

# HOW WIC HELPS TENNESSEE



## State WIC Director

Alesha Reeves  
710 James Robertson Pkwy, Andrew Johnson Tower, 8th Floor  
Nashville, TN 37243  
800.342.5942  
alesha.reeves@tn.gov

### Mission of WIC

Assuring healthy pregnancies, birth outcomes, growth and development for mothers, babies, and young children to age 5 who are at nutritional risk. Providing nutritious supplemental foods, breastfeeding promotion and support, education on healthy eating, and referrals to healthcare and critical social services.



**40%** OF INFANTS BORN IN TENNESSEE PARTICIPATE IN WIC



**41%** OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN TENNESSEE PARTICIPATE IN WIC

### WHO PARTICIPATES IN WIC IN TENNESSEE?

**127,924**  
WIC PARTICIPANTS

Pregnant women.....	12,394
Breastfeeding women.....	10,454
Postpartum women.....	9,282
Infants.....	32,663
Children.....	63,132

### BREASTFEEDING IN WIC

Tennessee WIC breastfeeding initiation rates increased by **190 percent** between 1998 and 2020.



Among WIC infants who initiated breastfeeding in Tennessee in 2020, **18 percent** continued breastfeeding at 6 months.



**Fruit and Vegetable Benefit:** Congress enhanced WIC's fruit and vegetable benefit to align with scientific recommendations. Current monthly benefit amounts are \$26 for children, \$47 for pregnant and postpartum participants, and \$52 for breastfeeding participants. In FY 2023, WIC provided an estimated **\$36.5M** in fruit and vegetable benefits to **95,261** participants in Tennessee.

### CHILDHOOD OBESITY IN WIC IN TENNESSEE

The obesity rate among WIC toddlers in Tennessee decreased **9 percent** between 2010 and 2020.

Childhood obesity rate, WIC toddlers, 2020..... **15%**

### MORTALITY AND BIRTH OUTCOMES IN TENNESSEE

Maternal mortality per 100,000 births, 2017-2021... **40.2**

Infant mortality per 1,000 live births, 2021..... **6.2**

Preterm birth rate, 2021..... **11%**

### TENNESSEE WIC PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

**\$18,576**

AVERAGE FAMILY INCOME

**84%**

RECEIVED MEDICAID

**\$44.76**

AVERAGE MONTHLY FOOD COST IN FY 2023

### HOW WIC SUPPORTED THE TENNESSEE ECONOMY IN FY 2023

**\$68.7M**

TO SPEND AT FOOD RETAILERS

**\$51.9M**

FORMULA REBATES RECEIVED

**\$49.9M**

NUTRITION, BREASTFEEDING SERVICES & ADMIN

Sources: WIC eligible individuals participating from USDA WIC Eligibility Estimates report for 2021 (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/eligibility-and-program-reach-estimates-2021>). WIC participants and economic impact from USDA WIC Data Tables for fiscal year (FY) 2023 (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/wic-program>) as of January 30, 2024. Participant characteristics for 2020 and WIC breastfeeding and rates for years displayed from USDA WIC Participant and Program Characteristics reports (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/participant-program-characteristics-2020>). WIC fruit and vegetable benefit calculated as the sum of FY 2023 issuance rates multiplied by average participation rates for each participant category from USDA WIC Data Tables. Maternal mortality from America's Health Rankings ([https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/measures/maternal\\_mortality\\_c](https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/measures/maternal_mortality_c)). Infant mortality and preterm birth rate from CDC ([https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/stats\\_of\\_the\\_states.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/stats_of_the_states.htm)). Obesity outcomes from CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/obesity-among-WIC-enrolled-young-children>).