



MEDIA OUTREACH TOOLKIT



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OVERVIEW

WIC agencies play a very important role in spreading awareness about WIC with the goals to retain the existing members and recruit new families. We understand promoting WIC to your community through various media channels is very important but can be overwhelming. There are many creative and effective ways to publicize your WIC message.

In this toolkit you will find ideas and guidelines to carry out your outreach efforts through earned and social media and deal with any potential crises. We hope these tools and tips will help you to spread the word.





**EARNED
MEDIA**

INITIAL PREPARATIONS

DEVELOPING A MEDIA CONTACT LIST

A media list is a document that includes individuals working in the media, such as journalists, reporters, editors, producers, podcasters, bloggers, and other contacts from media outlets whom you intend to pitch to. The goal is for these individuals to develop an interest in the story or news you intend to share through your pitches.

You can start by doing some online research, using keywords, hashtags, or social media platforms to find out which publications or reporters are covering relevant topics such as health care, nutrition, maternal health, and breastfeeding. Don't forget to include media that focus on covering ethnic audiences, such as Hispanics, African Americans and Pan-Asians.

Below are examples of consumer-focused media:

- Broadcast TV stations
- Daily consumer newspapers
- Community newspapers
- Community blogs
- City magazines
- Online magazines
- Local, community-centered media

Contact information for media outlets, news editors, and reporters can be found under the “contact” tab or the staff directory on their website.

If you have access to a media database service like Cision or Meltwater, you can also build your media list on the platform.

HOW TO REACH OUT TO MEDIA PARTNERS

Your agency can share a story by issuing press materials that explain how your services benefit your community participants.

ISSUING A PRESS RELEASE

When issuing a press release, be sure to e-mail a pitch of your idea or story to reporters in a creative, attention-grabbing way. Reporters receive multiple pitches daily, so it's important to include a catchy subject line. The Appendix has a press release template you can customize and send to reporters.

INFORMATION TO INCLUDE

Below are some ideas for local angles and statistics you can use to strengthen your press release.

- What your agency is celebrating
 - » Recognition days like National Enrollment Week
 - » An event you're hosting
 - » Partnering with other agencies or community organizations
- Impact of WIC in your community
 - » Positive statistics for your community
 - » The number of clients and what they've received through the program
 - » What your agency is celebrating
- How clients benefit from working with your WIC agency
 - » Nutrition education
 - » Breastfeeding education and support
 - » Supplemental nutritious foods
 - » Referrals to other health and nutrition services
- WIC success stories
 - » Testimonials from those you've assisted
 - » **You must obtain every person's permission to include their names and statements in your press release.**

VISUALS

Visuals that support your press release are often helpful. Depending on the media's preference, you can either embed or attach any of the following visuals to your press release:

- Photos or videos that relate to WIC or your agency directly
- Fact sheets you have about your agency

E-MAIL PITCH

To increase reporters' interest in reading your press release, include a short, personalized e-mail pitch when you send it, and create an attention-getting e-mail subject line. Then, copy and paste the text of your press release just below your pitch.

You can use the example in the Appendix to create your own pitch.

WHEN TO USE A MEDIA ALERT

A media alert is an invitation to the media for an event you are hosting. A media alert isn't a full story and is formatted differently from a press release. It's concise and provides the most important details of your event. The Appendix has a media alert template you can customize and send to reporters.

DEVELOP AN EVENTS & OBSERVANCES CALENDAR

Events and observances are timely and can serve as a “hook” or story angle to garner awareness. Some examples include:

- **February**
 - » Black History Month
- **March**
 - » National Nutrition Month
- **April**
 - » National Minority Health Month
 - » World Health Day - celebrated every year on April 7
 - » Black Maternal Health Week – recognized each year from April 11-17
- **May**
 - » Women's Health Month
 - » Maternal Health Month
 - » National Asian American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month
 - » National Women's Health Week – celebrated each year beginning on Mother's Day
- **August**
 - » National Breastfeeding Month
 - » World Breastfeeding Week - celebrated each year from August 1-7
 - » Indigenous Milk Medicine Week - second Week of August
 - » Asian American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander Breastfeeding Week - third Week of August
 - » Black Breastfeeding Week - fourth Week of August
- **September**
 - » Workplace Lactation Week – celebrated each year from September 1-7
 - » Semana de La Lactancia Latina - second Week of September
 - » National Hispanic Heritage Month – celebrated each year from September 15 – October 15
- **October**
 - » National Health Education Week - third full week of October
- **November**
 - » National Native American Heritage Month



TIMING

Although the media is never obligated to do anything with your press release and materials, the sooner you get the information into their hands, the better.

