

# **Module A:**

# **Overview of WIC Services**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>OVERVIEW</b> .....	1
What Is WIC?.....	2
WIC Foods.....	4
Food Instruments.....	5
Rights and Responsibilities of the WIC Participant.....	6
<b>PROGRESS CHECK</b> .....	9
<b>LEARNING ACTIVITIES</b> .....	11
1: What is WIC?.....	12
2: Participant Rights and Responsibilities.....	13
<b>PROGRESS CHECK ANSWERS</b> .....	14

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# OVERVIEW

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## Introduction

This module will help you understand and explain the purpose and services of the WIC Program.

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## Learning Objectives

After completing this module the Trainee will be able to:

- Explain the purpose of WIC
  - Describe WIC services
  - Identify who WIC serves
  - Explain the rights and responsibilities of the WIC participant
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## WHAT IS WIC?

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### Program Description

WIC is a federally funded Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. More commonly known as WIC. The mission of WIC is to safeguard the health of low-income women, infants and children up to age five who are at nutrition risk by providing nutritious foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion and support and referrals to health care.

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### Program Goals

The following are the WIC goals for participants:

- Decrease pregnancy problems
- Reduce the number of low birth weight infants
- Support the normal growth and development of infants and children
- Decrease the incidence of childhood obesity
- Encourage increased intake of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products
- Promote breastfeeding as optimal infant feeding choice

WIC encourages families to eat well, be active, and stay healthy.

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### WIC Provides

WIC participants receive the services listed below:

- Supplemental nutritious foods
  - Nutrition and breastfeeding education, support, and assistance
  - Screening and referrals to other health, welfare, and social services
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### WIC Serves

WIC helps low-income and nutritionally at risk:

- Pregnant women (through pregnancy and up to six weeks after birth or after pregnancy ends)
  - Breastfeeding women (up to infant's first birthday)
  - Non-breastfeeding postpartum women (up to six months after the birth of an infant or after pregnancy ends)
  - Infants (up to first birthday)
  - Children (up to their fifth birthday)
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## WHAT IS WIC? *(continued)*

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### WIC Locations

WIC is offered in all 50 states, 34 Indian Tribal Organizations, the District of Columbia, five territories (Northern Mariana, American Samoa, Puerto Rico and the Virgin islands) and on Military bases in Japan and Germany. In California, there are 84 agencies and over 600 offices.

WIC offices are located in the following areas:

- County health departments
- Hospitals
- Mobile clinics (vans)
- Community centers
- Schools
- Public housing sites
- Migrant health centers and camps
- Indian Health Service facilities

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### WIC Results

Does WIC work? It does! In fact, it is one of the nations most successful and cost-effective nutrition intervention programs. The results of studies conducted by Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and non-government entities have shown the following results:

- Pregnant women participating in WIC receive prenatal care earlier and have healthier diets.
- Women who receive WIC during their pregnancy have fewer premature births, low birth weight infants, fetal deaths, and infant mortality.
- WIC improves the growth of infants and children at nutritional risk.
- Children enrolled in WIC are more likely to have a regular source of medical care and have more up-to-date immunizations.
- WIC significantly improves children's diets and decreases the incidence of iron deficiency anemia.
- Children who receive WIC benefits demonstrate improved intellectual development which helps them prepare for school.

(See [www.fns.usda.gov/WIC](http://www.fns.usda.gov/WIC) for more information)

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## WIC FOODS

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### Supplemental Foods

WIC provides supplemental healthy foods which help to meet the increased nutritional needs and to improve health during critical periods of growth and development of the participants served. WIC supplements, but does not provide all of the foods a participant may need.

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### WIC Allowed Foods

WIC foods are sometimes called WIC allowed foods. WIC allowed foods are the foods the WIC Program provides to participants.

WIC allowed foods may include these foods.

- Milk
  - Cheese
  - Yogurt (Spring 2016)
  - Eggs
  - Soy beverage
  - Tofu
  - Juice
  - Whole grains
  - Cereal
  - Peanut butter
  - Dried beans and peas
  - Canned beans
  - Canned tuna, salmon, or sardines
  - Fruits and vegetables
  - Infant formula
  - Infant cereal
  - Baby foods
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### Learning Activity 1

To learn more about *WIC*, you may want to try **Learning Activity 1** at the end of this module.

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## FOOD INSTRUMENTS

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### Food Instruments

WIC gives participants special checks to buy WIC authorized foods. These checks are called Food Instruments or WIC checks. Food Instruments or WIC checks usually contain the participant's name, first and last days to use, and the type and amount of food to buy. WIC Food Instruments can only be used in grocery stores which have an agreement with the State to provide WIC foods to participants. These stores identify themselves by displaying the WIC logo below.



WIC Food Instruments look like checks. They include the following information:

- the participant's name
- the first and last day to use
- what to buy and how much

For more information on WIC Allowed Foods and Food Instruments see **Task V**.

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### Nutrition Education

You will be providing nutrition and health education through one-on-one contact or group classes. You will learn more about this in **Task IV Individual Education and Task VI Group Education**.

