

WIC (Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children)

Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS)

OVERVIEW

The mission of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program is to safeguard the health of low-income women, infants, and children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk by:

- Stressing the relationship between proper nutrition, physical activity and health with special emphasis on the nutritional needs of pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women, infants and children under five years of age and raise awareness about the dangers of using drugs and other harmful substances including alcohol and tobacco during pregnancy and breastfeeding.
- Assisting individuals at nutritional risk in achieving a positive change in dietary and physical activity habits, resulting in improved nutritional status and in the prevention of nutrition-related problems through optimal use of the supplemental foods, other nutritious foods and breastfeeding. This is to be taught in the context of the cultural preferences of the participants and with consideration for household situation and educational level of the participant.
- Promoting and supporting exclusive breastfeeding as the standard infant feeding practice. Breastfeeding has been shown to have significant advantages for women and infants. WIC staff should provide women with appropriate and adequate information and support to successfully breastfeed.

WHO IS SERVED?

Population(s)/Age Group:

WIC serves low-income pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women, and infants and children up to age 5 who are at nutrition risk.

Eligibility Criteria and Screening Tools:

To be eligible for WIC services and benefits, applicants must meet four core eligibility requirements. The WIC prescreening tool is available at: <http://wic.fns.usda.gov/wps/pages/start.jsf>

1. Categorical eligibility: women who are pregnant, post-partum (up to six months after delivery), infants (up to first birthday), children (up to fifth birthday).
2. Must be a resident of Illinois
3. Income at or below 185% of the poverty level
4. Certified by a health professional to be at nutritional risk (e.g. inadequate diet, abnormal weight gain, high-risk pregnancy).

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HOW ARE SERVICES DELIVERED?

Local Service System:

Services are delivered through local health departments, medical clinics and community based organizations. To find the local service provider, visit the IDHS Office Locator.

Referrals into Program:

Referrals to healthcare and other services are part of the program.

Data Systems Used:

Cornerstone

STATE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR OR CONTACT

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Program Website:
<https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=30513>