

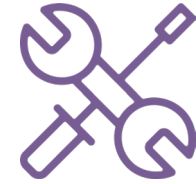
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Strengthening Food Security and Nutrition Readiness in the Force

Strengthening Food Security and Nutrition Readiness in the Force



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Nutrition_{AND} Food Security

Among our nation's active-duty service members and their families, an estimated 24% are food insecure.





OneOp

Readiness. Knowledge. Network.

The views expressed in this presentation do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Defense Department, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Government or OneOp.
The mention of any entity or product is for informational purposes only.

This material is based upon work supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Office of Military Family Readiness Policy, U.S. Department of Defense under Award Number 2023-48770-41333.

Objectives

- Describe three key features of the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Community Innovation and Outreach (CIAO) project at Fort Campbell, including its novel use of administrative data.
- Following a process like one being implemented at Fort Campbell, use a new WIC eligibility screening tool to identify Service members and military families who may be eligible for WIC.
- Describe how military practitioners successfully engaged community partners when developing a robust resource, the Fort Drum Food Resource Guide, to disseminate food security information.
- Evaluate the outcomes and lessons learned from opening the Fort Bragg WIC Office, a joint effort between Fort Bragg and Cumberland County Department of Public Health.

Today's Presenters

Increasing WIC Enrollment in Military Families at Fort Campbell, KY



Dr. Binny Chokshi, MD, Med

Associate Professor

Division of Military Child and Family Research

Department of Pediatrics

Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences



Dakota Davis

Community Health Worker

Department of Pediatrics

Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences

Today's Presenters Continued

Development of a Food Security Working Group and Food Resource Guide at Fort Drum, NY



CPT Kimberly M. Whitbeck, MS, RD, TSAC-F
Chief of Nutrition
Guthrie Ambulatory Healthcare Clinic
Fort Drum

Today's Presenters Continued

Enhancing Food Security Initiatives through Public Health Partnerships at Fort Bragg, NC

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Increasing WIC Enrollment in Military Families at Fort Campbell

Disclaimer

No conflicts of interest to disclose

The opinions and assertions expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, HJF, or the Department of Defense.

Objectives Continued

- Discuss food insecurity and its incidence among US Military connected individuals.
- Review prior study related to food insecurity and WIC engagement in military families.
- Discuss current WIC CIAO project at Fort Campbell.

What is Food Insecurity?

Food insecurity is defined as a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food (USDA, *Definitions of Food Insecurity*, 2024).



Food Insecurity- Military Relevance

24% OF MILITARY SERVICE MEMBERS IDENTIFIED AS FOOD INSECURE (DOD, 2022)

Unable to obtain quantity or quality of food

MAJOR IMPACTS:

- **Readiness**
Behavioral health, neonatal/pediatric health
- **Retention**
Inability to provide for family
- **Recruitment**
Obesity, military recruiting pool

Themes from Qualitative Study

1. Military-specific factors create unique circumstances related to WIC engagement.
2. The WIC program facilitates access to formula supplementation and nutritious foods for military families.
3. Lack of program awareness and misinformation are the top barriers to WIC engagement in military families.
4. Stigma impacts WIC program enrollment and engagement.
5. Logistics of enrollment can impact WIC engagement among military families.
6. The military can support WIC enrollment and engagement through standardization, education, and leadership commitment.

What is WIC?

- Nutrition program for women, infants, and children:
 - Food supplementation
 - Breastfeeding supplies & resources
 - Nutrition & wellness education
- Eligibility
 - Pregnant women (at least 6 weeks)
 - Breastfeeding women (up to 1 year postpartum)
 - Children < 5 years old
- **Less than 50%** of those who are eligible are enrolled

WIC and Military Families

Many military families do not know they can qualify for WIC assistance due to a common misinterpretation of income.

WIC does NOT include these military payments when counting your income:

- Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH)
- Family Separation Housing (FSH)
- Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance (FSSA)
- Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA)
- Combat Pay
- Outside of the Contiguous United States (OCONUS) Cost of Living Allowance (COLA)



Fort Campbell



Ft. Campbell is home to approximately 27,000 ADSM with an additional 51,480 family members

- Estimated that 83% are enlisted
- Approximately 13,000 live on base with remaining living off-base



2020 Census showed that 16.3% of people living on Ft. Campbell are under 5 years old, with median household income of \$45,017

Blanchfield Army Community Hospital delivered 1,308 babies during 2024.

Fort Campbell Project Objectives

Enrollment

Increase WIC enrollment among Service Members and their families at Fort Campbell

Retention

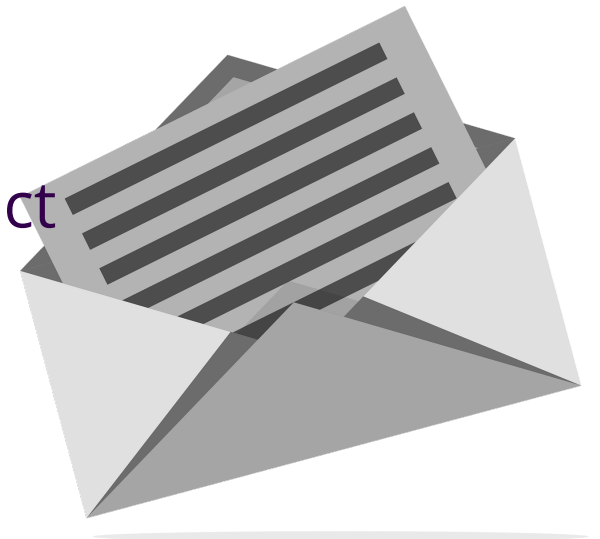
Work with local WIC offices to facilitate sustained enrollment in WIC program

Objective 1: Enrollment

Targeted Outreach:

Military Data Repository and Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) used to extract data and create list of likely eligible service members (family size, rank, years in service, contact information).

Community Health Workers (CHW) perform targeted outreach (mailer, phone) to confirm eligibility and assist with WIC enrollment.



