



A Family's Journey

MARIA'S STORY

Maria's story begins when she attends a WIC (Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants, and Children) appointment about a month before giving birth. At 25 years old, she is pregnant with twins. Maria is navigating the healthcare system without insurance, and she is more comfortable speaking Spanish than English. Recently, her family experienced an apartment fire that left them without a home or their belongings. She and her husband are now staying with a friend as they try to figure out their next steps.

It's a stressful and uncertain time. With limited social supports, Maria and her family are carrying these challenges on their own.

That first step into the WIC office is an important turning point in Maria's journey. WIC is a partner in the local IRIS network, opening the door to services, supports, and connections that help ease her situation. Through conversations and decisions—many of which will happen behind the scenes—providers work on her behalf, advocating for her needs, addressing barriers, and helping to shape a path toward stability and, ultimately, the opportunity to thrive.

THE PROVIDERS

At each step in Maria's journey, IRIS serves as the shared system connecting providers, coordinating action, and tracking progress.

June

When Maria arrives at WIC, an intake specialist asks a few questions and offers resources that could support her family and a healthy pregnancy. Together, they identify a Community Health Worker (CHW) as a valuable source of ongoing support. Using IRIS, the intake specialist sends referrals to a CHW program, car seats & cribs services, and breastfeeding support once she confirms the programs' capacity to provide services in Spanish. IRIS creates a shared record of outreach, helping WIC track progress and identify gaps.

Within three days, the CHW accepts the referral and connects with Maria. The baby supply program also confirms that Maria will receive "two of everything" in preparation for the twins. When breastfeeding support is unable to reach Maria, that gap is documented and visible to WIC in the IRIS referral's history.

The CHW begins working with Maria and introduces a home visiting program that can provide support during her pregnancy and after the twins are born. After confirming availability for Spanish-speaking families, the CHW submits a referral and tracks its progress. Six days later, enrollment is confirmed, with bi-weekly visits planned through the twins' second birthday.

Through frequent touchpoints, Maria and her home visitor begin building a relationship. When Maria shares difficulty accessing her WIC benefits, the home visitor sends a referral to WIC, flagging the issue and requesting follow-up.

Two months later

The twins are born. As their hospital discharge approaches, the home visitor stays in close contact and uses IRIS to request WIC follow-up to ensure Maria's benefits are active and accessible during this critical transition.

One month later

The twins' Medicaid coverage lapses, creating a complex and frustrating situation. Maria struggles to gather required documentation among providers. The CHW identifies the need for an insurance navigator and submits a referral in IRIS.

Sixteen months later

The twins will turn two soon and have outgrown their infant car seats. Through IRIS, her home visitor refers Maria to the car seat program, and they provide a quick update on scheduling an appointment.

With a big birthday approaching, other changes are on the horizon. Maria will graduate from the home visiting program, a relationship she has come to value deeply, and wants to continue receiving support. Well in advance of the twin's birthday, the home visitor identifies an evidence-based long-term home visiting program that is a good fit for Maria's family during this stage.

Seeing that the waitlist for a Spanish-speaking home visitor is long, program staff coordinate in IRIS to confirm that a Spanish interpreter is available and acceptable to Maria. Once enrolled, the new home visitor updates IRIS to confirm the services are in place, allowing the original home visitor to feel confident that Maria and her family are well-supported as they enter the toddler years.