



**Indiana  
Department  
of  
Health**

# NUTRITION AND BREASTFEEDING FOR MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH AND INDIANA WIC

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6/25/2025

## OUR MISSION:

To promote, protect, and improve the health and safety of all Hoosiers.

## OUR VISION:

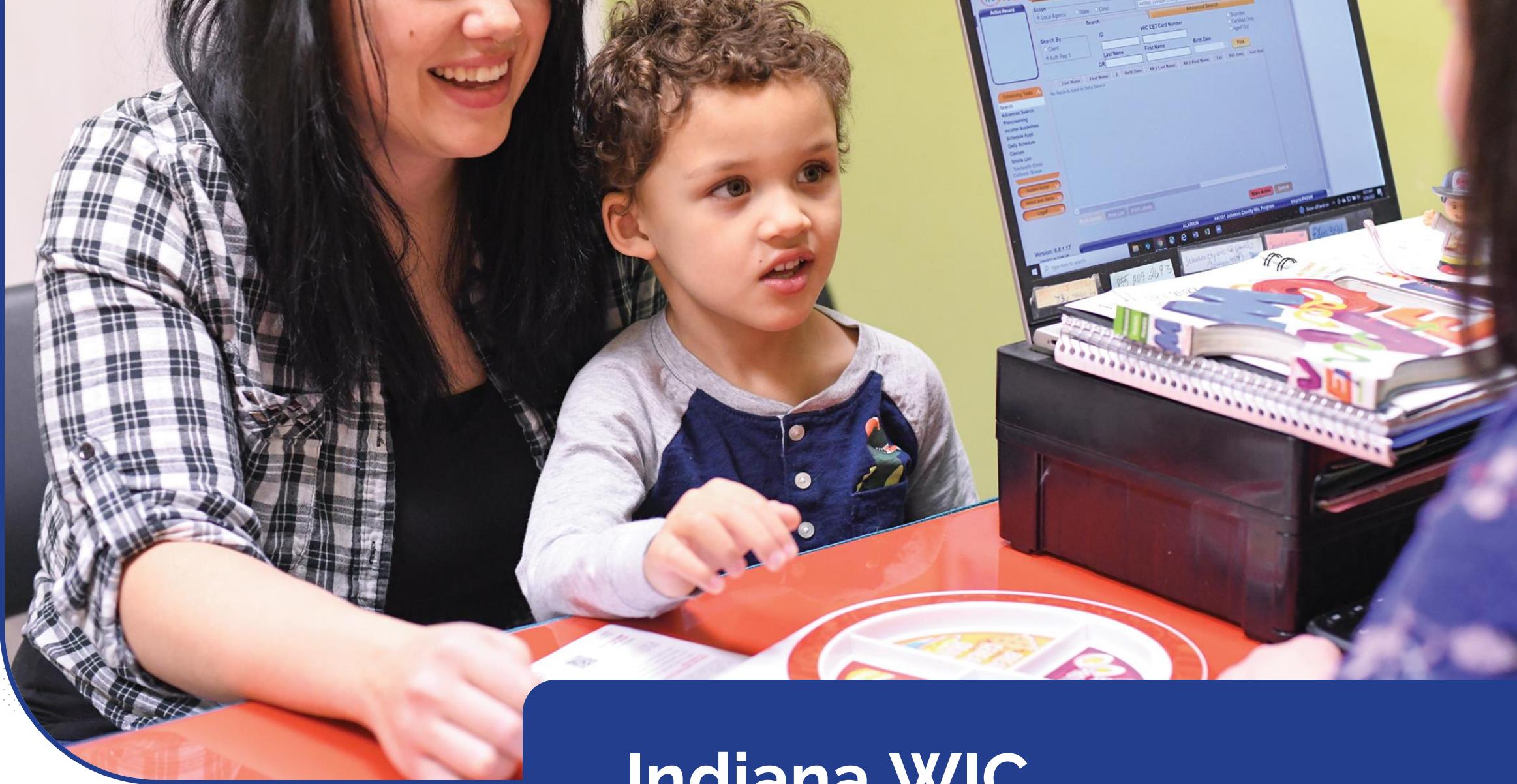
Every Hoosier reaches optimal health regardless of where they live, learn, work, or play.



