

## Women, Children, and Infants (WIC)

WIC is a 100% federally funded program that provides nutritious food, individual counseling, and health care referrals to high-risk, low-income women and children up to the age of 5.



### Basic Information

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Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides nutritious foods, education, and referrals to health and other social services to participants at no charge. WIC serves low-income pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women, and infants and children up to age five who are at nutrition risk. The target population includes:

- Pregnant women (through pregnancy and up to six weeks after birth or after pregnancy ends.)
- Breastfeeding women (up to infant's first birthday.)
- Nonbreastfeeding postpartum women (up to six months after the birth of an infant or after pregnancy ends.)
- Infants (up to first birthday); WIC serves 53% of all infants born in the United States.
- Children up to their fifth birthday.

WIC is not an entitlement program, which means that 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 funding each year for program operations. The Food and Nutrition Service, which administers the program at the federal level, provides these funds to WIC State agencies (State Health Departments or comparable agencies) to pay for WIC foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion and support, and administrative costs.

### Eligibility

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Generally, WIC is available to:

- Low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women.
- Low-income parent or guardian who is the sole provider of children under age five who are at nutritional risk and who are at or below 185% of the federal poverty level. See The California Department of Public Health's (CDPH) document of FY 2014/15 income guidelines. [PDF](#)

To qualify for WIC, individuals must contact their local WIC office. Local WIC agencies can be found by calling 1-888-WIC-WORKS (1-888-942-9675) or on CDPH's online search tool to find your local WIC agency. [link](#)

### Benefits

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The foods provided through the WIC Program are designed to supplement participants' diets with specific nutrients. Different foods are provided to each category of participants. WIC foods include infant cereal, iron-fortified adult cereal, vitamin C-rich fruit or vegetable juice, eggs, milk, cheese, peanut butter, dried and canned beans/peas, and canned fish. Soy-based beverages, tofu, fruits and vegetables, baby foods, whole wheat bread, and other whole-grain options were recently added to better meet the nutritional needs of WIC participants. Additional WIC benefits include:

- Nutrition education and counseling to support nutritious foods and healthy families.
- Support and information about breastfeeding.
- Referrals and assistance with other health and community services.

### WIC in California

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In California, 84 WIC agencies provide services locally to over 1.45 million participants each month at over 650 sites throughout the state.

CFPA supports the efforts of the California WIC Association and values their expertise on policy issues affecting WIC and WIC participants. For more information regarding WIC in California, including State and Federal policy action, please visit the California WIC Association. [link](#)