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# Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, & Children

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE / FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE / WASHINGTON, D.C.  
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The Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides specified nutritious food supplements to pregnant and nursing women, and to infants and children up to 5 years of age who are determined by competent professionals (physicians, nutritionists, nurses, and other health officials) to be at "nutritional risk" because of inadequate nutrition and inadequate income.

Funds are made available to participating State health departments or comparable State agencies; to Indian tribes, bands or groups recognized by the Department of the Interior; or to the Indian Health Service of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. These agencies distribute funds to the participating local agencies. These funds are used to provide specified nutritious food supplements to WIC recipients and to pay specified administrative costs, including those for nutrition education. Various types of food delivery systems are utilized by the State agency programs in order to provide supplemental foods to the target population. Systems most frequently used are: voucher, direct distribution, home delivery, or some combination of these.

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## WHAT SUPPLEMENTAL FOODS DO THE RECIPIENTS RECEIVE?

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Under the WIC program, infants receive iron-fortified infant formula, cereal which is high in iron, and fruit juice which is high in vitamin C. Infants 6 months of age or older may receive fortified whole fluid or dry milk or fortified evaporated milk in lieu of iron-fortified infant formula. Participating women and children receive fortified milk and/or cheese; eggs; hot or cold cereal which is high in iron; and fruit or vegetable juice which is high in vitamin C.

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## WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR LOCAL AGENCIES?

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Local agencies are eligible to apply for participation in the State's WIC program if they provide continuous medical care and treatment to residents of a substantially low-income area; if they serve a population of women, infants, and children at nutritional risk; if their staff includes competent professionals to interview and examine patients receiving health services; if they have the personnel, expertise, and equipment necessary for performing the measurements, tests, and data collection specified by Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) for the WIC program; and if they maintain or are able to maintain adequate medical records. Agencies which are interested in the WIC program should contact their State health department or comparable State agency for information.

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## WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANTS?

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Infants, children, and pregnant or nursing women are eligible for the WIC program if they reside in an approved project area; if they are eligible for treatment at free or reduced cost at the

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local agency serving the approved project area; and if they are individually determined by a competent professional on the staff of the local agency to be at nutritional risk and to need the supplemental foods provided by the WIC program.

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**WHAT RECOURSE DOES A PERSON HAVE FOR ANY ADVERSE DECISION WITHIN THE WIC PROGRAM?**

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Each State agency is required to have a fair hearing procedure under which pregnant and nursing women, parents, or guardians can appeal any decision made by the local agency regarding the participation of such persons in the program.

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**WHAT IS THE LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY FOR THE PROGRAM?**

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P.L. 94-105, effective October 7, 1975, authorizes the program through fiscal year 1978.

USDA policy does not permit discrimination because of race, color, national origin, sex, political beliefs, or religion. 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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