



Special Supplemental Feeding Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

Recognizing the lifelong impact of appropriate and sufficient nutrition during pregnancy and the early of a child's life, Congress established the Special

Supplemental Feeding Program for Women, Infants and Children in 1972 to safeguard this special and vulnerable population. Program participants receive supplemental nutritious foods, nutrition education and counseling at WIC clinics, screenings and referrals to other health, welfare and social services.

WIC participants receive checks or vouchers to purchase foods rich in one or more of the following nutrients: protein, calcium, iron and vitamins A and C. These foods include iron-fortified infant formula and cereal, iron-fortified adult cereal, vitamin C-rich fruit and vegetable juice, eggs, milk, cheese, peanut butter, dried beans or peas, tuna fish and carrots. If prescribed by a physician, special infant formulas and certain medical foods can also be provide to WIC participants.

WIC Wins for Low-Income Women and Children

Study after study has proven the effectiveness of WIC on the diets and health of low-income women and children in America. In fact, the WIC program has been cited as one of the nation's most successful and cost-effective nutrition intervention programs in the country.

WIC children have higher mean intake of iron, vitamin C, thiamin, niacin and vitamin B6. WIC children have significantly improved rates of childhood immunization and are more likely to have a regular source of medical care. Academically, WIC children are winning too. The children whose mothers participated in WIC prenatally have improved vocabulary scores, and WIC children have significantly improved memories for numbers.

WIC moms and babies win too! Studies have shown that women on WIC have longer pregnancies and fewer premature births. WIC mothers experience a lower incidence of moderately low and very low

birth weight babies. WIC babies are more likely to be breast-fed for longer periods of time than are non-WIC babies.

Eligibility Requirements

To participate in the WIC program, participants must be eligible in four (4) different categories: categorical, residential, income and nutrition risk.

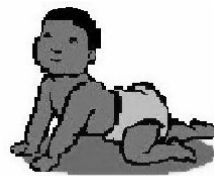
Categorical—Individuals are categorically eligible for WIC if they fall within one of the following categories

- Pregnant women (through pregnancy and up to 6 weeks after birth or after pregnancy ends)
- Breastfeeding women (up to infant's 1st birthday)
- Nonbreastfeeding postpartum women (up to 6 months after the birth of an infant or after pregnancy ends)
- Infants (up to 1st birthday)
- Children (up to their 5th birthday)

Residential Requirement—Applicants must live in the state in which they apply for WIC benefits. There is not, however, a minimum amount of time an applicant must reside in a state before she meets the residency requirements.

Income Requirement—WIC applicants must have income at or below 185% of poverty according to the federal poverty guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

States usually opt for the highest income eligibility cap, but they can restrict participation to those at



100% of poverty. If an individual receives food stamps, Medicaid or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the individual is automatically considered income-eligible. Also, if an applicant has certain family members who participate in other assistance programs, such as TANF or Medicaid, the applicant is deemed income-eligible.

Nutrition Risk Requirement—Applicants must be seen by a health professional and must have at least one of the medical or dietary conditions on the State’s list of WIC nutrition risk criteria.

In most cases, this screening can be done at the WIC clinic free of charge to the applicant. Nutrition risk means a woman, infant or child has either a medical-based condition, such as anemia, underweight or poor pregnancy outcomes, or a dietary-based condition, such as a poor diet. At the very least, the WIC clinic will record the applicant’s height and weight and perform a blood work-up to check for anemia.



Frequently Asked Questions

How does an individual apply to participate in WIC? An individual must contact the WIC state or local agency serving her area to schedule an appointment. Once an appointment is scheduled, the applicant will be advised about what to bring to the appointment.



Does every applicant who qualifies for the WIC program receive benefits? No. WIC is not an entitlement program like food stamps. Congress does not set aside funds to allow every eligible individual to participate in the program. Instead, WIC is a federal grant program for which Congress authorizes a specific amount of funds each year for the program. When WIC agencies don’t have enough money to serve everyone who applies, they place applicants on a waiting list. Using a priority system, they ensure that WIC services and benefits are provided first to participants with the most serious health conditions, such as anemia, underweight or a history of pregnancy problems.

How long can an individual participate in WIC? WIC is a short-term program. Depending on whether the individual is pregnant, postpartum, breastfeeding, and infant or a child, an eligible individual usually receives benefits for 6 months to a year. A person may reapply for benefits at the end of the certification period.

Where are WIC services provided? WIC clinics can be found in county health departments, hospitals, mobile clinics, community centers, schools, public housing sites and migrant health centers.

What foods can you purchase with WIC vouchers? Iron-fortified adult cereals (specific brands), vitamin C-rich fruit juices (specific brands), adult cereals fortified with folic acid (specific brands), iron-fortified infant formulas (specific brands), infant cereals, milk, cheese, peanut butter, evaporated milk, carrots, tuna fish, eggs and dried beans.

Technically Speaking

The Special Supplemental Feeding Program for Women, Infants and Children is federally funded through the United States Department of Agriculture and is administered at the federal level by the Food and Nutrition Service. The Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) has been designated to administer the program in South Carolina.

WIC reaches approximately 47% of all of the babies born in this country. Experts estimate that the program has achieved full coverage of eligible infants. WIC reaches approximately 81% of all eligible women, infants and children.

Contact Information

The WIC program is administered through the Greenville County Health Department.

Greenville Health Department
200 University Ridge
Greenville, South Carolina 29602
Phone: (864) 282-4326



Care Line
1-800-868-0404



For more information, visit:
www.scdhec.net/hs/mch/wic/index.htm