

VALUE ENHANCED NUTRITION ASSESSMENT (VENA)

What is Value Enhanced Nutrition Assessment (VENA)?

VENA is an initiative developed jointly by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and the National WIC Association to improve nutrition services within Georgia's WIC. VENA was developed in response to an Institute of Medicine report encouraging the replacement of traditional diet assessments with a positive health outcomes-based approach to determine WIC eligibility.

VENA is a process approach that allows for continual improvement in health outcomes.

VENA is also a part of a continual quality improvement process for WIC that focuses on:

- Nutrition Assessment Practices and Processes
- Staff Competencies and Training
- Quality Assurance and Monitoring with distribution of VENA Guidelines and the development of a comprehensive monitoring tool

How will VENA change the way WIC operates?

- Provides a defined process for WIC nutrition assessments
- Approach to dietary assessment will be qualitative instead of quantitative
- Staff assessment competencies are clearly defined
- Assessment will link information to individual needs and concerns

How will VENA change the WIC experience for participants?

Participants will:

- Experience a more positive encounter
- Be more involved in planning and goal setting
- Receive tailored nutrition education and food packages

What is motivational interviewing and why is it an important component of VENA?

Motivational interviewing is a participant-centered method that encourages change by addressing an individual's needs and concerns.

How will Georgia's WIC continue to provide a framework for ongoing support of the VENA initiative?

Georgia's WIC continues to provide training opportunities for local staff on VENA competencies (rapport building, critical thinking, motivational interviewing and goal setting). An electronic process is under development to improve monitoring of staff competencies in VENA.

Legislative Authority:

Federal Child Nutrition Act of 1966

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