

WIC BENEFITS:

YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE 2025

(Women, Infants & Children Program)



6,7 MILLION
People served
monthly



185%
Max Income
Level



41%
of all U.S. infants
receive WIC

Step-by-step guide to eligibility,
income rules, and how to apply
for WIC nutrition support

WIC Benefits: Your Complete Guide for 2025

Access WIC nutrition assistance for healthy foods, education, and support. This guide helps pregnant women, new mothers, and children under 5 manage food costs.

Key Statistics at a Glance

6.7M

Served monthly nationwide

185%

Income eligibility (federal poverty guidelines)

41%

U.S. infants receiving WIC benefits



Understanding WIC Benefits

What Is WIC?

WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) is a federal nutrition program providing healthy foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and healthcare referrals to low-income pregnant women, new mothers, and children under age 5.

Key Difference: Unlike SNAP, WIC specifically focuses on nutrition during critical periods of growth and development.

Why WIC Matters

WIC offers essential, often expensive, foods, focusing on critical developmental periods to maximize long-term health and development.



Who WIC Serves



Pregnant Women

Eligibility: Pregnancy & 6 weeks postpartum

Notes: Includes high-risk cases.



Breastfeeding Mothers

Eligibility: Up to 1 year postpartum

Notes: Enhanced benefits.



Non-Breastfeeding Mothers

Eligibility: Up to 6 months postpartum

Notes: Standard benefits.

Infants

Eligibility: Birth - 12 months

Notes: Formula if medically needed.



Children

Eligibility: Ages 1-4

Notes: Reapply before age 5.



Fathers/Guardians

Applies to: Caring for eligible children

Notes: Apply for children.



Foster Children

Eligibility: Under age 5

Notes: Automatically eligible.



Income Guidelines for 2025

1

Household Size 1

Annual: \$28,953

Monthly: \$2,413

Weekly: \$557

2

Household Size 2

Annual: \$39,128

Monthly: \$3,261

Weekly: \$753

3

Household Size 3

Annual: \$49,303

Monthly: \$4,109

Weekly: \$948

4

Household Size 4

Annual: \$59,478

Monthly: \$4,957

Weekly: \$1,144

For each additional person, add \$10,175 annually, \$848 monthly, or \$196 weekly.



Eligibility Requirements

You must fit into one of these categories:



Pregnant women



Postpartum women

(up to 1 year for breastfeeding, 6 months otherwise)



Infants

(0-12 months)



Children

(1-4 years)



Parents or guardians

caring for eligible children



Foster children under 5

(automatically eligible)

Residency Requirements



Live in state of application



No minimum residency period



Temporary residents & migrants eligible



Simplified Process for Current Benefit Recipients

If you receive SNAP, Medicaid, or TANF, income eligibility is automatic. Provide proof of benefits instead of income documentation.



Nutritional Risk Assessment

Eligibility requires a nutritional risk, identified during your appointment through:

Understanding Nutritional Risk & Assessment



Medical Risks

Anemia, lead poisoning, poor pregnancy outcomes, or other medical conditions.



Dietary Risks

Inadequate diet, poor food choices, or limited food access.



Physical Measurements

Height, weight, and growth assessment.

