



# HOW WIC POSITIVELY IMPACTS LOCAL COMMUNITIES



## RETAIL AND WIC – A WIN-WIN: BRINGING MONEY TO LOCAL ECONOMIES AND HEALTHY FOOD TO LOCAL RESIDENTS

There are over 47,000 authorized WIC retailers in the US, from small corner stores to big box stores. In fiscal year 2013, \$6.3 billion in WIC food benefits were spent in local communities across the country. Nearly \$2 billion of those resources were provided through WIC cost containment initiatives that save federal tax dollars. The most prominent cost containment measure, the WIC infant formula manufacturers’ rebate program, generated sufficient non-taxpayer WIC revenue in FY2014 to support over 1 in 4 WIC participants.

For over forty years, the *Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)* has been strengthening local communities across America. In urban, rural and suburban areas, WIC’s time-limited services and benefits ensure that children get a strong, healthy start in life.

WIC positively impacts local communities in a variety of ways:

- WIC brings money and healthy food into local communities,
- supports local farmers, and
- helps foster community partnerships that improve access to healthy food and ensure that local health and social service networks are strong and efficient.

This WIC-corner store partnership resulted in store modifications including stocking shelves with more fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low-fat milk, eggs, beans, water, and more. WIC partnered with diverse stakeholders throughout East St. Louis to form a coalition called *Make Health Happen*. To promote both the community’s health and the corner store initiative, *Make Health Happen* signage was posted throughout the stores. Additional marketing included shelf talkers, visual merchandising, and conducting nutrition education and cooking demonstrations. Informational resources on local food pantries, farmers’ markets, and local meal sites.

## FARMERS’ MARKET PARTNERSHIPS

WIC also supports farmers’ markets – WIC families spent over \$15 million to

## DAVIDSON COUNTY WIC, TENNESSEE

“WIC is an economic boost to our community - \$13,949,610 in WIC foods were redeemed in 93 Davidson County WIC authorized grocery stores.”

– Davidson County WIC

## EAST SIDE HEALTH DISTRICT WIC IN EAST ST. LOUIS, ILLINOIS

East Side Health District WIC partnered with seven local corner stores to increase both the amount and variety of healthy foods. East St. Louis has approximately 42 corner stores and only two grocery stores.





purchase fresh and local produce at their neighborhood farmers' market. Many Farmers' Markets also accept WIC Cash Value Vouchers (CVV). In fiscal year 2015, 17,926 local farmers were authorized as *WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program* (FMNP) vendors. Farmers benefit from the business and families benefit from fresh, local and seasonal produce. Currently, 48 States, ITOs and US Territory WIC programs participate in WIC FMNP.

## RACINE KENOSHA COMMUNITY ACTION IN KENOSHA, WISCONSIN

Racine Kenosha Community Action WIC is collaborating with local farmers to improve access to fresh, local produce. For example, Green Acres Farm is a weekly on-site farm stand at Racine Kenosha Community Action that provides WIC families and the community with an opportunity to purchase locally grown fruits and vegetables with WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) checks, Senior Fruit & Vegetable vouchers, or cash. The local WIC agency has worked with this market and other farmers' markets in the City of Kenosha to increase the number of farmers who accept WIC FMNP checks.

## WICHITA FALLS-WICHITA COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT WIC IN WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS

Wichita Falls-Wichita County Public Health District WIC, along with other local organizations, started a new project to increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables. The Wichita Falls Area Food Bank houses a program through which they provide a booklet worth \$30 to WIC clients to purchase fruits and vegetables at the local farmers' market. However, Wichita County WIC discovered that transportation barriers discouraged many WIC clients from participating. To overcome this challenge, WIC staff coordinated the distribution of vouchers on site and at the food truck for fresh fruits and vegetables at the local WIC clinic, and local farmers travelled to the clinic to make the produce easily accessible for eligible participants. These changes led to increased profits for the local farmers in the first two weeks, and over \$7,000 spent over the course of Summer 2015 at the WIC clinic farmers' market.

## LOCAL WIC AGENCIES: BUILDING CAPACITY AND STREAMLINING SERVICES IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

WIC helps build capacity in local communities. Strengthening partnerships between healthcare and other community resources helps ensure families receive effective

and efficient support. Referrals or connections to services such as prenatal or pediatric care, dental care, and social services, are part of the core services provided through WIC. Through referrals, WIC builds bridges, connecting families to primary and preventive health care and social service resources.

## OSAGE NATION WIC, OKLAHOMA

Osage Nation WIC works across the community by attending health fairs, and working closely with Osage County hospitals, clinics, Indian Health Service and shelters in the Tulsa, Ponca City, and Bartlesville area. Successful collaborations have resulted in new pregnancy and nutrition classes and free flu shots in the community.

## CCI HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

CCI WIC formed a coalition in 2015—including providers, vendors, food banks, K-12 schools, government agencies, military facilities, faith based organizations, and farmers—to improve the health of WIC participants and other vulnerable families in their community. In partnership with AmeriCorps, the local WIC agency launched a "resource navigator" program enabling WIC participants to access preventive services throughout the community. The resource navigator assists families in making appointments with primary care physicians and other preventive service providers. Through this and other activities, CCI WIC increased referrals to medical home providers, achieved successful interagency collaboration, and created a community resource database shared among resource navigators, community health workers, social work interns, and other service providers.

