

## 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 substantial reduction in the incidence of low-weight babies and infant mortality;
- a substantial 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 checks can be used through November 30 each year). The program is designed to promote both healthy eating and Pennsylvania agriculture.

 <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 292 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 \$217 million in 2010-11) 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 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 and older are eligible for FMNP coupons if their annual income is below 185% of poverty.</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 food 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 WIC program can be contacted at <a href="tel:18009429467">1-800 WIC WINS (1-800-942-9467)</a> for WIC-related questions. For policy-related questions, please contact the Department of Health at 717-783-1289.</p> <p>For FMNP-related questions, please contact PA Department of Agriculture at 717-772-2693.</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, along with SNAP, school meals, summer food, afterschool snacks and meals, and child care food, make up our nation's nutrition safety net and must be protected during the Super Committee's works to produce \$1.5 trillion in entitlement cuts and any and all following efforts to reduce the deficit through cuts to programs for the most vulnerable Americans. Visit <a href="http://www.pahunger.org">www.pahunger.org</a> for related advocacy opportunities.</p>