



PURPOSE: To describe the mission and administration of the WIC Program.

BACKGROUND: 1.0 The special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (commonly known as WIC) was established by the Federal Government in 1972 as a pilot program. At that time, Public Law 92-433 extended WIC to some half million pregnant women and infants in low-income areas for the first time. The Oregon WIC Program opened its first five projects, and served 5,000 participants in 1974. In 1975 WIC was made a permanent program and in 1993 provided WIC nutrition services to approximately 6 million individuals throughout the United States.

2.0 The WIC Program is a federally funded nutrition education food supplement program for low income, pregnant, post partum, breastfeeding women and children under five years of age who are at nutritional risk.

Administration of program 3.0 In Oregon the WIC Program is administered by the Oregon Health Division. See the Agency and Function Chart on page 140.1 for an explanation of the agencies involved in administering the program, starting with U.S. Congress on a national level to regional, state and local levels.

4.0 The overall purpose of the WIC Program is to improve the health status of its participating women, infants and children and to optimize their future health by developing healthy eating habits and knowledge about nutrition

Mission statement 5.0 In the spring of 1994, the Oregon WIC Program developed a program Mission Statement. See page 140.2 for this Mission Statement.

Program services 6.0 The program provides the following services to accomplish this goal:

- **screening** for anemia, poor growth patterns, inadequate diet, and other nutrition problems and needs;
- **nutrition counseling** and **education** to relate good nutrition to their health and dietary habits;
- **nutritious foods** to improve nutrition-related medical problems; and
- **referral** to other health or social services.

ORGANIZATION: PURPOSE & CHART, *cont.*

WIC Study Results 7.0 Over the last 20 years, numerous studies have demonstrated the tremendous success of WIC in improving the health and nutritional status of the women and children served by the program and in saving federal health care dollars. The following is a summary of the findings of these WIC studies:

- WIC decreases the incidence of iron deficiency anemia in children.
- WIC significantly improves children's diets.
- WIC improves the growth of at-risk infants and children.
- Children enrolled in WIC are more likely to have a regular source of medical care and are better immunized.
- WIC helps prepare children for school: children who receive WIC benefits demonstrate superior cognitive development.
- WIC improves the dietary intake of pregnant and postpartum women and improves weight gain in pregnant women.
- WIC saves money by preventing costs.
- WIC reduces fetal deaths and infant mortality.
- WIC reduces low birth weight rates and increases the duration of pregnancy.
- Pregnant women participating in WIC receive prenatal care earlier. ★

ORGANIZATION: PURPOSE & CHART, cont.

*Agency and
Function Chart*

U.S. Congress

Creates the law authorizing the WIC Program and appropriate funds.

**U.S. Department of Agriculture,
Food and Nutrition Service**

Administers national WIC program, including development of funding formula and issuance of rules and regulations.

**Western Regional USDA-FNS Office
(San Francisco)**

Provides state contact with USDA. Reviews state and local agencies in the Western Region.

**Oregon Health Division
Individual Health Services
State WIC Office**

Provides grants and fiscal management. Develops State Plan of Operation and Procedure Manual. Provides consultation and training to local projects.

Local WIC Program

Develops the local WIC budget and Nutrition Education Plan. Determines eligibility and provides services to eligible participants.

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MISSION STATEMENT - OREGON WIC PROGRAM

To promote the health and improved nutritional status of Oregon's families by providing leadership in:

- Implementing quality WIC services;
- Serving all eligible women, infants and children;
- Meeting or exceeding federal program requirements;
- Providing services in an appropriate cultural context; and
- Supporting local community needs.

WIC Program Description:

The WIC (Women, Infants and Children's) Program provides nutrition education and counseling, supplemental foods and referrals to health and social services.