

# WIC PROJECT

## YALE RUDD CENTER

### INSTRUCTIONS FOOD STORE ASSESSMENT FORM

This measure is designed to rate the nutrition environments of all retail food stores in selected towns of Connecticut. The main goal of the study is to assess changes in access to healthy foods (fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy) after the implementation of the WIC program revisions in food packages for low-income women, children, and infants. The due date for this program change is October 1, 2009. We collect data twice: before the change in spring 2009 and after the change in spring 2010.

#### General

The principle of these measures is to gather information on WIC authorized products and their alternatives when those are available (e.g., whole wheat bread and refined flour bread).

1. The measure is organized by food categories. For example, there is a section for milk, juice, etc. If the store does not sell a category of foods on the measure, mark the box at the top of the measure “store does not sell” product.
2. For each product in the instrument, we assess its availability and price. In several sections (milk, whole grains, fruits and vegetables of any kind), we also assess the available variety.
3. For the fresh vegetables and fruit sections there is a quality scale (excellent to poor).
4. The WIC authorized brands (when available) are listed alphabetically under each food category.
5. The column headings may be different by product due to the nature of the category. If the item is not available, check the box under the “not available” heading. To mark the price pay attention to the size of the item.

#### Time of assessment

Complete grocery store measures between 9 am and 4 pm. This helps to ensure that items have been stocked for the day and are not sold out. In small stores, it also helps to ensure that you are not in the way during a busy time.

#### Preparation

Before you go to the store, fill in the following at the top of each page:

1. Rater ID
2. Store ID

Staple pages by store under the store cover page. Go over the checklist to ensure you have all materials that you need. Leave the office with a checklist, map, # of surveys plus 5 extra, and GPS device.

#### Availability

If an item is sold out, write “sold out” in the comments section and record any available information. Continue down the list until an item is available or the list has been exhausted.

#### Pricing

If the price is not available, mark “no price label”, then ask an employee at the cash register or at customer service. Wait until all of the measures have been completed before asking the price of the items that are needed. There may be exceptions to this (i.e., you are in the produce section and there is no price shown but an employee is working there), so use your judgment.

### Cover Page

Complete the cover page after you do the store assessment. You may fill in some items during the store visit (e.g., WIC and food stamp authorization, # of cash registers, aisles).

On the cover page, fill in the following:

1. Store Name
2. Date
3. Day of the week
4. Start time (when you enter the store)
5. End time (when you have finished the measures and reviewed them for completeness)
6. Type of store:

**Convenience store:** Establishments primarily engaged in the retail sale of a medium variety of canned goods, dairy products, prepackaged meats, and other grocery items in limited amounts.

**Food mart/gas station:** They are similar to convenience stores in terms of the size and variety of items they sell, but they are associated with a gas station.

**Grocery store:** Non-chain stores that sell food. These stores are often “mom and pop” grocery stores, bodegas, and older markets and typically have a greater supply of foods than convenience stores and mini-marts, but offer less availability of foods compared to supermarkets and chain grocery stores.

**Supermarket:** Chain grocery stores like Shaws, Stop & Shop, Wal-Mart, C-Town and independent large grocery stores like the Edge of the Woods.

### 7. Vendor survey

This indicates if the store is in the sample for interviews with the store manager or owner. This will be true for all WIC-authorized small vendors and some small non-WIC stores. Ask for the store manager and follow the protocol for scheduling interviews. Mark the status of your request (you could talk to the store manager, participation was declined, you scheduled an interview, need a follow-up call). Write down a contact phone and time to call. If the interview is scheduled, leave our business card for the person to call if he/she needs to reschedule.

### 8. Store features:

Number of cash registers in the store: Each checkout register should be counted, even if a clerk is not there at the time of your visit. Mark down the number of cash registers as “1”, “2”, “3”, “4-9”, “10+”)

Number of aisles: Do not count perpendicular aisles, i.e. the aisles in the back and front of the store)

WIC Store Authorization: Ask a cashier, don’t assume based on the signs. If the store attended training and submitted an application, their status is “pending”.