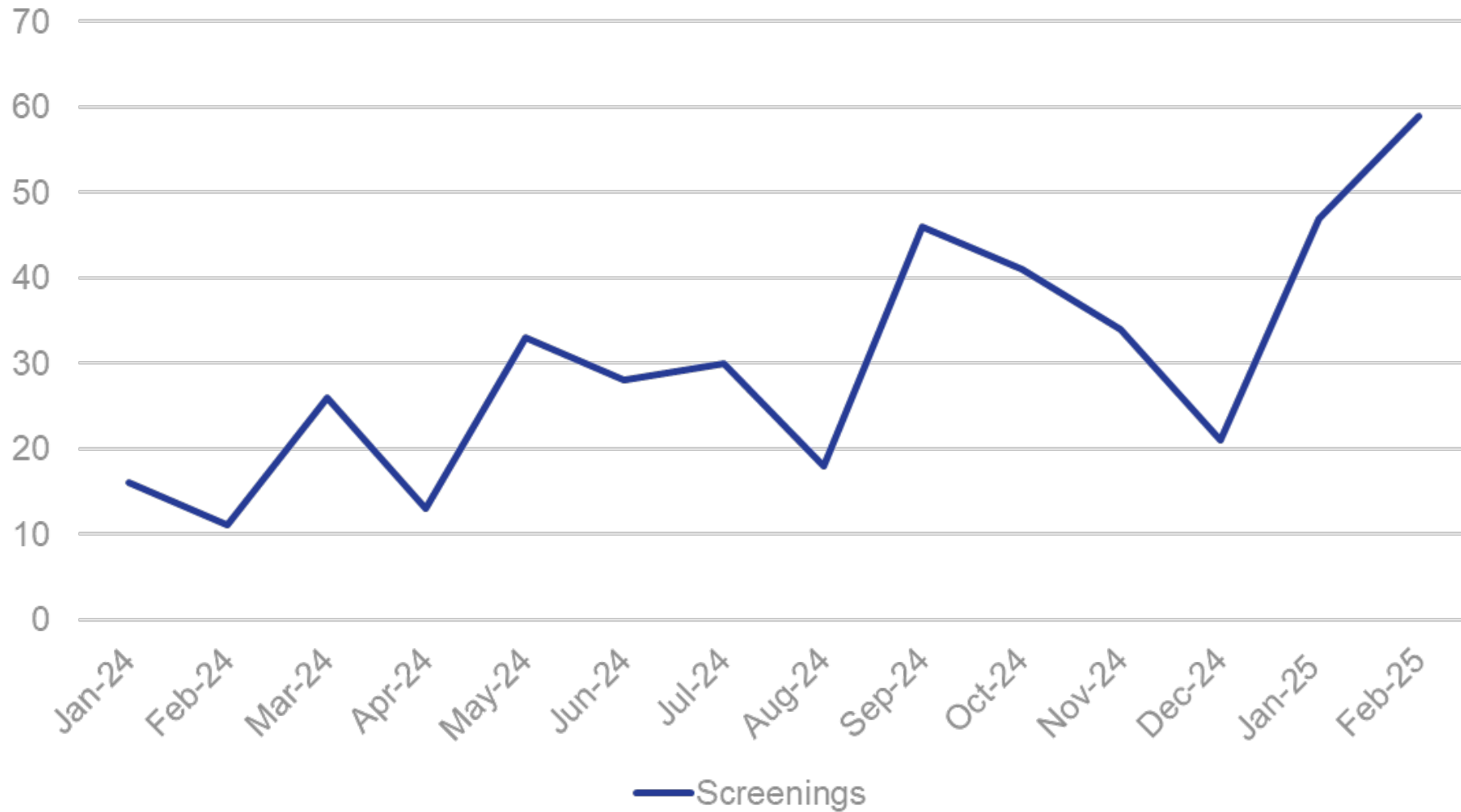
Objective 1: Enrollment Continued

Global Outreach:

- Flyers placed at high volume locations around Fort Campbell (medical clinics, Army Community Services, Parent Central Services)
 - Highlighting benefits of WIC
 - QR code for community health worker contact info
- Brochure made with general and military specific WIC information
- Clinic outreach via flyers and in-person/provider contact
 - Screening in the Women's Health Clinic
- In-person outreach via presentations at New Service Member orientation, Play Mornings, etc.,
 - 4,816 attendees at 2024 Newcomers Orientation



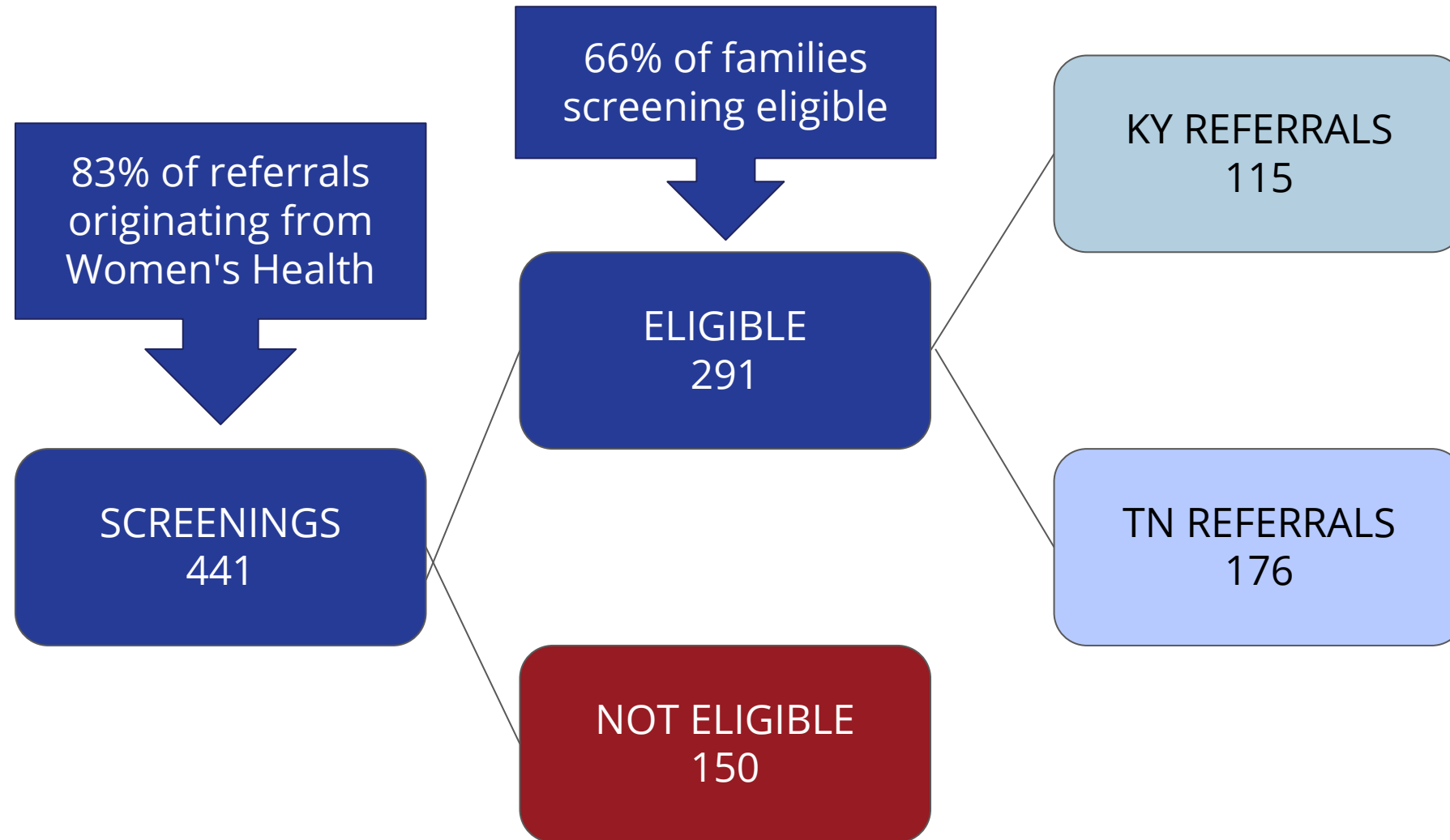
Monthly Screenings from January 2024 – February 2025



