



Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants & Children (WIC)

Description

- Provides nutritious supplemental foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and health and social services referrals at no charge to low-income pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women; and infants and children up to the age of 5 years.
- Provides participants in most States with monthly checks or vouchers to buy specific foods designed to supplement their diet with specific nutrients. A few State agencies distribute the WIC foods through warehouses or deliver the foods to participants' homes.
- Provides nutritious foods that include iron-fortified infant formula and infant cereal, iron-fortified adult cereal, vitamin C-rich fruit or vegetable juice, eggs, milk, and cheese. Soy-based beverages, tofu, fruits and vegetables, baby foods, whole-wheat bread, and other whole-grain options were recently added.
- Provides WIC services through county health departments, hospitals, mobile clinics, community centers, schools, public housing sites, Indian reservations, migrant health centers and camps, and Indian Health Service facilities.
- Operates in all 50 States, 34 Indian Tribal Organizations, America Samoa, District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. These 90 WIC State agencies administer WIC through 2,200 local agencies and 9,000 clinic sites.

Background

- The program was created in 1972 as a pilot program. WIC has operated as a
- permanent nutrition assistance program since 1974.

Participants

- 9.1 million people participated in FY 2009 (monthly average).
- An applicant's family income must be at or below 185 percent of the U.S. Poverty Income Guidelines (\$40,793 for four-person household as of July 1, 2009). A person who participates or has family members who participate in certain other benefit programs, such as the Food Stamp Program, Medicaid, or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, automatically meets the income eligibility requirement.

Budget

- \$6.9 billion in FY 2009 and \$7.3 billion in FY 2010.

Contact Information

For complete information about WIC, visit www.fns.usda.gov/wic or contact the State agency that administers WIC. View Agency listings at www.fns.usda.gov/wic select "State Contacts."