

# WIC and Retail Grocery Stores

## **What is WIC?**

WIC is the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children. WIC provides nutritious foods (primarily through retail grocery stores), nutrition counseling, and referrals to health care and social services. WIC serves low-income pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women, infants and children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk. Nearly 8.1 million people get WIC benefits each month.

## **Where is WIC available?**

WIC is available in all 50 States, 34 Indian Tribal Organizations, American Samoa, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

## **What foods does WIC provide?**

WIC provides infant formula, infant and adult cereal and juice, eggs, milk, cheese, peanut butter, and dried beans or peas. Some WIC participants also receive canned tuna and carrots.



## **How are stores authorized to accept WIC checks?**

Each State agency is responsible for authorizing stores to accept WIC checks. At a minimum, the State agency will consider the prices of foods, the business integrity of the store's owner, and the variety and quantity of foods available in the store. Nearly 49,000 stores are currently authorized to accept WIC checks.

## **When are stores authorized?**

State agencies authorize stores at different times. Interested persons should contact the State agency for further information. The name and phone number for each State WIC Director is available at [www.fns.usda.gov/wic](http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic) or by contacting the State Health Department.

## **Is there a cost for WIC authorization?**

No. There are no fees for the WIC authorization process.

## **Must State agencies authorize all qualified stores that apply?**

No. State agencies must authorize enough stores to ensure that WIC participants have access to WIC foods.