



## Benefits of the WIC Program

WIC is the nation's third largest nutrition program and one of the most thoroughly studied federal programs. An extensive body of research over four decades shows that WIC participation is associated with healthier births, reduced infant mortality, better infant-feeding practices, more nutritious diets, better access to primary and preventive health care, and improved cognitive development and academic achievement.<sup>1</sup> These results highlight the importance of ensuring that all eligible women and young children can get WIC benefits during pregnancy and critical periods of child development.

### Health Benefits

- 🍎 Research shows a **decline in childhood obesity** and overweight in children enrolled in WIC and a positive impact on food purchases and diet quality among WIC households.<sup>2,3</sup>
- 🍎 Dozens of studies published from 1974-2004 concluded that WIC **improves birth outcomes** by decreasing infant mortality rates, **lowering the incidence of preterm deliveries** and reducing low birth weight babies. A review of further studies published through 2010 echoed these conclusions.<sup>4</sup>
- 🍎 A recent investigation of over 11 million expectant mothers from 2011-2017 showed that participating in WIC and receiving Medicaid coverage was associated with lower preterm birth and 33% lower infant mortality.<sup>5</sup>
- 🍎 WIC participants had **better intakes of priority nutrients** like iron, zinc, potassium, saturated fat, and vitamin D compared to higher income nonparticipants.<sup>6</sup>
- 🍎 WIC participation leads to **higher rates of immunization** against childhood diseases.<sup>7</sup>
- 🍎 WIC provides women with **breastfeeding education and support**, smoking cessation counseling, and health/nutrition screening, assessment and counseling.

### Economic Development

- 🍎 In 2019, NYS WIC food packages generated over **\$341 million** in food purchases across the state.<sup>8</sup>
- 🍎 WIC is a major supporter of New York's **agricultural economy** through its purchase of milk, cheese, eggs, fruit juice, vegetables, and fruits and participation in the Farmers Market Nutrition Program.

### Cost Savings

- 🍎 WIC saves health care, educational and productivity dollars. For every dollar invested the savings is an estimated \$2.48 in medical, educational, and productivity costs.<sup>9</sup>
- 🍎 Prenatal and early childhood participation in WIC is associated with improved cognitive development and academic achievement.<sup>10</sup>
- 🍎 WIC decreases the risk of costly health problems and developmental delays for young children.<sup>11</sup>

### eWIC<sup>12</sup>

- 🍎 eWIC was fully implemented in NYS in April 2019.
- 🍎 eWIC helps families by providing a more discreet transaction, the freedom to purchase WIC foods as needed throughout the month, an easier checkout, and an interactive participant mobile app.
- 🍎 eWIC helps vendors by providing faster payment, fewer checkout errors and a smoother transaction.

1. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. [WIC Works: Addressing the Nutrition and Health Needs of Low-Income Families for Forty Years](#), September 2017.
2. USDA, Economic Research Service, [The WIC Program: Background, Trends, and Economic Issues, 2015 Edition](#), January 2015.
3. US Department of Health and Human Services, CDC, [State-Specific Prevalence of Obesity Among Children Aged 2–4 Years Enrolled in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children — United States, 2010–2016](#), November 2019.
4. USDA, Food and Nutrition Service, [Effects of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children \(WIC\): A Review of Recent Research \(Summary\)](#), 2012.
5. JAMA, JAMA Network Open. [Association of Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children With Preterm Birth and Infant Mortality](#), December, 2019.
6. The Journal of Nutrition, [Usual Nutrient Intakes from the Diets of US Children by WIC Participation and Income: Findings from the Feeding Infants and Toddlers Study \(FITS\) 2016](#), September 2018.
7. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. [WIC Works: Addressing the Nutrition and Health Needs of Low-Income Families for Forty Years](#), September 2017.
8. NYS DOH, January, 2020
9. Preventative Medicine, [Economic evaluation of California prenatal participation in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children \(WIC\) to prevent preterm birth](#), July 2019.
10. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. [WIC Works: Addressing the Nutrition and Health Needs of Low-Income Families for Forty Years](#), September 2017.
11. Children’s Health Watch. [WIC Improves Child Health and School Readiness](#), January 2010.
12. [NYS DOH](#)