeway	61	11.4
Spanish (n=184)	n	%
Walmart	70	38.0
Food City	69	37.5
Fry's	25	13.6

## Type of Child Care Used by Language

Survey respondents were asked to indicate the type of childcare they use. Most respondents reported they either do not use childcare or they have family of friends to help them. Very few reported using preschools or any type of childcare or daycare.

Figure 23. What kind of childcare do you use? (Select all that apply)



## Favorite Music

All survey respondents were asked to indicate their favorite type of music. The top three music types selected were country, pop and Latino music. Music selections varied by language with about one-half of the Spanish-speakers reporting Latino music as their favorite. English-speakers selected country, pop, rock, R&B and hip-hop. It is important to note that many stations play combinations of R&B and hip-hop. If combined, these two categories would be more popular (21.4%) than pop (19.6%) or rock (12.8%).

Table 9. What's your favorite type of music?

All (n=712)	n	%
Country	159	22.3
Pop	132	18.5
Latino	122	17.1
English (n=537)	n	%
Country	156	29.1
Pop	105	19.6
Rock	69	12.8
R&B	60	11.2
Hip hop	55	10.2
Spanish (n=175)	n	%
Latino	89	50.9
Pop	27	15.4
Gospel	24	13.7

## Technology Use

The top technologies used by survey respondents were text messaging, Facebook and YouTube. Spanish-speakers used Facebook less frequently than English-speakers. Note that the main recruitment method used was Facebook; however, respondents recruited via the promotoras also use Facebook daily (26.8%) or sometimes (32.9%), while 40.2 % have never used Facebook.

Figure 24. How often do you use each of the following? (All respondents)

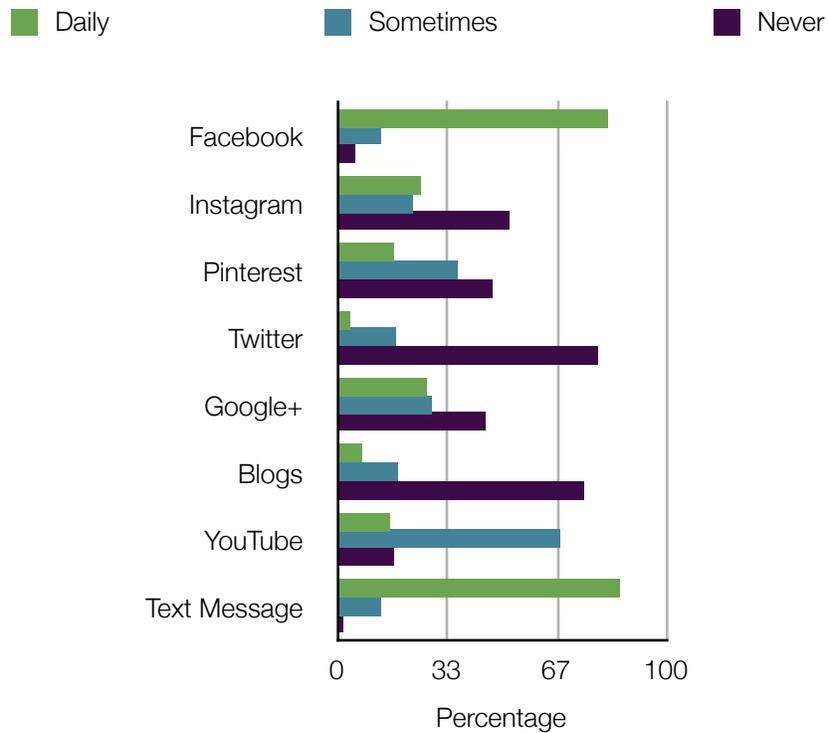


Figure 25. How often do you use each of the following? (English respondents)

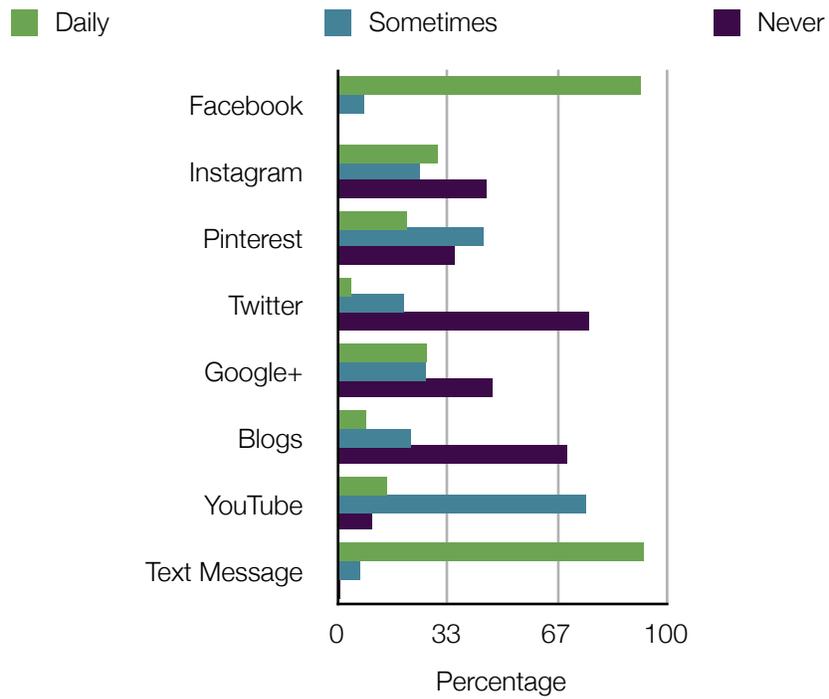
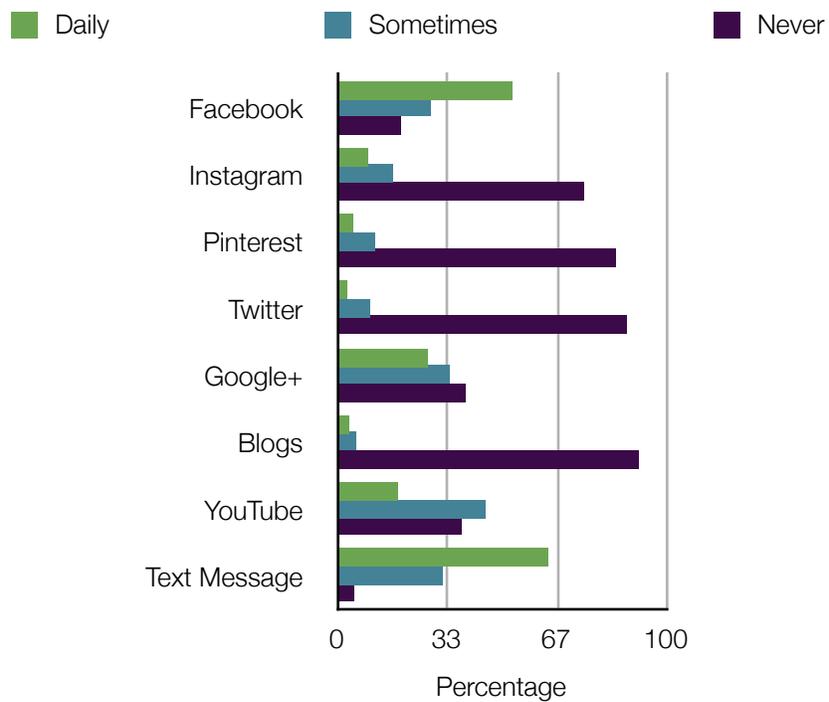


