



STATE OF WIC REPORT

50 YEARS OF IMPACT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) has been a cornerstone of US public health nutrition for 50 years, consistently demonstrating its effectiveness in improving the health and well-being of millions of nutritionally at-risk women, infants, and children. As the nation's first Food as Medicine program, WIC's impact extends beyond providing access to nutritious food. WIC empowers families to make healthy choices that benefit them throughout their lives.

This report highlights WIC's significant achievements, including improved pregnancy outcomes, increased breastfeeding rates, enhanced child nutrition outcomes, and substantial healthcare cost savings. Research consistently shows that WIC participation is linked to better health outcomes for both mothers and children. The program's comprehensive approach, encompassing nutrition and breastfeeding support, education, and referrals, makes it a cost-effective investment that yields long-term benefits for individuals, families, and communities.

KEY POINTS

- WIC serves 6.7+ million mothers and children across 12,000+ agencies
- For 50 years, WIC has improved pregnancy outcomes and enhanced nutritional intake for children
- WIC is the nation's largest coordinated breastfeeding support program
- There's still room to keep evolving the program by reaching all eligible families and modernizing service delivery

A ROADMAP FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

- **Modernize technology:** Congress must take action to make permanent remote/virtual services, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture should continue to prioritize online ordering.
- **Increase participation:** Congress and the WIC community should take steps to simplify enrollment, and partners who work with eligible families should strengthen outreach and referrals.
- **Invest in workforce:** Congress, funders, and other WIC community partners should prioritize diversity and professional development for WIC staff.
- **Maintain sustainable funding:** Congress should explore mandatory WIC funding for long-term program stability.



CHAPTER OVERVIEW

- 1. Origin and Early History:** Chronicles WIC's establishment in the 1970s and its legislative journey.
- 2. First Food as Medicine Program:** Explores WIC's pioneering role in linking nutrition to health outcomes.
- 3. Most Studied Federal Nutrition Program:** Reviews research demonstrating WIC's positive impact and cost-effectiveness.
- 4. Updated Food Packages:** Describes recent improvements in food options aligned with current dietary guidelines.
- 5. Enhancing The Participant Experience:** Highlights modernization efforts to improve access and flexibility.
- 6. Participation and Policy:** Examines trends, challenges, and recommendations for WIC's future impact.

CONCLUSION

As we celebrate WIC's past, it is equally important to focus on its future. WIC's role in nurturing the next generation is more crucial than ever, and the challenges faced require strong commitment. The National WIC Association (NWA) stands firm in its mission to empower our members with the leadership and tools needed to expand access and opportunity for all families.

Looking ahead, we are inspired by the possibilities. NWA's vision remains rooted in advancing the WIC program, fostering innovative solutions to meet evolving needs, and staying dedicated to the families that we serve. As we continue to build on the progress and embrace new opportunities, we are committed to ensuring WIC is here for generations to come.



[Click here](#) or scan the QR code to read the full State of WIC 2024 report!



This report is a product of the National WIC Association - the nonprofit voice of the 12,000 public health nutrition service provider agencies who serve over 6.7 million mothers, babies, and young children served by WIC. NWA provides education, guidance, and support to WIC staff; and drives innovation and advocacy to strengthen WIC as we work toward a nation of healthier families.