# Objectives

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- I. Provide an overview of the Indiana WIC program detailing the nutrition and breastfeeding services offered.
- II. Outline general nutrition and breastfeeding guidelines for prenatal and postpartum women and infants.
- III. Explain ways that providers and other MCH programs can partner with Indiana WIC.



# Indiana WIC



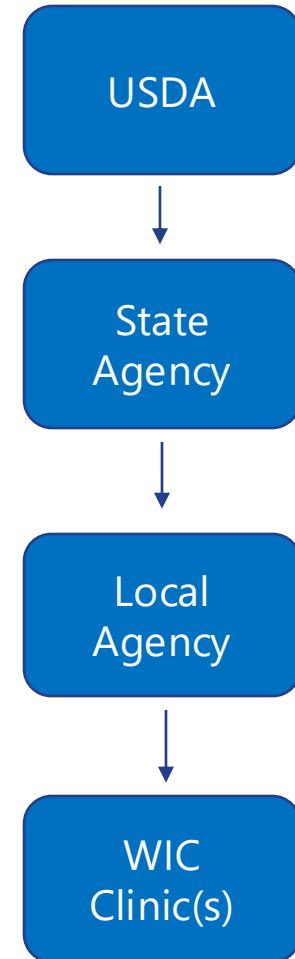
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# What is WIC?

## Funding Distribution

The **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children** administered by United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

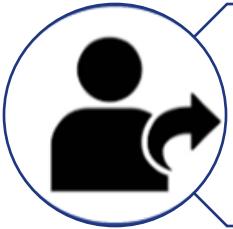
- Supplemental, federal grant program since 1974
- NOT an entitlement program, NOT a public charge
- Congress authorizes a specific amount of funding each year



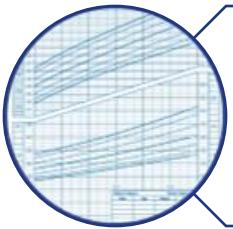
# What services does WIC provide?



Supplemental nutritious foods to meet special nutrition needs



Referrals to other Indiana health, family and social services



Nutrition and health screening and assessment



Breastfeeding support, including, one-on-one support from Peer Counselors, and access to lactation professionals



Nutrition education and counseling



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# Eligibility

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## Categorical

- Pregnant
- Postpartum (up to six months after birth);
- Breastfeeding (up to one year after birth);
- Infant (babies under the age of one);
- Child under the age of five.

## Residence

- Resident of Indiana

## Nutrition Risk

- Have at least one diet or medical related condition affecting nutritional status as determined by nutrition assessment



# Eligibility

## Income

- At or below 185% Federal Poverty Level
- Families already receiving Medicaid, SNAP, or TANF are income eligible for the WIC program.

Household* size	Annual income up to \$ (total before deductions)	Monthly income up to \$ (total before deductions)	Weekly income up to \$ (total before deductions)
1	\$28,953	\$2,413	\$557
2	\$39,128	\$3,261	\$753
3	\$49,303	\$4,109	\$949
4	\$59,478	\$4,957	\$1,144
5	\$69,653	\$5,805	\$1,340
6	\$79,828	\$6,653	\$1,536
7	\$90,003	\$7,501	\$1,731
8	\$100,178	\$8,349	\$1,927

*If you are pregnant, you may count yourself as two (2).*

*For households with more than 8 members, add \$10,175 annual income for each additional member.*

*\*Household means a group of people (related or not) who are living as one economic unit.*