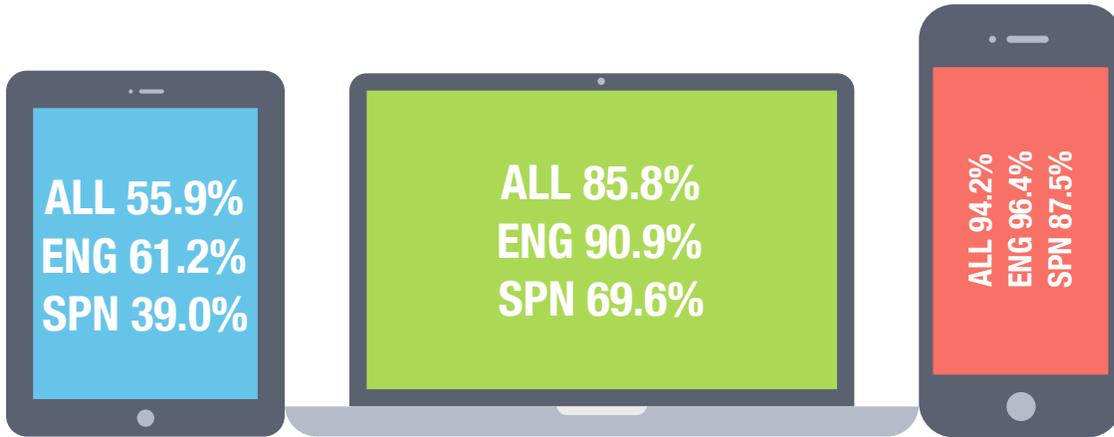
Figure 26. How often do you use each of the following? (Spanish respondents)



## Platforms Used to Access Technology

Survey respondents report a higher use of smartphones over tablets and desktop computers. The use of desktop/laptop computers and tablets varies by language, Spanish-speakers reported a lower frequency of use.

Figure 27. How often do you use each of the following?



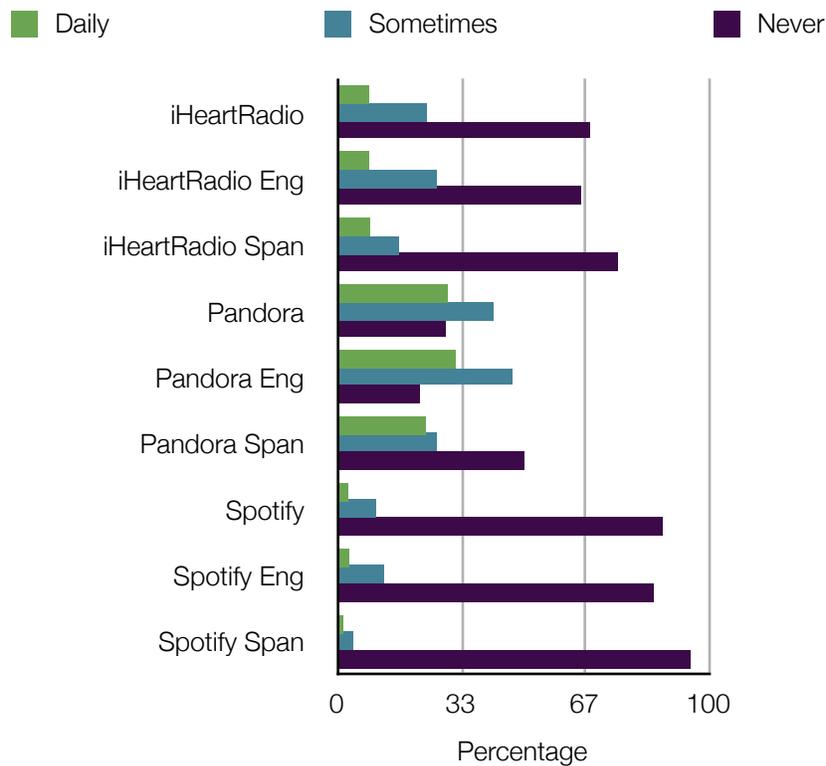
**Note:** The percentages listed are a composite score of daily and sometimes use reported by survey respondents.

## Music Apps

Pandora is the internet radio most frequently used, 71% use it at least sometimes and 29.5% use it daily. There are differences in daily use between English (31.5%) and Spanish-speakers (23.5%).

iHeartRadio is used less frequently, only 8.3% use it daily and 23.9% of the survey respondents use it sometimes. Very few survey respondents use Spotify.

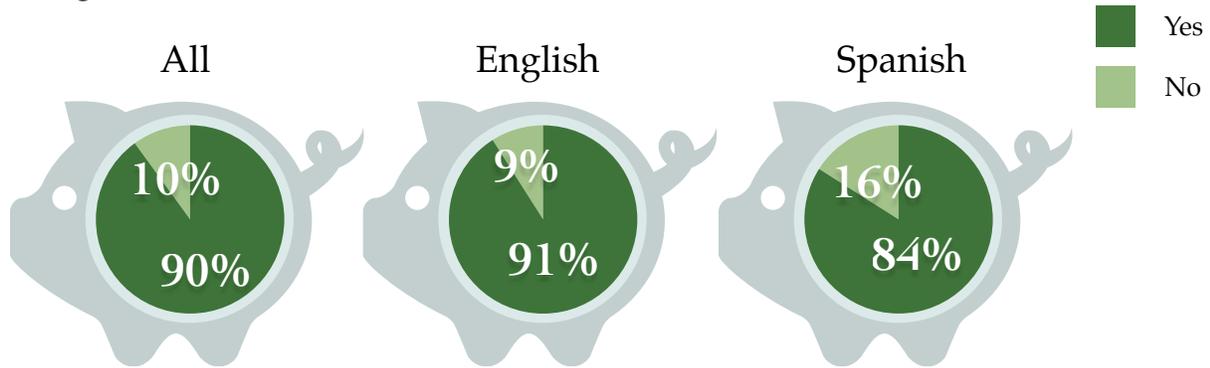
Figure 28. How often do you use each of the following to listen to music?



## Mailed Coupon Packets

Respondents were asked to indicate if they open and look through coupon packets sent to them in the mail. Almost all respondents indicated that they do look through the coupon packets.

Figure 29. When you get a packet of coupons in the mail do you usually open it and look through it?



# Conclusions and Recommendations from Study Respondents

Findings from this study indicate that WIC is helpful, but is perceived to be a hassle. Moreover, participation in WIC involves feelings of embarrassment and shame, often due to the stigma associated with being on a government program. When the hassles outweigh the benefits, participants drop from the program. Moms who are eligible, but have never enrolled, choose not to enroll because they are: unaware of their eligibility for WIC; unaware of the benefits WIC offers beyond food; keenly aware of the stigma that surrounds WIC and have heard from friends or seen the hassles their friends encounter at the grocery store and clinic. WIC can address these barriers and increase program participation by improving the grocery store experience, creating a better WIC experience and providing relevant information to participants in terms of nutrition education and increasing awareness of WIC services and eligibility guidelines.

## **Improving the grocery store experience**

Many previous WIC (PRW) participants reported the grocery store experience as a point of hassle, embarrassment and stigma associated with WIC. Qualitative participants mentioned the grocery store experience could be improved in the following ways:

- EBT card
- An aisle at the grocery store with WIC foods
- Providing new WIC participants with tips for the grocery store shopping experience
- A WIC peer-to-peer mentor to accompany them during their first WIC shopping experience
- WIC app to find retailers and the WIC foods

## **Create a better WIC Experience**

Shorter wait times and faster application processing were among the top changes previous participants want if they were to return to WIC. Participants in the qualitative study offered the following suggestions for creating a better WIC experience:

### **Streamline the application process and improve clinic flow**

- Be open on Saturdays and provide extended hours in the evening
- Provide an online application process

- Allow pediatrician offices to submit participants' information to WIC
- Send WIC staff to the hospital to enroll participants after birth

### **Clinic Environment**

- Make clinic offices more private
- Provide enclosed meeting rooms for nutritionists
- Make clinic offices more attractive, child- and family-friendly (especially for dads)
- Update the clinic poster boards to appeal to all moms (avoid glitter and creating bulletin boards that, in the words of one qualitative participant, "look like they might be used in high school.")

### **Provide a welcoming, friendly clinic visit with great customer service**

- Provide more staff who are bilingual and have children of their own
- Train staff to be more empathetic and welcoming
- Spend more time with participants and don't rush them through the clinic; participants want half-hour appointments for time to ask questions

### **Provide Relevant Information**

Focus group and interview participants indicated that WIC is good at providing information, but how the information translates to real-world application could be improved. Previous WIC survey participants indicated that "classes that help me with my life now" and "tips for feeding my family" are among the top reasons they would return to WIC. Focus group and interview participants suggested offering classes on nutrition, breastfeeding and making your own baby food.