Food Stamp (SNAP, which is a new name) Authorization: Ask a cashier  
Refrigeration available (any) or refrigeration only in the deli

### Food advertisements (any food) in store windows

9. Observational Status (if observation is complete, if not why)

10. New Store: If a new store is located, write down the name of the store and address. An ID will be assigned at the office.

Important: You can complete a store observation in this new store if you have time to finish other stores in your assignment. Otherwise, we'll come back to that store later on.

### General Completion Tips

Remember to follow the tips below to decrease the data cleaning time later.

1. Write legibly.
2. Check your work.
3. Use the correct line/check box.
4. Write your comments and notes on the lines provided.
5. Do not cross through any individual items or sections.
6. Erase any stray marks you make.
7. Round numbers to the closest whole digit, e.g. write down 10 oz for 9.75 oz.
8. Only fill in/look for the italicized item if the first listed item is not available.
9. Record regular prices, not sale or member-special prices. You can usually find regular prices noted under or next to sale prices.
10. If the size is not available for an item in the measure, select the product closest to the size of the item.
11. Check instructions to ensure that you follow the protocol.
12. Call the office if you have any questions: Tania (203) 432-8432, cell (310) 795-0750.

## Measure #1: MILK

### Milk Definitions

- a. Skim milk - fat-free
- b. Low-fat milk – 1%
- c. Reduced fat milk – 2%
- d. Whole milk – full fat (3.25%)
- e. Soy Milk

### Measurement Procedures

1. Find the milk aisle in the store. If the store does not sell milk, mark the “store does not sell milk” box.
2. Look for the least expensive brand. Usually there is only one brand in smaller stores. For supermarkets, use the store brand that is usually the cheapest (e.g., Stop&Shop). Do not use organic or flavored milk.
3. If all milk is the same price regardless of type, mark the “flat milk pricing” box. Next, check “Not available” for all milk fats, which are not available at the store.
4. Look for skim (non-fat) milk (0%). If skim milk is not available, mark “Not available”. If available, mark the price for 0.5 gallon and gallon.
5. If not flat pricing, repeat step 4 for low-fat (1%), reduced-fat milk (2%) and whole milk.
6. Look for plain (unflavored) soy milk of the brand with the most shelf space. If no soy milk is available, mark “not available”, otherwise mark the price for a quart and 0.5 gallon. Shelf-stable or refrigerated soy milk is acceptable.
7. If the store is not a supermarket, count the number of half-gallons of whole milk and count the total number of half-gallons of 2%, 1%, and skim milk as one group. Repeat the same step counting gallons.

## Measure #2: PROTEIN

### A. Cheese

#### Cheese Definitions:

- a. Reduced fat block cheese cheddar, least expensive brand  
If cheddar is not available, use American, Mozzarella, Monterrey Jack, Colby or Swiss and note in “Other”
- b. Regular clock cheese cheddar, least expensive brand  
If Cheddar is not available, use American, Mozzarella, Monterrey Jack, Colby or Swiss and note in “Other”
- c. Deli American cheese (Only American allowed)

**Restrictions:** No individually wrapped slices, shredded or string cheese, cheese food or spreads, cream cheese or cottage cheese. No imported or organic cheese. No flavored cheese.

WIC allows only 8-16 oz for cheese in blocks. Attempt to stay within this range and as close to 16oz as possible.

### Measurement Procedures

1. If the store does not sell cheese, mark the “store does not sell cheese” box.

#### Block (pre-packaged) cheese

2. First look for reduced-fat cheddar cheese in block. Use the cheapest cheddar in block 16oz. If 16oz is not available, look for the closest size available, ideally within the 8-16oz range. Record the package size in oz if it’s not 16oz.
3. If cheddar is not available, use the cheapest American, Mozzarella, Monterrey Jack, Colby or Swiss in block and write down the type and brand of cheese in “Other”.
4. Record the price per lb listed (i.e., the label should have a price/lb and price/package. Record the price per package only if the price per pound is not available).
5. Locate regular fat cheddar in block. Repeat steps 2-4.
6. For American slices locate the deli section and record price per pound. If it is not available, mark down “Not available”.

