

**201. What is “WIC?”**

“WIC” stands for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for **Women, Infants and Children**. Also referred to in this document as “the Program”, WIC is a Federally-funded grant program established as a pilot in 1972 and made permanent in 1974. The Program is administered at the Federal level by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). WIC is designed to improve the health status of women, infants, and children during critical periods of growth and development, with no cost to eligible participants. In the District of Columbia (DC), the WIC State Agency is housed within the DC Department of Health (DC Health), Community Health Administration, Nutrition and Physical Fitness Bureau. WIC provides a supplemental food package tailored to the participant’s unique needs, as well as services such as breastfeeding support and nutrition education. Participants redeem their food benefits at locally-authorized vendors and may not use their DC-WIC provided benefits in another state.

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**202. WIC Participants:**

WIC serves DC residents who meet income eligibility and nutritional risk guidelines established by the USDA. WIC participants include:

- **WOMEN** who are pregnant, breastfeeding (up to the baby’s first birthday), or have recently given birth but are not breastfeeding (up to six (6) months post-partum)
- **INFANTS** up to the first (1<sup>st</sup>) birthday
- **CHILDREN** aged one (1) to five (5) years

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**203. WIC Services Include:**

- Supplemental foods
- Nutritional risk assessment
- Nutrition education
- Breastfeeding support
- Health and social service referrals

WIC is specifically designed to serve as an adjunct to ongoing health care during critical periods of human growth and development, and provided foods are considered supplemental to a regular diet.

The WIC Food Package aligns with the US Dietary Guidelines for Americans and provides food items designed to meet the special nutrition needs of low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, non-breastfeeding postpartum women; infants; and children up to five years of age.

Nutrition education is a key component of the WIC program. The goals of WIC nutrition education are to: 1) emphasize the relationship between nutrition, physical activity, and health with special emphasis on nutrition needs for the WIC population; and 2) assist the individual who is at nutrition risk in achieving a positive change in dietary and physical activity habits, resulting in improved nutrition status and in the prevention of nutrition-related health issues through optimal use of the WIC supplemental foods and other nutritious foods.

204. WIC Foods:

Women and Children	Infants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, dried)</li> <li>• Vegetables (fresh, frozen, canned, dried)</li> <li>• Eggs</li> <li>• Dairy (milk, cheese, yogurt, soy milk, tofu)</li> <li>• Cereal (hot and cold)</li> <li>• Beans, lentils, and peas (dry or canned)</li> <li>• Fruit juice (100%)</li> <li>• Peanut butter</li> <li>• Plant based products (soy milk, tofu)</li> <li>• Canned fish (Tuna, sardines, salmon, mackerel)</li> <li>• Whole grains (brown rice, barley, oats)</li> <li>• Whole grain products (bread, pasta, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baby food vegetables and fruits</li> <li>• Baby food meat</li> <li>• Infant cereal</li> <li>• Infant formula</li> </ul>

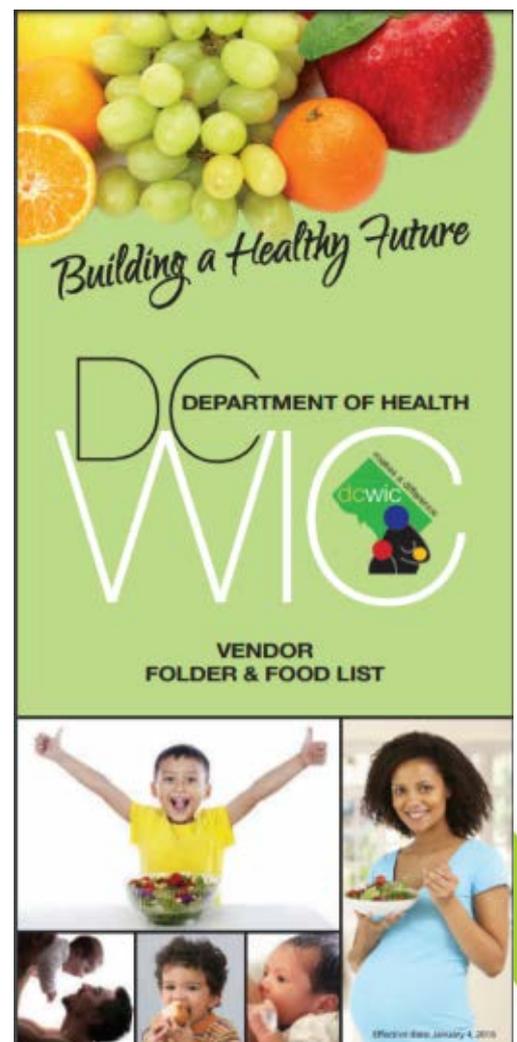
Vendor Folder & Food List

DC WIC-approved foods are detailed in the Vendor Folder & Food List. This folder is known as the “WIC ID Folder” to participants. The Food List details specific brands, flavors, sizes, and other information for DC WIC-approved food items.

Copies of the Vendor Folder & Food List will be provided during authorization training, and should be kept at each register.

Copies of the Food List in English and Spanish can be found at [www.dcwic.org](http://www.dcwic.org) and on the [WICShopper app](#).

WIC participants purchase their WIC foods from WIC-approved vendors. These vendors are required to stock WIC food items in specific varieties, flavors, and sizes so WIC families can receive the specific foods prescribed to them.



**205. WIC Clinics:**

WIC clinics (also referred to as “sites”) are locations where Program applicants and participants receive WIC services. There are currently 15 DC WIC Sites operating in the District, managed by four authorized local agencies. Visit [www.dcwic.org](http://www.dcwic.org) for more information on DC WIC local agencies and affiliated site locations.

Vendor-Relevant WIC Clinic Activities include:

- Distribute Cash-Value-Checks (CVCs) and WIC Checks
- Educate participants on WIC foods
- Educate participants on how to redeem checks
- Encourage participants to redeem all CVC and WIC monthly benefit checks
- Document participant problems and complaints related to the shopping experience
- Notify the State Agency of any vendor-related problems expressed by WIC participants
- Sanction participants found abusing authorized vendors and/or the Program

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**206. WIC Vendors:**

A WIC vendor is a supermarket, grocery store, corner store, commissary, and/or pharmacy authorized to participate in the DC WIC Program in 3-year cycles. Vendor responsibilities are discussed in detail in other sections of the Vendor Manual.

WIC Vendor Activities include:

- Accept CVC and WIC checks, deposit redeemed checks to the bank
- Stock sufficient levels of WIC-approved foods to meet minimum stocking requirements (MSR) established by the State Agency
- Help participants obtain foods listed on CVCs and WIC checks
- Resolve problems encountered during WIC transactions
- Provide the WIC State Agency with current pricing information
- Comply with the WIC Vendor Agreement

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**207. How WIC Benefits Vendors**

The collaboration between retail vendors and DC WIC is key to the success of the Program. The WIC Program makes a substantial contribution to food sales for WIC-approved local food retailers and supports the local food economy as well as the local community. As WIC participants purchase WIC-approved foods using CVCs and WIC checks, they also may purchase non-WIC food items with cash, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP – previously “Food Stamps”) benefits, or other forms of tender. The DC WIC Vendor collaboration results in better health for WIC participants and additional business for vendors.