Each outlet has different timelines and deadlines. For example, TV reporters often have shorter windows of time to complete story assignments, whereas magazines work on stories months in advance.

For broadcast media, online publications, and print publications that publish weekly, reach out 1-3 weeks in advance.

For magazines and monthly print publications, it's advisable to reach out 2-4 months in advance.

Additionally, consider visiting the news outlet's website to check for an editorial calendar that outlines their monthly topics and deadlines.

WIC BRAND VOICE

A brand voice is a brand's personality and the tone of communicating a message with its target audience. When reaching moms, WIC must be conversational, honest, and supportive.

The WIC voice is: empowering, simple, straightforward, encouraging, direct, engaging, and bold.

ROLE OF A SPOKESPERSON

A spokesperson is responsible for speaking on behalf of your agency. You'll want to identify in advance who can speak with the media, depending on the topic or story.

With media interviews, preparation is key. If a reporter or journalist contacts you, remember that you don't have to do the interview on the spot. Ask if you can schedule a time to talk. This will help to give you some time to prepare.

You'll want to develop key messages or talking points for your spokesperson to discuss.

You can ask the reporter before the interview to provide you with any specific questions. You can also suggest questions to the reporter. A traditional practice in interviewing is asking Who, What, Where, When, Why and How questions.

TIPS AND TOOLS FOR EARNED MEDIA OUTREACH EFFORTS

HOW TO BUILD A MEDIA KIT

A media kit, also known as a press kit, holds all of the information a media contact may need if they were to cover your agency in the news.

Media kits can be in the form of PDF files, shareable online folders (Dropbox, Google Drive, SharePoint), or online webpages.

Materials for your press kit include, but are not limited to:

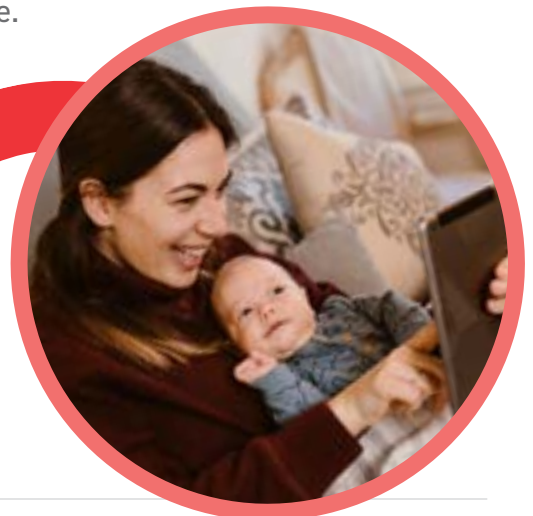
- Pitch letter (template provided)
- Press release (template provided)
- Media advisory (template provided)
- Digital photos/ spokespeople headshots
- Talking points/Q&As
- Sponsor and/or partner list
- Testimonials/ Interviews

MEDIA TRACKING

It's important to monitor media coverage. Some media outlets may reach out to inquire about an interview or additional information, while other outlets may publish your press release without connecting with you.

At a minimum, if you haven't already, make sure you set up a Google Alert for your organization and if you have access to media monitoring services like Cision or Meltwater – even better!

If you don't see any coverage or hear from a media outlet, feel free to follow up with an email or a phone call within a few days of sending the initial press release.



CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Crises are not only frequent, but they are also incredibly diverse, and due to today's 'Cancel Culture' environment, new and unprecedented types of crises are constantly emerging. Understanding and preparing for a tumultuous crisis landscape means organizations must adapt their approach to preparing for and addressing crises. It is critical that WIC agencies properly plan and prepare for crisis situations and scenarios.

Crisis communications management is a strategic approach to addressing a crisis that impacts your clients, target audience, and agency reputation. Developing a crisis communications plan helps your agency to effectively communicate and disseminate information.

