



WIC: Nutrition Support for Moms, Babies & Young Children

A Step-by-Step Guide for Families – 2026 Edition

AssistanceGuides.com | This guide is for informational purposes only. Eligibility rules and food packages vary by state and can change. Always verify with your local WIC office or fns.usda.gov/wic before making decisions.

What Is WIC?

WIC (the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children) is a federal program that provides **free nutritious foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and health referrals** to pregnant women, new mothers, babies, and young children.

Not just food

WIC also provides breastfeeding support, breast pumps, nutrition counseling, and connections to healthcare

Local program

Run through local health departments, hospitals, and community clinics in every state

Not welfare

WIC is a nutrition and health program; receiving it has no impact on immigration status or other benefits

Who WIC Is For:

01

Pregnant women

From confirmation of pregnancy until 6 weeks postpartum

02

Postpartum women

Up to **6 months** after end of pregnancy (even if not breastfeeding)

03

Breastfeeding women

Up to the **infant's first birthday**

04

Infants

From birth through age 1

05

Children

From age 1 through their **fifth birthday**



OBBBA Alert: Indirect Impact on WIC

⚠️ The **One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA)**, signed July 4, 2025, did **not cut WIC directly**. However, it creates a significant indirect risk through a process called **adjunctive eligibility**.

How This Affects You:

- **Adjunctive eligibility** means: if you're already on **Medicaid, SNAP, or TANF**, you automatically qualify for WIC — no separate income verification needed.
- The OBBBA's deep cuts to Medicaid and SNAP mean that **up to 8.2 million current WIC participants** could lose their automatic pathway to WIC.
- An estimated **3 million women and children** who lose Medicaid could lose their WIC income eligibility entirely.

What This Means in Practice:

- If you lose SNAP or Medicaid due to OBBBA changes, **you may still qualify for WIC on income alone** — but you'll need to provide income documentation separately.
- **WIC itself has no work requirements.** You do not need to be employed to receive WIC.
- If you were auto-enrolled via SNAP or Medicaid and those benefits change, **contact your WIC office immediately** to verify your WIC eligibility independently.

Who Qualifies?

Four Requirements – All Must Be Met:

1

Categorical Eligibility

You must be one of: Pregnant (any stage of pregnancy), Postpartum (within 6 months of end of pregnancy), Breastfeeding (up to child's first birthday), An infant (birth through 12 months), or A child (12 months through 4th birthday)

2

Residency

Must live in the state where you apply (no minimum length of residency required)

3

Income Eligibility

Household income at or below **185% of Federal Poverty Level (FPL)**

4

Nutritional Risk

Must be assessed by a WIC health professional (almost everyone qualifies — see below)



Income Limits (July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027)

Household Size	Annual	Monthly	Weekly
1	\$29,526	\$2,461	\$568
2	\$40,034	\$3,337	\$770
3	\$50,542	\$4,212	\$972
4	\$61,050	\$5,088	\$1,175
5	\$71,558	\$5,964	\$1,377
6	\$82,066	\$6,839	\$1,579
7	\$92,574	\$7,715	\$1,781
8	\$103,082	\$8,591	\$1,983
Each additional	+\$10,508/yr	+\$876/mo	+\$203/wk

✔ **Already on Medicaid, SNAP, or TANF?** You automatically meet the income requirement — no pay stubs needed.

What Is "Nutritional Risk"?

This sounds intimidating, but it's a simple health screening — and almost everyone passes. WIC staff check for common conditions like:

Pregnancy

Being pregnant (this alone qualifies)

Low iron (anemia)

Checked with a quick finger-stick blood test

Weight assessment

Underweight or overweight (by height/weight measurement)

Birth history

History of low birth weight in a previous pregnancy

Breastfeeding difficulties

Challenges with breastfeeding

Inadequate diet

Assessed through a brief questionnaire

The screening is **free, quick, and non-judgmental**. It's designed to help personalize your benefits — not to exclude people.

What Does WIC Provide?

1. Monthly Food Package (via EBT Card)

Benefits vary by your category. Here's what participants typically receive:

Children (Ages 1-5)

Food Item	Monthly Amount
Milk (whole for 12-23 mo; low-fat for 2-5 yr)	3 gallons
Milk or yogurt (additional)	1 quart
Cheese	1 pound
Eggs	1 dozen
Iron-fortified cereal	36 ounces
Peanut butter, beans, or legumes	16-18 oz PB, or 1 lb dry beans/4 cans
Fruits & vegetables (cash-value benefit)	\$26/month
Whole grain bread or grains	24 ounces
Canned fish (tuna, salmon, sardines, or mackerel)	6 ounces

Pregnant & Postpartum Women

Food Item	Monthly Amount
Milk or low-fat milk	4.5 gallons
Milk or yogurt (additional)	1 quart
Cheese	1 pound
Eggs	1 dozen
Cereal	36-51 ounces
Peanut butter or beans	1 lb dry/4 cans or 18 oz PB
Fruits & vegetables (cash-value benefit)	\$48/month
Whole grains	48 ounces
Canned fish	10 ounces