2025:

- 106 screenings
- 100 of those from Women's Health (94%)

In Clinic WIC Screenings

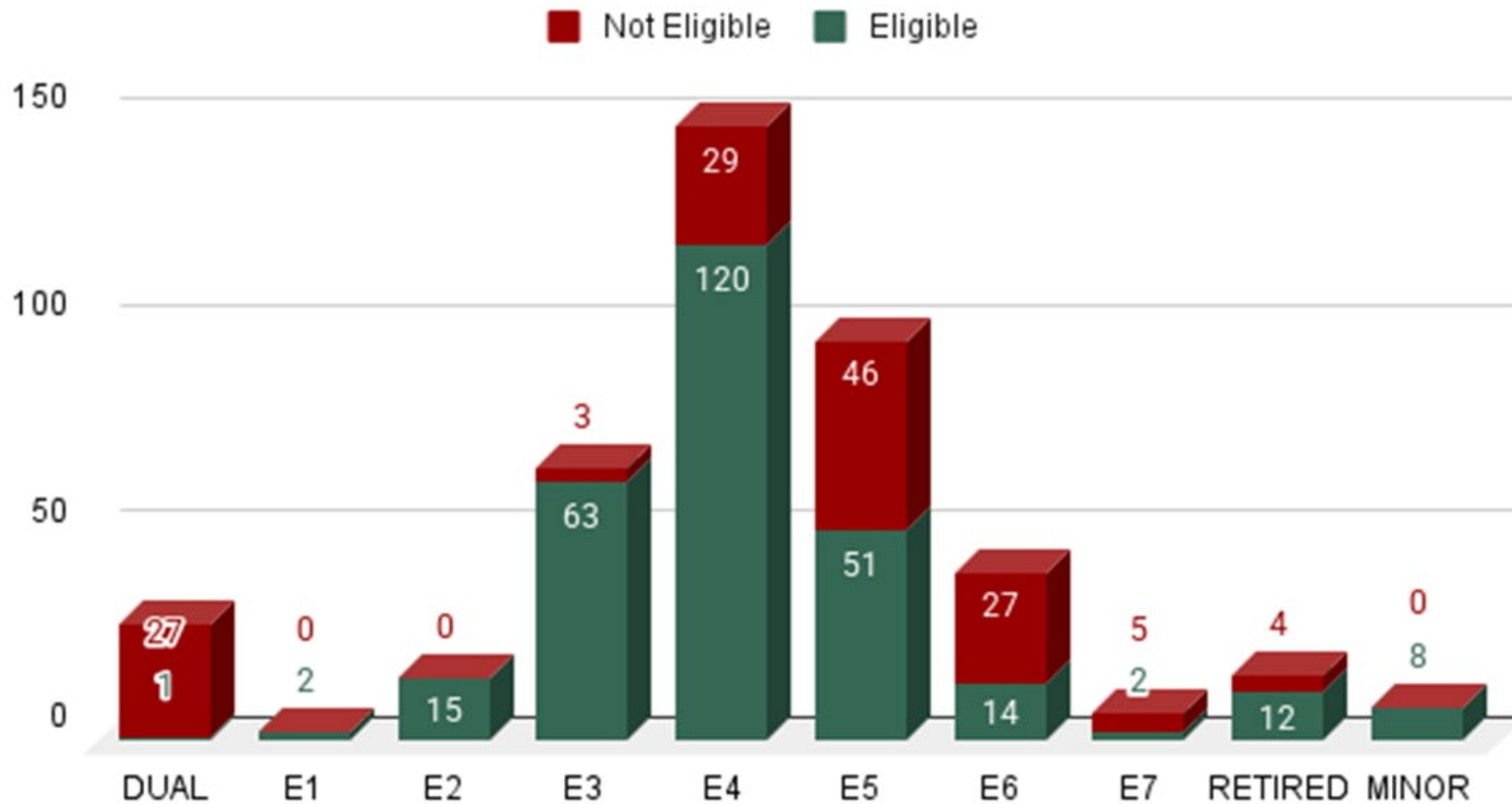


December 2023-February 2025

In Clinic Screenings

December 2023 - February 2025

Eligibility by Rank



Factors to consider:

- Household size
- Years in service
- Second income

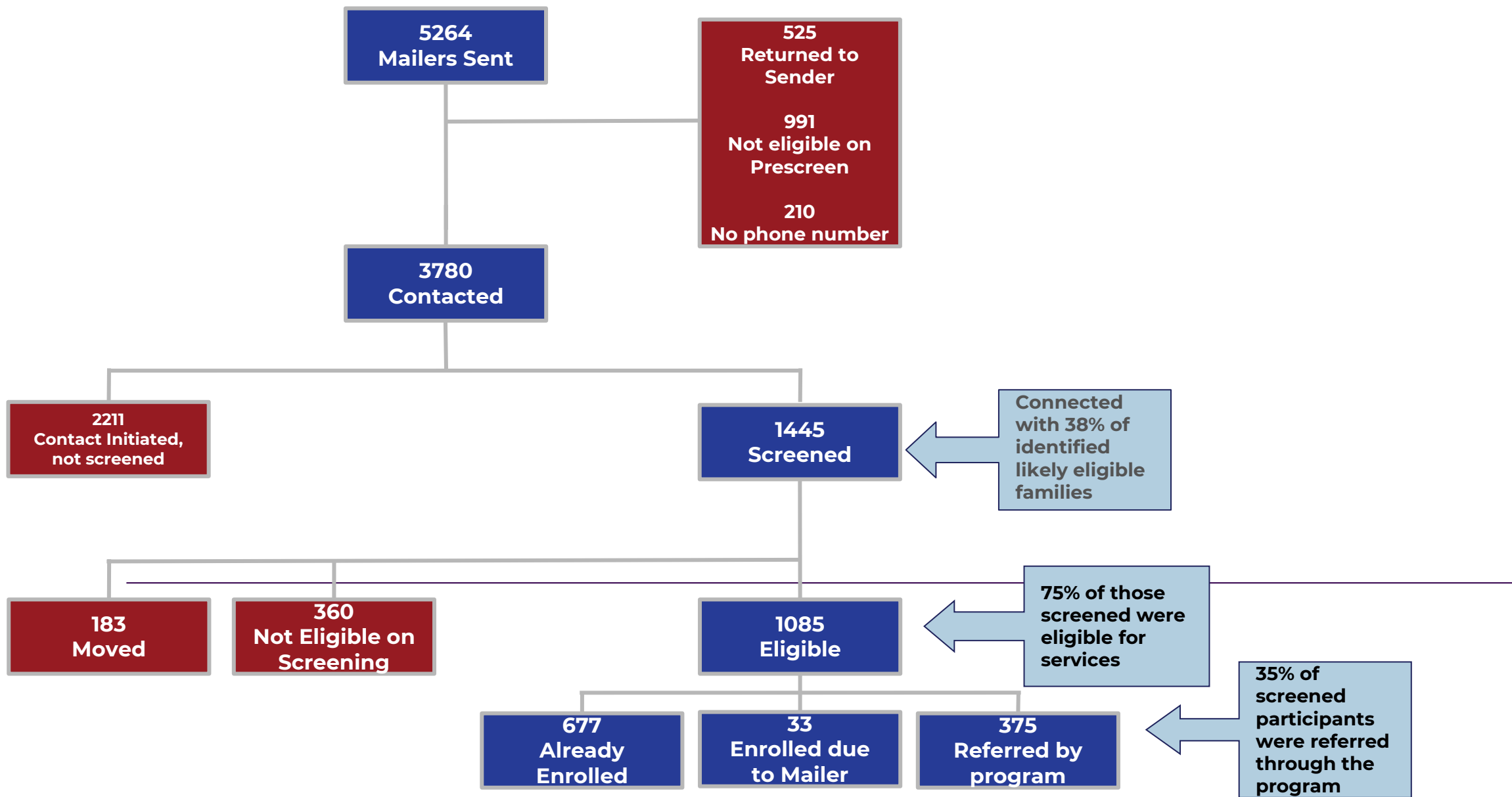
Two income households:

