

2020

**EMPTY CLINICS.
FULL SERVICES.**



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wic OREGON
GROWING HEALTHY FUTURES

MEETING PARTICIPANTS WHERE THEY ARE AND CONTINUING TO PROVIDE QUALITY SERVICES.

2020 was a challenging year for everyone, especially those hit hardest by the economic impact of a global COVID-19 pandemic. The Oregon WIC Program adapted to these challenges every step of the way. WIC clinics provided remote and telehealth appointments ensuring families continued to receive benefits. Staff provided virtual support groups for breastfeeding participants. Vendors adapted to the way families needed to shop for their WIC foods. Our partners stepped up by helping to provide relevant services to participants. We addressed racial inequities by adopting a racial equity commitment to guide our work. All while continuing to provide quality services to our participants.

At the Oregon WIC Program, we are growing healthy futures.





PROVIDING ONGOING SERVICES

WIC provides healthy food, connects families with other community programs, and offers feeding and nutrition support for families with infants and young children. Dietitians and lactation consultants offer specialized support for those with unique nutrition, eating and feeding needs.

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (P.L. 116-127) granted the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) statutory and regulatory waiver authorities necessary in a public health emergency such as COVID-19 to encourage physical distancing and reduce visits to WIC clinics. These waivers include physical presence, remote issuance, postponement of bloodwork results, separation of duties, remote authorization of vendors and remote local agency monitoring. These waivers help WIC provide continuity of service to our participants through this global crisis.

WIC appointments are being offered by phone, text or by video chat. Food benefit cards are mailed to participants' homes, and a designated friend or family can to shop for a participant in quarantine.

2,125 INTEREST FORMS
SUBMITTED

Potential WIC participants reached out to WIC using our online interest form since the pandemic began. This form is a contactless, convenient way to inquire about WIC services.



ACCESSING BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT

Oregon WIC promotes breastfeeding as the biological standard for infant and young child feeding. WIC has taken multiple policy steps to align daily clinic operations and implement evidence-based strategies to protect and support breastfeeding. At 94.8 percent, Oregon WIC's breastfeeding initiation rate is one of the highest in the nation.

More than one-fourth of WIC's Breastfeeding Coordinators are International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs), professionals with advanced training and expertise in clinical management of complex lactation problems. WIC provides direct support for participants in lactation services, peer support for breastfeeding, an enhanced food package and breast pumps.

WIC has placed high priority on maintaining breastfeeding support services during the pandemic. Agencies have shifted to providing education and support through more use of texting, telephone, and virtual meeting platforms. Multnomah County WIC is an example of an agency that quickly adopted new practices for providing excellent lactation services. Their IBCLC conducted 163 lactation consultations using both telehealth and in-person appointments for those experiencing significant breastfeeding challenges.

**260 VIRTUAL
GROUPS**
IN MULTNOMAH COUNTY ALONE

Between March and December, Multnomah WIC offered 260 virtual groups that reached pregnant women preparing to breastfeed as well as postpartum breastfeeding mothers and infants.



ADAPTING TO CHALLENGES

Oregon expanded the WIC food package to include a broader range of essential foods, including canned fruit and vegetables and shelf stable beverage alternatives to increase access. These changes also benefited Oregon families affected by the wildfires who had limited access to kitchen facilities. WIC developed a procedure for mailing food benefit cards to participants' homes, and allowed cardholders to designate a friend or family member to shop for them.

WIC provided mailing services allowing participants to receive their Farm Direct Nutrition Program checks via mail, rather than requiring a participant to pick them up in person. For 11 local agencies, the state WIC office mailed Farm Direct Nutrition Program checks directly to 22,868 families. Local agencies adapted their issuance methods to include mailing and curbside pickup options.

During this pandemic, four new stores were authorized as WIC vendors remotely using technology and newly created processes to allow for consistency in service. Across the state, a total of 209 stores attended required, interactive vendor trainings via Zoom.