*Effective July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026*

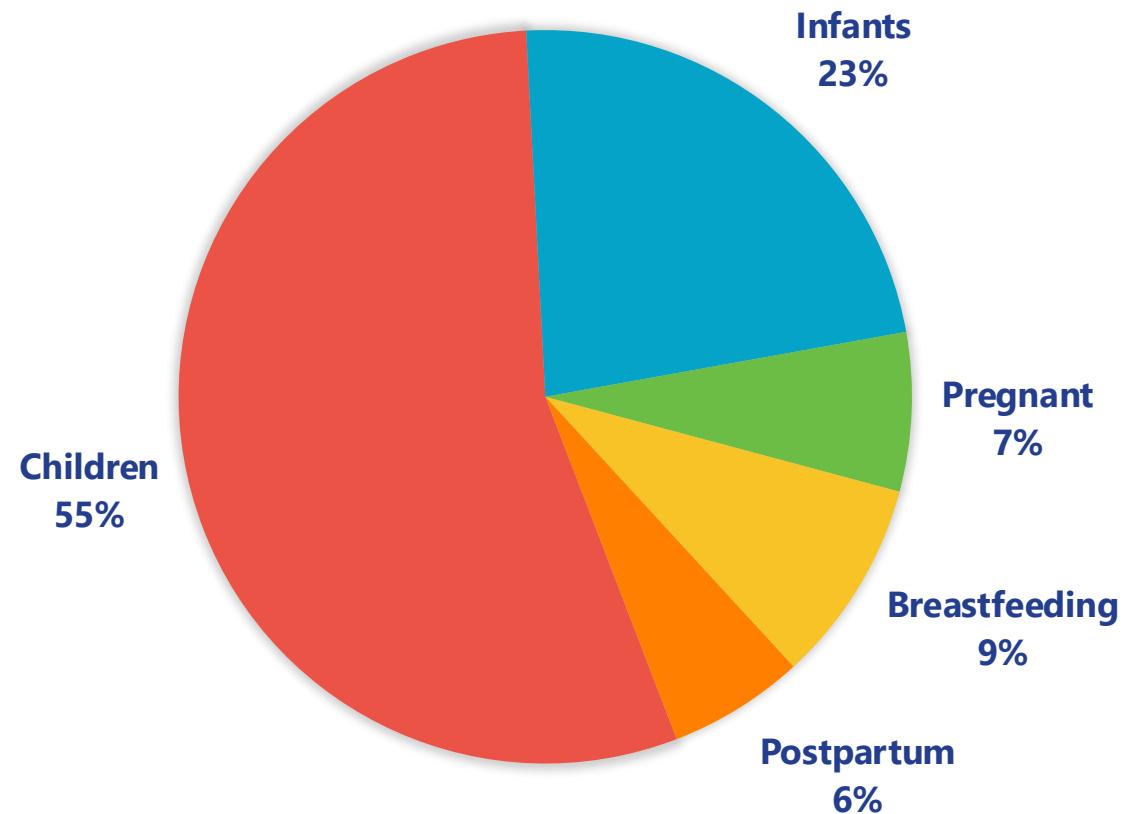
# WIC Reach

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Indiana WIC served on average **151,760** clients a month in Fiscal Year 2024.

## PARTICIPATION BY CATEGORY

SEPT 2024



# WIC Staff

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Nutritionists

Breastfeeding Peer  
Counselors

Clerical Staff

Local Agency Coordinator

Breastfeeding Coordinator

Lactation Consultants  
(IBCLC) or Designated  
Breastfeeding Experts



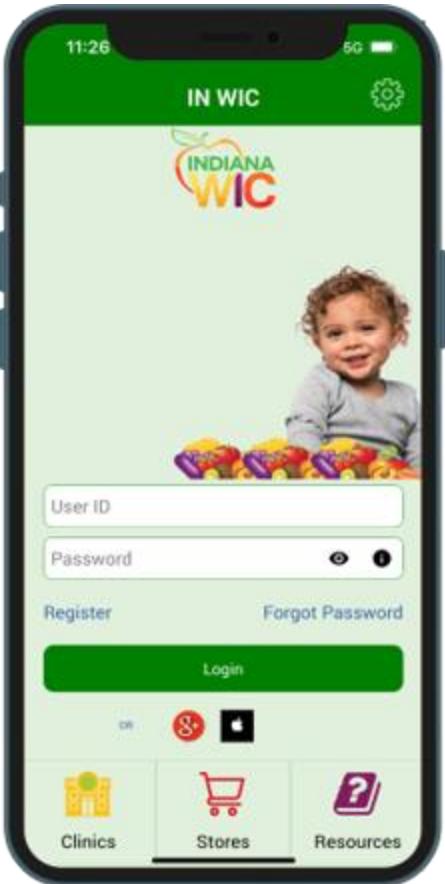
# WIC Foods

- Fruits and vegetables
- Dairy – milk, cheese, yogurt
- Whole grains
- Eggs
- Beans
- Peanut butter
- Tofu
- Juice
- Cereal

