

A Healthcare Provider's Guide to Pennsylvania WIC

WIC is a public health nutrition program that improves children's health. Decades of research shows WIC improves health outcomes and wellbeing for children and families.¹

Your WIC Referral Matters

As a trusted messenger, you can help families get vital services.

Did you know that Pennsylvania WIC:

Offers formula for babies ... AND food for children

Most babies qualified for PA WIC are enrolled, but enrollment goes down as they grow up. In PA, only 55% of eligible children are enrolled. It's vitally important to remind participants that they can qualify for WIC after the baby's first year and receive evidence-based Food Packages tailored to the child's individual needs.³

Builds healthy families by supporting mothers

WIC gives breastfeeding support for new mothers, including breast-pumps, nutritional coaching, and tailored food packages to prenatal and perinatal moms.

Provides nutritional coaching and referrals

WIC staff includes nutritionists, lactation consultants, and more. Staff connects participants with dentists, substance abuse and domestic violence counselors, and other social services. These services decrease hospital visits, increase routine check-ups and immunizations, and improve child well-being for years.²

Food Packages can include

Peanut Butter



Whole Grains



Dairy/Soy Products



Juice



Fruits & Veggies



Legumes



Eggs



Infant Foods



Who is Eligible for WIC?

Eligible populations include:

- Pregnant Women
- Breastfeeding Women
(up to infant's first birthday)
- Non-Breastfeeding Postpartum Women
(up to six months after pregnancy ends)
- Infants and Children up to age 5

Of these populations, low-income households with a nutritional or medical need

Family incomes must be below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level (roughly below \$50,000 for a family of three). Families automatically qualify if they receive TANF, Medicaid or SNAP benefits.

Outside of nutritional factors such as food insecurity, things like preterm birth and anemia can also qualify.

Tell patients what to expect: Your encouragement can help

You can streamline the application by completing these requirements in your office. Even without this, talking through the process can ease the stress and overwhelm of applying. The application can be completed in two ways:

1. A provider given referral and health assessment

- A referral starts the process, and WIC will contact the family soon after. You can follow-up at their next visit to hear how it went.
- A provider can complete the health assessment and send the details with the WIC referral. The screening includes weight, hemoglobin levels, and diet.

2. A self-referral and WIC clinic health assessment

- A person can refer themselves via the WIC online application form.
- The health assessment can be done at the WIC clinic, free of charge.

No matter how the application is started, the family will need to show proof of income via a pay stub, tax form, or proof of TANF, SNAP, or Medicaid benefits.

WIC provides at-risk children life changing benefits



Children can receive food assistance up to age 5.

Do you know about proxies?

Parents, grandparents, foster parents, or guardians who care for eligible children can apply for WIC on their behalf.

WIC provides formula for partially breastfed or fully bottle fed infants

Providers should send formula authorizations for eligible participants.

Ready-to-feed formula is only for WIC infants with a qualifying medical condition, such as low birth weight.

In most cases, Similac powder formula is offered. Emphasize how to safely make powder formula, as described by the instructions on the container.



Follow-up with referred families at your next visit

Check to see if your patient enrolled, or utilized WIC benefits since their last visit. If so, your patients are well on their way to a healthier future!

Sources:

1. FRAC, WIC Guidelines for Healthcare Providers, <https://frac.org/research/resource-library/wicguidehealthcareproviders>
2. National WIC Association, Healthcare Outreach Toolkit, <https://media.nwica.org/hcp%20toolkit%20-%20with%20how%20to%20establish%20referral%20and%20data%20sharing%20process.pdf>
3. Food Research and Action Center, the WIC Program, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic>

For more information, search or visit:

Search: 2019 WIC for a Stronger America, National WIC Association <https://media.nwica.org/2019-wic-for-a-stronger-america.pdf> Search: Thriving PA www.thrivingpa.org

Search: Pennsylvania WIC Food List <https://www.pawic.com/documents/food%20list%20english.pdf>

Search: Children in WIC, National WIC Association <https://media.nwica.org/2019-children-in-wic.pdf>

Search: Pennsylvania WIC <https://wic.health.pa.gov/pawic/default.aspx#>

Search: USDA WIC <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic>