### B. Eggs

1. If the store does not sell eggs, mark the “store does not sell eggs” box.
2. Look for the least expensive brand of large white eggs. Mark the price per dozen for large white regular eggs. If these are not available, look for large brown eggs and mark the price per dozen. Note if “extra-large” or “medium” in Comments.

3. If only ½ dozen is available, write down the price per package in “Other”.

### **C. Tofu**

1. If the store does not sell tofu, mark the “store does not sell tofu” box.
2. Look for both the Soyboy (16oz) and Nasoya (14oz) packages and mark the price per package.
3. If these brands are not available, locate calcium-set tofu, write down the name, size and price per package of the available brand. If calcium-set tofu is not available, write down the brand, size and price in the next “Other” heading.

## **Measure # 3: JUICE**

### **Measurement Procedures**

1. Find the refrigerated juice, the shelf stable juice section and the frozen juice concentrate section in the store. If the store does not sell juice, mark the “store does not sell juice” box.
2. In the refrigerated juices, locate the half gallon size (64 oz) of Tropicana 100% orange juice. If available, record the price. If not available, note it in “Not available” box.
3. In the refrigerated juices, locate the gallon size (128 oz) of Tropicana 100% orange juice. If available, record the price. If not available, note it in “Not available” box.
4. If any of Tropicana items above are not available, record the brand, flavor and price of 100% fluid orange juice in the “Other” category.
5. Locate 64-oz plastic bottles of any flavor juice blend by Nestle Juicy Juice. Write down the price. If not available, check if other brands of juice in plastic bottles 64oz are available and record price.
6. In the shelf stable juices, locate the 46 oz size of Juicy Juice (any flavor). If available, record the price. If not available, note it in “Not available” box.
7. If Juicy Juice is not available, record the brand, flavor and price of any other shelf-stable juice in the “Other” category. Choose the closest size to 46oz (if 46oz is not available) and note the size in Comments.

## Measure #4: Fresh Fruit

### Measurement Procedures

1. If the store does not sell fresh fruit, mark the “store does not sell fresh fruit” box.
2. Look for the fruit listed. If it is not available, mark down the box “Not available”. If there is a line below it for an alternate item, look for the cheapest similar alternate. If available, write it down it. For example, if there are no Red delicious apples and Gala apples are the cheapest alternate, write “Gala” on the line below “Red delicious”.
  - **Always try to record the price per 1 pound if there is an option. Always choose the pound to price rather than per piece if possible.**
3. If the item is sold out, write “Sold out” in comments and record the available information.
  - If the fruit is only available as pre-sliced and in a container, still consider it to be available and write “Pre-cut in container” and any size information in Comments.
  - If the fruit is available but mixed with other fruit in a container, mark “Not available”.
4. Record the **price** of the fruit. Write the **quantity (#)** of the fruit that is listed **for the price**. For example, if the sign says 2 for \$1.00, write “2” for the quantity. If the sign says 3 lbs for 99¢, write “3” for the quantity.
  - For prices per pound, you will have 1 as the quantity.
  - If the fruit is not loose but packaged (e.g., pint or container), count the quantity as “1” and write the quantity of the package in comments.
5. Indicate if the price of the fruit is calculated by the piece or pound by marking “pc” or “lb”. For example, if the sign says 2 for \$1.00, mark “pc” for piece. If the sign says 3 lbs for 99¢, mark “lb” for pound.
  - If packaging is other than pc/lb (e.g., per pint or bunch), mark “pc” and note under comments.
6. Record the **quality** of the item by marking “A” for “Excellent”, “A-” for “Very good”, “B” for “Good”, “B-” for “Fair” and “C” for “Unacceptable/poor” quality of fruit.
  - **A:** Excellent = outstanding quality, perfectly ripe, Nica’s kind of quality - no molded, wrinkled/shriveled, bruised, wilted
  - **A-:** Very good = very good, almost perfect quality, ripe fruit but some imperfections – few (<5%) molded, wrinkled/shriveled, bruised, wilted
  - **B:** Good = good quality, but not perfectly ripe and some fruits are below average quality – several (5-15%) molded, wrinkled/shriveled, bruised, or wilted
  - **B-:** Fair = about a quarter of fruit is below average quality - <25% molded, wrinkled/shriveled, bruised, or wilted
  - **C:** Poor = totally unappealing, at least a half of fruit (>50%) is below average quality - molded, wrinkled/shriveled, bruised, or wilted
7. Count the number of all available fruits and record the total at the top of the measure page (do this only if the store is NOT a supermarket). Count 2 kinds of 1 fruit as 1 variety (e.g. Navel and Valencia oranges is 1 variety of fruit).