### **Increasing Awareness of the WIC Program**

Increasing the awareness of WIC services and the WIC income guidelines is key to increasing participation rates. Consider the following from Moses Anshell about how marketing strategies can be used to overcome the barriers to participation described in this study:

#### **Meet them where they are**

WIC eligible moms have revealed where they spend time, who/what they listen to, and how they get information. Current, previous and never participants hear about WIC by far most often through friends and relatives. This trusted word-of-mouth is critical, and a major reason why social media and grassroots efforts will be integral in this campaign. It's also now clear that gas stations and convenience stores are places where we can cost-effectively reach this group during their frequent visits. When they shop for food, Walmart, Fry's and Food City are prime locations to meet their glance. WIC-eligible moms also told us they pay attention to direct mail coupon packets; another great way to capture a few moments of their focus. And we can add

the WIC voice where WIC moms enjoy their favorite country, pop and Latino music on the radio and through Pandora, the clear leader in internet radio among this group. Lastly, like millennial moms across the country, more than 80% of Arizona WIC-eligible moms send text messages and use Facebook daily, providing more places to serve them smart, interesting, intriguing messaging and opportunities to learn more.

### **Retention isn't maximized by meeting practical needs alone; moms need to feel comfortable self-identifying with WIC**

Moms report applying for WIC for infant formula and WIC foods; those are the primary practical reasons. But given the value they've assigned to personalized support, and interest they've expressed in relevant tips, it's evident that there are other factors important in the decision-making process that can be effectively addressed through strategic marketing. For example, emphasizing what WIC does right in areas that previous participants said they'd return for. A better shopping experience can mean a debit card, but it also means elements we can impact through marketing. Like a fun, unexpected out-of-home grocery store placements, or a sleek shopping app.

### **Shame can be conquered**

Stigma is one of the biggest barriers among WIC-eligible moms. Above all, WIC moms just want to feel like good moms. They've shown this through their desire for more training, tips, etc, and the fact that they continue to enroll despite the other problems with the program. WIC can increase current satisfaction and enrollment by assuring these moms that they are good moms, and leveraging marketing tactics to signal that being on WIC doesn't make you unusual; it's something a LOT of moms do.

### **Marketing ideas from focus group participants and interviewees**

- Increased advertising, outreach, and partnering with doctors offices, schools, daycares and anywhere else moms go
- Highlight participant stories and testimonials, illustrate positive stories about how WIC has helped other moms. Participant suggestions for commercials include:
  - Depicting women who "look like they've got it together and are educated."
  - Emphasize that the WIC program is not food stamps and is not a program for people who are left with no other options to feed their family
  - Showing a child thanking his mom for taking him to WIC
- Consider home visits and going into communities to provide services
- Use social media, have a Facebook page/group where WIC staff answer questions online
- Develop YouTube videos showing how to enroll in WIC and what to expect at the clinic and the grocery store

- Once improvements have been made to the program, advertise the WIC program has changed for the better
- At the clinic, let participants bring friends along to classes or consultations and offer incentives

# Appendix - Survey Questions

## Arizona Survey

Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions and enter the drawing to win one of ten \$100 Visa gift cards. This survey should take less than 5 minutes to complete. Your answers will remain anonymous. No one is going to know how you responded and your contact information will not be shared with anyone else.

### 1. What's your favorite type of music?

### 2. Which one of the following markets do you visit most often?

### 3. What kind of childcare do you use? (Select all that apply)

- Out-of-home childcare center/Daycare
- Family/Friend
- School/Preschool
- In-home childcare center/Daycare
- None

**\*4. Have you or your child ever been on WIC? (The Women's, Infants, and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program)**

- Yes, my child or I are currently on WIC.
- Yes, my child or I were on WIC in the past.
- No, neither my child nor I have been on WIC.

## Previous WIC Participant

### 5. Where did you hear about WIC? (Select all that apply)

- My doctor or my child's doctor
- TV/Radio/Billboard/Bus advertisement
- Poster or pamphlet
- Grocery store
- Friend or relative
- Hospital staff
- WIC staff
- DES Office (AHCCCS, SNAP)
- Internet search
- Other (please specify)

### 6. I chose to apply for WIC because I wanted: (Select all that apply)

- Nutrition tips
- A breast pump
- Tips for a healthy pregnancy
- To be the best mom possible
- WIC foods
- Infant formula
- To improve my child's health
- Breastfeeding support

**7. When I walked out of the WIC office, I felt ..... (Select all that apply)**

- Frustrated
- Confident
- Judged
- Confused
- Like I was doing something right for my child
- Powerful
- Like a failure
- Secure
- Like a responsible mom
- Respected
- Guilty
- Like I'm poor
- Like I learned something new
- Like I was doing something wrong
- Self-conscious
- Like a great mom

## 8. I left WIC because... (Select all that apply)

- WIC staff didn't respect my time
- It was hard to communicate with the WIC staff
- I no longer needed help from WIC
- I no longer met the WIC income guidelines
- My child turned one
- It is a hassle shopping for WIC foods
- The breastfeeding support was not helpful
- The WIC staff talked down to me
- I felt judged by the WIC staff
- I felt that friends and family were judging me
- Going to the WIC office was embarrassing
- The WIC location was too far from me
- I thought I was taking the place of someone who needed WIC
- My baby no longer needed formula
- The WIC staff were rude to my children
- The nutrition information was not helpful
- My child was over age 5
- My children don't like going to WIC
- I had to wait too long at the WIC office
- The hassle of going to the WIC office wasn't worth it
- I don't value what WIC offers other than the food

**9. I would return to WIC if it offered... (Select all that apply)**

- A service I was not embarrassed to tell others I use
- A clinic visit that does not embarrass me
- More toys and activities in the waiting room
- Tips to make feeding my family easier
- WIC staff who don't pressure me
- WIC debit card
- WIC staff who speak Spanish
- Faster application process
- Shorter wait times
- An experience that made me feel proud of myself as a mom
- Friendly WIC staff
- Easier shopping for WIC foods
- A chance to talk to other moms
- Classes that help me with my life now
- A less embarrassing grocery store experience

**10. If I were to return to WIC, when I walk out of the office I would like to feel... (Select all that apply)**

- Like someone is helping me
- Powerful
- Secure
- Understood
- Independent
- Less confused
- Cared about
- I'm not alone
- Like I received great service
- In control
- Responsible
- I learned a skill I needed
- Like a great mom
- Less afraid

## Current WIC Participant

### 11. Where did you hear about WIC? (Select all that apply)

- Grocery store
- Hospital staff
- Internet search
- Poster or pamphlet
- DES Office (AHCCCS, SNAP)
- My doctor or my child's doctor
- Friend or relative
- TV/Radio/Billboard/Bus advertisement
- WIC staff
- Other (please specify)

### 12. I chose to apply for WIC because I wanted: (Select all that apply)

- Infant formula
- To improve the health of my child
- WIC foods
- Information for a healthy pregnancy
- A breast pump
- Nutrition information
- Breastfeeding support

### 13. When I walk out the WIC office I usually feel...

- Like I was doing something right for my child
- Self-conscious
- Confused
- Confident
- Judged
- Like I learned something new
- Guilty
- Like a responsible mom
- Like I was doing something wrong
- Secure
- Like I'm poor
- Like a great mom
- Powerful
- Respected
- Frustrated
- Like a failure

### 14. When I walk out of the WIC office I want to feel... (Select all that apply)

- Someone is helping me
- Cared about
- Like a great mom
- Less confused
- I learned a skill I needed
- I received great service
- Powerful
- Independent
- Less afraid
- Understood
- In control
- I'm not alone
- Secure
- Responsible

