



## Press Release

### WIC Still Enrolling and Providing Benefits During the COVID-19 Pandemic

More families than ever are finding it hard to put healthy food on their dinner tables. For young children, a lack of good nutrition can put them at risk for health problems and problems in school. North Carolina's WIC program helps low-income families meet the nutritional needs of pregnant and post-partum women, infants and children up to age 5.

"While adding more fruits and vegetables to these families' diets is an important part of our program, participants get more than food from WIC," Danielle Miller, Macon County WIC Director said. "WIC offers families nutrition education and counseling, breastfeeding promotion and support, supplemental foods, and even healthcare referrals."

The North Carolina WIC Program currently serves over 200,000 participants each month. Studies show that children who participate in WIC are more likely to receive regular preventive health services and are better immunized than children who did not participate in WIC. WIC participants receive helpful one-on-one counseling with a nutrition professional. Group nutrition classes may also be offered by trained staff on topics ranging from healthy drink choices to grocery shopping on a budget.

Breastfeeding promotion and support is an important part of the WIC Program. All WIC agencies have trained staff ready to assist moms in making informed decisions about how they feed their babies.

WIC also teaches moms the basics of breastfeeding. Better educated moms mean healthier babies. Medicaid beneficiaries who participated in WIC had lower infant mortality rates than Medicaid beneficiaries who did not participate in WIC.

WIC participation also decreases the incidence of low birth weight and pre-term births. "WIC is so much more than people realize," said Miller. "The nutrition education and healthy foods that WIC provides really give children a healthy start in life, which is so important."

The WIC Program is available at Macon County Public Health Department at 1830 Lakeside Drive in Franklin, NC. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, WIC is currently enrolling women and children via phone appointments, with limited in-person visits should they be necessary.

WIC is available to pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women, as well as infants and children up to age five (5), who meet the following criteria:

- Are a resident of North Carolina
- Are at nutritional risk, as determined with a nutrition assessment, conducted by a competent professional authority.
- Have proof of income less than 185% of the current Federal Poverty Level; OR verification of adjunct eligibility by Medicaid, FNS (Food Stamps), and/or TANF (Work First).

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For more information about WIC or to make an appointment please call (828) 349 - 2448. You may also visit the WIC Web site at [www.nutritionnc.com](http://www.nutritionnc.com).

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