

FLORIDA WIC FACTS



WHAT IS WIC? WIC is the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for **W**omen, **I**nfants, and **C**hildren. The program provides eligible participants a combination of supplemental nutritious foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion and support, and referrals to health care and other social services. In Florida, approximately 490,000 participants are served by WIC each month.

HOW IS WIC FUNDED? WIC is a 100 percent federally funded program which began in 1974. WIC is administered by the Food and Nutrition Service of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). In Florida, WIC is administered by the Florida Department of Health, Bureau of WIC Program Services.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR WIC SERVICES? To be eligible for WIC, the person must:

- be a pregnant or breastfeeding woman, a woman who has recently been pregnant, an infant, or a child under 5 years of age;
- currently live in Florida, but does not need to be a U.S. citizen;
- have a nutrition risk that is determined by WIC staff; and
- be income eligible.

The total household income must be at or under 185% of the federal poverty guidelines; or, the person must be currently receiving Medicaid, Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA), or Food Assistance. However, persons applying for WIC do not have to be on a public assistance program.

WHERE ARE WIC SERVICES PROVIDED? WIC is available in all 67 counties in Florida and is provided through 43 local WIC agencies. There are over 200 WIC offices throughout the state of Florida. Many of these WIC offices are located at county health departments. To find out the phone number of the WIC office in your county, call **1-800-342-3556** or go to the Florida WIC website at www.FloridaWIC.org.

WHAT FOOD DOES WIC PROVIDE? WIC provides supplemental foods designed to address the nutritional needs of WIC participants. The WIC food packages are aligned with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the infant feeding practice guidelines of the American Academy of Pediatrics.



Women and children 2 years and older who participate in the WIC program usually receive 1% lowfat or fat free milk, while children who are 1 year old receive whole milk. Other WIC foods for women and children may include cheese; yogurt; eggs; 100% whole wheat bread, pasta, and tortillas; corn tortillas; brown rice; breakfast cereals; 100% fruit juice; fruits and vegetables; peanut butter; and beans. Women who are fully breastfeeding their babies receive additional amounts of food along with canned light tuna and/or pink salmon. Soy milk may be provided to women and children 2 years and older when requested by the participant or the caregiver. Infants who are not breastfed or who are partially breastfed receive the WIC contract brand of infant formula. Other types of infant formulas or WIC-eligible nutritionals are available to participants with certain medical conditions. Beginning at 6 months of age, infants receive baby foods such as baby cereal and baby fruits and vegetables, in addition to infant formula. Infants 6 months and older who are fully breastfed receive baby cereal, baby fruits and vegetables, and also baby meats.

WIC PROVIDES NUTRITION EDUCATION Nutrition education is available to all adult WIC participants and, whenever possible, to child participants and other family members. The goals of nutrition education are: to achieve a positive change in the food consumption habits related to the participant's nutrition risk; to teach the relationship between proper nutrition and good health; to promote the optimal use of WIC supplemental foods and other nutritious foods; and to provide nutrition education within the context of the ethnic and cultural preferences of the participant.

WIC SUPPORTS BREASTFEEDING The WIC program recognizes that breastfeeding is the normal way to feed and nurture infants. Breastfeeding promotion and support is an integral part of the WIC program. WIC is striving to increase the number of infants who are breastfed and the length of time an infant is breastfed. WIC agencies have breastfeeding peer counselor programs which provide mother-to-mother support. WIC agencies also have trained personnel who are able to assist mothers in making informed decisions about infant feeding and in instructing them in the basics of breastfeeding. In addition, many WIC agencies have certified lactation counselors and consultants who can provide in-depth breastfeeding assistance. WIC agencies also provide breastfeeding aids such as breast pumps.

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FLORIDA WIC FACTS (CONTINUED)



WIC WORKS CLOSELY WITH HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

WIC works closely with the health care community, receiving referrals from private and public health care providers and making referrals, as needed, to health and social services, including immunizations. WIC staff routinely coordinates with other programs such as Healthy Start, MomCare, and KidCare. Persons who are already receiving medical services are encouraged to remain under their physicians' care while they receive WIC benefits. Individuals who are not receiving medical care are encouraged to seek and maintain appropriate care. In addition, WIC sites are designated voter registration sites where participants and others can apply to register to vote.

RESEARCH PROVES THAT WIC MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Numerous studies have shown that pregnancy outcome, particularly birth weight, is improved for program participants. National evaluations of the WIC program have documented that WIC encourages earlier prenatal care for women and regular medical care for children; improves the dietary intake of pregnant women and children; reduces the incidence of low birth weight babies; reduces infant mortality; reduces the incidence of anemia in children; and improves access to children's dental care services.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH WIC PROGRAM

STATE WIC OFFICE: 1-800-342-3556 or (850) 245-4202
www.FloridaWIC.org

LOCAL WIC AGENCY ADDRESS & PHONE NUMBER:

WIC PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE THEIR WIC FOOD BENEFITS BY USING ELECTRONIC BENEFITS TRANSFER (EBT) CARDS AT LOCAL GROCERY STORES

WIC clients receive their WIC food benefits by using a WIC EBT card at local grocery stores. Each WIC family receives a shopping list that identifies the type and amount of food they may purchase with their WIC EBT card. In Florida, approximately \$358 million of food is provided each year to WIC participants. There are approximately 2,000 grocery stores in Florida that accept WIC EBT cards, including all major chain stores.

WIC FARMERS' MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM

Each year in the spring, the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program provides fruit and vegetable checks to approximately 29,000 WIC participants in 16 counties across northern Florida, in addition to the food these participants receive with their WIC EBT card. The Farmers' Market fruit and vegetable checks are used to buy fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables at authorized farmers' markets. The program promotes consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables among families served by WIC and also stimulates sales of the produce offered by local independent farmers. For more information about the Florida WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, visit:

<http://www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Food-Nutrition-and-Wellness/Administering-Your-Nutrition-Program/WIC-Farmers-Market-Nutrition-Program>

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