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Supplemental Food
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The Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children

The Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides participants with specific nutritious supplemental foods and nutrition education, at no cost. WIC participants are eligible low-income persons who are determined by competent professionals (physicians, nutritionists, nurses, and other health officials) to be at “nutritional risk” because of inadequate nutrition, health care, or both. Federal funds are available to participating State health departments or comparable State agencies. Indian tribes, bands, groups, or their authorized representatives recognized by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior; or the appropriate area office of the Indian Health Service, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services may also act as State agencies. These agencies distribute funds to the participating local agencies. The funds pay for

supplemental foods for participants and pay specified administrative costs, including those of nutrition education.

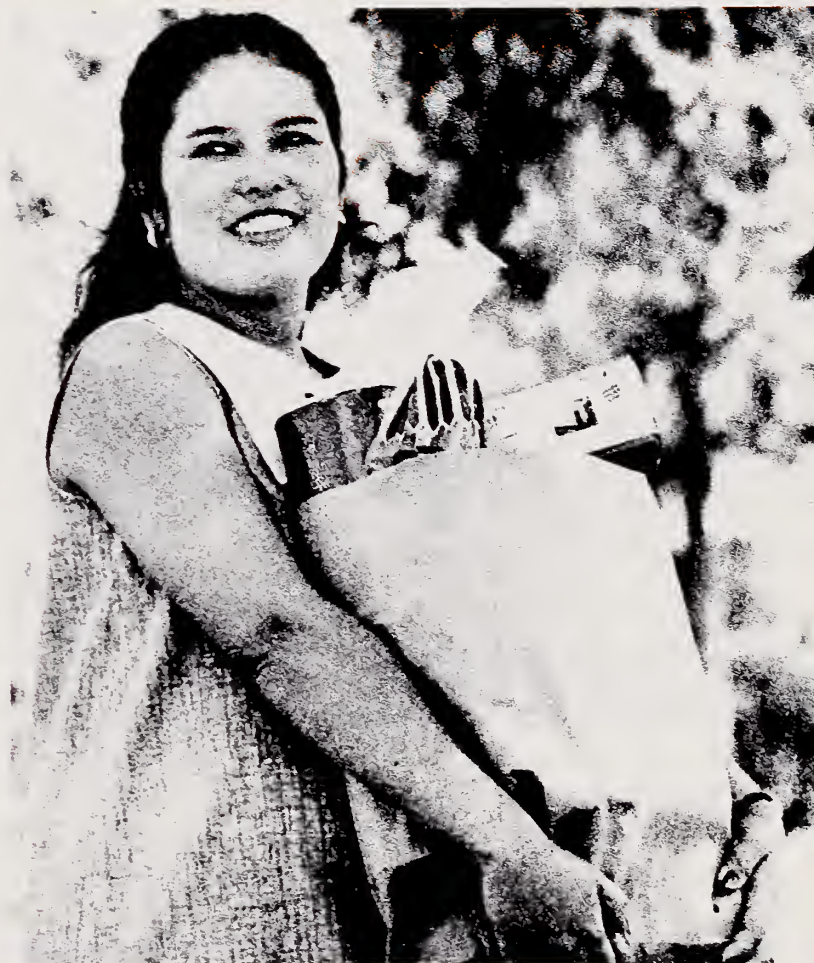
Who Is Eligible for the WIC Program?

Pregnant, postpartum, and breast-feeding women, and infants and children up to their fifth birthday are eligible if they: (1) meet the income standards (a State agency may either set a statewide income standard or allow the local agencies to set their own); (2) are individually determined to be at nutritional risk and in need of the supplemental foods the program offers; and (3) live in an approved project area (if the State has a residency requirement) or belong to special population groups such as migrant farm-

workers, Native Americans (Indians), or refugees. Length of residency is not an eligibility requirement. "Nutritional risk" is a term used to indicate abnormal weight gain during pregnancy, a history of high-risk pregnancies, low birth weight (under 5½ pounds), stunted growth, underweight, obesity, anemia, or an inadequate dietary pattern. When a local agency has limited funds to serve additional participants, applicants are classified according to a priority system based on nutritional need, and placed on the program if space becomes available.

What Supplemental Foods Do Participants Receive?