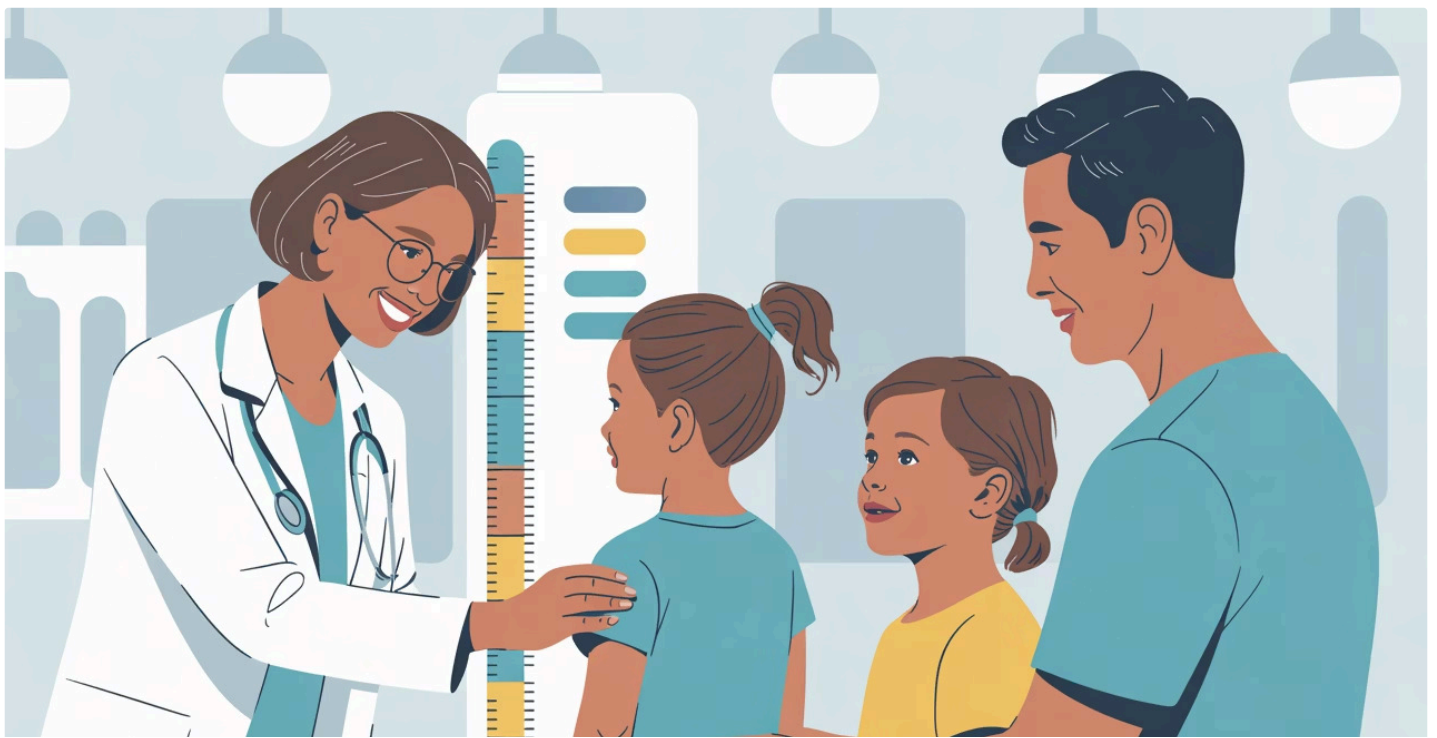


Blood Tests

Anemia and lead levels (if needed).



Important: This is a free professional health assessment. Most applicants meet nutritional risk requirements.



Application Process - Getting Started



Locate Your WIC Office

- Find your local WIC office using the USDA online locator or by contacting your state WIC program, local health department, or community health center.



Schedule Your Appointment

- Appointments are generally required; confirm walk-in availability with your chosen office.
- Request interpreter services or inquire about virtual pre-screening options if needed.



Required Documents

Identity Documents

Photo ID (driver's license, state ID, passport), birth certificate, or SSN (if available) for each applicant.

Proof of Residency

Utility bill, lease agreement, or official mail with current address.

Income OR Benefits Verification

Benefits Recipients:

Current benefit card or award letter (SNAP, Medicaid, TANF).

Other Applicants:

Proof of income for the last 4 weeks (e.g., pay stubs, self-employment records, unemployment, Social Security, child support).

Additional Documents

- Children's immunization records
- Proof of pregnancy (doctor's statement, ultrasound)
- Relevant medical records (if applicable)

APPLICATION DOCUMENTS



The WIC Appointment

What to Expect (60-90 minutes)

- 1 — **1. Document Review** (15 min)
Staff verify paperwork for income and eligibility.
- 2 — **2. Health Screenings** (20-30 min)
Measurements (height, weight), anemia blood test, and optional lead screening.
- 3 — **3. Nutritional Assessment** (20-30 min)
Discuss eating habits, identify risks, and receive personalized education.
- 4 — **4. Benefits Issuance** (10-15 min)
eWIC card setup, food package explanation, and shopping guide.