## Measure #5: FRESH VEGETABLES

### Measurement Procedures

1. If the store does not sell fresh vegetables, then mark the “store does not sell fresh vegetables” box.
2. If the first listed item is not available and there is a line below it for an alternate item, look for it. For example, if there are no 1 lb bags of whole carrots but there are 2 lb bags, write “2 lb bag” on the line below “1 lb bag”.
  - Look for whole vegetables. Select precut veggies as a last resort and make a note in comments.
  - For tomatoes, look for the least expensive loose tomatoes (regular size) first. If not available, look for tomatoes packaged. Choose tomatoes on the vine or cherry tomatoes as a last resort and make a note in comments.
3. If the vegetable or alternate is not available, mark “Not available”. If the item is sold out, write “Sold out” in comments and record the available information (i.e., price if listed).
4. Record the **regular price** of the vegetable.
  - If the vegetable is not specifically listed as packaged (e.g., corn or celery) but is sold as packaged or loose, record the price of the one that is cheapest.
5. Write the **quantity (#)** of the item that is listed **for the price**. For example, if the sign says 2 for \$1.00, write “2” for the quantity. If the sign says 3 lbs for 99¢, write “3” for the quantity.
  - If the item is sold by the package (e.g., corn), count the quantity as “1” and write the number of the item included in the package in comments (e.g., 3 in package).
  - **Always try to record the price per 1 pound if there is an option. Always choose the pound to price rather than per piece if possible.**
6. Indicate if the price of the item is by the piece or pound by marking “pc” or “lb”. For example, if the sign says 2 for \$1.00, mark “pc” for piece. If the sign says 3 lbs for 99¢, mark “lb” for pound.
  - If packaging is other than pc/lb (e.g., per pint or bunch), mark “pc” and note in comments.
  - If an item is packaged and its size is listed in pounds or equal to a pound, mark “lb” for pound.
8. Record the **quality** of the item by marking “A” for “Excellent”, “A-” for “Very good”, “B” for “Good”, “B-” for “Fair” and “C” for “Unacceptable/poor” quality of vegetable.
  - **A:** Excellent = outstanding quality, perfectly ripe, Nica’s kind of quality - no molded, wrinkled/shriveled, bruised, wilted
  - **A-:** Very good = very good, almost perfect quality, ripe vegetable but some imperfections – few (<5%) molded, wrinkled/shriveled, bruised, wilted
  - **B:** Good = good quality, but not perfectly ripe and some items are below average quality – several (5-15%) molded, wrinkled/shriveled, bruised, or wilted
  - **B-:** Fair = about a quarter of items is below average quality - <25% molded, wrinkled/shriveled, bruised, or wilted
  - **C:** Poor = totally unappealing, at least a half of vegetables (>50%) is below average quality - molded, wrinkled/shriveled, bruised, or wilted

8. After completing the information for 10 vegetable items, count the number of vegetables available and record the total at the top of the measure page (do this only if the store is NOT a supermarket). Do not include white potatoes in your count.