- COVID-19 pandemic
- Infant formula shortage
- Government shutdown
- Natural disasters

HELPFUL TIPS WHEN RESPONDING TO A CRISIS

DELIVER ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

During crises, there can be a sense of information overload, making it critical to communicate the most important and essential information people need to know. Focus on essential information and focus on communicating clearly and concisely. Share what you know when you know it. Also, be honest and as transparent as possible.

REVIEW, REPEAT, REINFORCE

When you think about the best communication channels to use during a crisis, don't rely on one particular medium or platform. Remember the 3 R's: review, repeat, and reinforce. Information needs to be shared broadly and consistently during a crisis, so be thoughtful about selecting the communications vehicles that will reach your audience. In addition, repeating the information helps foster understanding, and be sure to reinforce the key points of your information by providing additional context or guidance. It's better to over-communicate than under-communicate and run the risk of people not receiving or understanding your message.

MESSAGE CONSISTENCY IS KEY

Ensuring your messaging is consistent throughout the organization in times of crisis is imperative. Make sure you are addressing the issue comprehensively and cohesively and thinking about all audiences that will be impacted - internal and external. Consider creating a one-pager that provides all key messages and talking points and sharing it across the agency with appropriate spokespeople and leaders.

PREPARATION MATTERS

If you fail to plan, you plan to fail. Take the time to develop a crisis communications plan or refine your existing plan. The more prepared you are, the better equipped you are to successfully manage a crisis. Consider scenarios that could impact your organization, identify your audiences and spokespeople and proactively map out your plan before a crisis occurs.



PR TEMPLATES

SAMPLE EMAIL PITCH

You can use the pitch example below to create your own pitch.

SUBJECT: **[Your agency's name]** Celebrates WIC National Enrollment Week!

Hello **[reporter's name]**,

During the week of October 10, **[Your agency's name]** is celebrating *WIC National Enrollment Week!* With inflation raising grocery prices across the US, WIC aims to reach families by providing nutritious foods to supplement diets and referrals to health and other social services.

[Your agency's name] is celebrating with other WIC agencies throughout the country to show our communities why WIC is an important resource for not only expecting and current mothers but also for fathers, foster parents, and caretakers.

The attached press release contains more information about our activities during the week. I'll follow up with you in the next few days, but please contact me if you need any additional information. I look forward to connecting with you to spread the word about this important initiative!

Best regards,

[Your name]

[Your agency's name]

[Your phone number]

PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE & SAMPLE

Below, you will find the template for a press release and an example press release - feel free to use the example for your press release or edit it however you please.

- **Contact Information**
 - » Who the media should contact if they have additional questions or interview requests. Include name, phone number and email address. Following the contact information, include when it should be released; it is usually for immediate release.
- **Headline**
 - » Tells readers what the release is about. It should be concise and engaging to grab the reader's attention. Limit the headline to eight to 10 words, if possible, brief is better, and keep it to one line, if possible.
- **Subhead**
 - » The subhead should further elaborate on what was initially stated in the headline and be interesting so as to hook the reader further. The length is usually about 20 words, two full lines max.
- **First Paragraph**
 - » Summarizes key points of the press release and answers the "Five W's" of Who, What, When, Where, and Why. Provides readers who don't have the time to read the full story with a general idea about the news in two or three sentences.
- **1st Quote**
 - » Supporting quotes are an opportunity to present a more human element. Include a quote from your WIC director about their vision and why the news is important.
- **Trend Tie In**
 - » Ensures your press release outlines why the topic is important right now. It connects your news to something happening now or something important in the long term. This is where you can draw on statistics, recent studies, or current events to demonstrate your news' relation to the issues trending at this moment in time. The length is usually 1-2 paragraphs long.
- **Second "quote"**
 - » Quotes from your participants can add validation and credibility to your services and the announcement as a whole. Always make sure that you have their permission to use their quote.
- **Boilerplate & Closing**
 - » Essentially an About Us section; it provides a quick overview of the agency and what it does. Press releases always end with #### centered at the bottom of the page. This way, no extra text can be mistakenly published as part of the announcement.