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### Referrals

You will be providing referrals to community and medical services when a participant has needs the local WIC agency is unable to meet. **See Task III** for more information on referrals.

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## RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE WIC PARTICIPANT

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### Rights

A participant can expect certain services from the WIC program. These services are sometimes called “rights”.

A participant’s rights include the following:

- Fair treatment
  - Common courtesy and confidentiality
  - Receive WIC services
  - Disagree with and appeal any decision made about participation in the WIC program
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### Responsibilities

A participant also has responsibilities or obligations to the WIC program.

A participant’s responsibilities include the following:

- Use WIC checks to only purchase WIC approved foods
  - Not sell or trade WIC checks
  - Go only to one WIC office at a time
  - Keep WIC appointments
  - Provide truthful and current information
  - Be courteous
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### Rights and Responsibilities Form

These participant rights and responsibilities are outlined in the *Know Your Rights and Responsibilities (R&R)*. You will give the participant this form at the following times:

- Certification: Initial and Subsequent (*certification is explained in more detail in Module II B*)
- Disqualification
- Suspension
- When transferring into your agency

The participant is responsible for reading and signing this form. If she/he cannot read, WIC staff must read the R&R to the participant. It is the staff’s responsibility to ensure the participant understands and fills out the R&R form completely. This form is kept on file for three years.

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### Learning Activity 2

To learn more about the WIC *Participant Rights & Responsibilities*, you may want to try **Learning Activity 2** found at the end of this module.

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# PROGRESS CHECK

1. Mark the following as “TRUE” or “FALSE”.

- WIC stands for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.
- WIC serves women and children of all ages.
- WIC serves low-income families.
- One of the goals of the WIC program is to decrease pregnancy problems.
- The WIC foods given to a participant should be enough to meet the participant’s daily needs.
- Ice cream is a WIC allowed food.
- WIC Food Instruments are like checks a participant uses to buy WIC allowed foods.
- WIC participants have the right to appeal any decision made by the local agency regarding participation in the program.

2. Put a check mark (√) next to the services provided by the WIC program.

- Health care referrals
- Citizenship classes
- Supplemental foods
- Food stamps
- Breastfeeding information and support
- Nutrition education

3. Put a check mark (√) next to the WIC allowed foods.

- |   |                                  |  |
|---|----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chocolate milk | <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit   | <input type="checkbox"/> Cereal        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetables     | <input type="checkbox"/> Eggs    | <input type="checkbox"/> White bread   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cheese         | <input type="checkbox"/> Ketchup | <input type="checkbox"/> Peanut butter |

4. List the five main participant responsibilities outlined in the R&R form.

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## LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The following activities are included and are recommended for interactive learning:

- **Learning Activity 1:** *What is WIC?*
- **Learning Activity 2:** *Participant Rights & Responsibilities*

## ACTIVITY 1: WHAT IS WIC?

**Learning Objectives**

After completing this activity, WIC staff will become familiar with the California WIC website and the tools and resources available there. Staff will be able to identify five new things they learned about WIC.

**Background**

The California WIC Program has consolidated a lot of useful information for local agency staff on to a website called:  
<http://www.wicworks.ca.gov>

**Instructions**

1. Browse California WIC website: [www.wicworks.ca.gov](http://www.wicworks.ca.gov).
2. Write down five new things you learned about WIC after viewing the website.

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## ACTIVITY 2: PARTICIPANT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

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**Learning Objectives**

After completing this activity you will be able to identify the participant's rights and responsibilities.

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**Background**

A participant can expect certain services from the WIC program. These services are sometimes called "rights."

A participant must adhere to their responsibilities in the WIC program.

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**Instructions**

1. Ask your mentor or supervisor for the *Know Your Rights and Responsibilities* (R&R) form. (You may also want to look in the *Welcome to WIC* and *What You Need to Know* pamphlets.)
  2. Read over the R&R. Do you understand each right and responsibility?
  3. Discuss these rights and responsibilities with your mentor or supervisor.
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## PROGRESS CHECK ANSWERS

1. Mark the following as “TRUE” or “FALSE”.

**TRUE** WIC stands for Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

**FALSE** WIC serves women and children of all ages.

**TRUE** WIC serves low-income families.

**TRUE** One of the goals of the WIC program is to decrease pregnancy problems.

**FALSE** The WIC foods given to a participant should be enough to meet all the participant’s daily needs.

**FALSE** Ice cream is a WIC allowed food.

**TRUE** WIC Food Instruments are like checks a participant uses to buy a WIC allowed foods.

**TRUE** WIC participants have the right to appeal any decision made by the local agency regarding participation in the program.

2. Put a check mark (√) next to the services provided by the WIC program.

Health care referrals

Citizenship classes

Supplemental foods

Food stamps

Breastfeeding information and support

Nutrition education

3. Put a check mark (√) next to the WIC authorized foods.

Chocolate milk

Fruit

Cereal

Vegetables

Eggs

White bread

Cheese

Ketchup

Peanut butter

4. List the five main participant responsibilities outlined in the R&R form.

**Buy WIC approved foods.**

**Go to only one WIC office at a time.**

**Keep WIC appointments.**

**Provide truthful and current information.**

**Be courteous.**