- 56 screened
- 14% Eligible

Objective 2: Retention

- Collaborate with local WIC offices in TN and KY to pursue process improvement
 - Improving virtual availability vs. In-person appointments
 - Streamlining enrollment process
- Work towards assisting relocating military families with transfer of benefits to new state.
- Education on the military electronic health record, MHS Genesis (electronic medical record) for enrollment/recertification.





Conducted from November 2023-September 2024

Eligibility Tool

Economic Units:
People living in the house: Includes grandparents, adult children, children, parents, and pregnancy
Monthly Income Allowance for Eligibility
Rank:
Cumulative Years of Service:
BAS
Basic Pay
Total
Income allowable for 2nd Household Income to Remain Eligible

4
\$4,810.00
E-5
Over 6
\$460.25
\$3,763.80
\$4,224.05
ELIGIBLE
\$585.95

Eligibility Tool

Economic Units:
People living in the house: Includes grandparents, adult children, children, parents, and pregnancy
Monthly Income Allowance for Eligibility
Rank:
Cumulative Years of Service:
BAS
Basic Pay
Total
Income allowable for 2nd Household Income to Remain Eligible

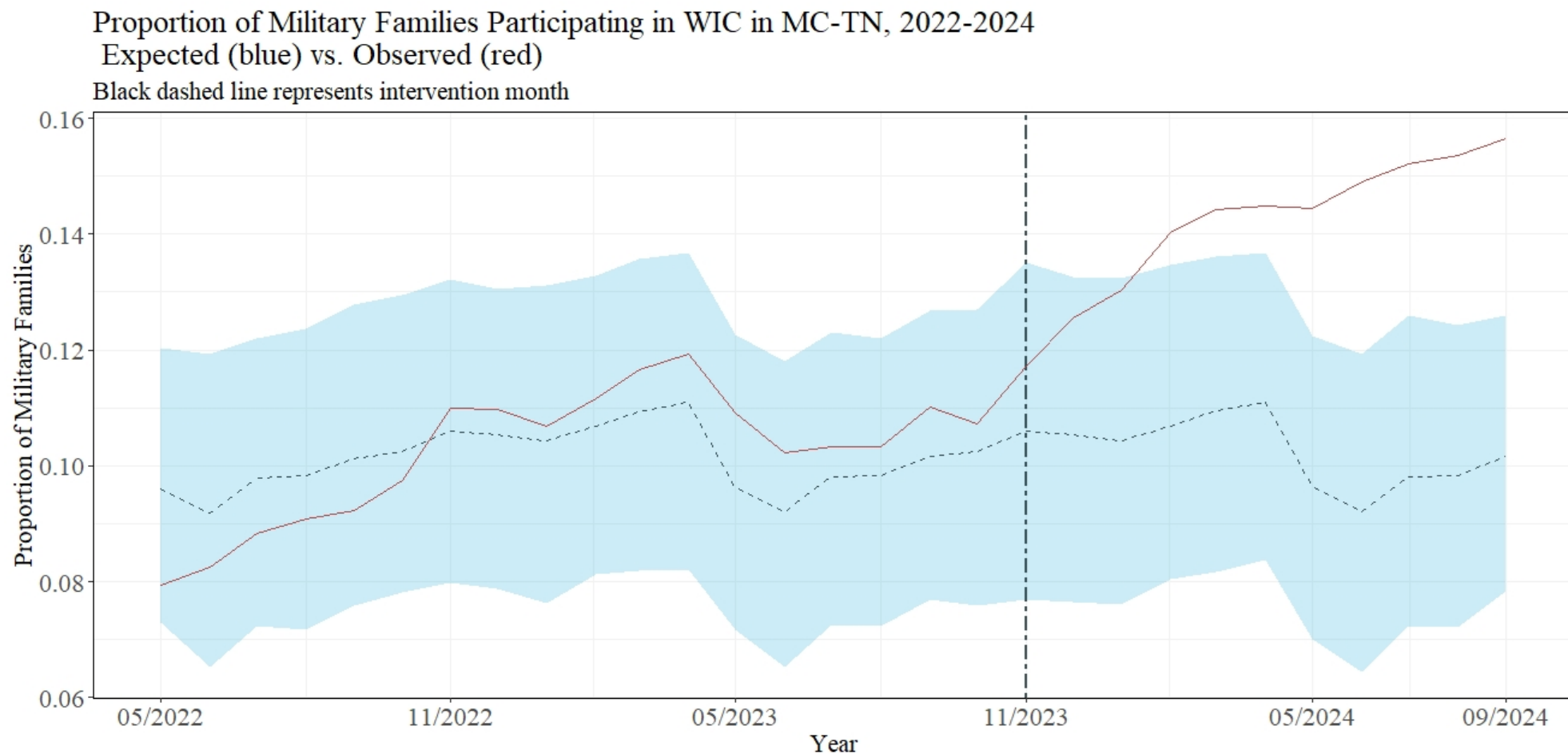
2
\$3,152.00
E-3
Over 3
\$460.25
\$2,800.80
\$3,261.05
Not Eligible
-\$109.05

Considerations:
Single service members are **less likely** to be eligible due to household size but at a higher risk of facing financial strain

Findings - Eligibility

- Query identified that **1 in 8** service members stationed at Fort Campbell over the course of the study period could be eligible for WIC based on their rank, time in service, and family size.
- **41%** of the service members identified as eligible for WIC were not enrolled in the program at time of contact with a CHW, highlighting the underutilization of the WIC among military families.
- Our approach utilized contact information self-managed by the service member in DEERS, resulting in information not being accurate/up-to-date.
 - Only 27% of service members who were deemed as highly likely to be eligible were able to be contacted and successfully screened.
 - DEERS does not have access to active pregnancies or children born after the pull dates of the data, rates of eligibility may vary.