## Never participated in WIC

### 15. Which of the following services have you heard that WIC offers? (Select all that apply)

- Car seats
- Nutrition information
- Food (such as fresh, frozen and canned fruits and vegetables)
- Breastfeeding help and education
- Food (such as milk, cheese, bread and cereal)
- Parenting information
- Health checks
- Breast pumps
- Formula for babies
- Childcare
- I have never heard of WIC

### 16. Where did you hear about WIC? (Select all that apply)

- DES Office (AHCCCS, SNAP)
- WIC staff
- My doctor or my child's doctor
- Internet search
- Hospital staff
- Grocery store
- Poster or pamphlet
- Friend or relative
- TV/Radio/Billboard/Bus advertisement
- I have never heard about WIC
- Other (please specify)

**17. I have not participated in WIC because: (Select all that apply)**

- I can do it on my own
- My friends and family do not approve of this type of program
- I would rather "make do" with less, than rely on a government program
- I don't think we are eligible
- I've seen people shopping for WIC foods and it looks complicated
- I would be embarrassed to use a WIC voucher in the grocery store
- Participating in WIC makes me feel like I am unable to provide for my family
- I don't need or want more information on feeding my child
- My family doesn't eat the foods WIC offers
- I don't want others to know I'm on a government assistance program
- Friends tell me it isn't worth the effort
- I don't know how to apply for WIC
- My church does not approve of this type of program
- I have never heard of WIC

**18. If you were to go to WIC, how would you want to feel when you walk out the door?**

- Like I'm not alone
- That I learned a skill I needed
- Understood
- Powerful
- Like a great mom
- Like someone is helping me
- Secure
- In control
- Less afraid
- Independent
- Responsible
- Like I received great service
- Less confused
- Cared about

## Arizona Survey Demographics

### 19. How often do you use each of the following?

	Daily	Sometimes	Never
Facebook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instagram	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pinterest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Twitter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Google+	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Blogs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
YouTube	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Text message	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### 20. How often do you use each of the following to listen to music?

	Daily	Sometimes	Never
iHeartRadio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pandora	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spotify	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### 21. How often do you use each of the following?

	Daily	Sometimes	Never
Smartphone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tablet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Desktop/laptop	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### 22. How often do you visit these places?

	Frequently	Sometimes	Never
Convenience store	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gas station	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community/Rec center	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
YMCA	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Farmer's Market	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Swap meet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Goodwill/Thrift store	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Movie theater	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### 23. When you get a packet of coupons in the mail, do you usually open it and look through it?

- Yes
- No

**\*24. How many people, including children, currently live in your household?**

**\*25. Please tell us your average annual household income before taxes or other deductions.**

**26. Are you Hispanic, Latino or of Spanish origin?**

- Yes  
 No

**27. What is your race? Please select one or more.**

- White  
 Black or African American  
 Asian  
 Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander  
 American Indian or Alaskan Native  
 Other

**28. In the last 12 months, how often did you worry that you would run out of food before you had money to buy more?**

- Often  
 Sometimes  
 Never

**29. Please select all of the following that apply to you:**

- I am pregnant  
 I was pregnant in the last 6 months  
 My child is younger than 1 year old  
 My child is 1 or 2 years old  
 My child is 3 or 4 years old

**30. Please tell us what town or city you live in and your zip code.**

Town or City

Zip

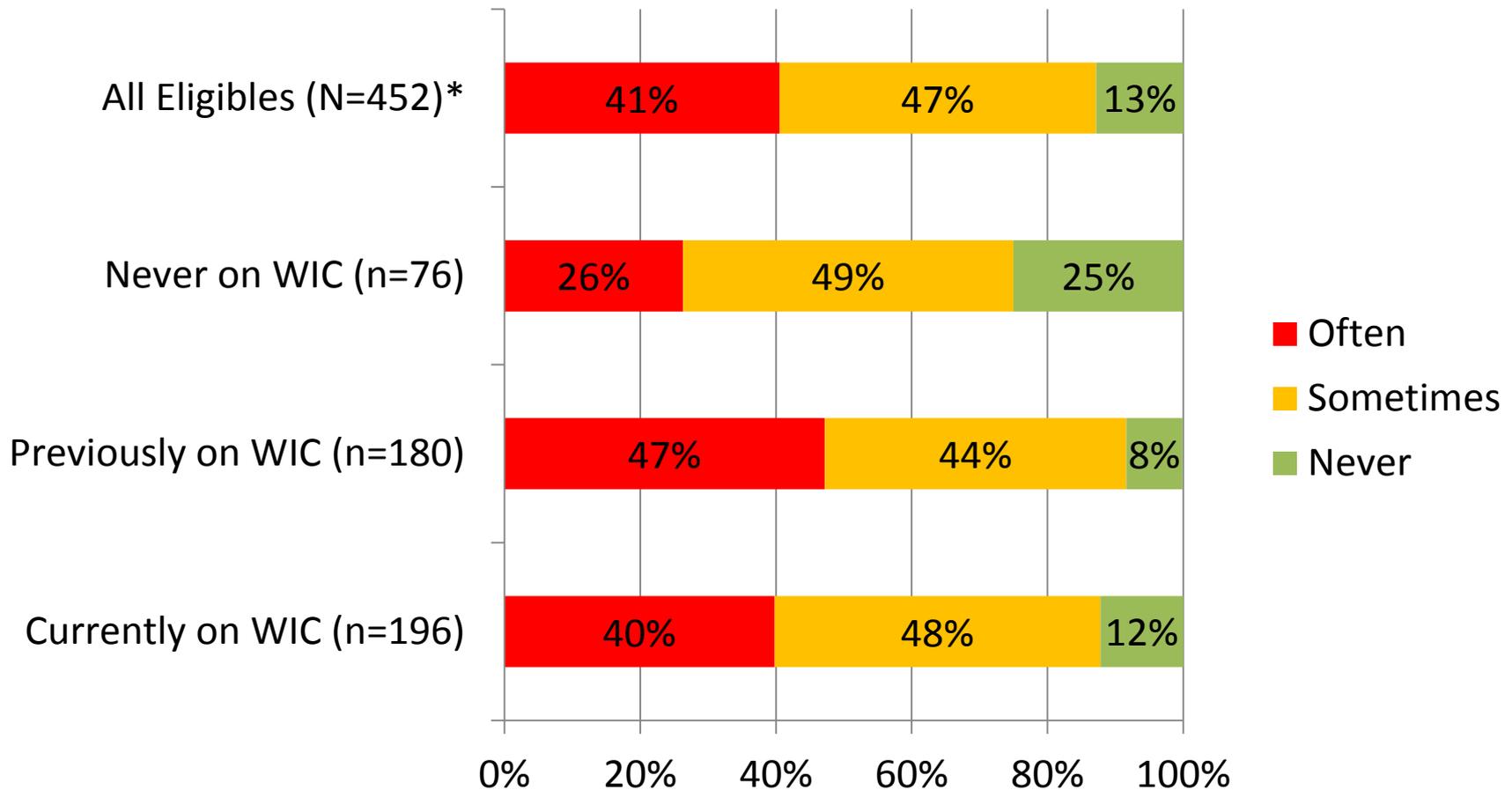
# Appendix B – ADHS Analysis WIC Eligible

# 775 surveyed

- This presentation focuses on the 473 people who were eligible for WIC at the time of the survey
- Currently enrolled (n=216)
- Previously enrolled (n=181)
- Never enrolled (n=76)

# Food Insecurity Among WIC Eligibles

## How often worry would run out of food



\*Only those who answered question on food insecurity were included on this chart. There were 21 who did not answer.

