



## WHAT IS WIC?

WIC is the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. 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 500,000 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 up to 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 clinic sites throughout the state of Florida. Many of these clinic sites 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 WIC website at [www.FloridaWIC.org](http://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 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, eggs, 100% whole wheat bread, brown rice, corn tortillas, breakfast cereals, 100% fruit juice, peanut butter, and beans. Women and children also receive a Fruit and Vegetable Voucher which allows them to buy fresh, frozen, and/or canned fruits and vegetables. Women who are fully breastfeeding their babies receive additional amounts of food along with canned fish (light tuna and/or pink salmon). Soy milk may be provided to women when requested by the participant. Children 2 years and older may receive soy milk when requested by the health care provider.

Infants who are not breastfed or who are partially breastfed receive the WIC contract brand of infant formula. Other types of infant formulas or medical foods are available to participants with certain medical conditions. Beginning at 6 months of age, formula-fed infants receive baby cereal and baby food fruits and vegetables in addition to infant formula. Infants who are fully breastfed receive baby cereal, baby food fruits and vegetables, and baby food meats when they are 6 months and older.

## WIC SUPPORTS BREASTFEEDING

The WIC program recognizes that breastfeeding is the best method of infant feeding and nurturing. 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. All WIC agencies have trained personnel who are able to assist mothers in making informed decisions about their infant feeding choice and in instructing them in the basics of breastfeeding. Many WIC agencies have excellent breastfeeding peer counselor support programs which provide mother-to-mother counseling. In addition, the local WIC agency may provide breastfeeding aids such as breast pumps.

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# FLORIDA WIC FACTS (CONTINUED)



## 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 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.

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### STATE WIC OFFICE:

1-800-342-3556 or (850) 245-4202

WIC website: [www.FloridaWIC.org](http://www.FloridaWIC.org)

### LOCAL WIC AGENCY ADDRESS & PHONE NUMBER:

## 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.

## WIC PROVIDES FOOD CHECKS AND VOUCHERS THAT ARE REDEEMED AT LOCAL GROCERY STORES

WIC program participants receive food checks that identify the type, brand, and amount of food they may purchase and Fruit and Vegetable Vouchers that specify a maximum dollar amount of fruits and vegetables that may be purchased. In Florida, approximately \$343 million of food is provided each year to WIC participants. There are approximately 2,000 grocery stores in Florida that accept WIC checks and vouchers, 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 33,000 WIC clients in 15 counties across northern Florida, in addition to the regular WIC food checks. These 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 [www.florida-agriculture.com/consumers/wic.htm](http://www.florida-agriculture.com/consumers/wic.htm).

FLORIDA  
**WIC**

Good Nutrition for  
Women, Infants & Children

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