Impact - Montgomery County, TN



Takeaways

- There are misconceptions about WIC Eligibility that can affect family participation
 - What income is included (BAH not included while disability is)
 - The effect it has on the family (security clearances, stigma, etc.)
- There is a need for universal policies in terms of eligibility, screening, and documentation requirements
 - WIC is managed at the state level which results in differing processes and confusion for families that are moving on average every 2-3 years
- There is a need for outreach among military families that considers families' unique circumstances.

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Development of a Food Security Working Group and Food Resource Guide at Fort Drum

Disclaimer

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Health Disparity Screening

- October 2023 food insecurity chosen as disparity of focus by MEDDAC council
 - Joint commission requirement to identify a health-related social need
- Initiated using MHS Genesis food insecurity screening tool
 - Limitation: HealthEregistries metrics
- Patients identified with answer of 'sometimes true' or 'often true' given:
 - Referral to nutrition clinic to see Dietitian
 - Copy of Fort Drum Food Resource Guide
- In-services given to primary care, OBGYN, and Behavioral Health (BH) clinics on use of tool
 - # screened, # identified as food insecure

The screenshot shows the 'Food Insecurity Screening' tool interface. It has a blue header with the title. Below the header, there are two screening questions, each with three radio button options: 'Often true', 'Sometimes true', and 'Never true'. The first question is 'Within the past 12 months, you worried whether your food would run out before you got money to buy more.' The second question is 'Within the past 12 months, the food you bought just did not last you and you did not have the money to go buy more.' To the right of the second question, there is a red dot and a note: 'Often True or Sometimes true response should result in a referral to nutrition'. Below the screening questions, there is a section titled 'Food Insecurity Disposition' with a list of checkboxes: 'Referral to Social Work (this must be entered separately)', 'Referral to Nutrition (this must be entered separately)', 'No referral for additional assistance requested by Patient', 'Already receiving services or assistance', and 'Other:'. The first two checkboxes are checked.

Development of a Working Group

- Standard operating procedures (SOPs) to address food insecurity at Fort Drum included development of a working group.
- Intent was to ensure quality of care exceeded Joint Commission standards.
- Many organizations on the installation with food resources or initiatives without centralized sharing of resources.
- First working group meeting was held in NOV 2023 with U.S. Army Medical Department Activity (MEDDAC) stakeholders.
- Expanded to include on and off-post stakeholders to improve quality and quantity of food resources on and nearby the installation.

Food Security Stakeholders

Food Security Stakeholders

- Nutrition (MEDDAC and H2F)
- Population health nurses
- Army Public Health Nursing
- Family Advocacy Program
- Financial Readiness Group
- USO
- Chaplains
- Thrift Shop
- Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE)
- Food Bank of Central NY
- Community Action Planning Council (CAPC) of Jefferson County
- North Country WIC
- MWR
- AAFES
- Commissary
- Family Readiness Group representatives
- Feed Our Vets pantry
- Garrison Command
- Garrison Legal representatives
- Public Affairs Officer (PAO)
- Mountain Community Homes (MCH)
- MEDDAC Patient advocate
- Installation Prevention Advisory Group (IPAG)

Fort Drum Food Resource Guide

- Consolidated list of on-post financial and food resources, and off-post food pantries, soup kitchens, federal assistance programs, and non-profits
- Created and updated quarterly by Fort Drum MEDDAC Registered Dietitians
- Shared with all medical clinics and Garrison organizations
- Division Surgeon sent as Operation Order (OPORD) for units to post in high traffic areas



Working Group Successes

- Over 980 views of Food Resource guide from MAR to DEC 2024
- Briefed on food insecurity and working group efforts to Garrison and DIV Commands
- Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program partnership with MEDDAC and Fort Drum Commissary (*pending partnerships with other health/wellness/social service groups*)
- Community Action Planning Council (CAPC) began monthly mobile food pantry site specific to Fort Drum families off post at local health center
- CAPC scheduled to begin on-post mobile pantry site in MAR 2025
- Fort Drum Thrift Shop opened food pantry in DEC 2024 with monthly hours
- CAPC and Food Bank of Central NY help offered to fund Chaplain emergency food boxes (*pending start date*)



CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION
315-782-4900 EXT 221



MOBILE FOOD PANTRY

SERVING RURAL JEFFERSON COUNTY

PRE-PACKAGED
FOOD BAGS ON SITE

3RD MONDAY OF
EVERY MONTH

RHICARD HILLS COMMUNITY CENTER
8499 LEWIS AVE.
FORT DRUM, NY 13603
WHEN:
10:00-11:30AM

ADIRONDACK CREEK COMMUNITY CENTER
9797 CONSTITUTION BLVD.
FORT DRUM, NY 13603
WHEN:
12:30-2:00PM

SERVING THE FORT DRUM COMMUNITY



FORT DRUM THRIFT SHOP

Blessing Pantry

First Wednesday of every
Month 10:30a.m-4:45p.m

1454 Fourth St M,
Fort Drum

For More Information:

EMAIL:
fdtsmanager@gmail.com
315-772-0021



North Country Fruit & Vegetable Prescription Program

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Jefferson County



Way Forward

- Continued Garrison involvement
- Continued outreach efforts with Fort Drum community
- Continued partnership with local non-profits
- Monthly resource sharing and quarterly updates to resource guide
- Tracking metrics to identify community need and briefing through IPAG
- Expansion of pantry hours and supply based on metrics
- Bringing WIC back on post and increase of utilization by Fort Drum families



FORT BRAGG, NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.

Enhancing Food Security Initiatives through Public Health Partnerships at Fort Bragg, NC

Jeramy J. McCarty. PA-C, MPAS

Deputy Director

Fort Bragg Department of Public Health
Womack Army Medical Center

Whitney Nelson

Compliance Consultant

Fort Bragg Department of Public Health
Womack Army Medical Center



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Learning Objectives

- Gain insights from the unique demographics of the Fort Bragg community
- Explore how Fort Bragg utilizes collaborative partnerships to combat food insecurity and the justification for a WIC Office on base
- Identify best practices and future directions for enhancing food security initiatives within Fort Bragg and military community overall



FORT BRAGG, NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.

