

The Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) The PA 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 September 30, FMNP provides WIC participants and eligible seniors with checks to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at farmers' markets. 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 PA that contract with the PA Department of Health to provide WIC. These agencies staff 328 clinics across the state. These clinics also provide FMNP coupons to eligible women and 2, 3 and 4-year-old children.</p> <p>FMNP coupons for Seniors are available through senior centers in all counties of PA. 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 \$206.4 million in 2008-09) and is administered by the PA Department of Health. At present, no state dollars are involved.</p> <p>FMNP is jointly funded by PA (\$2.26 million this year) and the federal government (approximately \$3.6 million 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 under five years of age who are determined by a health professional to be at medical or nutritional risk and whose household incomes are below 185% of poverty. Foster children, MA, TANF, and SNAP clients are also eligible, but income documentation is required.</p> <p>Seniors 60 years of age or older are eligible for FMNP coupons if their annual income is below 185% of poverty: \$20,036 (for a single) or \$26,955 (for a couple).</p>
 <p>What is provided?</p>	<p>WIC provides nutrition education and counseling, breastfeeding information and support, referrals to health care and community services, and checks for the purchase of healthy foods, including milk (or soy alternatives), peanut butter, eggs, dried or canned beans/peas, cereal, whole grains (whole wheat bread or rolls, whole grain bread or rolls, brown rice, oats, or soft whole wheat or corn tortillas), infant formula, baby fruits, vegetables and meats, and canned fish. A Cash Value Voucher (not to be confused with FMNP checks described below) is provided for fresh, frozen or canned fruits and vegetables.</p> <p>June through September, 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 2, 3 and 4, and eligible seniors 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>State funding for the FMNP has declined since the 2006-07 budget when it was funded at \$3 million. Tell your state representatives to restore this valuable funding.</p> <p>WIC is up for reauthorization in 2010. Hunger Action will keep you posted on our website www.pahunger.org about advocacy opportunities related to getting the best child nutrition programs for the next five years.</p>