California WIC Program: WIC Works!

52% of all infants born in California in 2015 were certified by WIC in their first year!

65.5% of eligible individuals participate in the California WIC Program, surpassing the national average of 54.5%

Supporting California Farmers

WIC participants are able to use their WIC checks at authorized grocery stores and farmer’s markets throughout the year to buy fresh fruits and vegetables— for California WIC participants, produce often happens to be grown locally! In August 2018, California WIC participants purchased over $6.3 million in fruits and vegetables, ensuring that their children have healthy nutritious produce, and supporting California farmers at the same time.

WIC provides supplemental nutritious foods through local retail food outlets to low-income families, and services which include nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and help finding health care and community services.

eWIC (WIC EBT & MIS)

California WIC is making steady progress to replace paper food checks with the California WIC Card. The WIC Card is an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) system that will provide an easier way to issue food benefits and will improve the shopping experience for WIC families and grocers. The computer-based data system is also being replaced with a new EBT-ready Management Information System, which will be known as the WIC Web Information System Exchange (WIC WISE). The two systems will be replaced concurrently. The California WIC Card and WIC WISE will be piloted in Napa and Solano Counties starting May 2019, and then rolled out statewide with final transition expected the end of March 2020. You can find this information and more on the CDPH website www.wicworks.ca.gov. We have added a webpage titled WIC Card—It’s Coming! to make it easier for you to locate updates on the website.

CALIFORNIA WIC PARTICIPATION BY CERTIFICATION CATEGORY, MONTHLY AVERAGE OVER FFY OCTOBER 2017 – SEPTEMBER 2018

Budget Breakdown

FFY 2018-2019

67.58% Food Budget

32.42% Nutrition Services Administration Budget

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WIC and Military Families

There are WIC offices on most military bases, including those overseas, because many military families fall within the low-income guidelines. In California, there are 12 WIC clinics located on or near military bases. WIC checks can also be used at commissaries – in August 2018, WIC checks spent at commissaries amounted to $143,597 spent by 3,038 WIC participants. All twenty-four active commissaries redeemed WIC checks during the same time period. Many WIC clinics are also located in health centers, next to Head Start locations, or are co-located with other important family services.

Local Retail Grocers

The WIC food package provides a healthy bag of groceries for young families including milk, cheese, cereal, bread, eggs, beans, fruits and vegetables, tofu, juice and more. WIC checks are redeemed monthly at local grocers and supplement families’ food budget. In August 2018, California WIC participants purchased over $65million in groceries.

WIC Breastfeeding Support in California

Breastfeeding support is a large part of the WIC services. While over 90% of California women start to breastfeed, various challenges make it difficult to continue to breastfeed. Working with community partners including hospitals, community clinics and employers, WIC employs multiple strategies to support breastfeeding initiation and duration. The state Maternal Child and Adolescent Division works closely with WIC to utilize state and federal data to better understand disparities and target support.