WIC Food Benefits Overview

WIC provides specific food packages (not cash) with values varying by category and need, helping families save hundreds of dollars monthly.

WIC Food Categories



Dairy Products

Milk (1% or fat-free), cheese, yogurt



Protein Sources

Eggs, legumes, peanut butter, canned fish



Whole Grains

Whole grain cereals and bread



Fresh Produce

Fruits & vegetables (Cash Value Benefit)



Infant Nutrition

Formula & baby food (when needed)

Food Packages by Category



Pregnant & Breastfeeding

- Dairy (milk, cheese, eggs)
- Whole grains (cereal, bread)
- Fruits & vegetables (Cash Value Benefit)
- Protein (legumes, peanut butter, canned fish)



Enhanced Breastfeeding

Includes all above, **PLUS** additional:

- Fruits & vegetables (higher CVB)
- Whole grain tortillas or brown rice
- Milk & cheese



Infants (0-6 months)

- Iron-fortified infant formula (if not fully breastfeeding)



Infants (6-12 months)

- Iron-fortified infant cereal
- Baby food (fruits, vegetables, meat)
- Formula (if needed)



Children (1-4 years)

- Milk (2%, 1%, or fat-free)
- Cheese, eggs, whole grains (cereals, bread)
- Fruits & vegetables (Cash Value Benefit)
- Legumes, peanut butter

WIC Services Beyond Food

Comprehensive Support Services

Nutrition Education:

- Personalized family counseling
- Classes: meal planning, food safety, healthy cooking
- Multilingual materials
- Infant & child feeding focus

Breastfeeding Support:

- Lactation counseling & education
- Breast pump loans (manual/electric)
- Peer counselors
- Enhanced food packages
- Support groups & classes

Healthcare Referrals:

- Healthcare provider connections
- Immunization referrals
- Prenatal care coordination
- Mental health & substance abuse resources
- Social services assistance

Community Resources:

- Local food banks
- Housing assistance
- Childcare resources
- Transportation services



Using Your eWIC Card

How the eWIC Card Works



Like a Debit Card

Functions like a debit card at approved stores.



No Cash Back

Cannot be used for cash back.



WIC-Approved Items Only

Only for WIC-approved foods in approved sizes.



Benefits Expire

Benefits expire monthly; don't roll over.



Monthly Benefits

Benefits load monthly on assigned date.



Before You Shop:

- Bring shopping guide (brands/sizes)
- Check card balance (app/card number)
- Shop for WIC items first



At the Store:

- Look for WIC signs
- Keep WIC items separate
- Complete WIC transaction separately
- Ask staff for help



Common Shopping Mistakes to Avoid:

- Incorrect sizes or non-approved brands
- Mixing WIC and non-WIC items in same transaction
- Not using benefits before expiration
- Shopping at non-authorized stores

Certification and Recertification

Initial Certification Periods

| Category | Certification Length |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Pregnant Women | Until 6 weeks postpartum |
| Breastfeeding Women | 6 months or 1 year |
| Postpartum Women | 6 months |
| Infants | 6 months to 1 year |
| Children | 6 months to 1 year |

Recertification Process

- Schedule appointment before expiration
- Updated income/benefit proof needed
- New health screening
- Nutrition education refreshed
- Benefits adjusted based on assessment



Report Changes Within 10 Days:

- Address
- Income
- Family size
- Pregnancy status

Special Programs & Enhanced Services

Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)

- Federal program offering additional vouchers (\$10-30/year)
- Redeemable for fresh produce at farmers markets
- Available in most states during growing season; supports local agriculture

Enhanced Breastfeeding Support

- Peer counselors & dedicated classes
- Hospital-grade breast pump loans
- Extended certification & higher benefits

