WIC and Retail Grocery Stores

What is WIC?
WIC is the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children. WIC provides nutritious foods (primarily through retail grocery stores), nutrition counseling, and referrals to health care and social services. WIC serves low-income pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women, infants and children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk. Nearly 9 million people get WIC benefits each month.

Where is WIC available?
WIC is available in all 50 States, 34 Indian Tribal Organizations, America Samoa, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

What foods does WIC provide?

WIC foods include: infant formula; infant and adult cereal; baby food fruits, vegetables and meats; whole wheat bread, brown rice, soft corn and whole wheat tortillas; juice; eggs; milk; cheese; peanut butter; dried beans or peas; fruits and vegetables; soy beverage, tofu; and canned fish.

How are stores authorized to accept WIC checks?
Each State is responsible for authorizing stores to accept WIC checks. At a minimum, the State will consider the prices of foods, the business integrity of the store's owner including if the owner has been disqualified from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and the variety and quantity of foods available in the store. Nearly 46,000 stores are currently authorized to accept WIC checks.

When are stores authorized?
States authorize stores at different times. Interested persons should contact the State agency for further information. The name and phone number for each State WIC Director is available at www.fns.usda.gov/wic or by contacting the State Health Department.

Is there a cost for WIC authorization?
No. There are no fees for the WIC authorization process.

Must States authorize all qualified stores that apply?
No. States must only authorize enough stores to ensure that WIC participants have adequate access to WIC foods, and they can effectively manage.

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