



Veggie and Fruit Increase Boosts Nutritional Quality for WIC Families

Release & Contact Info

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(Albany, NY, June 21, 2021) - New York families participating in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) will be able to purchase more fruits and vegetables between June 1 and September 30, 2021. The federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) is funding the [temporary increase in monthly WIC benefits](#) to help make healthy food options more available to families facing additional challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. More than 300,000 New York women and children will now have increased access to additional fruits and vegetables during the four-month time period.

The cash value benefit used by WIC participants on their eWIC card to buy vegetables and fruit as part of their WIC food package will increase temporarily to \$35 a month for each WIC-eligible woman and child during the four-month period, up from \$9 per child and \$11 for pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women. The benefit applies to all fruits and vegetables, fresh, frozen or canned as well as any brand, variety, size, with no added sugar, syrup, artificial sweeteners, fat or oil. Organic fruits and vegetables are allowed.

From an anonymous survey to WIC parents in Jefferson and Lewis counties, one shared, “The fruits and veggies has increased for this summer. This really helps a lot. My kids love fruit smoothies.” Another parent said, “WIC has helped ease our financial strain and helps provide fresh fruits, veggies and all other nutritional foods my kids enjoy.”

“In communities across New York, WIC is ready to help as parents and caregivers continue to navigate the COVID-19 crisis,” said Stony Brook WIC Program Director and WIC Association of New York State Chair Lauren Brand. “The increased dollars for fruits and vegetables is great news for families this summer.”

“Since inception, WIC has served as the nation’s premiere supplemental nutrition program by providing healthy foods for pregnant women, lactating mothers, infants and children when their nutrition needs are critical, said Vijaya Jain, MSc, MS, RDN, CDN, WIC Association of New York State’s Co-Chair of the Legislative & Public Policy Committee. “Increasing the resources for fruits, vegetables will further enable WIC participants to maintain better nutritional status and good health.”

“Good nutrition is key to mental and physical health, and expanding healthy food choices for WIC participants is one way we can help families be resilient during this very challenging year,” said Helene Rosenhouse-Romeo, Director of WIC and Nutrition, Ryan Health, and WIC Association of NYS Provider.

New York WIC is equipped to serve twice as many participants and welcomes everyone who is eligible to apply. New Yorkers can [find out if they are eligible](#) for WIC and [apply by contacting their local WIC agency](#) or calling 1-800-522-5006. WIC provides nutrition education, breastfeeding education and support, supplemental nutritious foods, and connections to other community services.

Background: WIC’s vegetable and fruit benefit – known as the Cash Value Benefit (CVB) – was first introduced in 2007 as part of a decades-long effort by advocates to increase the nutritional quality of WIC-approved foods. Officials have credited the CVB, whole-grains and low-fat dairy with improving the [dietary quality](#) of WIC participants, leading to a reduction in the prevalence of [childhood obesity](#) among WIC toddlers.

The WIC Association of New York State, Inc. is the leading organization supporting and enhancing the services of the WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) Program and its direction for the future. Learn more at [nyswica.org](https://www.nyswica.org).

Website: <https://www.nyswica.org>

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