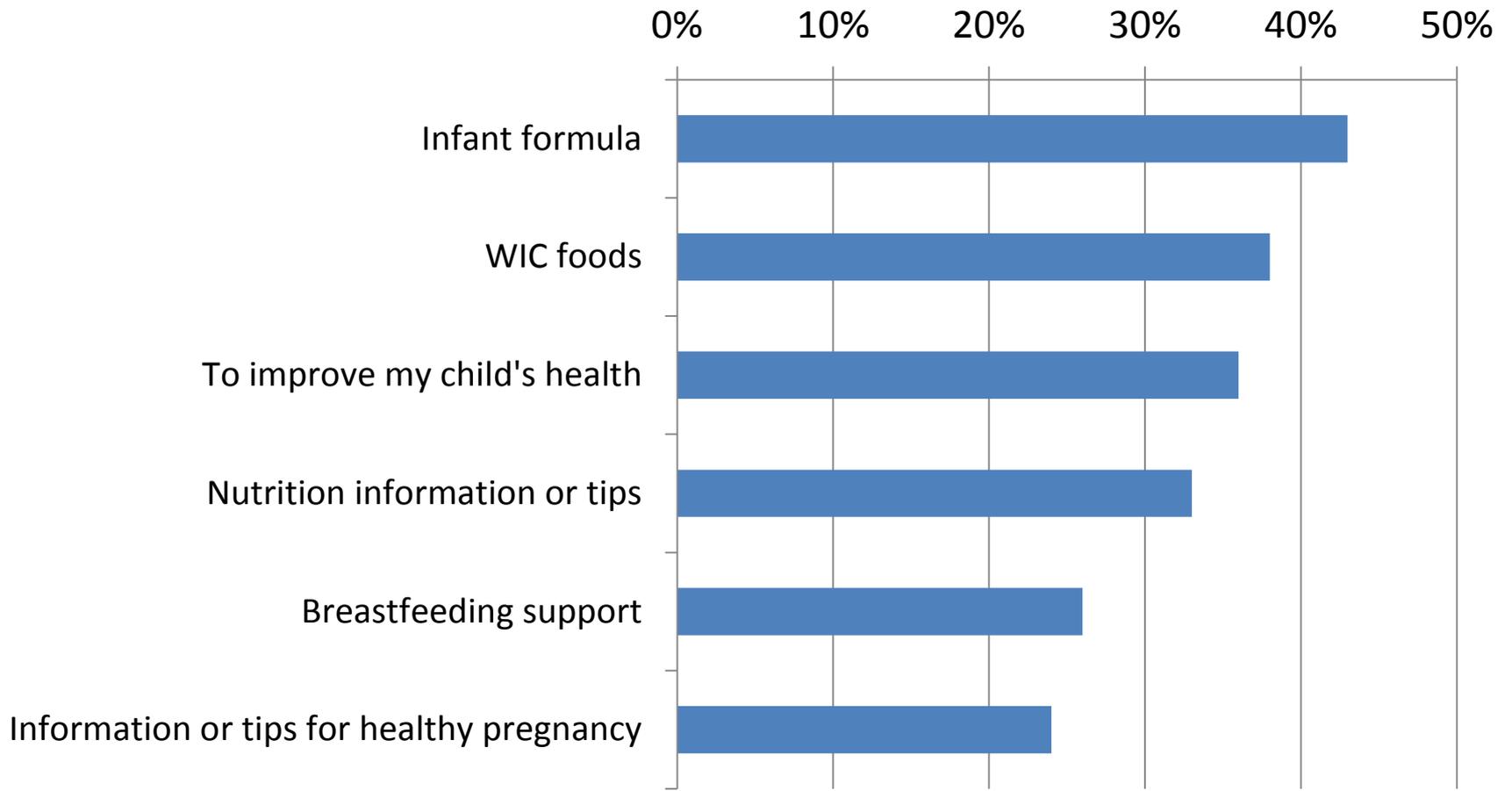
# Where heard of WIC (N=473)

- Friends or relatives (56%)
- Doctors Offices (25%)
- DES/AHCCCS/SNAP offices (25%)
- Hospital staff (18%)
- Fewer than 7% heard it from grocery store, advertisements, posters or pamphlets, internet search, WIC staff, and others.

# Why never participated (n=76)

- Some are unaware or misinformed
  - Over half thought they were not eligible (51%)
  - 13% don't know how to apply
  - 3% never heard of WIC
- Some believe they shouldn't rely on WIC
  - 18% said "I can do it on my own"
  - 11% said "I would rather do with less rather than rely on the government"

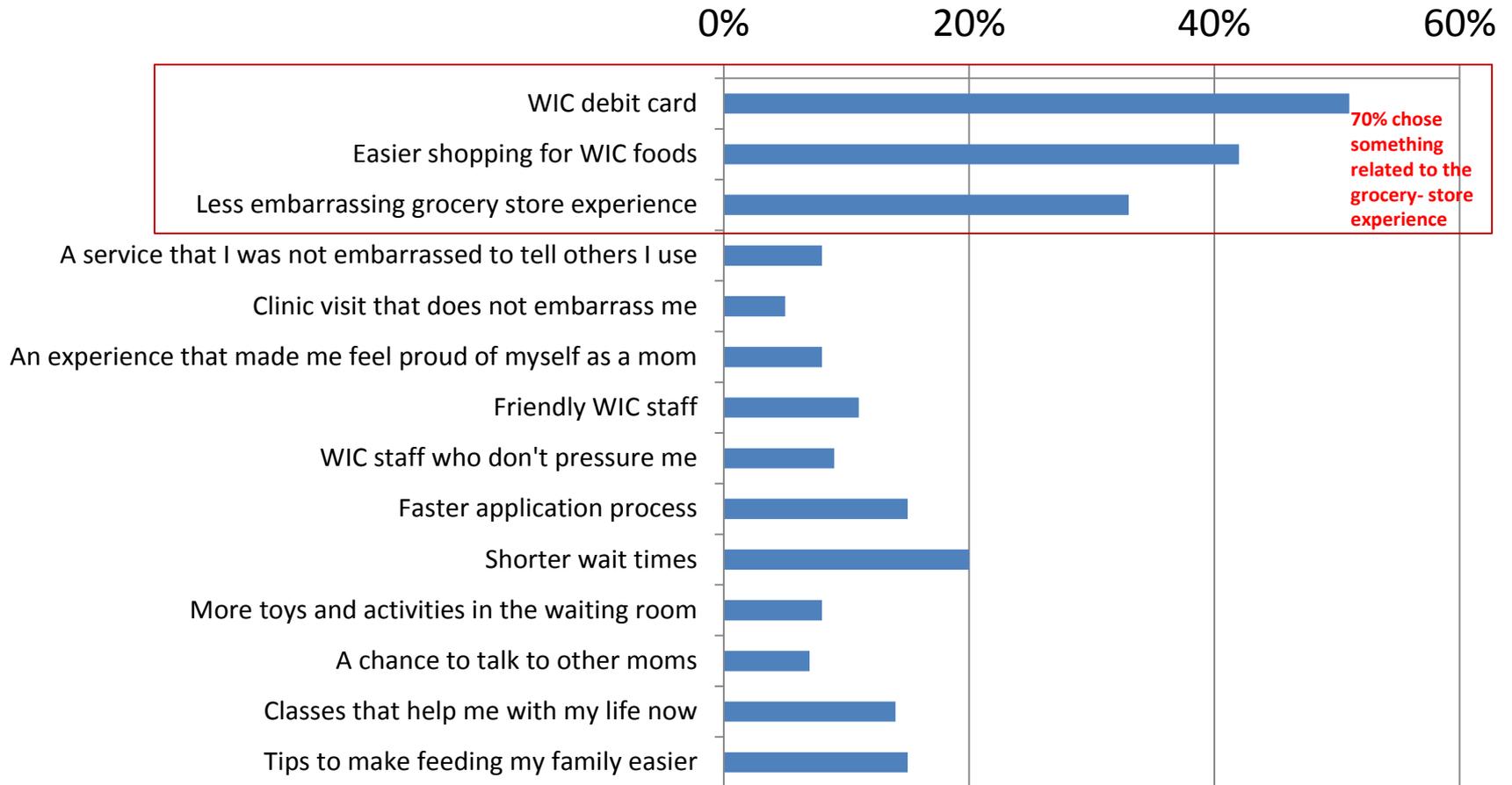
# I chose to apply for WIC because I wanted (n=397) . . .