- Canned fish
- Infant foods
- Infant formula



# WIC Shopping



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## Nutrition and Breastfeeding for Pre- and Postpartum Women and Infants



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# Prenatal and Postpartum Nutrition

Dietary patterns before and during pregnancy are tied to pregnancy health outcomes.

Dietary patterns before and during pregnancy and lactation may impact health outcomes for both mother and child later life stages (USDA & HHS, 2020).



# Prenatal and Perinatal Nutrition

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## Special considerations

- Increased caloric needs
- Nutrients: folate/folic acid, iron, iodine, choline
- Food safety
- Seafood, alcohol, caffeine
- Conditions impacting nutrition status



# Infant Nutrition

Birth to age two is critical time for growth and development (USDA & HHS, 2020).

- Birth to 6 months - exclusive human milk feeding is ideal
- Introduction of complementary foods when infant is developmentally ready (not recommended before 4 months)

## Signs of developmental readiness

- Head and neck control
- Sitting up
- Bringing objects to mouth
- Trying to grasp small objects
- Swallowing food instead of pushing it back out



# Infant Nutrition

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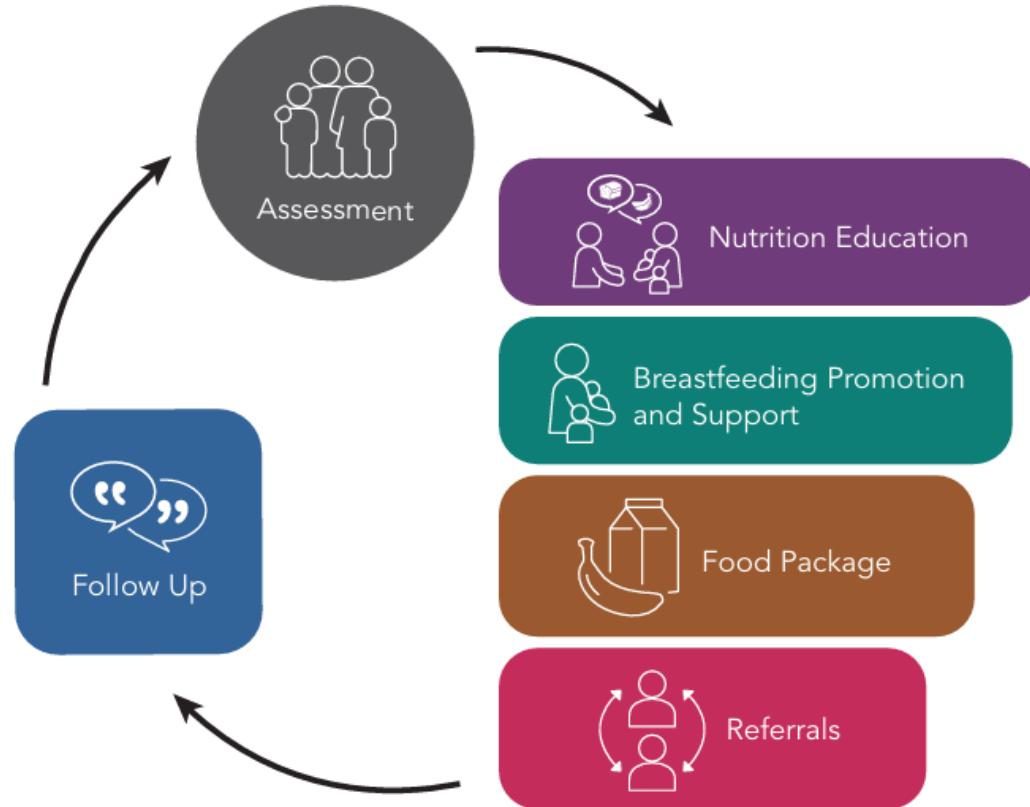
## Special considerations

