

# **WIC: The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children**

## **1. What is WIC?**

WIC is a Federal program that provides food, nutrition counseling, and access to health services to low -income women, infants and children. WIC participation is linked with longer gestation periods, higher birthweights, and lower infant mortality

## **2. Who is eligible?**

Pregnant or postpartum women, infants, and children up to the age of 5 are eligible. They must meet income guidelines, prove state residency, and be individually determined to be at “nutritional risk” by a WIC health professional.

To be income eligible, applicants’ income must fall below 185 percent of the U.S. Poverty Income Guidelines (currently \$40,793 annually for a family of four). A person who participates in certain other programs such as the Food Stamp Program, the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), or Cash Assistance (TANF) automatically meets the income eligibility requirement.

## **3. What is “nutritional risk”?**

Two major types of nutritional risk are recognized for WIC eligibility:

- *Medically* based risks (designated as high priority) such as anemia, underweight, maternal age, history of pregnancy complications, or poor pregnancy outcomes.
- *Diet* based risks such as inadequate dietary pattern.

Nutritional risk is determined by a health professional such as a physician, nutritionist, or nurse, and is based on Federal guidelines. The health screening is free to program applicants.

## **4. Where is WIC available?**

WIC is administered by State Health Departments or comparable agencies. It is available in each State, the District of Columbia, 32 Indian Tribal Organizations, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and Guam. In Arizona, call 1-800-2525-WIC (1-800-252-5942) to find the nearest WIC office.

## **5. What food benefits do WIC participants receive?**

WIC participants receive vouchers that allow them to purchase a monthly food package designed to supplement their diets. The foods provided are high in protein, calcium, iron, and vitamins A and C. These are the nutrients frequently lacking in the diets of the program’s target population. Different food packages are provided for different categories of participants. WIC foods include iron-fortified infant formula and infant cereal, iron-fortified adult cereal, vitamin C rich fruit or vegetable juice, eggs, milk, cheese, and peanut butter or dried beans or peas.

## 6. Who gets first priority for participation?

WIC cannot serve all eligible people, so a system of priorities has been established for filling program openings. Once a local WIC agency has reached its maximum caseload, vacancies are filled in the order of the following priority levels:

- Pregnant women, breastfeeding women, and infants determined to be at nutritional risk because of a nutrition-related medical condition.
- Infants up to 6 months of age whose mothers were at nutritional risk during pregnancy.
- Children at nutritional risk because of a nutrition-related medical condition.
- Pregnant or breastfeeding women and infants at nutritional risk because of an inadequate dietary pattern.
- Children at nutritional risk because of an inadequate dietary pattern.
- Non-breastfeeding, postpartum women at nutritional risk.

### For more information:

For more information on the WIC program in Arizona, call 1-800-2525-WIC (1-800-252-5942).

### INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

(Effective April 8, 2009)

Household Size	185 Percent of Poverty		
	Annual	Month	Week
2	26,955	2,247	519
3	33,874	2,823	652
4	40,793	3,400	785
5	47,712	3,976	918
6	54,631	4,553	1,051