

Title of Project: MARO New Jersey: Dietetic Internship Program

Agency Name: New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services/WIC Services

State: New Jersey

Key Word Descriptors: Dietetic Internship Training for unregistered WIC nutritionists with a B.S. in Nutrition, ADA Verification Statement for completion of Didactic Program in Dietetics and 3 years of work experience in New Jersey WIC.

Description of Project:

In December 2000, the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services/WIC Services received Developmental Accreditation to implement a dietetic internship program for a maximum of 10 interns. Full accreditation will follow in 2004 after the successful completion of two internship classes.

This internship was undertaken as a strategy to recruit, train and retain culturally competent, better-qualified nutrition professionals in the New Jersey WIC Program. National studies showed nutritionists who are registered dietitians have higher job satisfaction and less turnover rates. Opportunities for public health nutritionists, especially those in WIC to complete an internship while still working are limited.

WIC Services collaborated with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey to develop a didactic curriculum consisting of 5 modules on CD ROMs: Multicultural Issues/and Foods, Current Issues on Communication in Nutrition and Dietetics, Prevention and Health Promotion, Maternal and Pediatric Nutrition and Therapeutic Nutrition Strategies. Food Service to be added in 2001. The didactic curriculum was delivered via self-study CD-ROMs, classroom instruction and via multipoint videoconferencing, a first in New Jersey. Following successful completion of the didactic curriculum, the students are admitted into the internship.

The Internship Model is a coordinated supervised practice of 400 hours in community nutrition, 300 hours in therapeutic nutrition, 200 hours in food service at traditional and innovative rotation sites close to the interns' home or workplace. Interns will receive salary and benefits while participating. Staff replacements at WIC clinics will be provided. - Didactics curriculum and supervised rotations can be completed part time in about 15 months.

Results of the Project:

Impact on didactic students:

- students benefitted academically
- tremendous immediate carry over into the workplace
- students attained new computer and test taking skills

- students enjoyed networking and personnel interaction with piers

Impact on Recruitment:

Inquiries on internship have been received from nutritionists all over the country.

Impact on local WIC agencies:

Interns will be with NJ WIC for 3 years after completed internship. Registered dietitians can serve as a Chief nutritionists in New Jersey WIC.

Unique Program, Designed for Success

- The internship is specifically tailored for WIC needs and meets ADA accreditation.
- Uses innovation - CD-ROM modules, multipoint videoconferencing, non-traditional rotation sites, collaboration between state, local agencies and prestigious university, combines work, study and supervised practice.
- Presents opportunities to partner with other public health programs

Contact person:

Marilyn A. Lynch, MS, RD

Internship Director

E-mail: mlynch@doh.state.nj.us

Telephone: (609)292-9560

Fax: (609)2929288