



# GUAM WIC PROGRAM STRUCTURAL ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN

## Abstract

An assessment of the Guam WIC Program structure against the affirmative action plan to support the operations that impact access to services, enrollment and participation rates.

Cydset Victoria Toledo, MD, MHA

May 16, 2023

## **Structural Assessment of Guam WIC Program**

Since the beginning of FY 2023 Guam WIC program have seen a steady increase of enrollees and participation rates. As of April 2023, Guam WIC program have 6615 enrollees with a participation rate of 90.7%. However, this is only about 51% penetration rate of WIC Eligible participants as discussed in the affirmative action plan. The action plan to increase participation and retention must be supported by infrastructures such as, physical location of WIC clinic, accessibility, staffing patterns and strategies that also needs to be supported to be successful. Below is an assessment of the current clinic infrastructure and operations in consideration of how much of the current participants needs are being met.

### **Access to Services/Clinic Hours**

There are currently 4 WIC clinics on Guam, strategically located in the North, South and Central location on the island. The clinics serve all the villages on the Island as there is no wrong door; clients can visit any WIC clinic at their convenience. The two main clinics are located at Dededo and Tiyan and are open six days a week from 8:00 am – 5:00 pm. The other satellite clinics are located in the Southern Region Community Health Center Inarajan which is open only once a week and at Sta. Rita which is open three days a week. The same staff goes to the two satellite clinics.

As of April 2023, we expanded the clinic hours at our Inarajan clinic to 2x weekly to accommodate more participants from the southern region.

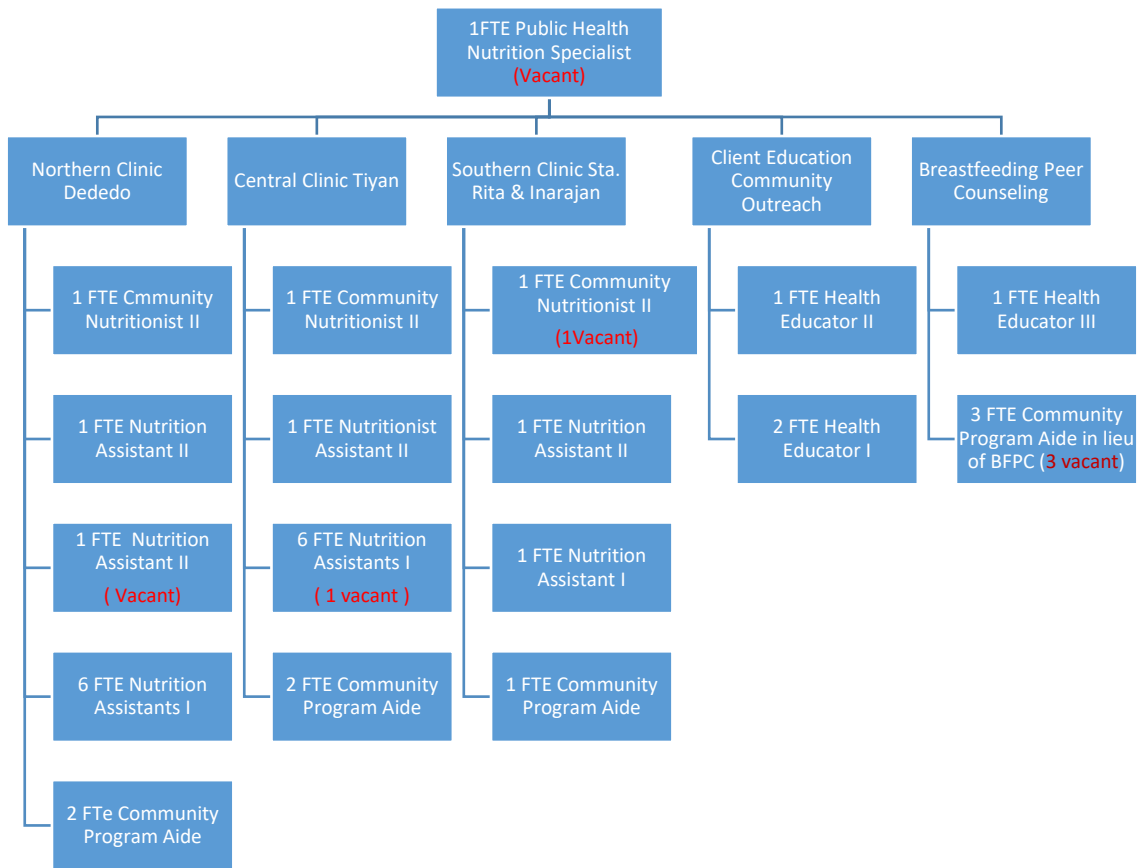
### **Clinic Structures/Environment/location**

All WIC clinics are accessible by public transportation as bus stops are situated across the clinic. Participants who don't have a vehicle can utilize the public transportation. The four clinics also have ample parking space to accommodate participants and have a ramp for wheelchairs or strollers. Two of the clinics are also located in the Regional Community Health Centers wherein other needed health services are accessible. Each staff have their own clinic space and privacy when providing services to the clients.

Although accessibility of the clinics is good, there are some structural facility maintenance concerns as the buildings especially the Tiyan clinic is more than 40 years old. The clinics also needs to be repainted, refurbished to be more welcoming and child friendly with eye catching signage. This is a project that will be taken in the near future if budget permits. Relocating the Tiyan administrative office and clinic to a newer building is being discussed as there are already health and safety issues with the current building, that maintaining and repairing it is not cost effective.

### **Staffing Pattern**

There have been shortages of staff for the past years. Four (4) Nutrition Assistants and 1 Community Nutritionist II vacancies were filled last March and April 2023. This has facilitated the opening of more clinic hours for the Inarajan clinic and more clinic appointments were accommodated on a daily basis in four of our clinics. Each staff can have a maximum caseload of 500. With the current 17 clinic staff, Guam WIC can accommodate 8,500 clients.



## Outreach Efforts

Outreach efforts were put on hold during the pandemic, but with the lifting of the public health emergency community outreach are now being carried out. An outreach plan was created as informed by the affirmative action plan. The Memorandum of Understanding with the Guam Memorial Hospital was updated and recently signed by both agency directors and is pending the governor's signature as of this writing.

Based on the affirmative action plan our outreach efforts are needed more in the northern villages. The only challenge is that, our outreach unit doesn't have their own Vehicle to transport them to the different villages and conduct outreach activities. Procurement of a WIC vehicle dedicated for our Health Educators' use during outreach "WIC on Wheels" will facilitate more enrollees and access to services.

By June 2023 our daily outreach activities with the Guam Memorial Hospital Authority will resume as this was put on hold during the pandemic.

Guam WIC needs to be exposed and be seen in the community, more advertising is needed. It has to be rebranded as there are a lot of people who doesn't know what WIC program is. A budget should be set aside to support the outreach efforts and marketing of the program.

## **Conclusion**

The current staffing of the Guam WIC program is adequate to provide quality WIC program services. More participants can still be accommodated to maximize clinic staff and to remain cost effective. The 4 clinic locations are so accessible and serve the different Guam villages. The clinic hours can also accommodate working clients as two of the main clinic sites are open on Saturdays. The outreach program however needs to be supported to be more robust and efficient by providing a designated vehicle for staff to use to keep them mobile and able to meet and enroll WIC eligible participants in the community.