Special Populations Support

- **Military families:** Served on bases worldwide
- **Migrant workers:** Accommodations for seasonal workers
- **Homeless families:** Flexible documentation
- **Native American families:** Coordinated with tribal programs



Coordination with Other Programs

WIC and SNAP

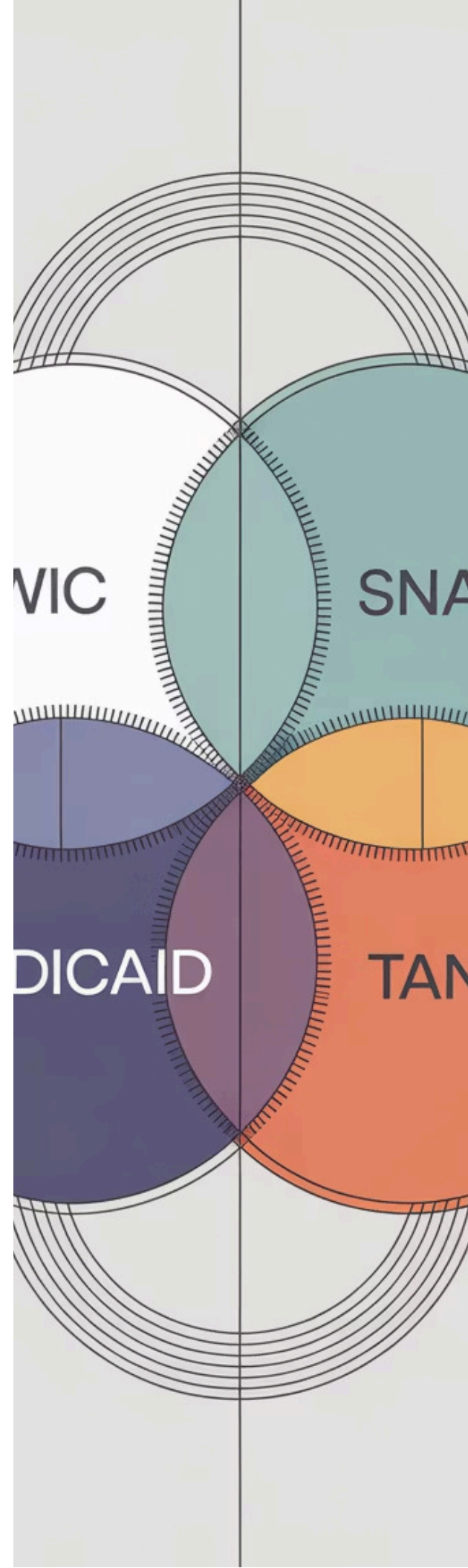
- Receive both simultaneously
- WIC benefits don't impact SNAP
- WIC offers unique food items

WIC and Medicaid

- Medicaid recipients often auto-eligible for WIC
- Complementary health & nutrition support

WIC and TANF

- Receive both simultaneously
- TANF status meets WIC income
- Separate applications required



Program Integrity & Responsibilities

Participant Responsibilities

- Use benefits only for approved family
- Use eWIC card for approved foods only
- Report changes (income, address, family size)
- Attend appointments
- Keep eWIC card & PIN secure

Prohibited Activities & Consequences

Prohibited activities include:

- Selling WIC foods/formula for cash
- Trading WIC foods for non-food items
- Allowing others to use eWIC card
- Providing false info on applications

Consequences can be severe:

- Disqualification from WIC
- Repay benefits received
- Prosecution (state/federal laws)
- Disqualification from other federal nutrition programs

Vendor Violations

WIC vendors violating program rules face penalties: warnings, civil money penalties, contract termination, and disqualification from WIC/SNAP.



Troubleshooting Common Issues

If Your Application Is Denied

- Inquire about denial reason and appeals process.
- Submit additional documentation if requested.
- Reapply if eligibility changes.