- Vitamin D supplementation
- Developmentally-appropriate foods
- Potentially allergenic foods
- Nutrients: iron, zinc
- Added sugars, sodium
- Beverages



# WIC Nutrition Services

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# Local Agency Nutrition Staff

A **Competent Professional Authority (CPA)**, or a WIC Nutritionist, completes the nutrition and health screening and assessment, assigns nutrition risk, provides nutrition education and counseling and tailors the WIC food package. CPAs may be Registered Dietitians, Registered Nurses, or individuals with a Bachelor's or Master's degree with an emphasis in nutrition.

A **Qualified Nutritionist** is available for high-risk nutrition education and counseling and must be a Registered Dietitian or hold a Bachelor's or Master's degree in nutrition (FNS, 2013).



# Nutrition Assessment

- Anthropometric measurements
- Hematological testing
- Dietary intake and nutrition practices
- Medical conditions and history
- Medical care



# Nutrition Education and Counseling



Clients are offered one nutrition education contact per quarter of their WIC certification.

- Individual counseling (in-person or over-the-phone)
- Group classes
- Online nutrition education lessons

Clients assigned high risk will receive individual nutrition education and counseling.

# Why Breastfeeding?

- Human milk is the optimal nutrition source for infant health and development.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and World Health Organization (WHO) recommend that infants are exclusively fed human milk for about the first six months of life.
  - Introduction of complementary foods at 6 months.
  - Breastfeed as mutually desired by parent and child for 2 years or beyond.
- Benefits:
  - Infants have a lower risk for obesity, asthma, ear infections, leukemia, and Type 2 diabetes.
  - Mothers/parents have a reduced risk of certain types of breast cancer, ovarian cancer, and Type 2 diabetes. Economic savings.



