

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN (WIC)

DEFINITION: The average number of women, infants, and children (ages 1-4) served by the WIC program each month.

SIGNIFICANCE

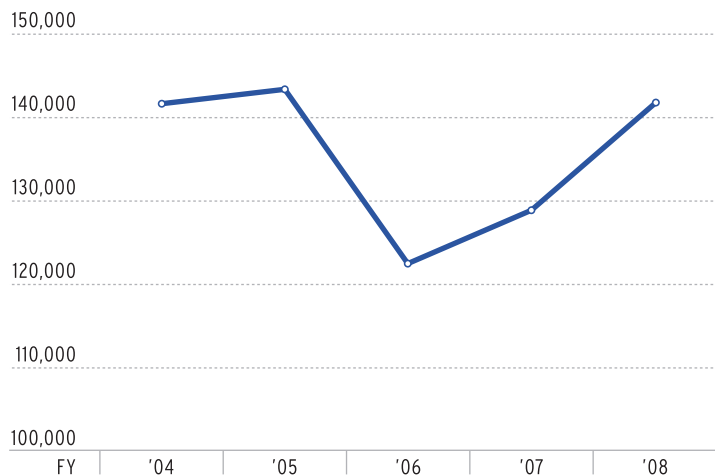
Adequate nutrition helps babies and children grow up strong and healthy. The WIC program provides supplemental food, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant and postpartum women, infants, and children up to age five. Food provided through the WIC program includes eggs, milk, cheese, peanut butter, dried beans, tuna, cereal, carrots, and fruit juice. Infant formula is also provided for infants who are not exclusively breastfed. Starting in October 2009, WIC food packages will include fruits and vegetables, as well as whole-grain breads for women and children. The new food packages will also provide infants with jarred fruits and vegetables.

WIC promotes breastfeeding by providing counseling and coaching, along with enhanced food packages, and other supports (such as breast pumps) to breastfeeding mothers. On average, 15.8% of infants participating in the WIC program in Louisiana in 2007 were breastfed. By May 2009, this figure had increased to 18.9%.¹

Research has shown that WIC participation leads to improved outcomes for mothers, babies, and children. Women who participate in WIC during their pregnancies tend to experience better birth outcomes than other low-income women. WIC participation is linked to a lower incidence of moderately low and very low birth weight infants, fewer infant deaths, and an increased probability of receiving prenatal care. WIC also has a positive impact on children's diets and is associated with higher intakes of key vitamins and minerals, such as iron, vitamin C, thiamin, niacin and vitamin B6. WIC has even been shown to increase the vocabulary scores of children whose mothers participated in WIC prenatally.²

WIC is funded and administered at the federal level by the U.S. Department of

WIC PARTICIPATION IN LOUISIANA Fiscal years 2004-2008



Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service. In Louisiana, the Department of Health and Hospitals administers the program. In order to be eligible for the WIC program, an applicant's gross income must be below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). For a family of four, this means a family must earn less than \$40,793 a year. In FY 2007, the average monthly benefit for a participant in Louisiana was \$43.83, just above the national average of \$39.04.³

After dropping by over 20,000 participants between federal fiscal year (FFY) 2005 and FFY 2006, WIC participation in Louisiana rebounded to 141,704 participants in FFY 2008, only 1,658 fewer participants than in FFY 2005

CHART DATA SOURCE

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, "WIC Program: Total Participation," retrieved from www.fns.usda.gov on 7/30/2009.

DATA SOURCE

Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, Office of Public Health, Center for Preventive Health, Nutrition Services

DATA NOTE

All data reflect average program participation for the period of May-April.

¹ Data received from Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, Office of Public Health, Center for Preventive Health, Nutrition Services, by special request.

² U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, "How WIC Helps," U.S. Department of Agriculture, retrieved from www.fns.usda.gov on 6/30/2009.

³ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, "WIC Program: Average Monthly Benefit per Person," U.S. Department of Agriculture, retrieved from www.fns.usda.gov on 6/1/2009.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN (WIC) AVERAGE MONTHLY NUMBER

2007	TOTAL	INFANTS	CHILDREN AGES 1-4
LOUISIANA	136,030	41,274	58,085
Acadia	2,066	568	940
Allen	876	270	356
Ascension	3,400	924	1,581
Assumption	687	175	345
Avoyelles	2,075	524	1,016
Beauregard	1,095	327	473
Bienville	516	143	237
Bossier	2,425	740	1,026
Caddo	8,492	2,709	3,649
Calcasieu	4,876	1,638	1,842
Caldwell	565	126	283
Cameron	247	64	116
Catahoula	597	140	311
Claiborne	639	168	311
Concordia	953	255	463
De Soto	1,059	277	528
East Baton Rouge	11,613	3,716	4,713
East Carroll	540	118	311
East Feliciana	820	224	395
Evangeline	1,524	411	741
Franklin	919	260	408
Grant	795	198	398
Iberia	2,575	825	938
Iberville	990	319	417
Jackson	723	184	355
Jefferson	11,321	4,253	3,936
Jefferson Davis	1,104	345	471
Lafayette	5,676	1,713	2,353
Lafourche	2,884	850	1,224
La Salle	592	160	276
Lincoln	1,172	349	470
Livingston	3,001	890	1,259
Madison	882	181	503
Morehouse	1,120	351	445
Natchitoches	1,633	416	791
Orleans	3,922	1,560	1,260
Ouachita	5,821	1,779	2,589
Pointe Coupee	915	259	442
Rapides	4,931	1,316	2,269
Red River	686	166	357
Richland	886	231	410
Sabine	855	231	399
St. Bernard	808	298	254
St. Charles	1,084	361	428
St. Helena	775	170	433
St. James	715	203	331
St. John the Baptist	1,410	470	518
St. Landry	4,304	1,191	1,989
St. Martin	2,036	557	933
St. Mary	1,741	581	659
St. Tammany	5,508	1,594	2,369
Tangipahoa	4,353	1,290	1,802
Tensas	238	58	128
Terrebonne	3,323	1,076	1,453
Union	846	225	405
Vermilion	1,681	497	674
Vernon	1,996	567	841
Washington	2,445	616	1,247
Webster	1,574	477	660
West Baton Rouge	843	248	368
West Carroll	608	139	327
West Feliciana	545	126	290
Winn	731	179	371