If You Miss Appointments

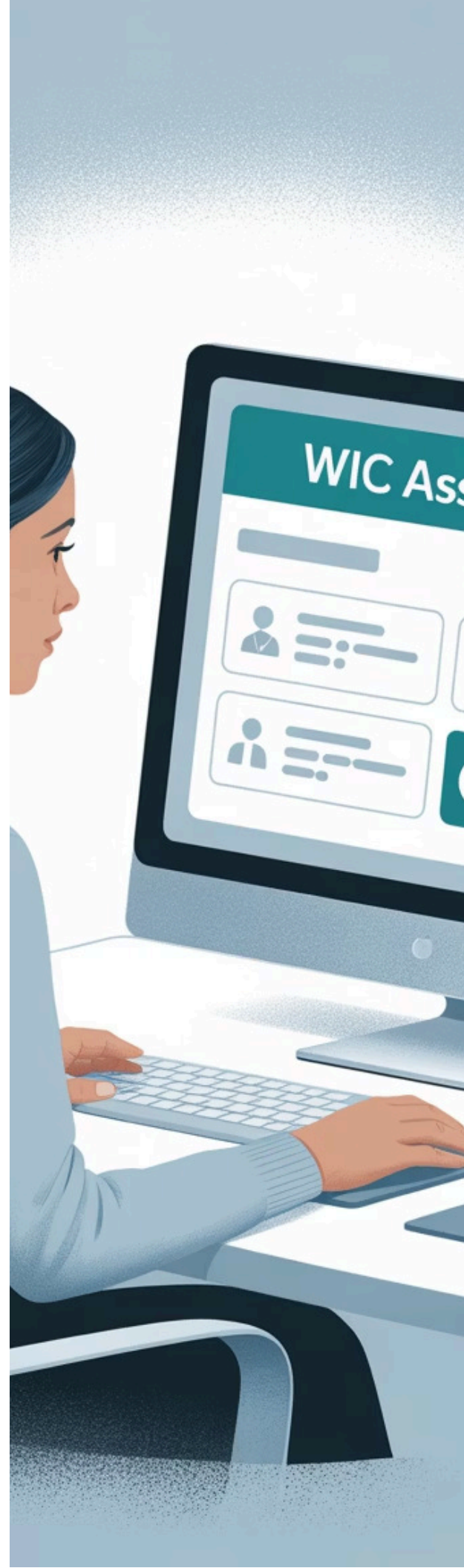
- Reschedule immediately, explaining any emergencies.
- Benefits may be suspended but can often be restored.
- Multiple misses may require reapplication.

If Your Benefits Don't Work

- Verify WIC-approved items, store, and benefit expiration.
- Ensure correct brands and sizes.
- Contact WIC office for card issues.

If You Move to Another State

- Contact new state's WIC office with your ID/case number and benefit documentation.
- Your case will transfer, ensuring continued benefits.



Important Contacts & Resources



National WIC Information

USDA Food and Nutrition Service

Main Website: fns.usda.gov/wic

WIC Resources: wicworks.fns.usda.gov



Finding Local WIC Offices

State WIC Directory

Website: fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-contacts

Search by state/county for contacts & hours.



Emergency Food Assistance

Immediate Help:

- Food banks: feedingamerica.org
- Local resources: Dial 2-1-1
- Charitable orgs: Salvation Army, Catholic Charities



Breastfeeding Support

National Breastfeeding Helpline

- Phone: 1-800-994-9662
- Website: womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding
- La Leche League: llusa.org

Program Data & Action Checklist

WIC by the Numbers (FY 2024)

\$7.2B

Total Federal
Investment

6.7M

Monthly
Participants

\$1.6B

Infant Formula
Rebates (funds ~20%
of participants)

70%

Rebates reduce
package costs by
~70%

Your Action Checklist

- 1 Check income and category eligibility
- 2 Find your local WIC office
- 3 Gather all required documents
- 4 Schedule and attend your appointment
- 5 Set up eWIC card (if approved)
- 6 Mark recertification date & report changes

Remember

WIC helps families during critical growth periods. It's a comprehensive public health intervention, investing in the long-term health of mothers and children.