Fort Bragg, NC Overview



Population Overview of Fort Bragg

- **Largest US Army installation by population** the largest military installation in the world.
- **Home to nearly 10%** of the Army's active component forces



Total Military Population	47,342
Army Active Duty	43,294
Other Military (Air Force, Reserves, Other)	4,048
DoD Civilians	11,847
Other Employees (NAF And AAFES)	8,125
Military Family Members	71,960
Retirees and Families	125,278
Total Supported Population	272,277





Fort Bragg Public Health Partnerships



Fort Bragg Public Health Partnership



University of Tennessee

UNC Greensboro



UNC Chapel Hill



NC DHHS

Cumberland County



Fort Bragg

Partnership Goals:

- Support **military readiness and population health** in the Fort Bragg community
- Develop a **long-standing partnership** between Fort Bragg, local public health, and UNC universities
- Create a **formalized practicum program** between UNC Gillings/Lineberger & Fort Bragg Department of Public Health





Our Public Health Strategy



Survey our population's health needs



Pilot & implement evidence-based interventions



Pursue external funding to sustain projects

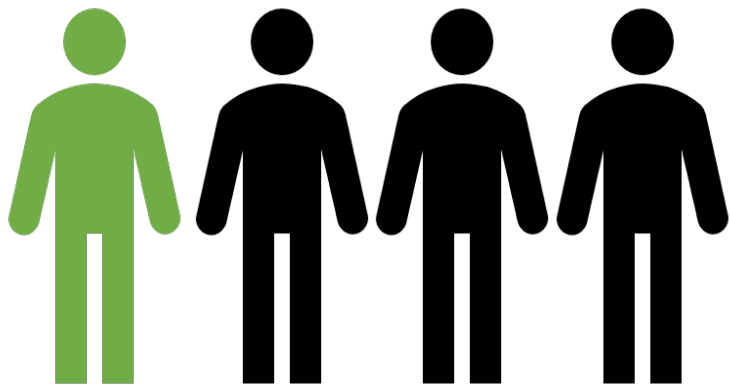


Food Insecurity and WIC

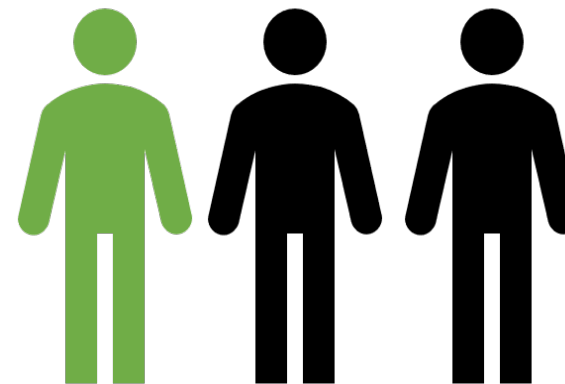


Food Insecurity in the Military

One in **four** military families are food insecure.



One in **three** Fort Bragg families are food insecure.



Source: Military Family Advisory Network (MFAN) 2022 Causal Factors of Military and Veteran Family Food Insecurity; RAND Corporation; Military OneSource 2022 Spouses Survey



Utilization of WIC Services

62%

**of eligible North
Carolinians
received WIC
services in 2021**

79%

**of eligible Fort
Bragg families
received WIC in
2021**

70%

**of Fort Bragg
families using WIC
wanted to access
WIC on post**



Fort Bragg Food Insecurity

Most survey respondents experience food insecurity.

67%

at least somewhat **worry their food will run out before they had money to buy more**

64%

at least sometimes true that **food doesn't last long, and they don't have money to buy more immediately**



Fort Bragg WIC Office Location Timeline

Fielded Fort Bragg
Community Survey

Biweekly Organizing
Partnership Meeting

Grand Opening
(February)

Relocated WIC Office
(August)

2021

2022

2023

2024


FORT BRAGG DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.

 **FORT BRAGG COMMUNITY STRENGTHS SURVEY**
WE'RE LISTENING.
Open December 5th - January 15th

**HELP US IMPROVE
COMMUNITY WELL-BEING**
Share what matters most to you!

TAKE A 10 MINUTE, ONLINE SURVEY FOR A CHANCE TO WIN A
\$20 GIFT CARD*

*To be eligible for a gift card, federal employees must complete the survey during off-duty hours

**SCAN THIS
QR CODE**

Or visit https://unc.a21.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_21212Xa0G7Ekku

WIC Office Requirements - Working Document
August 31, 2021

- (3) Computers - WIC to provide
- **locked storage** - space to store client information per HIPAA requirements
- **lab area** - enclosed space to perform required labs
 - (1) Sink
 - (1) Counter space
 - (1) Table
 - Lab materials (gloves, micro-cuvettes, cotton balls, alcohol pads, bandages) - WIC to provide
 - (1) Changing table in lab area
 - (1) Hemocue machine - WIC to provide
 - 1 Lab chair - WIC to provide
 - (2) Scales - WIC to provide
 - (1) Standing scales - WIC to provide
 - (1) Refrigerator to store controls - WIC to provide
- Access to breakroom for staff
- Access to restrooms for staff and participants
- Technical service
- Medical waste disposal service - Provider TBD
- Access to IT/Internet Access (i.e. for computers, printer/scanner/copyer)

Office Equipment Requirements:

	Enclosed reception & waiting area	(4) Offices	Secure storage	Lab area	Totals
Phone	1	4			5
Computer	1	4			5
Desk	1	4			5
Chair	17	8			25
Print/Scan/Copy machine	1	4			5
Fax machine	1				1
Card reader		4	1		4
File cabinet		4	1		4
Sink				1	1
Counter space	1			1	2
Infant scale				1	1
Table				1	1
Hemocue machine				1	1
Lab chair				1	1
Lab materials				5	5
Refrigerator				1	1
Standing scale				1	1
Changing table				1	1

Communication & Outreach

- Communications plan to announce opening of this location (no announcement)
- Signs to direct participants to WIC office
- (30) Designated parking spaces for WIC participants
- Bulletin boards to display required informational posters, flyers, etc. - Provider TBD

NOW OPEN
**FORT LIBERTY
WIC CLINIC**

New and current clients can schedule appointments at this location.

Not sure if you qualify for WIC?
Call us at 910-321-6420 or visit cumberlandcountync.gov/WIC to learn more.

Need transportation?
If you need for transportation to your appointment, please call us at 910-321-6420.

**Now Open
Tuesdays &
Thursdays
8 a.m. - 5 p.m.**

WIC - FORT LIBERTY
Public Health Annex 2122
Blackjack St. (Lane St.)
Fort Liberty, NC

**Fort Liberty
WIC CLINIC**

New Address
Tuesdays & Thursdays
8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Joel Clinic
4861 Logistics Street
Fort Liberty, NC 28307

New and current clients can schedule appointments at this location.

The lactation room is open to all breastfeeding persons.

To learn more, call us at 910-321-6420 or visit CumberlandCountyNC.gov/WIC.

