







The Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) The Pennsylvania Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)

WIC began in 1974 in response to an appeal from medical doctors with patients who suffered from ailments that could best be treated by food. Since its origins, WIC's effectiveness as a health program has been demonstrated repeatedly:

- a big reduction in the incidence of low-weight babies and infant mortality;
- a big reduction in the incidence of iron deficiency anemia among children;
- improved vocabularies and digit memory scores among four and five-year-olds;
- higher rates of childhood immunizations; and
- savings in the Medical Assistance Program of \$3 for each WIC dollar spent.

From June 1 to November 30, FMNP provides WIC participants with checks to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at farmers' markets. FMNP coupons are also provided to low-income seniors. The program is designed to promote healthy eating and Pennsylvania agriculture at the same time.

 <p>Who can provide the service?</p>	<p>There are 24 agencies in Pennsylvania that contract with the PA Department of Health to provide WIC. These agencies staff 356 clinics across the state. These clinics also provide FMNP coupons to eligible women and children.</p> <p>FMNP coupons for Seniors are available through senior centers in all counties of Pennsylvania. The program is administered locally through the Area Agency on Aging.</p>
 <p>How is it financed?</p>	<p>WIC is funded by the federal government (PA received \$140.5 million in 2004-05) and is administered by the PA Department of Health. At present, no state dollars are involved.</p> <p>FMNP is jointly funded by PA (\$2.0 million annually) and the federal government (\$3.2 million approx. this year), and is administered by the PA Department of Agriculture.</p>
 <p>Who can receive this service?</p>	<p>Pregnant women, breastfeeding women up to 12 months postpartum, non-breastfeeding women up to six months postpartum, and children up to five years of age who are determined by a health professional to be at medical or nutritional risk and whose family incomes are below 185 percent of poverty. Foster children and those on medical assistance are automatically income eligible for WIC.</p> <p>Seniors are eligible for FMNP coupons if their annual income is below \$17,705 (for a single) or \$23,736 (for a couple).</p>
 <p>What is provided?</p>	<p>WIC provides a basic health assessment and appropriate referrals for immunizations and health care. It provides vouchers for a basic food package that includes milk, eggs, cheese, fruit and vegetable juices, cereal, peanut butter, dried beans and peas. Breastfeeding mothers may receive tuna and carrots; newborns may receive infant formula and cereals. The average value of the food package is \$53 a month. Along with the food, WIC provides nutrition information to ensure foods will be properly used.</p> <p>During either June or July, pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women receive an additional \$20 in FMNP vouchers for the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables at local farmers' markets. Children ages 3 and 4, and seniors (60 years and over) also receive \$20 in vouchers.</p>
 <p>Contact</p>	<p>The PA Department of Health at 1-800 WIC WINS (1-800-942-9467) for WIC-related questions. The PA Department of Agriculture at (717)787-4737 for FMNP-related questions.</p>
 <p>Suggestions for advocacy</p>	<p>The growing federal deficit has prompted some in Congress to seek cuts in funding for nutrition programs like WIC. Tell your congressman or congresswoman that you support funding smart programs like WIC.</p>