[WIC AGENCY LOGO HERE]

MEDIA CONTACT:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[First and Last Name]

C: (123) 456-7890

E: email@email.com

[YOUR HEADLINE HERE]

[YOUR SUBHEAD HERE]

[City, State, Date] – [Your agency’s name] announced today [WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN]
[WHY and details here]

[Quote from WIC director or WIC representative]

[Additional information, trends, stats]

[Call to action and where to find more information]

About WIC

The WIC Program (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children) is administered at the Federal level by the Food and Nutrition Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The WIC program was established in 1974 to provide Federal grants to States for nutrition education, supplemental foods, and health care referrals for low and moderate-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, as well as infants and children who have a health or nutrition need.

To assess eligibility or to find out more about WIC services, visit: [\[website here\]](#) or call [\[phone number here\]](#)

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[LOGO HERE]

MEDIA CONTACT:

[First and Last Name]

C: (123) 456-7890

E: email@email.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Your Agency's Name] Celebrates WIC National Enrollment Week

Join the celebration and #StartWithWIC – **Dates here**

City, State, September XX, 20XX – As grocery prices continue to rise in the US due to inflation, [Your agency's name] is partnering with other WIC (Women, Infants and Children) agencies across the country to remind families of the services it provides during WIC National Enrollment Week, **Dates here**

WIC empowers families with nutrition education, breastfeeding support, supplemental foods, and referrals to other health and nutrition services - all free of charge to those who qualify. During National Enrollment Week, [Your agency's name] will provide breastfeeding and cooking tips on social media, celebrate community partnerships, and **[insert a brief description of what you plan to do during National Enrollment Week]**.

"We want to let people know that [Your agency's name] is here for all families seeking support, which makes WIC National Enrollment Week so important," said **[Insert name, WIC XXXXX Director]** "Our team is ready to assist families with healthy choices and save on groceries so they can have more to spend on other things their family needs."

[Your agency's name] is **[insert operating policies, operating virtually, open office, etc]**. **[Insert what you are doing to keep participants and staff safe]**. Families can make appointments to see their WIC specialists; scheduled appointments may include **[insert what services your agency provides that you would like to highlight]**. [Your agency's name] recommends that you call **[insert phone number]** to set up an appointment or sign up online at **[insert website URL]**

"WIC has been a great support for my family during this tough time. They've provided us with food education, shopping tips, and even kid-friendly recipes," says **[Participant name]**, a current WIC Participant.

National Enrollment Week is a celebration of healthy families. Throughout the week, WIC will be highlighting kid-friendly recipes to get kids involved in the cooking process. Additionally, **[Your agency's name]** will be **[insert what you plan to do during National Enrollment Week]**.

About WIC

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To assess eligibility or to find out more about WIC services, visit: www.signupwic.com or call the hotline at 1-800-722-2295.

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MEDIA ALERT TEMPLATE AND EXAMPLE

[LOGO HERE]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA ALERT

[Your Agency's Name] Hosts [Your Event] in Honor of WIC National Enrollment Week

What: [Information about your event.]

Who: [Information about your agency. Sponsors and partner organizations can also be shared here. Include who will be available for interviews.]

Why: [The purpose of your event.]

When: [Date and time.]

Where: [Location and address.]

Media Contact: [Name and contact information for the person designated to communicate with the media on behalf of the agency.]

###





**SOCIAL
MEDIA**

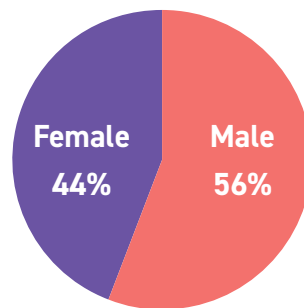
SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM PREFERENCES

With all the social media platforms out there, it can be difficult to know what to prioritize. Below is an overview of each platform, including which age group is most prevalent and what type of content is best suited for each. Remember quality over quantity when choosing which social media platform(s) for your agency. It's better to post high-quality content on one channel than to have five channels you barely post on.



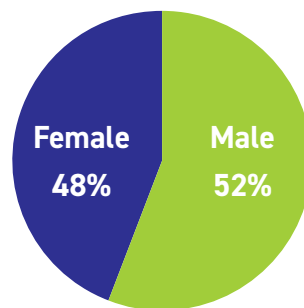
FACEBOOK

- Primary audience: 25 – 34 years old
- Content type: Links, photos, and videos.
- Best for: Facebook is a great platform to share photos of employees and show behind-the-scenes looks of your agency.