Contact Us to Learn About Your WIC Eligibility
Bring these documents to your WIC Appointment

1. **Applicant Must Be Present**
Woman, infant and/or child.
2. **Proof of ID**
Birth Certificate, shot record, Social Security card, Medicaid card, paycheck stub, etc.
3. **Proof of Residence**
Utility bill less than 60 days old, lease, bill, Medicaid card, paycheck stub, etc.
4. **Proof of Income**
Paycheck stub, Medicaid card, most recent end of month LES, unemployment, food stamp eligibility letter, etc.

Note:
Basic Housing Allowance does **NOT** count towards determining WIC eligibility.
Certain types of special pay may be excluded from your income.
Please contact the WIC office for a personalized income calculation.



WIC Promotion Programs



Fort Liberty
WIC CLINIC

New Address

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Certain types of special pay may be excluded from your income.
Please contact the WIC office for a personalized income calculation.



Raise awareness about WIC program and benefits in the Fort Bragg community.



Coordinate with local community partners **to amplify WIC office outreach** and strengthen food insecurity efforts



Reduce barriers to WIC enrollment and service continuity.



Align with Military Family Advisory Network (MFAN) to **create a Military WIC Office Council** to share best practices across installations.

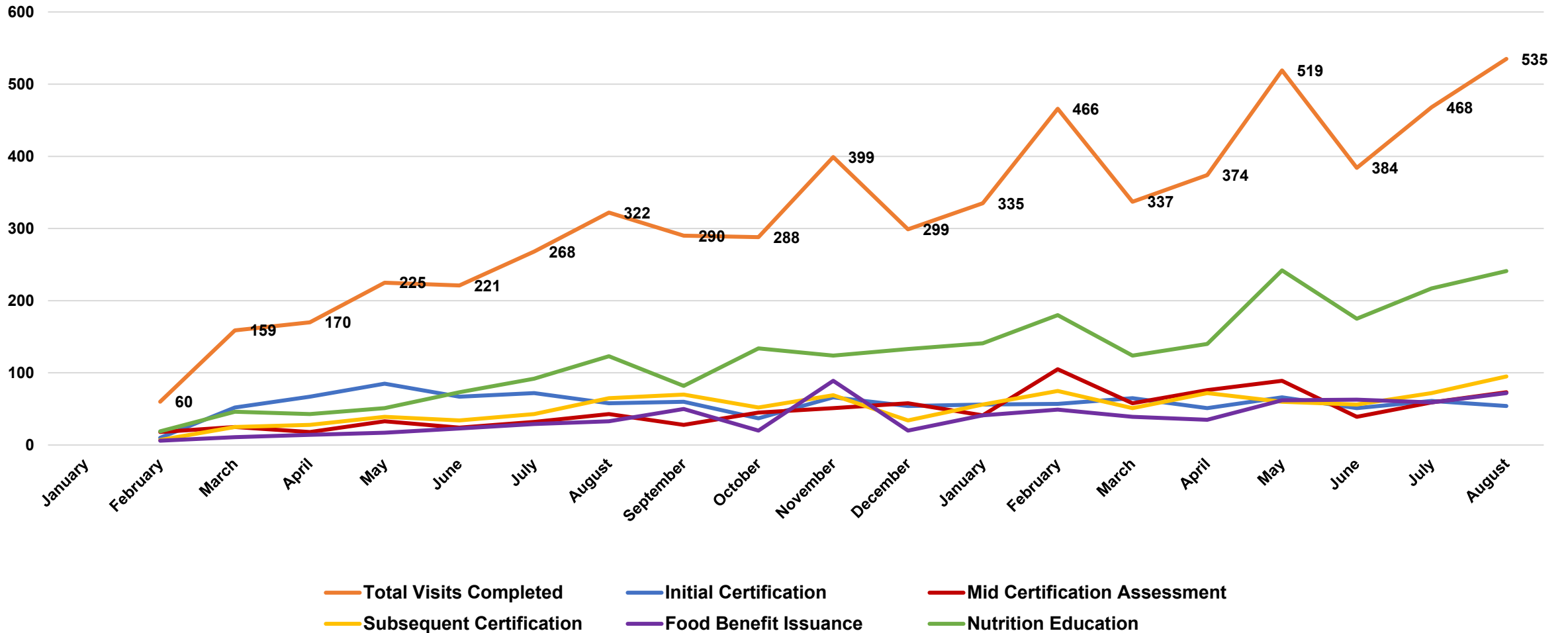


Fort Bragg WIC Office Data



WIC Office Data Breakdown

Fort Bragg WIC Office Data Breakdown - FEB 2023 – AUG 2024
(avg. 322/mo | 6,119 total)



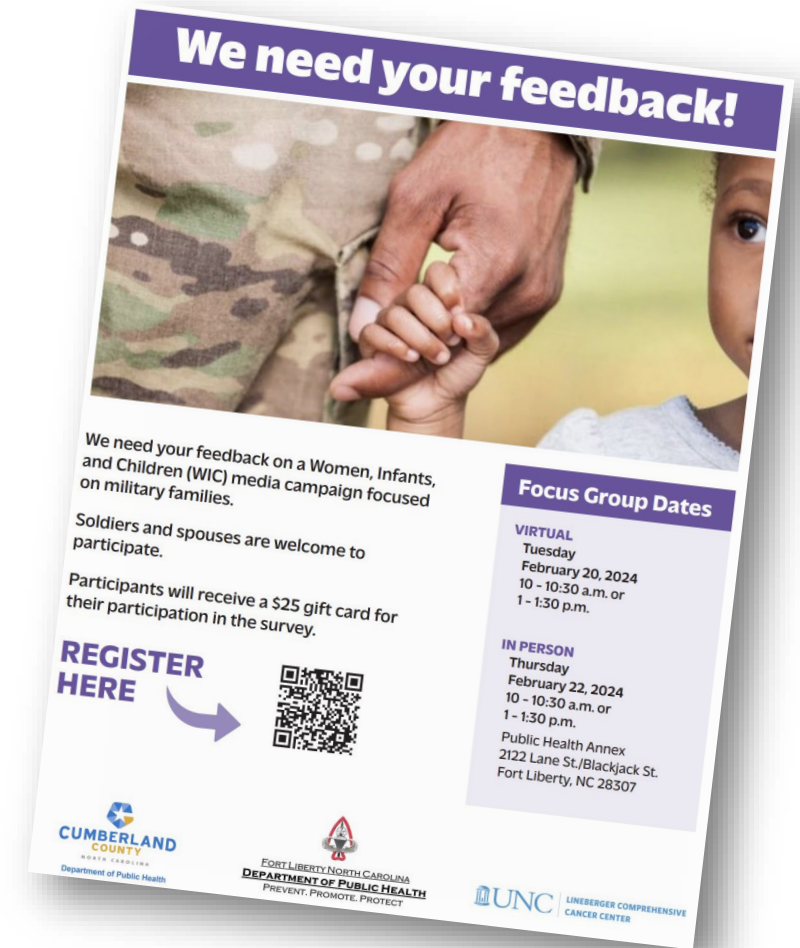


Focus Group Background

Fort Bragg WIC Office focus groups conducted in February 2024.