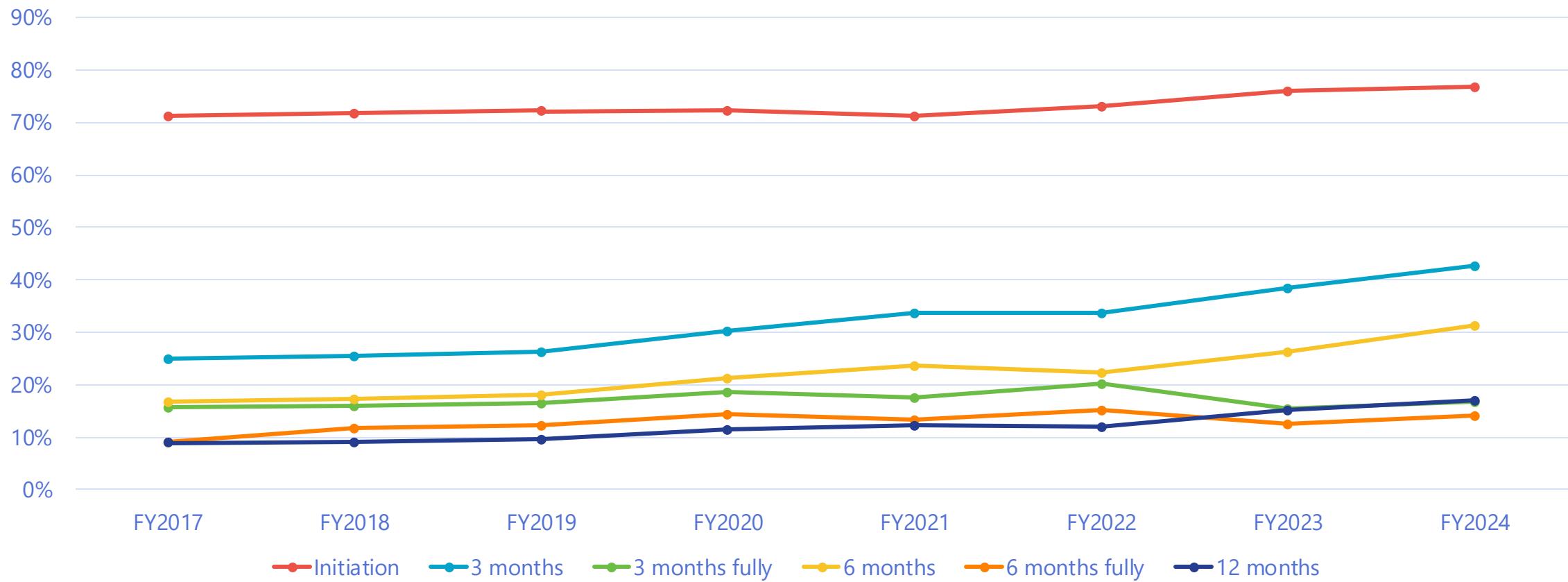
# WIC and Breastfeeding

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- All WIC staff promote and support breastfeeding as the optimal method of infant nutrition.
  - WIC Breastfeeding Support Curriculum
- Parents who breastfeed are eligible for a larger food package and longer program participation.
- The Indiana WIC program provides several breastfeeding supports for clients:
  - breastfeeding education,
  - breastfeeding supplies and aids (e.g., loaner pumps, nursing bras), and
  - access to Peer Counselors and Designated Breastfeeding Experts (DBEs).



# Indiana WIC Breastfeeding Rates



# ALL Clinic Staff Support Breastfeeding

Level	WIC Staff	Breastfeeding Role
1	All WIC staff, including clerical and support staff	Basic breastfeeding promotion, basic communication approaches, and how to support WIC mothers with breastfeeding.
2	Peer Counselors and other WIC staff who support parents with breastfeeding (CPAs, DBEs, BFCs, etc.)	Supporting normal breastfeeding, including early practices to get breastfeeding off to a good start, positioning and latch, and supporting mothers from pregnancy through weaning.
3	CPAs and Breastfeeding Coordinators	Assisting mothers with breastfeeding concerns, clinic practices that support breastfeeding.
4	Designated Breastfeeding Experts (DBEs)	Assisting WIC mothers experiencing complex breastfeeding challenges that are beyond the scope of Level 2 peer counselors and Level 3 WIC staff.

# Local Agency Breastfeeding Staff

- **Peer Counselors (PCs)** are paraprofessionals who provide breastfeeding support and encouragement to clients focused on normal breastfeeding. Peer Counselors are of the same demographics of the clients they serve, and many have been clients of WIC themselves.
- A **Designated Breastfeeding Expert (DBE)** provides breastfeeding support to those with complex breastfeeding situations that go beyond the scope of practice of a Peer Counselor. Preferably the DBE is an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC).
- Each agency has a **Breastfeeding Coordinator** who: ensures their clinic/s are breastfeeding friendly; supervises, manages, and trains staff; manages breastfeeding pump/supply inventory; community outreach; National Breastfeeding Month activities, etc.



