

## Communication Methods

- I. Telephone Communication
  - a. WIC staff should use good telephone etiquette when receiving and making calls.
    - i. Calls received during business hours should be answered promptly.
    - ii. Ask people to hold when necessary and provide an estimate of the wait time.
    - iii. Return phone messages the same or the next business day.
    - iv. For non-English speakers, use bilingual staff or an interpreter.
  - b. The Utah WIC program uses the Teletask system to make automated calls for appointment reminders and missed appointment notifications for those who do not receive text messages.
- II. Text Communication. The Utah WIC program uses the Teletask text messaging system. The state office uses this system for mass texting and for appointment reminders. Local agencies are authorized to use this system for: two-way texting with participants, to exchange documents with participants, and for the collection of electronic signatures.
  - a. Automated mass text messages. Automated text messages are set up and sent by the state office for:
    - i. Appointment reminders,
    - ii. Missed appointment notifications,
    - iii. Notifying participants who were recently terminated for failure to receive benefits for 3 months or for failure to reapply,
    - iv. Notifying participants who have not received current month benefits and no appointment is scheduled,
    - v. Notifying participants with a certification expiring at the end of the month and no appointment scheduled,
    - vi. Inviting Medicaid and SNAP recipients to apply for WIC,
    - vii. Emergency alerts,
    - viii. Local agency requested mass texts.
      1. Local agency WIC directors or designee must request approval for mass text messages from the state WIC program manager.
    - ix. The wording and timing of mass text messages and automated reminders is coordinated between the state office staff and the local WIC directors.
  - b. Individualized Two-way texting. The Utah WIC program uses Teletask to facilitate direct communication between local clinic staff and participants.

- i. Clinic staff must monitor the Teletask Dashboard web page throughout the WIC business day to watch for and respond to incoming messages.
- ii. Text communication with participants
- iii. Sending documents to participants
- iv. Requesting documents and proofs from participants
  - 1. When requesting documents/proofs to be submitted through Teletask, always send the Upload Documents link first. This ensures document security. If a participant sends a document directly as a text message, it is less secure.
  - 2. To ensure the security and confidentiality of participant data, all staff must generate a unique Teletask link for every individual text request. Failure to do so creates a group chat environment, leading to a major breach of confidential documents.
    - a. Each employee is required to be fully trained prior to initiating such requests through text.
    - b. Never reuse, copy, or paste a previously generated Teletask link. Generate a new link every time. A new link must be created for every single participant interaction.
    - c. Do not save Teletask links in "Quick Notes" or external documents for future use.
    - d. Double-check the participant's phone number before hitting send.
  - 3. Consequences of improper link use.
    - a. Reusing a link adds the new participant to an existing thread.
    - b. All participants in that thread can view each other's confidential uploaded documents (ID, income, medical records).
    - c. Sharing personally identifiable information (PII) or protected health information (PHI) with unauthorized individuals is a reportable breach.
  - 4. Reporting a Breach. If you realize a link was reused:
    - a. Notify your supervisor immediately.
    - b. Contact the WIC help desk immediately
    - c. The state office will contact Teletask immediately to get the text removed. Teletask turnaround time is 24 hours to get the text deleted.
- v. Collecting electronic signatures.

### III. Email.

- a. Email may be used to communicate with participants as needed.

- i. Encrypted emails must be used if sharing confidential information or PHI.
  - b. Email addresses should be requested of all families. Emails are not required to be on WIC, but are used to send invitations to create an account in the Participant Portal. If the family does not use email or declines to share their email address, leave the E-mail Address field blank.
- IV. WICShopper app
  - a. The state office uses banner ads to communicate information to participants.
    - i. Banners may be used temporarily to share urgent news and information.
    - ii. Banners are often used on a rotating basis to share nutrition information, food updates and other resources.
  - b. On occasion, the state WIC office uses push notifications to communicate news and information to all participants who use the app.