



National WIC Association
Your child has you. And you have WIC.



WIC: Solid Returns on Investment While Reducing the Deficit

WIC Provides Solid Returns on Investment

PREVENTIVE PUBLIC HEALTH NUTRITION SERVICES FOR AN AT-RISK POPULATION

WIC provides nutrition and breast-feeding education, nutritious foods, and improved healthcare access for low and moderate-income women and children with, or at risk of developing, nutrition-related health problems.

A SHORT-TERM INTERVENTION

Only pregnant, breastfeeding and post-partum women, infants, and children up to age five are eligible for the Program, which limits the overall duration of participation in the program. On average, a woman participates for thirteen months.

HEALTHY OUTCOMES

Participation in WIC improves nutrition, resulting in overall healthier pregnancies, healthier birth outcomes, and better growth and development of young children. WIC helps to ensure infants' and children's normal physical growth and has been shown to improve cognitive development, reduce levels of anemia, improve access to regular health care/social services, improve diets and household health behaviors, reduce the risk of child abuse or neglect, and improve breast-feeding rates of WIC mothers over the years through increased breast-feeding support and counseling. WIC children arrive at school with a healthy foundation ready to learn.

FAR-REACHING

WIC serves over 9 million mothers and young children per month, including 53% of all infants and approximately one out of four pregnant women in the U.S., in all 50 states and 40 U.S. territories and tribal organizations in both rural and urban communities.

EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT

Program management costs average 9.09%, nationally.

BRINGS MONEY TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND IS ENTREPRENEURIAL

In fiscal year 2010, \$6.25 billion of WIC food benefits were spent in local communities across the country, but only \$4.56 billion of those dollars were provided by the government. WIC cost containment initiatives save federal tax dollars, e.g. the infant formula manufacturers' rebate program generated \$1.69 billion dollars.

IMPROVED ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD FOR THE COMMUNITY

Science-based healthy WIC food packages not only improve access to healthy food for the Program's target population, but also increase the demand for healthy food items in local food retail outlets. Stocking WIC food items on grocery shelves also provides access to those healthy foods for others in the community. For many consumers, eating the WIC way assures healthy eating habits.

IMPORTANT TO ACHIEVING NATIONAL GOALS

WIC plays an important role in achieving national goals to end childhood hunger by 2015, prevent maternal and childhood overweight and obesity, make healthy food accessible, and improve breastfeeding rates.

Deficit Reduction Strategy

- ➔ For every dollar spent on a pregnant woman in WIC, up to \$4.21 is saved in Medicaid for her and her newborn baby because WIC reduces the risk for preterm birth and low birth-weight babies by 25% and 44%, respectively.
- ➔ Preterm births cost the U.S. over \$26 billion a year, with average first year medical costs for a premature/low birth-weight baby of \$49,033 compared to \$4,551 for a baby born without complications.
- ➔ It costs approximately \$743 a year for a pregnant woman to participate in WIC with an average participation length of 13 months.
- ➔ It has also been estimated that \$13 billion per year would be saved if 90% of US infants were breastfed exclusively for six months.
- ➔ Participation in WIC's prenatal counseling program is associated with an increased rate of breast-feeding initiation.
- ➔ In 2008, survey data indicated that 59% of WIC infants ages 6-13 months were breastfed. Funding for WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselors has helped to improve breastfeeding duration rates.

Cutting funding from WIC means cutting women, infants, and children from the Program and depriving young children the opportunity of a healthy start on life, taking away purchasing power in local economies, and increasing long-term healthcare costs.