

# WIC ANNUAL REPORT



CELEBRATING  
  
**50 YEARS**

Photo by Shurkin\_son

# 2024

## CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF IMPACT

# RECOGNIZING 50 YEARS OF IMPACT

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), has been a cornerstone of public health nutrition for over five decades, improving the health and well-being of Oregon families. WIC's impact goes beyond providing nutritious food—it empowers families to make lasting healthy choices. With a comprehensive approach that includes nutrition and breastfeeding support, education, and referrals, WIC proves to be a cost-effective investment that delivers long-term benefits for individuals, families, and communities.

Oregon WIC opened in April of 1974, serving 2,500 women, infants, and children across five pilot programs. Today, the program serves over 114,000 participants in every Oregon county, with more than 100 clinic sites. Oregon WIC is proud to showcase how this program has evolved to meet the ever-changing needs of Oregon's families.



"As a dietetics student and new dad, I experienced firsthand how WIC supports young families. Inspired by the program's impact, I applied for a job after graduation—and I've been with WIC ever since."

—Dale Erickson, RDN  
Salud WIC Registered Dietitian

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# WIC: A STRONG RETURN ON INVESTMENT

- **Expands access to healthy food** – WIC improves nutrition security for families and strengthens access to healthy food across communities.
- **Boosts local economies** – Last year, over \$64 million in WIC benefits were spent at 547 grocery stores and pharmacies across Oregon.
- **Supports working families** – 72% of WIC participants are employed.
- **A targeted, time-limited program** – WIC serves pregnant and post-partum women, as well as infants and children up to age five ensuring short-term yet impactful support.
- **Far-reaching impact** – WIC serves on average 69,000 families each year. In 2024, 40% of all pregnant women in rural Oregon participated in WIC.
- **Promotes healthy communities** – As a preventive health program, WIC provides long-term benefits for women and children while reducing healthcare costs. [Every \\$1 invested in WIC saves about \\$2.48 in downstream costs.](#)
- **Operates efficiently** – Administrative costs make up less than 10% of total program funding.

“Congratulations to Oregon WIC on 50 years of service! As national pioneers in limiting sugar in WIC cereals, advocating for fruits and vegetables in the food package, and supporting breastfeeding, WIC has helped make Oregon’s infants, children, and women healthier. Thank you to the dedicated WIC staff!”

— Betsy R. Clarke, MS  
Original Oregon WIC Manager and Former President,  
National WIC Association



# OREGON WIC MILESTONES

## 1985-1994

- WIC services expand to nearly every Oregon county
- Breastfeeding becomes a core program pillar

## 2005-2014

- WIC food package expands to include fruits, vegetables and whole grains
- WIC launches online nutrition-related courses
- Electronic benefits transfer cards and the WIC Shopper App replace paper vouchers

## 1974-1984

- Oregon WIC launches in five counties
- Nutrition education is integrated into the program

## 1995-2004

- Oregon introduces the Farm Direct Nutrition Program (Farm Direct)
- The Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program is established
- New data system is implemented, centralizing statewide data and tracking

## 2015-2024

- Farm Direct grows, supporting 700 farmers and reaching 100,000 Oregonians
- WIC begins offering remote services
- A new food rule is published, improving choice and flexibility for WIC families

# CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF SUPPORTING WIC FAMILIES



## COMMUNITY EVENTS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

These celebrations recognized five decades of WIC's dedication to empowering families and strengthening communities.

Events included:

- Health fairs promoting wellness and nutrition.
- Radio podcasts and media events highlighting WIC's impact over the years.
- The launch of a new mobile services van to expand access to WIC resources.
- Farmers markets showcasing fresh, local food options.
- Breastfeeding town halls/community gatherings to educate, support and celebrate partners and families.
- Tributes to past participants and staff, honoring their contributions and experiences.

CELEBRATING  
WIC  
50 YEARS



WIC 50th anniversary community events. Clockwise from top right Clackamas County, Linn County, the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla, Jefferson County and Benton County.

# MODERNIZING WIC SERVICES

WIC has made **SIGNIFICANT STRIDES** in modernization to better support busy families by enhancing accessibility, convenience, and expert care.

## MAKING SERVICES MORE ACCESSIBLE

WIC is **LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY** to improve the experience for participants with:

- Remote appointment options to reduce barriers like transportation or childcare.
- Texting capabilities for quick and direct communication with applicants and participants.
- A secure messaging platform for streamlined document signing.
- An interactive map to help participants easily find farmers markets and farm stands that accept Farm Direct dollars.
- Online nutrition education classes for flexible, convenient learning.
- An Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card and WIC Shopper App to simplify the shopping experience.
- A WIC online interest form, allowing applicants to connect with WIC anytime.



**EXPERT GUIDANCE  
COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

WIC's dedicated team provides families with expert care during a transformative time in their lives. Registered Dietitian Nutritionists and WIC Certifiers offer personalized nutrition guidance, while International Board-Certified Lactation Consultants and Lactation Specialists provide breastfeeding support. As trusted community members, WIC staff are trained in motivational interviewing and participant-centered care, ensuring families feel heard, supported, and empowered.

These innovations ensure WIC remains a

**TRUSTED, ACCESSIBLE RESOURCE**

for Oregon families.