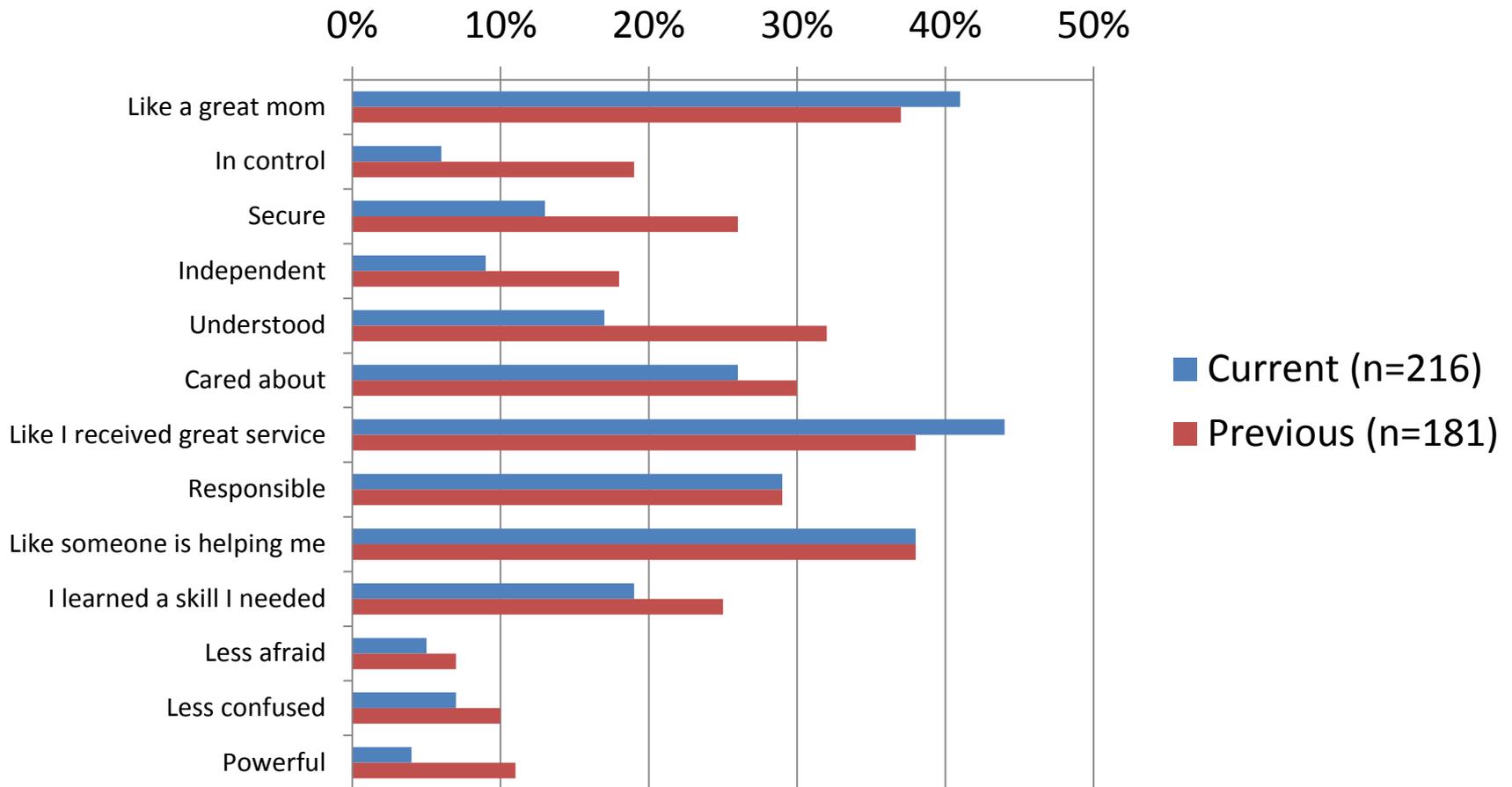
# I left WIC because . . . (n=181)

- No longer needed help from WIC (33%)
- It's a hassle shopping for WIC foods (19%) or going to the WIC office (14%)
- 16% said (even though they were currently eligible):
  - My child turned one,
  - I no longer met the WIC income guidelines.
- 16% said
  - My child turned five,
  - My baby no longer needed formula
  - I thought I was taking the place of someone else.
    - All who gave this reason said they worried about running out of food either often (39%) or sometimes (61%).

