

Management Evaluation Tool



The Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program provides nutritious foods, education of proper nutrition, referrals to health and other social services at no charge. The WIC Program serves low-income pregnant, postpartum and breast feeding women, and infants and children up to age 5 who are at nutrition risk. The WIC Program provides assistance to those who might not be able to get nutritional and educational needs met without this program. The WIC Program was appropriated \$7.252 billion for FY2010. The WIC Program benefits approximately 9.3 million women, infants, and children in all 50 states, 34 Indian tribal organizations, District of Columbia,

and US territories. The WIC Program is a grant program administered at the federal level by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Agency and provides funding for program operations by 90 State and Indian Tribal Organization agencies.

FNS performs evaluations of the State and Indian Tribal Organization agencies' operations in providing this important service. These evaluations are conducted in potentially 2,200 local agencies and 9,000 clinics by 8 regional offices. These evaluations were conducted by paper, mail, email, and fax spanning months. Analysis and reporting on grantee performance was not possible because of how the evaluation data were collected. The evaluation process differed by regional offices. FNS was looking to standardize the evaluation process and collect grantee performance data for trend analysis to improve WIC Program operations and ultimately to better serve those who need the assistance the program provides. In October 2009 FNS deployed the Management Evaluation (ME) Tool. The ME Tool is a custom software solution built from the group up. It provides FNS the ability to evaluate grantees electronically, gather evaluation responses quickly, communicate evaluation results, standardize the evaluation process nationally, and collect data to perform trend analysis and performance reporting. The system is an internet/intranet application using USDA's single sign-on service to provide grantees and employees access to evaluation data.

Deployment and operations of the ME Tool System enabled FNS to meet the primary goals of its initial investment of:

- Providing a system that standardizes the management evaluation process throughout all eight regional offices
- Providing a system that is extendable to the 13 other programs in FNS that perform management evaluations
- Transition from a paper based process to electronic process to reduce the amount of time required to go through the management evaluation process
- Providing a data store for trend analysis and reporting on grantee performance

Counterpointe staff was part of a team that successfully implemented the ME Tool System through an iterative process. We currently provide operations and maintenance support.