INSTAGRAM

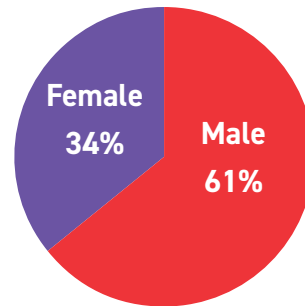
- Primary audience: 18 – 24 years old
- Content type: Photos and videos, especially vertical-format videos (Instagram Reels)
- Best for: Videos that share information about WIC benefits, including breastfeeding tips, nutrition advice, and meal ideas.





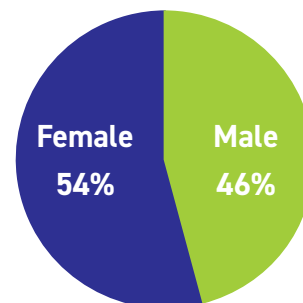
TWITTER (X)

- Primary audience: 18 – 29 years old
- Content type: Short copy (less than 280 characters); images and videos.
- Best for: Twitter users tend to have graduated college and make more than WIC income maximums, so this platform should not be your primary means of reaching potential WIC participants. If you have bandwidth on your team, Twitter/X can be used to engage with community organizations, health care providers, schools, and other local entities.



TIKTOK

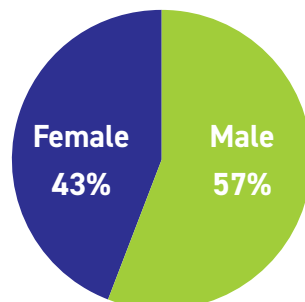
- Primary audience: 18 – 24 years old
- Content type: Short-form videos that use trending audio and pop culture references
- Best for: Videos that share information about WIC benefits, including breastfeeding tips, nutrition advice, and meal ideas. TikTok content should be concise and be useful to audience members. It's the perfect channel to show your agency's personality! Write descriptive captions and use trending audio to get your content shown to more people.





LINKEDIN

- Primary audience: 30 - 39 years old
- Content type: Links, photos, videos
- Best for: LinkedIn is often used by working professionals. You can use it to give your community updates about WIC, list job openings, and share information with stakeholders.



SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT DEVELOPMENT



Developing a Social Media Calendar

Planning your content one month at a time can keep your social media pages organized and resourceful for your followers. We recommend using Google Drive, Microsoft SharePoint, or another shareable drive to store a social media content calendar. Try to include a variety of content each month, including but not limited to:

- Information about WIC benefits
- Childhood nutrition information
- Breastfeeding benefits
- Posts with recipes
- Posts about breastfeeding
- Encouraging or funny posts

Free Content Development Tools

There are tons of free tools your agency can use in the content development process! [Pexels](#) has free stock photos and videos, [Canva](#) has templates and graphics for different types of marketing materials, and [Chat GPT](#) can help you with post copy when you have writer's block – just make sure to proofread!

Using In-Platform Scheduling Tools

Your team is busy, and you may not always have time to post on social media on certain days. This is especially true for holidays when your team may not be working. Luckily, most social media platforms have free scheduling tools! Facebook, Instagram, Twitter/X, LinkedIn, and TikTok all offer in-platform scheduling. Schedule your content for the week or month ahead so you don't have to set reminders for yourself the day of! [TikTok](#) and [Instagram](#) require a business or creator account to schedule posts, which you can set in the Account Settings.

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT BEST PRACTICES

- Always use some type of visual in your post, not just text. This makes your post more interesting and helps viewers relate to your brand.
- A post shouldn't be too heavy on the text. We recommend a maximum of five sentences in your post to ensure your content is accessible and digestible.
- Use emojis, but not too often. Two to three emojis in a post is fun. More than four emojis can distract from the purpose of your post.
- Include a clear call-to-action in each post, such as “follow us for more info,” “visit our website to learn more,” “apply for WIC today,” or “share this post to your story so others can learn about WIC.”



ENGAGEMENT

Engaging your social media followers is key to providing them with a safe and informational online setting for learning about WIC. Check out these do's and don'ts of audience engagement:

DO:

MESSAGE CONSISTENCY IS KEY

- Respond to comments and messages – even if it's a simple “Thanks!” or a heart emoji.
- Respond to questions within 48 hours, which will build trust with your audience and keep them coming back to your page.
- Post consistently, whether that's once a week or once a month. By doing so, your followers will know what to expect of you.