# I would return to WIC if it offered . . . (n=181)



# When women walk out of the WIC office, they would like to feel. . .

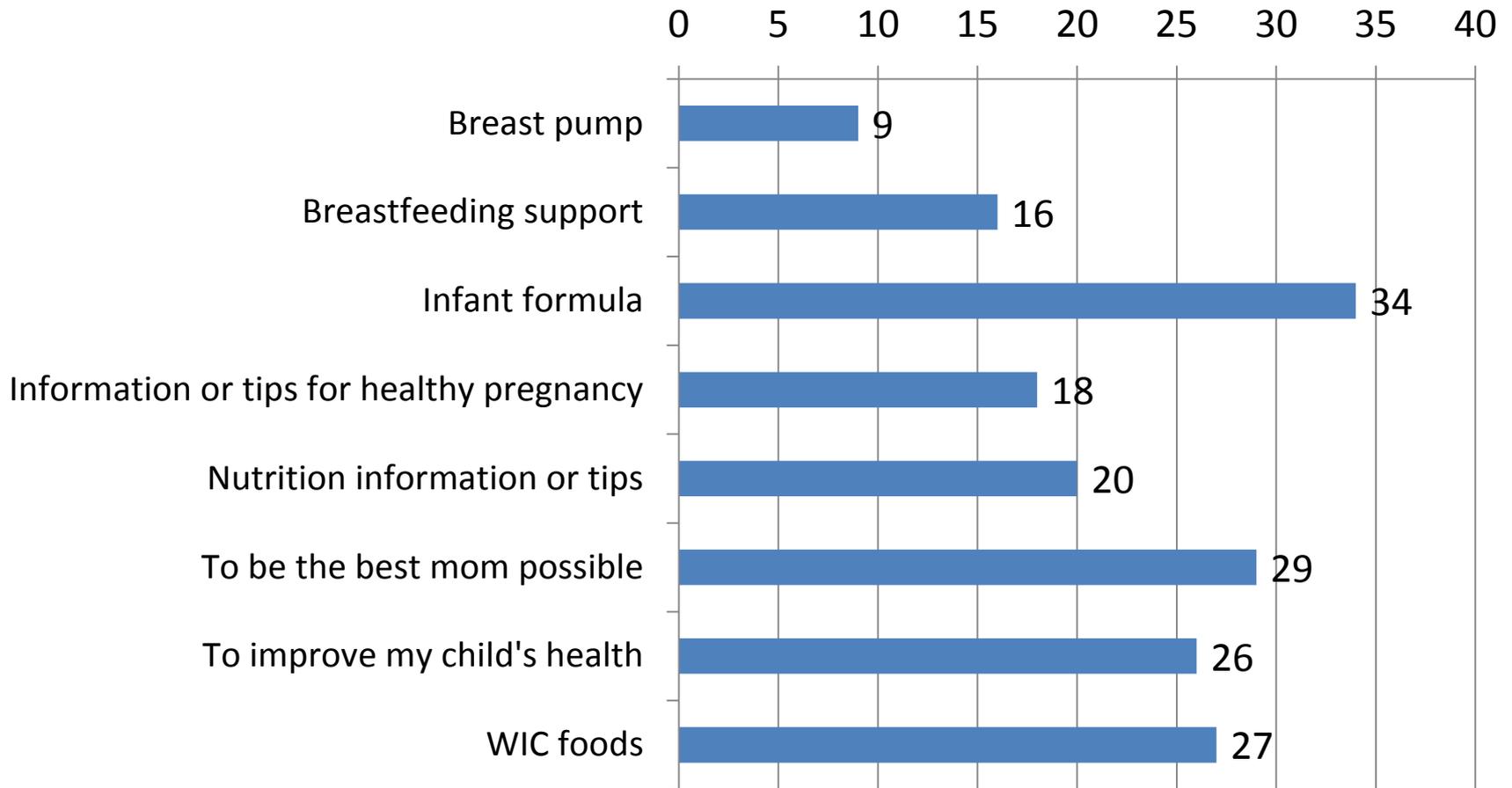


# Appendix C – ADHS Analysis WIC Not Eligible

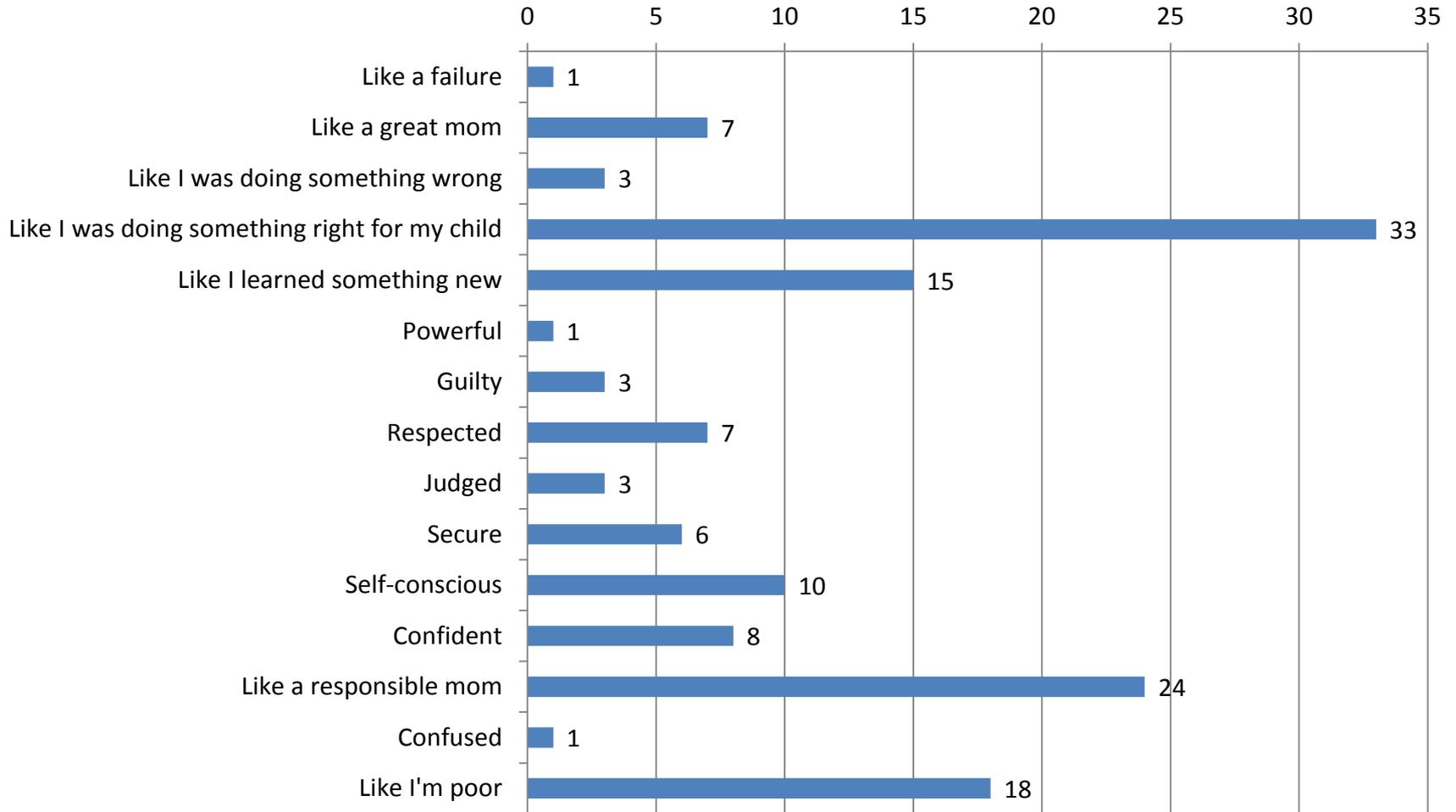
# 290

- This presentation focuses on 290 people who were excluded from the previous analysis because they were not eligible at the time of the survey
- 75 were previously enrolled
- 171 were never enrolled
- 13 did not answer question

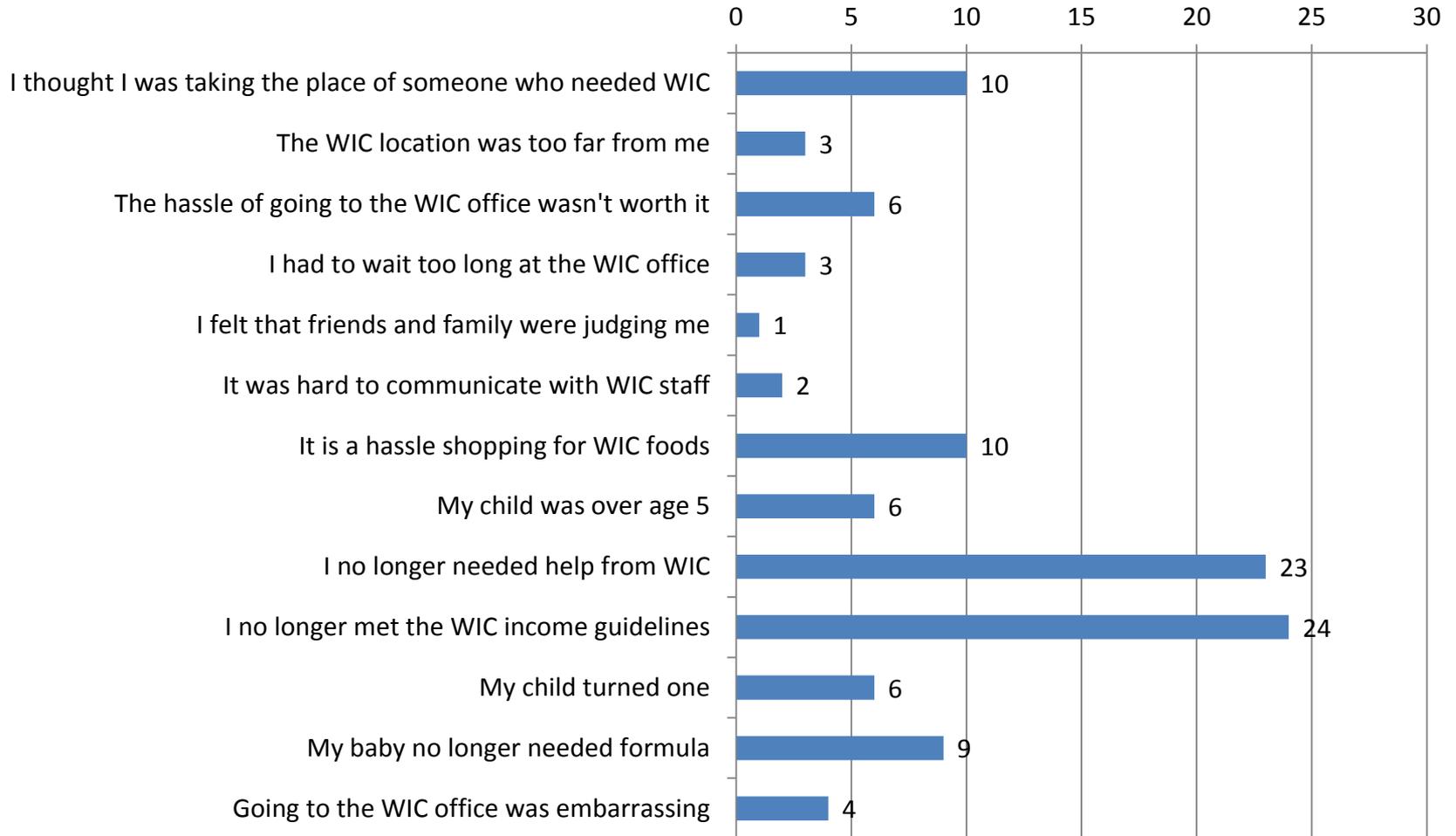
# I chose to apply for WIC because I wanted



