



United States Department of Agriculture
Research, Education, and Economics
Agricultural Research Service
National Agricultural Library

Dear WIC Nutrition Professional:

It's spring and the seeds outdoors are sprouting. After several years of groundwork, it is time to nurture preparations for the Value Enhanced Nutrition Assessment (VENA) process so it will come to full bloom this year.

The VENA process identifies the WIC participants' immediate concerns about nutrition and encourages their involvement in improving their health. It is an opportunity to build rapport and create a partnership with the participant. VENA enables you to have greater success in meeting participants' needs.

This mailing includes a few things to assist you in successfully implementing VENA.

1. **Are You Ready to Implement VENA?** Use this brochure to explain why VENA is necessary and its benefits.
2. **Is Your Clinic VENA-Ready?** Review how everyone can contribute to VENA's success.
3. **Clinic Self-Assessment Activity:** Apply VENA principles as you evaluate your work environment.
4. **VENA Skills Checklist for Effective Counseling:** Enrich your interactions with WIC participants. If some of the skills are new to you, try practicing first with your colleagues.

VENA Resources at WIC Works (www.nal.usda.gov/wicworks): WIC Learning Online (WLOL) includes a lesson on VENA. Dietitians and nurses earn free continuing education credits when they complete the lesson. An overview of VENA as well as sections on critical thinking and health outcome-based assessment are all part of this lesson. All WIC clinic staff can benefit from reviewing the VENA WLOL modules because they lead to greater understanding of VENA and can serve as a refresher for staff that participated in a VENA training earlier.

The VENA section in the WIC Works Learning Center has the complete VENA guidance document, Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) competency training materials, answers to frequently asked questions, and VENA implementation materials received thus far from Alaska, Guam, Idaho, Maine, New York, Texas, and Wisconsin. Visit often as the WIC Works Team is busy upgrading and enhancing this section.

It's up to you to make VENA beneficial for WIC participants and staff. Let us know what else we can do to help you help WIC! Contact the WIC Works Resource System team by phone: 301-504-5414, by fax: 301-504-6409, or by email at wicworks@ars.usda.gov.

DEBRA R. WHITFORD
Acting Director
Supplemental Food Program Division
Food and Nutrition Service

SHIRLEY KING EVANS
Acting Coordinator
Food and Nutrition Information Center
National Agricultural Library