DON'T:

RELEVANT INFORMATION IS IMPORTANT

- Post just to post. Make sure your content is valuable to your audience, which will help followers stay interested and engaged.
- Be too promotional. Your posts should be useful to your audience, whether that's by answering a question, giving them updated information, making them laugh, or providing them with parenting inspiration.
- Forget to add a visual! Even on platforms like Facebook, where a visual isn't a requirement, it's a good idea to add a photo or video to make your post more interesting and to encourage engagement with your audience members.

BELOW ARE A FEW ENGAGEMENT TACTICS YOU CAN TRY ON YOUR AGENCY'S PAGE!

Share “Behind the Scenes” Photos: People love to learn about what goes on behind the scenes at organizations like WIC. This could be as simple as posting a photo of your office, a team photo, or showing what a day in the life of a WIC staff member is like. A WIC employee could even do an “Instagram takeover,” which is when an employee or partner “takes over” the WIC agency's Instagram account for a day to show a more personal side to the organization. In this case, the WIC employee could explain a bit about who they are, how long they've worked for WIC, what their job entails, and how they help WIC participants. Posting a selfie is a great way to start.

Highlight WIC Participants: One way to grow your page's engagement and raise awareness is to highlight WIC families by sharing photos of them. Ask WIC mothers and family members to send in photos (either by email or Dropbox) or tag your agency in a post on social media. With their permission, you can share their photo, giving WIC a more friendly, personable face than a stock photo would. Remember, it's crucial to receive permission from WIC participants before sharing a photo of them.

Spotlight a Local Market or Grocery Store: Some people may feel intimidated by the shopping process or concerned that WIC benefits won't be offered at the grocery store they frequent. One way to address this is to visit a grocery store that accepts WIC and share photos and videos of various items that can be purchased using WIC benefits. If food items have “WIC accepted” stickers on the shelves, that's even better. You can share these in a post on Facebook and Instagram or as a Facebook Story or Instagram Story. The goal of these posts is to make WIC participants more comfortable with the idea of using WIC benefits to purchase the food their family loves.

Partner with Another Local Agency: Don't underestimate the power of partnerships. Each WIC agency has the same goal: to reach potential WIC participants and support them in the best ways possible. By partnering with another WIC agency or community organization on social media, you can reach more audience members and generate more engagement. What does a social media partnership look like? It could consist of any of the following:

- Tagging each other in social media posts
- Sharing each other's posts on your own feeds
- Giving your partner a shout-out on social media and highlighting some of their work
- Commenting on your partner's posts

You can partner with a nearby agency, a local YMCA, a city library, an elementary school or any other organization that has similar goals and audiences to WIC. When choosing a partner organization, be sure they represent WIC well and their social media channels contain appropriate content.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

When social and political issues affect families' abilities to receive WIC, it's important to keep a close eye on your social media presence. Your agency can be a resource during difficult times and help participants sort through any confusion. The following situations are times when your staff should monitor your social media pages closely:

- Infant formula shortages
- Virus surges (such as when new strains of COVID-19 emerge)
- Discussions about a possible government shutdown
- Milk and/or egg shortages
- Nationwide or local political unrest, as WIC participants may be unsure of benefit changes or availability

Having content already written and approved can help avoid delays when a crisis hits. Write a few posts with visuals to have onhand when you need them. These can be slightly generic, and you can add specific details when you know more about the crisis situation.



ANALYZING AND TRACKING

Monitoring your social media post performance can help you understand what your audience wants to see from your content. Each platform has an analytics or insights section that details how many people engaged with your post. Some even highlight the age and gender of your audience members, along with what times of day they're most active. You can learn how to find the insights section on each platform below:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Twitter \(X\)](#)
- [TikTok](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)

A few metrics to analyze when determining post performance include:

- How many people a post **reached**
- How many **engagements** a post earned
- How many **reactions** a post earned
- The number of times a post was **shared** – this tells you that followers found the post useful.

Once you've monitored and analyzed post performance for a few months, you can start to determine what an average performance looks like. Then, you can identify posts that are above average. These posts will tell you what your audience is looking for in social media content so you can create similar posts in the future. This way, you're meeting the needs of WIC participants in a format they can understand and relate to.