Infants through 3 months of age receive iron-fortified formula. Older infants (4 through 12 months) receive formula, iron-fortified infant cereal, and fruit juices high in vitamin C. An infant may receive noniron-fortified or special therapeutic formula when it is prescribed by a physician for a specified medical condition. Par-



icipating women and children receive fortified milk and/or cheese; eggs; hot or cold cereals high in iron; fruit and vegetable juices high in vitamin C; and either peanut butter, dry beans, or peas. WIC provides breast-feeding women with a food package to meet their extra nutritional needs. Women and children with special dietary needs may receive a package containing cereal, juice, and special therapeutic formulas. For a participant to receive this package, a physician must determine that the participant has a medical condition that precludes or restricts the use of conventional foods and requires a therapeutic formula.

How Do Participants Obtain Supplemental Foods?

The State agency administering the program may use one or all of the following food delivery systems: (1) retail purchase, where participants use vouchers or checks to buy foods at local retail stores authorized by the State agency to



accept WIC vouchers or checks; (2) home delivery, where the food is delivered to participants' homes; and (3) direct distribution, where participants pick up the food from a warehouse.

What Kind of Nutrition Education Do Participants Receive?

Nutrition education is available to all adult WIC participants, to parents or caretakers of infant and children participants, and, whenever possible, to the child who participate. This nutrition education is designed to have a practical relationship to participants' nutritional needs, household situations, and cultural preferences; and includes information on how participants can select food for themselves and their families. The goals of WIC nutrition education are to teach the relationship between proper nutrition and good health, to help the individual at nutritional risk develop better food habits, and to prevent nutrition-related problems by showing participants how to best use their sup-

plemental and other foods. The WIC Program also encourages breast-feeding and counsels pregnant women on its nutritional advantages.

How Are Local Agencies Selected for Funding?

Every State agency must rank areas under its jurisdiction (such as counties, health districts, or special populations) in order of greatest need based on economic and health statistics. States must target funds in this order of rank. The State agency selects a local public or private nonprofit agency based on the type of service and capabilities of the agency. Consideration is given to each agency according to a priority system. The priorities are as follows: (1) a health agency that can provide both health and administrative services; (2) a health or welfare agency that must contract with another agency for health or administrative services; (3) a health agency that must contract with a private physician in order to provide health services to a

specific category of participant (such as women, infants, or children); (4) a welfare agency that must contract with a private physician in order to provide health services; and (5) a health or welfare agency that will provide health services through referral. For the WIC program, the term "health services" means ongoing, routine pediatric and obstetric care (such as infant and child care and prenatal and postpartum examinations) or referral for treatment.

Can Eligibility Decisions Made By the WIC Program be Appealed?

Every State agency is required to have a fair hearing procedure under which adult applicants, and parents or guardians of infant and child applicants can appeal a denial of eligibility or a termination made by the local agency.



The Commodity Supplemental Food Program

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) provides nutritious foods at no cost to supplement the diets of low-income pregnant, postpartum, and breast-feeding women, and infants and children under 6 years of age who are vulnerable to malnutrition. Nutrition education is offered as a part of the program, with a special emphasis on the nutritional needs of the individual participant.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) donates commodity foods to the appropriate State agency for distribution, and provides funds to State and local agencies to cover certain administrative costs. USDA pays for the initial processing and packaging of the food and for transporting it to the State agency. State distributing agencies are then responsible for storing the food and distributing it to local agencies. Local agencies provide the supplemental foods to participants.

The flexible design of the CSFP allows State and local agencies to administer the program in a manner tailored to meet the community's needs and resources. Community involvement in the CSFP takes many forms, ranging from supplying volunteer drivers to providing warehouse space.

Who Is Eligible for the CSFP?

To be eligible to participate in the CSFP, infants, children, and pregnant, postpartum, and breast-feeding women must: (1) live in an area where the CSFP is operating; (2) meet the income standards for benefits under existing Federal, State, or local food, health, or welfare programs for low-income persons; and (3) at the State agency's discretion, be determined to be at nutritional risk by a doctor or staff person at the local agency.

To receive CSFP benefits, an applicant must be certified as eligible by the local agency. Participants are certified for 6 month periods, except for pregnant women who are certified for the duration of their pregnancy and 6 weeks post-partum. New mothers may participate for 1 year after they give birth, and infants and children until their sixth birthday.

After participants are certified, they receive either their food or a voucher entitling them to pick up the food at the local distribution center every month or every other month.



What Supplemental Foods Do Participants Receive?