## **Measure #6: FROZEN FRUIT AND VEGETABLES**

### **Measurement Procedures**

#### **A. Frozen Vegetables**

1. If the store does not sell frozen vegetables mark “store does not sell frozen vegetables” box.
2. Please select frozen vegetables and fruits without sauce, added sugars, fats or oils. Try to have regular cut vegetables. Note in Comments if different.
3. For frozen vegetables, look for the Green Giant brand item that is 16 oz. If not available, mark “Not available” and find the cheapest alternative in the same category “Other”. Note the type of veggie and package size.
4. Record the price of the frozen vegetable.
5. If the store is not a supermarket, count all the varieties of frozen **plain** vegetables (plain means no added source, sugars, fats, oils). Do not include white potatoes. Do not count different package sizes, brands, or cuts of the same product as multiple products.

#### **B. Frozen Fruit**

1. If the store does not sell frozen fruit mark “store does not sell frozen fruit” box.
2. For fruits, look for Green Giant brand item in 16 oz. If not available, mark “Not available” and find the cheapest alternative in the same category (note the type of fruit and package size).
3. If the store is not a supermarket, count all the varieties of **plain** frozen fruits (i.e. without added sugars or cream).
4. Record the price of the frozen fruit.
5. If the store is not a supermarket, count all the varieties of frozen **plain** fruits (plain means no added source, sugars, fats, oils). Do not count different package sizes, brands, or cuts of the same product as multiple products.

## Measure #7: CANNED FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

### Measurement Procedures

#### A. Canned Vegetables

1. Please select canned vegetables without sauce, added sugars, oils, or fats.
2. For vegetables, look for Del Monte brand item. If not available, mark “Not available” and find the cheapest alternative in the same category (note the type of veggie and can size).
3. For canned vegetables, select 15-oz metal cans if available. If the 15oz size is not available, attempt to use 14-16oz cans if available. If cans 14-16oz are not available, use the closest available size.
4. Record the price of the vegetables.
5. If the store is not a supermarket, count all the varieties of plain canned vegetables (without added sugar, oils, and fats). Do not include white potatoes. Do not count the same products of different brands, package sizes as multiple types of the product.

#### B. Canned Fruit

1. For fruits, look for Del Monte and Dole brand item. If not available, mark “Not available” and find the cheapest alternative in the same category (note the type of fruit and can size).
2. Look for the size that corresponds to the type of fruit listed. If the 15oz size is not available, attempt to use 14-16oz cans if available. If cans 14-16oz are not available, use the closest available size.
3. Record the price of the canned fruits.
4. If the store is not a supermarket, count all the varieties of canned plain fruits (without added sugars, cream). Don't count the same products in different package sizes or of different brands as multiple products.

## **Measure #8: Canned protein**

### **Measurement Procedures**

#### **A. Canned Fish**

1. If the store does not sell canned fish, mark the “store does not sell canned fish” box.
2. Select chunky light tuna in water, salmon in water, and sardines in water.
3. For tuna, locate the least expensive brand in 6-oz cans and 5-oz cans (if available) and note the brand, price. If the size is different from standard, note.
4. Where appropriate a brand and size is indicated on the measure. If that brand is not available, mark unavailable and look for another brand with the same size. If the size is not available, look for the closest size in the same brand.
5. Write down price per can. If the price is indicated per pack of cans, calculate the price per can.
6. If any of the brands on the measure for salmon and sardines are not available, record the available item in the “Other” heading (including the brand).

#### **B Peanut Butter**

1. If the store does not sell peanut butter, mark the “store does not sell peanut butter” box.
2. For peanut butter, select the cheapest brand in 16.3oz jars if available. If this size is not available, select next closest in size, 18oz and note the jar size. If the 16.3-18oz size is unavailable, use the closest size to 18oz.

#### **C. Dry Beans and Barley**

1. If the store does not sell dry beans, lentils and barley, mark the “store does not sell dry beans and barley” box.
2. Any dry beans at the lowest price are allowed (e.g., kidney, pinto, etc). Locate the 1 lb bags, write down the type and mark the price per bag for each of the categories.
3. Locate dry lentils and repeat Step 2 for the least expensive brand. If dry lentils are not available, use dry peas or other variety and note in “Other”.
4. For barley, if the first listed item (Goya) is not available, mark “not available” and write down the alternative brand and price.