# WIC Breastfeeding Support – Peer Counselors



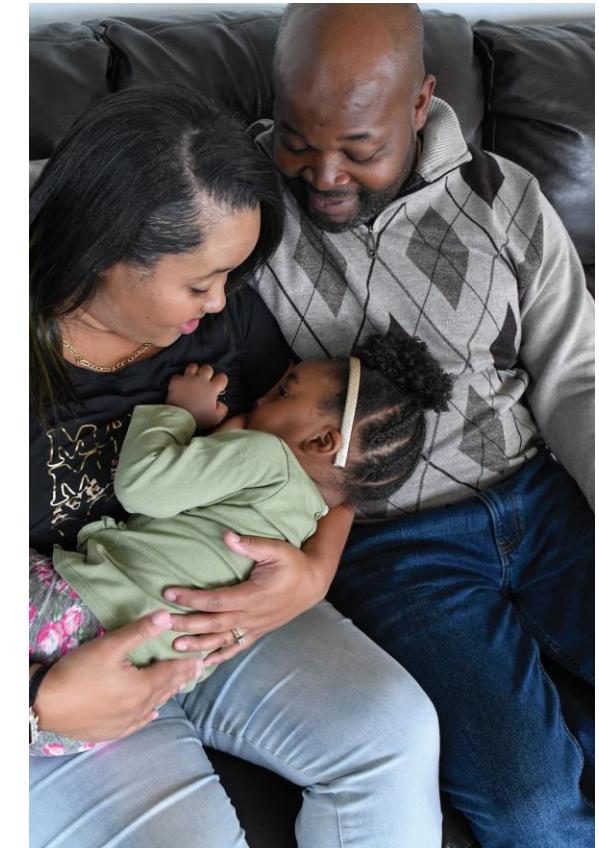
WIC  
BREASTFEEDING  
SUPPORT

- The heart of WIC Breastfeeding Support is the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program.
  - Evidence-based and shown to increase breastfeeding rate of initiation, duration, and exclusivity.
- History: Loving Support Makes Breastfeeding Work (1997) → **WIC Breastfeeding Support: Learn Together. Grow Together (2020)**
- Since 2004, FNS has allocated funding to States and ITOs for the Peer Counseling Program
- Indiana WIC is unique in that every Local Agency has a Peer Counselor Program
- Research on Peer Support
- What is a Peer Counselor?
- Peer Counselor must have timely access to a Designated Breastfeeding Expert (DBE) to yield to for out-of-scope concerns.

# Pump Loan Program

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- LA staff aid clients in obtaining a breast pump through their insurance if they are eligible.
- Clients unable to obtain a pump through insurance or for other reasons are issued a loaner pump through their local WIC clinic.
- Clients who are issued a loaner pump may keep the pump for the duration they are certified on the program and expressing milk.
- Staff is expected to check in on clients with a loaner pump monthly.



# Impact of WIC

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Research shows that WIC is a cost-effective program for improving and protecting infant, child and maternal health (FNS, 2024)

- Decrease in fetal deaths and infant mortality
- Decrease in rate of low birthweight rates and increase in duration of pregnancy
- Improvement in growth of nutritionally at-risk infants and children
- Decrease in incidence of iron deficiency anemia in children
- Improvement in dietary intake of pregnant and postpartum women and weight gain in pregnant women
- Earlier prenatal care
- Increase in likelihood of regular medical care and up to date immunizations for children



Partnering with WIC

# How can we partner for success?

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## As a program/agency:

- Ensure your management staff are competent about where WIC clinics are in your area, and what WIC does.
- Reach out to your local WIC agency and get to know the staff. Building relationships is an intense focus of the WIC program.
- Take the time to understand how WIC referrals work.
- Allow WIC to work alongside your agency to support your families. This could mean offering certifications, breastfeeding support, nutrition education or sharing outreach events.



# How can we partner for success?

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## As a staff supervisor:

- Remind your staff during supervision about WIC as a resource to families. Have brochures on hand if needed.
- Arrange for WIC to come to your office to present to staff. We want to educate and assist your team and your families.
- If your staff feel frustrated with WIC, help them reach out to a local clinic or the state office for support.
- Help us improve. WIC has 600 staff statewide, and lots of moving parts. We are always open to respectful and useful constructive criticism.



# How can we partner for success?

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## As direct service staff:

- Remind your clients that WIC is more than just formula. WIC is support, education, resources, and compassion.
- Get to know the staff at your local WIC agency(ies). Clients are more likely to engage with your recommendation. And, our staff are more likely to refer if they know our families are going to good hands.
- If your client feels frustrated with WIC, help them reach out to a local clinic or the state office for support.
- Be an advocate. Your client's choices and decisions should be supported, and WIC is on your team.

# Referrals

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## Federally required

- Medicaid
- Substance use
- Immunizations
- Lead testing
- Healthcare providers

## Other referrals

- Local health departments
- Home visiting programs
- Local food pantries
- Head Start
- First Steps
- Healthy Families
- Tobacco cessation