The program provides participants with nutritious Government-purchased commodity foods to assist them in obtaining an adequate diet. Foods donated through CSFP may include:

- Infant formula
- Farina or infant rice cereal
- Ready-to-eat cereal
- Canned juices
- Dried egg mix
- Instant nonfat dry milk
- Evaporated milk
- Dehydrated potatoes
- Peanut butter or dry beans
- Canned meat or poultry
- Canned vegetables or fruit

Note: Not all local programs provide all these foods.

The CSFP foods are not a complete diet, but they do provide good sources of nutrients lack-

ing in the diets of the target population. These foods have been selected for use in the CSFP because they help meet the nutritional and developmental needs of low-income pregnant, breast-feeding, and postpartum women, and infants and young children who receive program benefits. The CSFP provides breast-feeding women with a food package containing additional food to meet their extra nutritional needs.

What Nutrition Education Do Participants Receive?

Nutrition education is a vital component of the Commodity Supplemental Food Program. Each CSFP State agency must ensure that its local agencies offer nutrition education to all adult participants and to parents and guardians of participating infants and children. The nutrition education is designed to have a practical relationship to participants' nutritional needs, household situations, and cultural preferences. It emphasizes the relationship between nutrition

and health; helps participants improve their nutritional status through optimal use of the supplemental and other foods; and assists participants in developing sound dietary habits, which can be maintained after participation in the CSFP has ended.

Who Runs the CSFP?

A local agency may be a public or private non-profit agency that provides a service to low-income persons. Approved local agencies must enter into written agreements with the State agency to ensure proper recordkeeping and issuance of food. The term "local agency" can include a unit of the Indian Health Service, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; an Indian tribe, band, or group; or an authorized representative recognized by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior.

Local agencies determine the eligibility of applicants, distribute supplemental foods, and pro-

vide the nutrition education, either directly or through another agency with which they have entered into a written agreement. Local agencies are encouraged to develop health service linkages and at a minimum are required to advise participants of the importance of health care and where they can obtain health services.

State agencies approve local agency applications and develop plans specifying how the program will operate in each State. (Every State does not operate a CSFP program.) The State agency may be any agency designated by the State to administer the program, such as the departments of health, social services, education, or agriculture. An Indian nation or group may also serve as a State agency.

The Food and Nutrition Service of USDA is responsible for designing and monitoring the CSFP at the national level. USDA's seven regional offices approve the State plans, assist the State agencies, and evaluate State operations.

How Can Interested People Apply?

Women, infants, and children (with their parents or guardians) who wish to receive benefits through the Commodity Supplemental Food Program apply at a participating local agency. Competent professional authorities or other designated personnel of the local agency will then determine eligibility and certify those accepted for participation. Eligible persons receive their supplemental foods within 10 days of notification of eligibility.

Can Eligibility Decisions Made By the CSFP Be Appealed?

Every State agency is required to have a fair hearing procedure under which applicants and parents or guardians of infant and child applicants may appeal any decision made by the local agency regarding participation.

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The Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program are open to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, sex, national origin, age, or handicap. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any USDA-related activity should write immediately to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.



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For Additional Information:

You may obtain additional information on the CSFP or on the WIC program from the FNS regional office serving your State. Within some States, there are one or more Indian agencies that operate as independent State agencies. Depending on the nature of your request, you may then be referred to the appropriate WIC or CSFP coordinator in your State.

New England Regional Office

Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
33 North Avenue
Burlington, Massachusetts 01803
(617) 272-8383

Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts,
New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont

Mid-Atlantic Regional Office

Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
One Vahlsing Center
Robbinsville, New Jersey 08691
(609) 259-3041

Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland,
New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania,
Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Virginia,
West Virginia

Southeast Regional Office

Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1100 Spring Street, N.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30367
(404) 881-7092

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky,
Mississippi, North Carolina,
South Carolina, Tennessee

Midwest Regional Office

Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
536 South Clark Street
Chicago, Illinois 60605
(312) 353-1780

Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota,
Ohio, Wisconsin

Mountain Plains Regional Office

Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
2420 West 26th Avenue, Room 430-D
Denver, Colorado 80211
(303) 837-5836

Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Montana,
Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota,
Utah, Wyoming

Southwest Regional Office

Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1100 Commerce Street, Room 5C30
Dallas, Texas 75242
(214) 767-0220

Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico,
Oklahoma, Texas

Western Regional Office

Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
550 Kearney Street, Room 400
San Francisco, California 94108
(415) 556-3170

Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii,
Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Washington