## **Measure #9: Bread**

### **Measurement Procedures**

#### **A. Bread**

1. If the store does not sell bread, mark the “store does not sell bread” box.
2. Locate each item under the whole grain/100% whole wheat bread in a **16oz package**. If the item is not available, mark unavailable. If available in a different size, mark the size and price.
3. If other items of the listed brands are available, note that for each brand. Record their size and price.
4. If any of the brands of whole grain/100% whole wheat bread on the measure are not available, record an available brand of whole grain/100% whole wheat bread in any size. Note the brand, size and price.
5. Locate White Wonder bread in small size (~12oz) and regular/family size (~20oz). If not available, mark unavailable and then chose an alternative white bread brand in a similar size package.
6. If the store is not a supermarket, count and record the number of varieties of 100% whole wheat bread and whole grain bread, which includes both different brands and types (100% whole wheat, 100% honey whole wheat, etc.), but does not include different sizes of the same bread.
7. If the store is not a supermarket, count and record the number of whole wheat and whole grain breads available in **1 lb** packages.

#### **B. Tortillas**

1. If the store does not sell tortillas, mark the “store does not sell tortillas” box.
2. Locate the 1 lb packages of whole wheat tortillas. If the listed brand is not available, mark “not available” and record the price of the alternative brand.
3. For white corn tortillas, use the listed brand. If it’s not available, use the brand with most shelf space. Write down the brand, size (if different from 1lb), and price/package.
4. For white flour tortillas, use the brand with most shelf-space. Repeat step 3.
5. Count the varieties of whole grain tortillas (if the store is not a supermarket).

## **Measure #10: GRAINS**

### **Measurement Procedures**

#### **A. Rice**

Use only unflavored rice, no quick “ready to eat”, etc.

1. If the store does not sell rice, mark the “store does not sell rice” box.
2. Locate Uncle Ben’s brown rice 1 pound bag. If this is not available, mark unavailable and select an alternative brand with the same package size.
3. Locate Uncle Ben’s white rice 1 pound bag. If this is not available, mark unavailable and select an alternative brand with the same package size.
4. Count and record the number of varieties of brown rice if the store is not a supermarket. Count across brands and types of rice, but not package sizes.

#### **B. Cereal**

1. If store does not sell cereal, check the “store does not sell cereal” box.
2. Look for the 5 popular whole grain brands listed. If the store has the brand (in any size), check the corresponding box.
3. Locate each cereal brand listed in an 18 oz box. If the brand is not available, mark “Not available.” If the 18oz size is not available, choose the closest size and note that in the size section. Record the price.
4. Continue down the list of whole grain cereals and non-whole grain cereals. Look for 18 oz packages and record the prices. If the 18oz size is not available, choose the closest size and note that in the size section. Record the price.
5. Locate oatmeal in a 24 oz package and record prices of two listed brands (if available). No flavored, instant oatmeal allowed.

## **Measure #11: BABY FOOD**

1. If the store does not sell baby food, mark the “store does not sell baby food” box.
2. Locate the Nestle Good Start Gentle Plus (old name Nestle Good Start Supreme DHA & ARA) powder infant formula 12oz. Record the size (if not 12oz) and price. Repeat for Nestle Good Start Soy Plus (old name Nestle Good Start Supreme Soy DHA & ARA) and Nestle Good Start 2 Soy Plus 2 (old name Nestle Good Start 2 Supreme Soy DHA & ARA) if available.
3. Repeat step 2 for Nestle Good Start Gentle Plus liquid concentrate for infant formula in 13oz size. Repeat for Nestle Good Start Soy Plus and Nestle Good Start 2 Soy Plus 2.
4. Locate the Gerber 8 oz plain infant cereal. If not available, mark “unavailable” and look for a brand with a comparable size. Record the price, brand and size.
5. For baby food meat, fruits and vegetables, locate Gerber and Beach-nut brands in 4oz cans and record prices. If the size or brand is not available, record the price, brand and size of the alternative item.