How can we support WIC uptake among military affiliates?

1. Image-focused advertising
2. Military friendly language
3. Address misconceptions
4. Use social media





Fort Bragg Military WIC Office Council



Military WIC Office Council (MWOC)

Goal: Align efforts of current and potential military installation WIC Offices to reduce food insecurity within the military community overall.

Collaborate with Military Family Advisory Network (MFAN) and military installations to share & inform on best practices aimed to:

- Raise awareness
- Reduce barriers
- Expand outreach
- Utilize data
- Develop community partnerships
- Discuss outcomes

1st Wednesday OTM @ 1400 EST

POC: Whitney Nelson

whitney.j.nelson.civ@health.mil



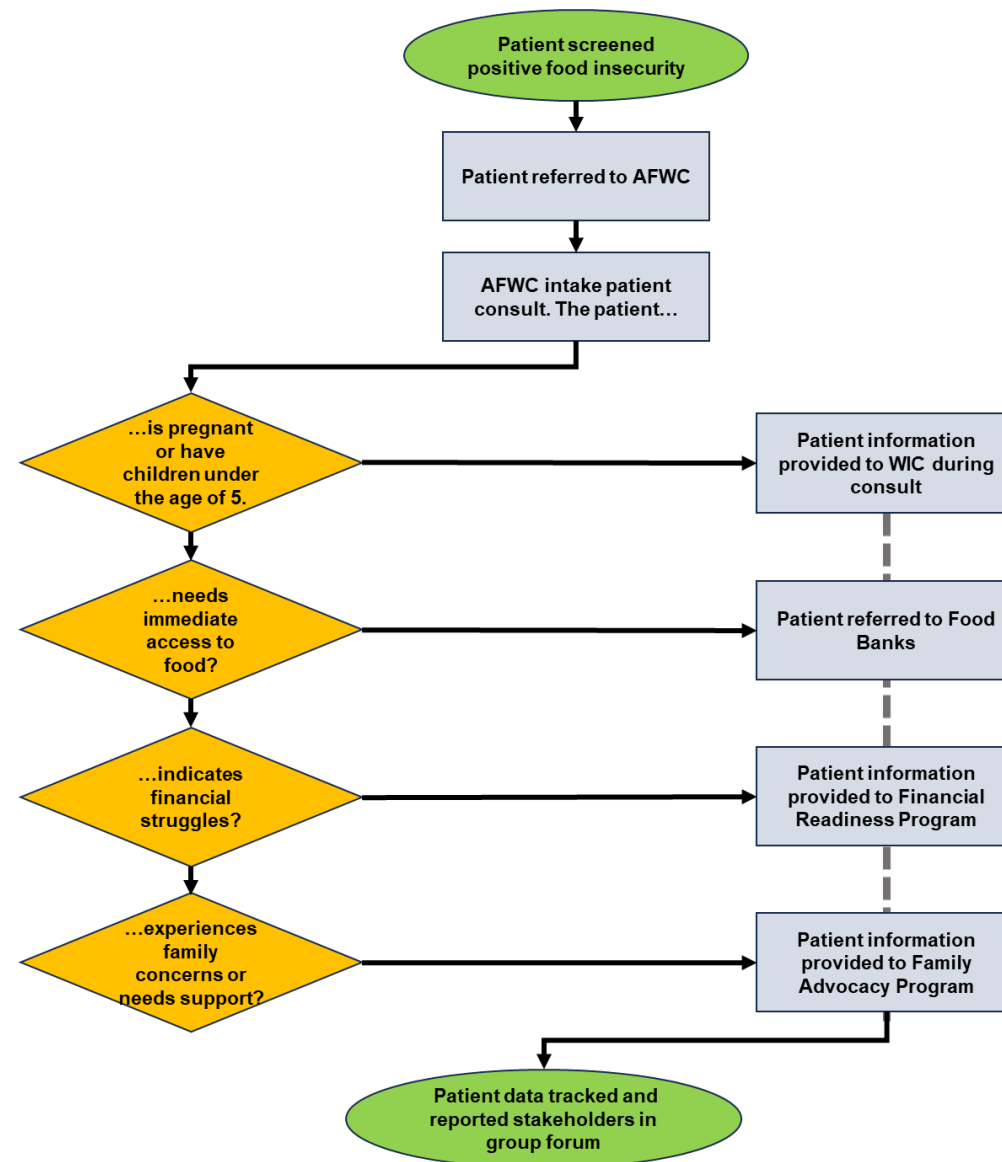


Conclusion



What is Next for Fort Bragg & Food Security Work?

- New - Fort Bragg Armed Forces Wellness Center Food Security Initiative: Enhancing Wellness Through Collaborative Referral Solutions
- Develop consultation referral process between:
 - Armed Forces Wellness Center
 - WIC
 - Financial Readiness Program
 - Family Advocacy Program
 - Food Pantry's
 - Behavioral Health
- Goal: Track outcomes across all food insecurity assets on Fort Bragg



Thank you!

Questions

Upcoming Event



Energy Drinks, Dietary Supplements & Operation Supplement Safety

April 29, 2025

Many Service Members choose to consume dietary supplements to improve physical performance, build muscle, lose weight, enhance cognitive function, boost energy, and more. Unfortunately, some dietary supplements can compromise rather than improve performance through the production of adverse events and positive drug tests. This presentation highlights tools and resources available from Operation Supplement Safety, the Defense Department's established program of record for anything related to health, wellness, and performance products, to help Service Members and general consumers make informed choices about dietary supplement products and energy drinks.

Continuing education credit will be available for this session!

Nutrition for the Tactical Athlete

Spring & Summer 2025

- Energy Drinks, Dietary Supplements & Operation Supplement Safety
- Social Drivers of Health for Tactical Athletes
- Special Operations Nutrition Optimization
- Engineering Food to Fuel Warfighter Performance

OneOp.org/series/nutrition-for-the-tactical-athlete



FREE CDR and NCHEC CEs
will be available for these
events!



**NUTRITION FOR THE
TACTICAL ATHLETE**



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Readiness. Knowledge. Network.

Continuing Education



This webinar has been approved for 1.5 continuing education (CE) credits by the following organizations:

- Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR)
- American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) for CFCS and CNWE
- National Commission for Health Education Credentialing (NCHEC)
- National Advocate Credentialing Program (NACP)
- University of Texas at Austin, Steve Hicks School of Social Work
- Commission for Case Manager Certification (CCMC).
- Patient Advocate Certification Board (BCPA)
- Association for Financial Counseling & Planning Education (AFCPE)
- Center for Financial Certifications (FinCert.org)
- Early Intervention Training Program (EITP) at the University of Illinois
- National Council on Family Relations (NCFR)
- Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)
- Certificates of attendance are also available

Evaluation Link

Go to the event page for the evaluation and post-test link.

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Questions?

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