

## **Applying Diffusion of Innovation Theory to promote WICShopper App use among less digitally ready participants**

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**TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE:** Health and nutrition educators, designers of staff trainings, instructors of courses on Health Behavior Theories, social marketers.

**ABSTRACT:** In 2016 the Oregon WIC Program changed from paper vouchers to an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) system to issue monthly food benefits to program participants. A free App was offered to WIC families for ready access to their food balance, to scan a food for eligibility, expiration reminders and Food Hero recipes. Yet after 6 months of promoting the WICShopper App to participants, 57% of Oregon WIC families still had not downloaded the App.

State WIC staff designed a 30-minute webinar to empower local agency staff to use proven techniques from the Diffusion of Innovation theory to reach those reluctant to download the app. Content includes data on App use by geographic region and participant demographics, a basic explanation of Diffusion of Innovation Theory and interviews with three local WIC staff demonstrating how they use Theory techniques in their promotion of the App in one-on-one and group settings. At the end of the webinar local agency staff were invited to take the WICShopper App Promotion Challenge.

A brief intervention to engage staff with the application of a health theory to target behaviors of program participants may be a promising practice for improving uptake of technology in nutrition and health programs.

### **OBJECTIVE(S):**

1. Identify proven strategies to engage more reluctant technology users.
2. Apply Diffusion of Innovation to potential interventions for their own target population.

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