

Improving WIC Access by Streamlining Eligibility Determinations

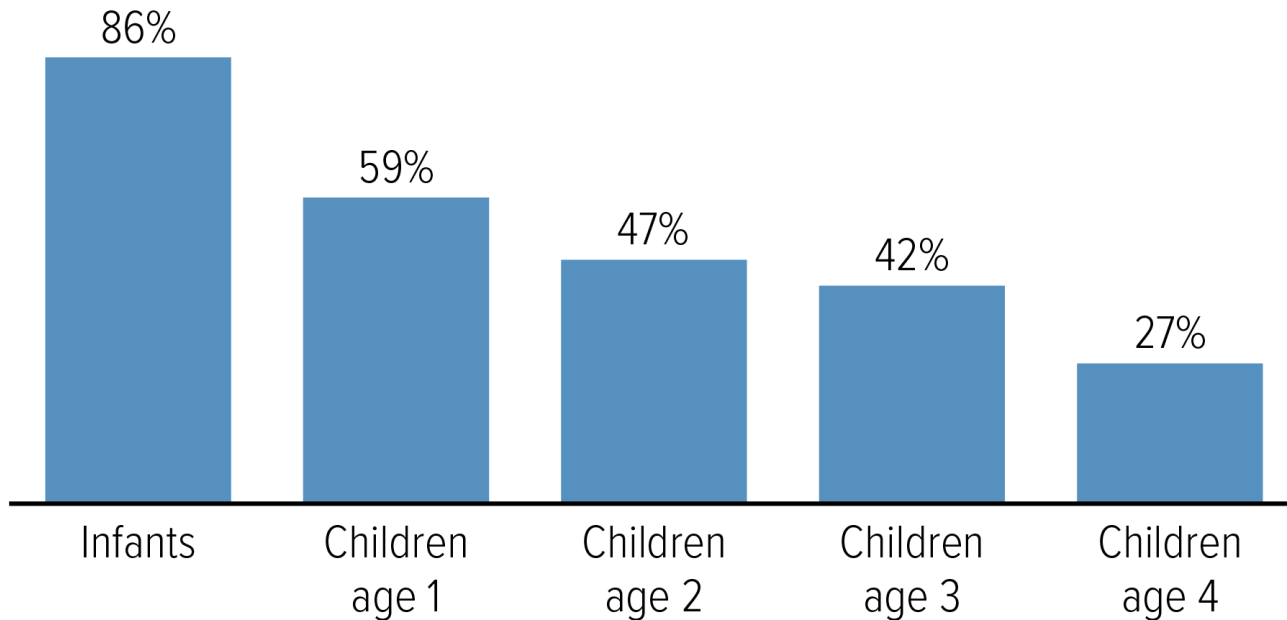
Zoë Neuberger

April 28, 2019



Eligible Toddlers Less Likely Than Eligible Infants to Participate in WIC

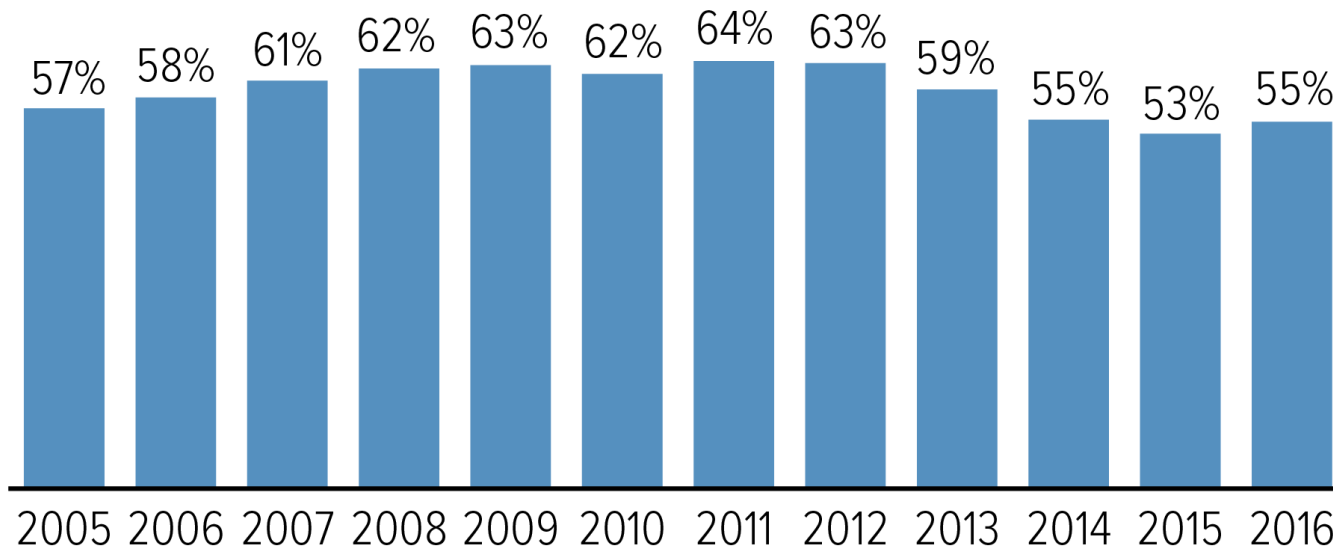
WIC participation rates by age



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, “National and State-Level Estimates of Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Eligibility and WIC Program Reach in 2016,” February 2019.

