

Women, Infants and Children Nutrition Program (WIC)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is the sole funding source and provides a grant used to prevent and improve nutrition related health problems for women, infants and children with healthy supplemental foods and nutrition services.

- The WIC Program was authorized by Congress in 1972 and was implemented in Pennsylvania in May 1974. The Program is administered through 24 contracts with county and private non-profit agencies that deliver WIC services locally in all 67 counties at about 297 sites.
- The Pennsylvania WIC Program received approximately \$208 million to serve clients in the 2010 Federal Fiscal Year. In addition, Pennsylvania received an estimated \$53 million in infant formula and infant cereal and juice rebates to serve additional clients.
- The WIC Program served an average of 262,270 women, infants and children each month in 2010.

WIC Program Facts

WIC is available in all 50 states, 34 Indian Tribal Organization, America Samoa, District of Columbia, Guam, Commonwealth Islands of the Northern Marianas, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. These 90 WIC State Agencies provide WIC benefits to over 9 million women, infants and children each month.

- Pennsylvania ranks 8th in total WIC participation among the 90 State Agencies.

WIC Program Eligibility

- Women who are pregnant, or had a baby in the past six months, or twelve months if breastfeeding.
- Infants and children under age five, including foster children.

Applicants must: (1) Reside in Pennsylvania; (2) Have a medical or nutritional risk; (3) Have a household gross income that does not exceed 185% of the U.S. Poverty Income Guidelines. For example, a family of four can earn up to \$41,348 annually effective July 1, 2011 and be income eligible for the WIC Program. An unborn child is included in the family size.

NOTE: MA, TANF and SNAP (Food Stamps) clients are eligible, but must provide income documentation.

Foster children under five with the ACCESS card are eligible and foster parent income is not required.

WIC does not require proof of citizenship or alien status.

Benefits and Services WIC Provides

- Nutrition counseling support and information.
- Breastfeeding information and support.
- Health and children's immunization screenings.
- Referrals to health and social service organizations.
- Participation in the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) for certain clients.

- WIC checks provide nutritious foods from any WIC authorized store.
- The monthly food package may include: fruits and vegetables, whole grains, soy alternatives, milk, 100% unsweetened fruit and/or vegetable juice, peanut butter, cheese, eggs, canned or dried beans, cereal, iron-fortified infant formula and cereal, jarred infant foods, and canned fish for breastfeeding moms and pregnant women with multiple fetuses, and special formulas when medically necessary.
- All services are provided at no cost to the participant.

How to Apply for WIC Benefits and Services

To apply for the WIC Program an applicant must call their local WIC agency to schedule an appointment. At the appointment, a health and nutrition assessment will be completed.

An applicant may also call the WIC toll-free hotline 1-800-WIC-WINS (1-800-942-9467) and they will be connected with the WIC office closest to their home.

Health Outcomes/The Research on WIC

- WIC reduces fetal deaths and infant mortality
- WIC reduces low birth weight rates and increases the duration of pregnancy
- WIC improves the growth of nutritionally at-risk infants and children
- WIC decreases the incidence of iron deficiency anemia in children
- WIC improves the dietary intake of pregnant and postpartum women and promotes proper weight gain in pregnant women
- Pregnant women with prior WIC participation receive prenatal care earlier
- Children enrolled in WIC are more likely to have a regular source of medical care and have more up to date immunizations
- Children who receive WIC benefits demonstrate improved intellectual development
- WIC significantly improves children's diets
- WIC is a relatively short-term program that has long-lasting benefits for the participants it serves

WIC Contact Information

WIC toll-free hotline is 1-800-WIC-WINS (1-800-942-9467).

WIC is administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Health with funds from the United States Department of Agriculture.

WIC is an equal opportunity provider.

For more information about the WIC Nutrition Program, please visit our websites at:

www.health.state.pa.us or www.pawic.com