Fully Breastfeeding Women

Breastfeeding moms get the **largest food package** to support milk production:

Food Item	Monthly Amount
Milk	5 gallons
Milk or yogurt (additional)	1 quart
Cheese	1 pound
Eggs	2 dozen
Cereal	36 ounces
Peanut butter	16-18 oz jar
Beans	1 lb dry or 4 cans
Fruits & vegetables (cash-value benefit)	\$52/month
Whole grains	48 ounces
Canned fish	20 ounces

Infants

- **Fully breastfed:** Infant cereal (16 oz), infant fruits & vegetables (32 containers), infant meat (16 containers)
- **Formula-fed:** Iron-fortified infant formula (full supply — one of WIC's largest benefits); reduced infant foods
- **Partially breastfed:** Combination of above; formula amount adjusted based on breastfeeding level



Fruit & Vegetable Note: The cash-value benefit can be used for **fresh, frozen, canned, or dried** fruits and vegetables at any WIC-authorized store. As of 2026, most states now accept at least one additional form beyond fresh.

What Does WIC Provide?

2. Nutrition Education & Counseling

- Free one-on-one sessions with a registered dietitian or nutrition counselor
- Guidance on healthy eating during pregnancy and postpartum
- Support for feeding your baby and introducing solid foods
- Can be done in-person or virtually

3. Breastfeeding Support

- Peer counselors available by phone, text, or in person
- **Breast pumps** provided free to eligible participants (hospital-grade pumps for medical need; standard pumps broadly available)
- Lactation consultant referrals
- Support available through baby's first birthday

4. Health Referrals

WIC connects families to:

- Prenatal care and OB/GYN
- Pediatric care and immunizations
- Dental care
- Substance use support
- Housing and social services



How to Apply

01

Step 1: Find Your Local WIC Office

- **Online:** signupwic.com — enter your zip code
- **Website:** fns.usda.gov/wic/apply
- **Phone:** 1-800-942-3678 (WIC National Hotline)

02

Step 2: Schedule a Certification Appointment

Call or go online to schedule. Appointments can be **in-person or virtual** depending on your state. Many offices offer same-week or next-day appointments for pregnant women and infants under 6 months.

03

Step 3: Gather Your Documents

See the document table below for what to bring.

04

Step 4: Your Certification Appointment

A WIC staff member will review your documents, take simple measurements (height, weight, and a quick finger-stick for iron), ask a few nutrition and health questions, and determine your benefits and set up your EBT card. The whole process typically takes **30–60 minutes** for a first appointment.

05

Step 5: Start Using Your Benefits

- You'll receive a **WIC EBT card** loaded monthly with your food benefits
- Use it like a debit card at any WIC-authorized store (most major grocery chains, Walmart, Target, and many smaller stores)
- Your card shows exactly what you're authorized to buy — look for the **WIC shelf labels** in stores

Step 3: Gather Your Documents


Document	What to Bring
Proof of identity (each applicant)	Birth certificate, passport, hospital record, or photo ID
Proof of residency	Utility bill, lease, piece of mail, or medical record with your address
Proof of income	Pay stubs (last 30 days), tax return, or employer letter — OR Medicaid/SNAP/TANF card (replaces income proof)
Pregnancy documentation (if applicable)	Ultrasound, prenatal visit record, or doctor's note



No documents? Don't wait. Contact your WIC office — they may be able to accept verbal statements or temporary certifications to get you started quickly, especially during pregnancy.

Certification Periods

Category	Length of Certification
Pregnant women	Until 6 weeks postpartum, then recertified
Postpartum women (not breastfeeding)	Up to 6 months after end of pregnancy
Breastfeeding women	Up to baby's first birthday
Infants (birth–12 months)	Up to age 1
Children (1–4 years)	Up to 1 year at a time

 You must **recertify** at the end of each period. Your WIC office will contact you, but keep your contact information up to date to avoid gaps.

Common Questions

"I'm not a US citizen – can I still apply?"

WIC eligibility for non-citizens follows immigration rules. Lawfully present immigrants generally qualify. The OBBBA immigration restrictions affect Medicaid and SNAP, not WIC directly — but if you lose those programs and were using adjunctive eligibility, contact your WIC office to verify income eligibility separately.

"I already get SNAP – do I need to apply for WIC separately?"

Yes, WIC is a separate program from SNAP. But having SNAP makes the WIC application easier — your SNAP card counts as proof of income, so you won't need pay stubs. You still need to complete a WIC certification appointment.

"My income just changed – am I still eligible?"

WIC income is rechecked at each certification. Report income changes to your office. If you become eligible mid-certification period, you can apply at any time.

"Can my dad or grandparent apply for my child?"

Yes. A parent, legal guardian, grandparent, or authorized caregiver can apply for and manage WIC benefits on behalf of an infant or child.

"What if I'm homeless or have no permanent address?"