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WIC Coverage Rates



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, “National and State-Level Estimates of Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Eligibility and WIC Program Reach in 2016,” February 2019.

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Modernizing and Streamlining WIC Eligibility Determination and Enrollment Processes

By Zoë Neuberger¹

WIC — the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children — serves low-income pregnant and postpartum women, infants, and children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk and plays a crucial role in improving their lifetime health. While WIC effectively and efficiently provides nutritious foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and referrals to health care and social services to millions of families, there is room to modernize and simplify enrollment.²

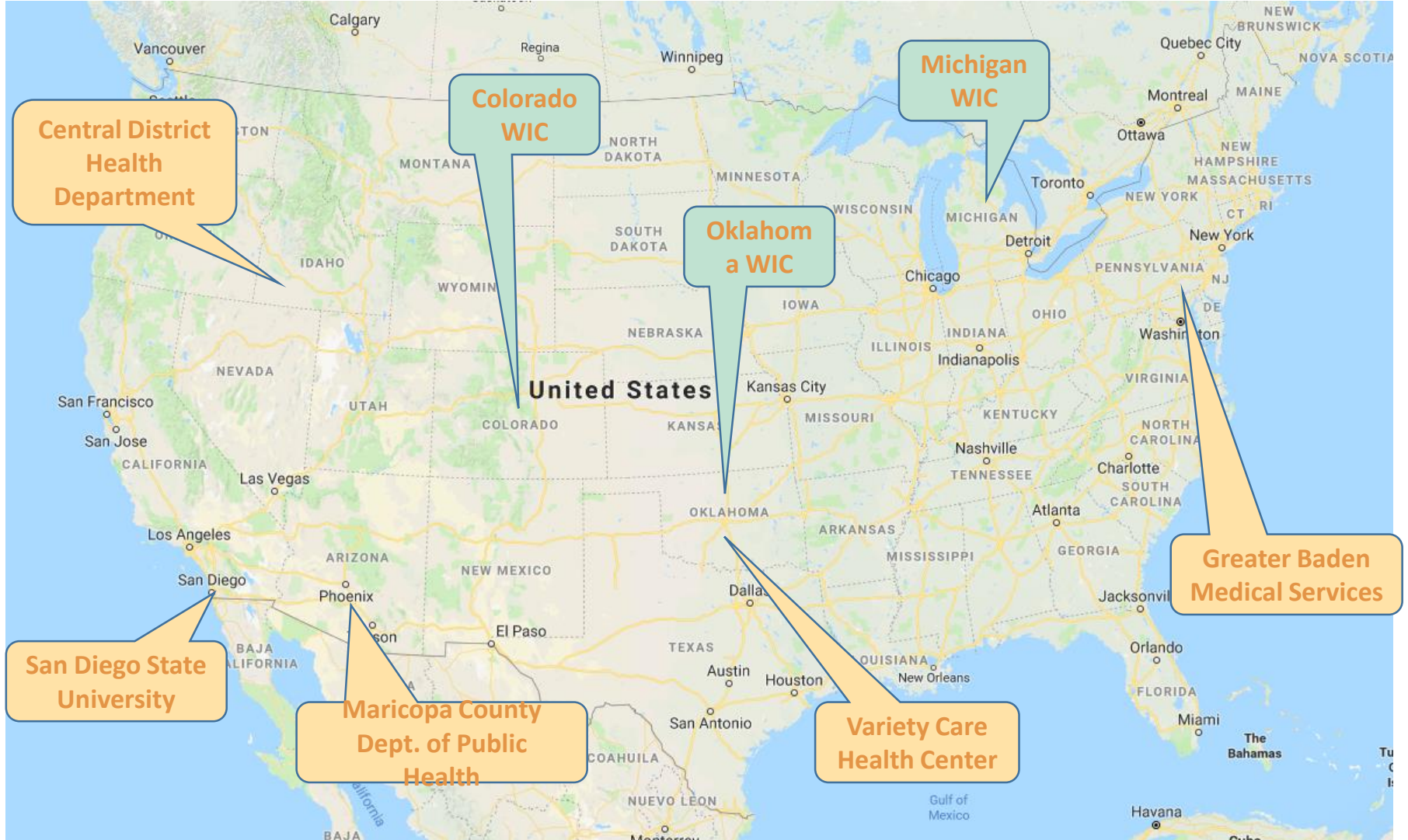
WIC is well-known for extensive research showing that participation improves the nutrition and health of low-income families — leading to healthier infants, more nutritious diets and better health care for children, and subsequently to higher academic achievement for students.³ WIC is also extremely cost-effective.⁴

WIC programs across the country are exploring ways to update business processes and use technology to improve service delivery. For example, states are moving to providing food benefits electronically rather than using paper vouchers, and in some places WIC participants can use apps

¹ This report and the underlying research was developed with support from Kiser Consulting. Kathy Woldeweb, a Center on Budget and Policy Priorities adviser, conducted key underlying research reflected in this report. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities greatly appreciates the time that state and local WIC staff spent speaking with us about WIC eligibility determination and enrollment processes.

WIC Certification Streamlining Opportunities

- Clinic processes
- Communicating with clients
- Policy flexibility
- Data and reports
- Collaboration and outreach



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