

TOOLKIT: INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN WIC – FOR CHILDCARE CENTERS AND HOMES



D.C. Hunger Solutions

Ending hunger in the nation's capital

INTRODUCTION

WIC provides nutritious supplemental foods, nutrition education and counseling, and more to participating women, infants, and children. However, while the majority of infants participate in WIC, just 42% of WIC eligible children participate in the program. Childcare centers and homes have the opportunity to conduct outreach with eligible families and connect them with this important nutrition program.

STEP 1: LEARN ABOUT WIC AND OTHER FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.

WIC

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides nutritious supplemental foods, nutrition education and counseling, and screening and referrals to health and social services to low-income women, infants, and children.ⁱ WIC is proven to decrease food insecurity, improve dietary intake, and improve birth outcomes.ⁱⁱ

Persons eligible for WIC include:

- Pregnant women (through pregnancy and up to 6 weeks after birth or after pregnancy ends),
- Breastfeeding women (up to infant's 1st birthday),
- Non-breastfeeding postpartum women (up to 6 months after the birth of an infant or after pregnancy ends),
- Infants (up to 1st birthday), and
- Children up to their 5th birthday.

Interested individuals can apply for WIC by visiting a [WIC clinic](#) or by calling **202-442-9397**. Participants gain access to nutritious foods and professional nutrition counseling and breastfeeding support.

DC WIC is run through [DC Health](#). Resources and information for providers, families, and community partners can be found at www.dcwic.org.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WIC at a Glance](#)

[The Importance of the Federal Nutrition Programs for Infants and Toddlers](#)

[DC WIC Outreach Materials](#)

SNAP

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps) provides low-income households with a monthly Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card that can be used, like a debit card, to buy food at most grocery stores and other food retailers, including farmers' markets.

SNAP is the largest federal nutrition program operated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and administered by state agencies. In D.C., the program is administered by the Department of Human Services' Economic Security Administration (ESA).

D.C. Hunger Solutions provides a [calculator tool](#) to help determine if a D.C. resident is potentially eligible for SNAP benefits. If potentially eligible, residents can [download an application](#) or pick up an application at the [nearest ESA center](#). Applications can be dropped off at an ESA center or submitted through D.C. Hunger Solutions (email to info@dchunger.org). After submission, the applicant will complete an interview and receive their EBT card and monthly benefits. Learn more about how to apply for SNAP [here](#).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Am I Eligible for SNAP?](#)

[SNAP in the District of Columbia](#)

STEP 2: TRAIN YOUR STAFF.

Ensure staff are trained on the federal nutrition programs (like SNAP and WIC). Train new staff on WIC and SNAP program basics, and also provide continuing education opportunities for current staff on relevant topics (e.g. food insecurity, assistance program referrals, etc.). Many

local partner agencies provide training including D.C. Hunger Solutions and WIC agency outreach staff.

STEP 3: SPREAD THE WORD.

POST INFORMATION IN HIGH TRAFFIC AREAS

As you know, parents are busy! Be sure to post information about WIC and other assistance resources in high traffic areas, and make brochures and hand-outs easily accessible to families picking up and dropping off at your center. You can find lots of great promotional materials on [DC WIC's website](#). These materials are also customizable with help from the DC WIC agency.

ACTIVE OUTREACH TO FAMILIES

Along with sending information home with the child, also send information via email and mail to families. After sending information, talk to families to make sure they received the information and answer any questions they might have. Conversations with family members is the best way to communicate about these important programs.

Invite outreach partners to your family events! Having a health fair or parent meet & greet? Partners like D.C. Hunger Solutions and WIC outreach staff can attend, exhibit, and/or present to your families.

STEP 4: FOLLOW UP!

Follow-up with families after distributing materials and/or having conversations about food, nutrition, or other assistance resources. Along with follow-up, provide multiple opportunities spaced throughout the year for families to engage with you on these topics.

Questions?

Contact D.C. Hunger Solutions – info@dchunger.org – (202) 640-1088 – www.dchunger.org

ⁱ United States Department of Agriculture. (2019). Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) – About WIC. *Food and Nutrition Service*. Accessed on January 31, 2019. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/about-wic-wic-glance>.

ⁱⁱ Food Research & Action Center. (2017). Hunger & Health: The Role of the Federal Child Nutrition

Programs in Improving Health and Well-Being. Accessed on January 31, 2019. <http://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/hunger-health-role-federal-child-nutrition-programs-improving-health-well-being.pdf>.