# WIC Resources

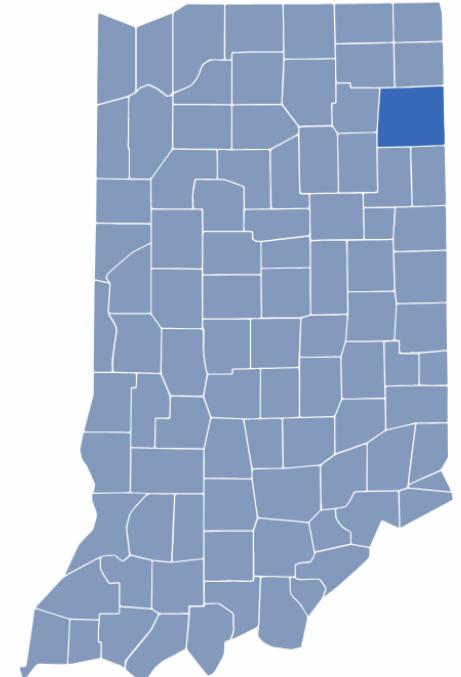
Website: [wic.in.gov](http://wic.in.gov)

- Eligibility guidelines
- How to apply
- Clinic locations
- WIC foods & formula
- Referral Form
- Medical documentation form
- Contact information

**Allen County**

Local Clinic Address and Phone Numbers	Business Hours	Times
Neighborhood Health Clinics, Inc. 1717 S. Calhoun St. Fort Wayne, IN 46802-5257 (260) 458-2641 FAX (260) 458-3093	Mon., Wed.	8 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Paulding Rd. WIC 3350 E. Paulding Road Fort Wayne, IN 46816 (260) 702-3058 FAX: (260) 458-2596	Tues., Thurs., Fri.	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
	Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fri. *Closed for lunch from noon to 1 p.m.	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
	Wed.	10 a.m. to 7 p.m. *Closed for lunch from 2 to 3 p.m.

[Return to Introduction](#)

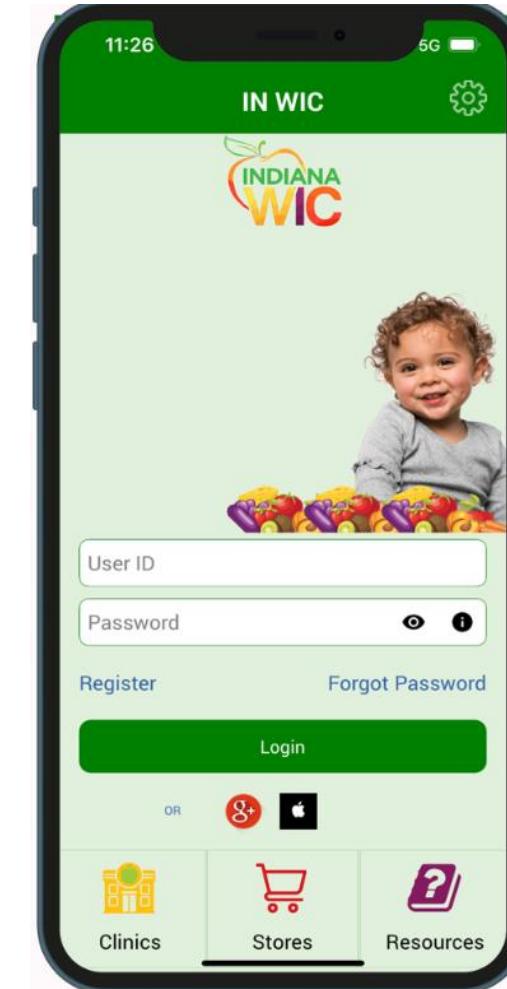


Or select a County:

# WIC Resources

## IN WIC Mobile App

- Clinic and store maps
- Appointment information
- WIC benefit information
- UPC scanner
- Nutrition and breastfeeding education lessons



# References

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U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). (2013). *WIC Nutrition Services Standards*. <https://wicworks.fns.usda.gov/resources/wic-nutrition-services-standards>.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). (2024, October 2). *How WIC Helps*. USDA Food and Nutrition Service. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/helps>.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). (2020). *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025. 9th Edition*. [DietaryGuidelines.gov](https://DietaryGuidelines.gov).

# Questions?

**IN WIC Nutrition**

[INWICNutrition@health.in.gov](mailto:INWICNutrition@health.in.gov)

**IN WIC Breastfeeding**

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