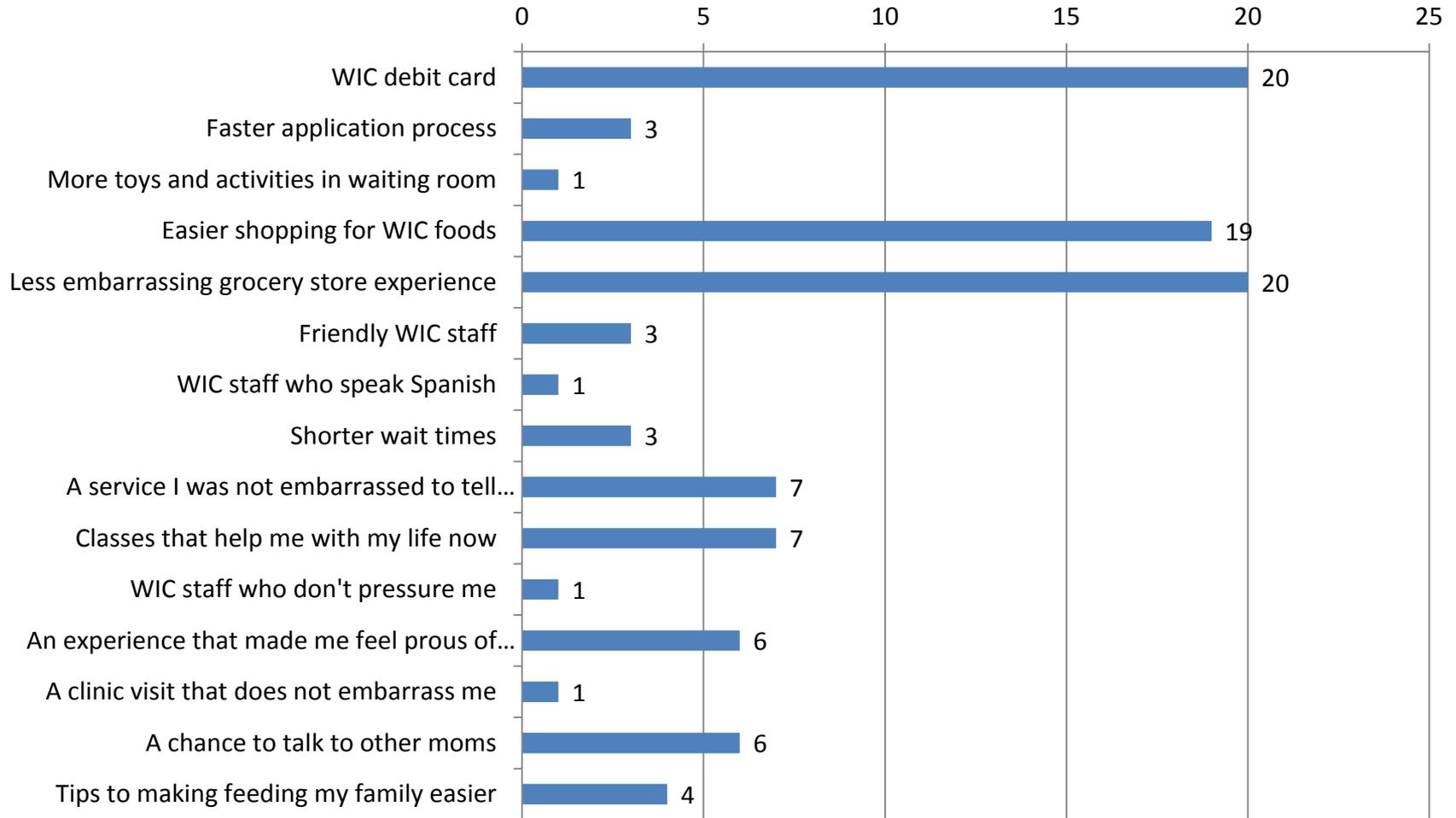
# When I walked out of the WIC office, I felt



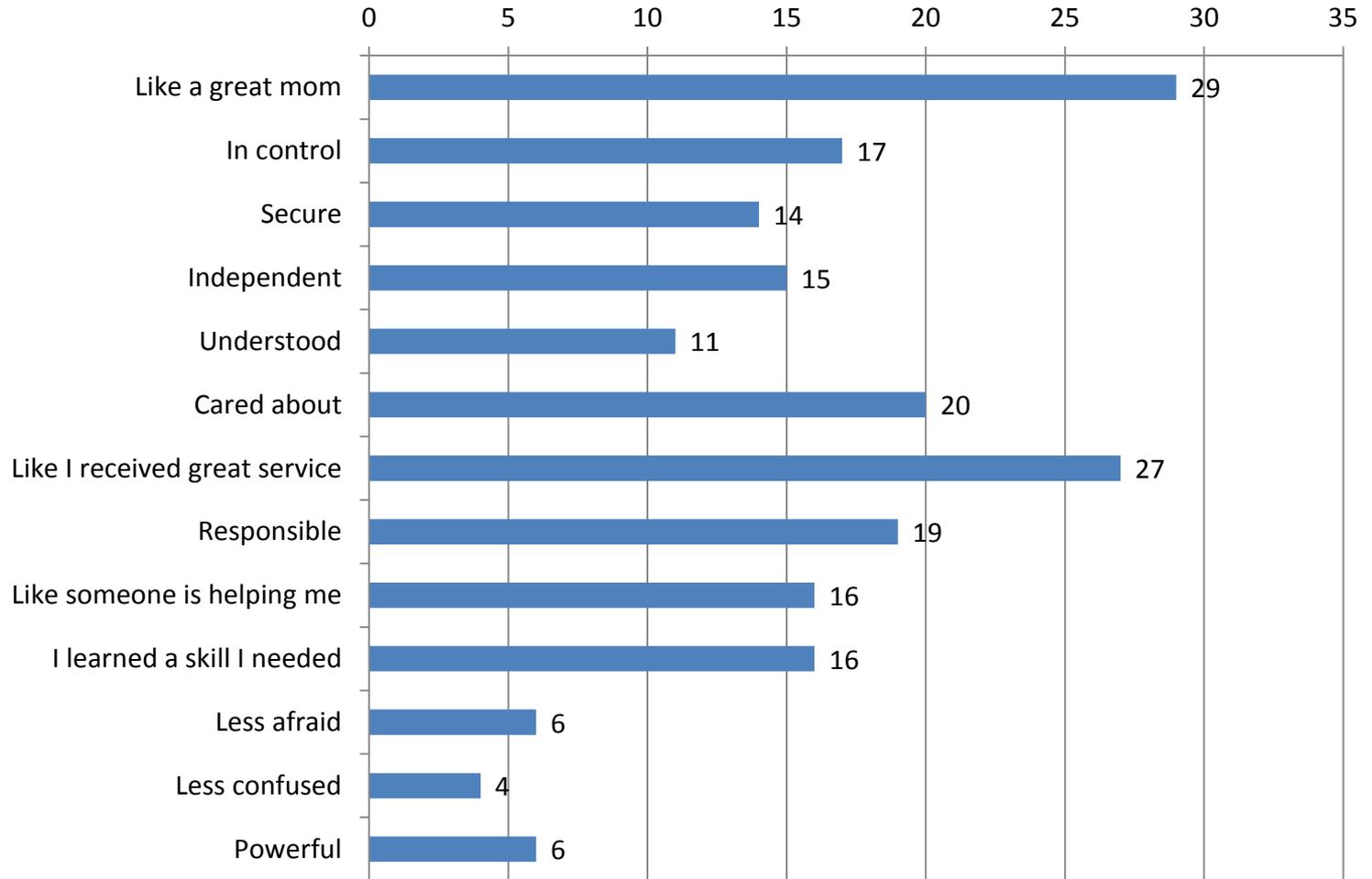
# I left WIC because



# I would return to WIC if it offered



# If I were to return to WIC, when I walk out of the office I would like to feel



# If you were to go to WIC, how would you want to feel when you walk out the door?