# WIC INCREASES ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD

## Oregon WIC Increases Access to Healthy, Local Food

Each year, WIC participants receive seasonal Farm Direct dollars to purchase fresh, local fruits and vegetables at farmers markets and farm stands—supporting both families and hundreds of small farms across the state. Last year was especially successful:

- \$788,000 spent by WIC families at farmers markets—a 12% increase from 2023.
- Over 56,000 participants received Farm Direct dollars.



"It brightens my day when WIC participants shop at my farmers market booth with their Farm Direct dollars! Seeing a child's eyes light up when they get to choose a vegetable is so heartwarming and encouraging. The impact of WIC Farm Direct is invaluable to me, to my farm business, and to Oregon's farming community!"

Nicki Passarella - Storybook Farm. Sandy, OR

WIC is proud to help families access fresh, local food while supporting farmers and fostering a stronger, more vibrant Oregon food economy.

"I was on WIC as a toddler, and my mom said it helped put healthy food on our table. When I became pregnant, WIC was one of the first places I turned for support. The program provided food vouchers and connected me to resources. My love for WIC led me to join the team, and 19 years later, I still feel privileged to be part of this amazing team!"

—Shannon Flowerday, IBCLC  
Deschutes County WIC Certifier and Lactation  
Consultant





# WIC IMPROVES ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES

## Lane County WIC Expands Rural Healthcare Access

Lane County WIC is improving in-person services in rural areas, where transportation barriers limit healthcare access. Focusing on South Lane County, WIC partnered with Community Health Centers of Lane County (CHC) to address these challenges. In Fall 2024, CHC opened the South Lane Clinic in Cottage Grove, featuring dedicated WIC space. Since then, the clinic has served over 50 families, offering WIC and primary care, with plans to expand to dental and behavioral health services. Families appreciate the convenience of accessing both WIC and medical care in one location.



Spanish-speaking WIC participant Carmelina shares:

"Me gustó mucho la clínica. También me gusta que está muy cerca y pude llegar pronto a mi cita." ("I really liked the clinic. I also love that it is so close, and I was able to get to my appointment quickly today.")

## WIC Strengthens Referrals through Collaboration

WIC is partnering with the Oregon Health Authority's (OHA) Lead Poisoning Prevention Program to expand lead testing referrals statewide. This initiative **IMPROVES ACCESS TO CRITICAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES**, particularly for children enrolled in Medicaid, where blood lead testing is a key priority. Since 91% of WIC families are also enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan, WIC plays a vital role in early detection and intervention. Over the past year, WIC and OHA have collaborated to develop innovative strategies that increase referrals and improve lead testing rates among healthcare providers.

Ryan Barker, OHA Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, shared:

"The partnership between WIC and the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program has expanded access to blood lead screening and nutrition services, helping prevent harmful lead exposure in Oregon children."

# WIC BREASTFEEDING HIGHLIGHTS

"I joined the Jackson County WIC team early on, and as a mother of three, my family benefited greatly from WIC's food, education, and support. With my first child, I leaned on my coworkers to reach my infant feeding goals, inspiring me to become a lactation consultant to help others do the same. After 32 years, I'm grateful to be part of the WIC family!"

—Korina Skaff, BA, IBCLC Oregon WIC Breastfeeding Coordinator



## Linn County WIC Expands Breastfeeding Support

The Linn County Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Expansion Program is piloting an initiative to provide peer counseling services for other WIC agencies. Linn County WIC extended peer counseling support to two additional WIC agencies, streamlining services, modernizing support, and strengthening connections with participants.

## Multnomah County WIC Earns National Recognition

The Multnomah County WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program was honored with the 2024 Premiere WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence! This prestigious award was presented by the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Services for exemplary breastfeeding support and practices. The award was presented during the third annual town hall celebrating National Breastfeeding Month.



# 2024 OREGON WIC NUMBERS

WIC served  
**114,390**

Participants in Oregon

• 31,183 women • 83,207 infants and children

**\$64.8 MILLION**

in WIC benefits were spent at authorized grocery stores and pharmacies in Oregon

**2 out of 5**

women living in rural and remote areas used WIC during pregnancy (40%)

**\$788,288**

in WIC Farm Direct Nutrition Program benefits were spent at authorized farm stands and farmers markets

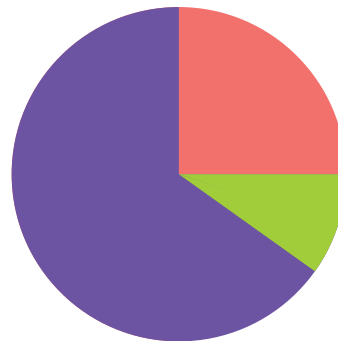
*The Farm Direct program provides fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables and education on selecting and preparing fresh produce while supporting local farmers markets and farmers. Oregon Farm Direct includes 772 authorized farmers.*

**72%** of WIC families are working families

# 2024 OREGON WIC FUNDING

## WIC FUNDING SOURCES

- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- State and federal funds for the Farm Direct Program
- Local government funds
- Provider agency and community contributions
- Competitive bidding savings



**65%** Healthy food

**25%** Nutrition and breastfeeding services

**10%** Administration

## VISION

Every Oregon family achieves optimal nutrition and lifelong health for their children.

## MISSION

Provide leadership, guidance, and resources to local WIC programs, vendors, and partners to ensure quality WIC services that support collective public health efforts.



PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION  
Nutrition & Health Screening  
Program for Women, Infants & Children

You can get this document in other languages, large print, braille or a format you prefer. Contact the Oregon WIC Program at 971-673-0040. We accept all relay calls or you can dial 711.

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