512 STORES ACROSS OREGON
Including independent stores, local, regional and national chains, and pharmacies

ACCOUNTED FOR NEARLY
\$45 MILLION

in total dollars spent by WIC participants at local stores

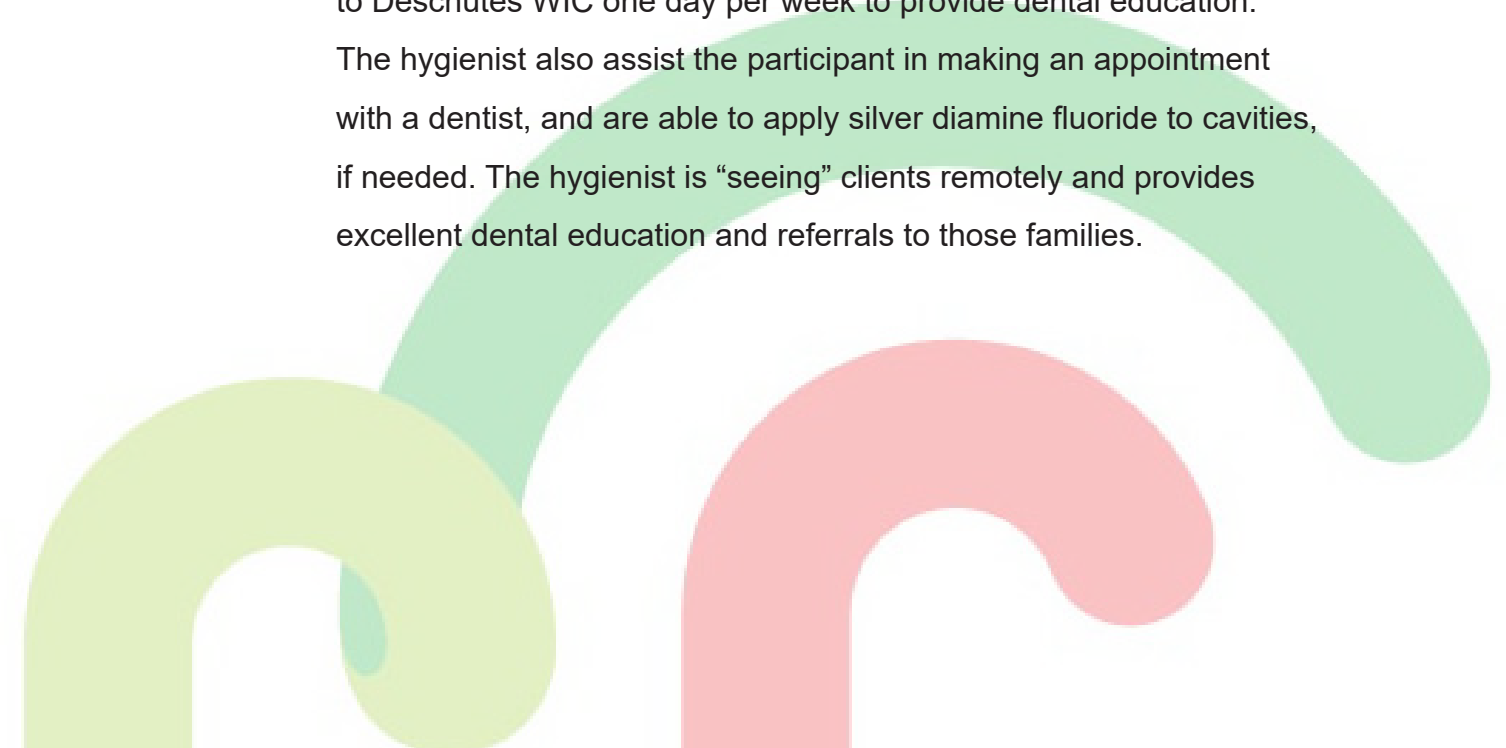


PARTNERING TOGETHER

Oregon WIC local agencies have developed great relationships with external partners to continue the work we do. Of course, this year provided us with some challenges in terms of physical distancing; here are two examples of how WIC worked with partners to meet the needs of our participants.

The Washington County WIC Program contracted with the Beaverton City Library to offer quarterly English and Spanish virtual storytimes for the Washington County participants. Serving children five years and younger is a core library service, particularly in the area of kindergarten readiness. The goal of the partnership is to capitalize on their shared audience and “meet families where they are” to provide a storytime experience enhanced with early literacy and nutrition information.

Deschutes County WIC has a long-standing partnership with Advantage Dental and continues to collaborate to serve their mutual clients. Advantage Dental provides an Advanced Practice Dental Hygienist to Deschutes WIC one day per week to provide dental education. The hygienist also assist the participant in making an appointment with a dentist, and are able to apply silver diamine fluoride to cavities, if needed. The hygienist is “seeing” clients remotely and provides excellent dental education and referrals to those families.





COMMITTING TO RACIAL EQUITY

The Oregon WIC program is committed to creating systems of health equity for all individuals, families and communities. We strive to maintain a welcoming and trauma-informed work environment that reflects and supports the racial and ethnic diversity of our participants, local agencies, partners and communities.

We have adopted a [strategic plan](#) that advances the work of equity, diversity and inclusion and have identified priorities for future work based on a racial equity program assessment. Oregon WIC commits to working towards racial equity by addressing institutional and individual racism, acknowledging implicit bias, reconsidering our practices, and adapting how we do what we do.

We acknowledge that Black, Native, Indigenous, and Communities of Color in Oregon experience inequities and disparities in health due to racism, oppression, and historical trauma.

We believe government has a primary role in disrupting and dismantling these racist systems, and it is crucial to address system inequities faced by our communities.

We envision an Oregon where racial inequities and disparities are eliminated and Black, Native, Indigenous, and Communities of Color and other historically marginalized communities experience lifelong health and wellbeing.

WIC NUMBERS

WIC served

116,334

Oregon women, infants and children

• 31,673 women • 84,661 infants and children

\$44.7 MILLION

in WIC benefits were spent at authorized grocery stores and pharmacies in Oregon during the federal fiscal year



43%

 of women living in rural and frontier areas used WIC during pregnancy

\$707,100

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

The FDNP provides fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables and education on selecting and preparing fresh produce while supporting local farmers markets and farmers. FDNP includes 665 authorized farmers

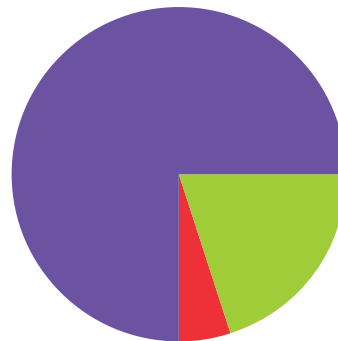
69%

 of WIC families are working families

WIC FUNDING

WIC FUNDING SOURCES

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



75% Healthy food

20% Nutrition and breastfeeding services

5% 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.