WIC serves people experiencing homelessness. A shelter address, case manager letter, or similar documentation can substitute for proof of residency. Tell your WIC office your situation.

Key Resources

Resource	Contact
Find your WIC office	signupwic.com
Apply or learn more	fns.usda.gov/wic/apply
WIC National Hotline	1-800-942-3678
Check income eligibility	fns.usda.gov/wic/eligibility
WIC food packages detail	fns.usda.gov/wic/food-packages

Guide current as of June 2026. Income guidelines effective July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027 per USDA FNS. Food package amounts based on federal standards; exact items and quantities vary by state. Always verify with your local WIC office.

Important Disclaimer

Please Read Before Using This Guide

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This Is General Information – Not Medical or Nutritional Advice

- The content in this guide is provided for **general informational and educational purposes only**
- Nothing in this guide constitutes medical advice, dietary advice, infant feeding advice, or professional health counsel
- WIC provides nutrition services through trained health professionals — the information in this guide is a summary only and does not replace the personalized nutrition counseling you will receive from a WIC nutritionist or dietitian
- **All decisions about infant feeding, breastfeeding, formula use, and child nutrition should be made in consultation with your child's pediatrician or a qualified healthcare provider** — this guide does not advocate for or against any specific feeding method

Breastfeeding and Infant Formula

- This guide describes WIC's breastfeeding support and the larger food package available to breastfeeding mothers — this is a description of program structure, **not a medical recommendation**
- The decision to breastfeed or formula-feed is a personal medical decision; consult your OB/GYN, midwife, or pediatrician
- WIC provides infant formula to families who need it — receiving WIC formula does not carry any negative implication
- Specific formula brands and types available through WIC are determined by each state through competitive bidding — this guide does not recommend any specific formula product

This Is Not an Official Eligibility Determination

- Only your **local WIC agency** can make an official determination of whether you or your child qualifies — including the nutritional risk assessment, which requires evaluation by a WIC health professional
- Income eligibility tables in this guide are based on federal guidelines effective July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027; your state may implement slightly different rules or apply different income counting methods
- "May qualify" or "likely eligible" language does not guarantee enrollment or benefits

Food Packages Vary by State

- WIC food packages are set at the federal level but states have flexibility in authorized brands, package sizes, and specific items
- The food packages described in this guide represent federal standards and examples from specific states; **your state's exact authorized foods and quantities may differ**
- Always refer to your state's WIC-authorized food list or shopping guide for the specific items you can purchase with your EBT card

Immigration – This Is Not Immigration Legal Advice

- This guide discusses non-citizen eligibility for WIC in general terms only — **this is not legal advice**
- WIC eligibility rules for non-citizens differ from Medicaid and SNAP — WIC is generally available to lawfully present immigrants, but specific categories matter
- WIC is **not on the federal public charge list** as of this guide's publication date; however, immigration law changes frequently and this guide cannot guarantee the current status of any rule
- If you have concerns about immigration consequences of applying for WIC, **consult a qualified immigration attorney or BIA-accredited representative before applying**
- We make no representations or warranties about the immigration consequences of applying for or receiving WIC

OBBBA and Adjunctive Eligibility

- This guide notes that OBBBA cuts to SNAP and Medicaid may indirectly affect WIC participation through adjunctive eligibility — this is informational only
- WIC program rules are set annually by Congress and subject to change; the indirect impacts described are estimates from advocacy organizations and are not guaranteed outcomes

Information May Be Outdated

- WIC income eligibility guidelines are updated every July 1; food package contents and cash-value benefit amounts are updated annually
- This guide reflects guidelines effective July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027 and food package rules as of spring 2026
- Always verify current rules with your local WIC office before making any decisions

No Warranties – Use at Your Own Risk

- This guide is provided **"as is"** without any warranty of accuracy, completeness, or timeliness
- **You assume full responsibility** for any decisions made based on information in this guide
- AssistanceGuides.com, its owners, editors, and contributors shall not be liable for any damages of any kind arising from your use of this guide

Your Rights Are Not Affected

- Nothing in this guide waives your right to apply for WIC, appeal a denial, or access any other right provided by law
- If you are denied WIC benefits, you have the right to request a fair hearing through your local agency

If You Are in Crisis

- This guide is an informational resource — **it is not a substitute for emergency food or medical assistance**
- If you are facing an immediate food or nutrition emergency, contact your local food bank or call **2-1-1**
- If you or your child needs emergency medical care, call **911** or go to the nearest emergency room
- WIC appointments may have short wait times — contact your local agency and explain any urgent need (particularly for newborns and pregnant women near delivery)

Data and Privacy

- AssistanceGuides.com may collect anonymized, aggregate data through the eligibility screening tool on our website
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Guide last reviewed: June 2026 | Income guidelines: USDA FNS, effective July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027 | Cash-value benefit amounts: FY2026 per USDA FNS Policy Memorandum #2026-2 | Food package data: federal standards as updated April 2026 | AssistanceGuides.com