



WIC remains in operation in Missouri.

The Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, known as WIC, remains in operation in Missouri. Local agencies continue to support current participants and to enroll new participants who may now be income-eligible due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Given the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to control the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through means of social distancing, the United States Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has approved Missouri's request to waive the WIC program's physical presence requirement. Normal clinic operations that require employees, participants and applicants to physically come into the clinic create an undesirable risk and there are mandatory clinic closures in some areas. A waiver of physical presence removes a requirement that could prevent or impede the provision of essential WIC services to participants under current circumstances.

The approval to waive the physical presence requirement includes the ability to defer anthropometric and bloodwork requirements necessary to determine nutritional risk for the period the physical presence waiver is in effect per section 2203(a)(1)(B) of H.R. 6201.

Missouri WIC has requested additional waivers to allow WIC local agencies and retailers to better serve current and new WIC participants while limiting exposure and travel for WIC participants and staff. These strategies will help local, state and national efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19 and will allow WIC participants to receive services if under quarantine. Missouri will act swiftly to implement new strategies for remote service delivery as additional waivers are approved. The current waivers have been approved through May 31, 2020, with an option to request an extension, if needed.

WIC participants may now choose from expanded options in a variety of food categories to help address WIC product shortages that have occurred because of food distribution issues. WIC participants may substitute Jif, Skippy and Peter Pan peanut butters in the same size; substitute medium eggs if large eggs are not available; and purchase quarts and gallons of the same variety of milk to total the number of gallons on their checks. The WIC state agency will decrease the maximum quantity printed on checks to allow WIC customers to purchase smaller quantities of food items from multiple retailers for up to the full amount of their food prescription. The WIC program is considering other product list expansions at this time to be effective throughout May 31, 2020, unless extended. Per WIC requirements, retailers must allow WIC participants to purchase the full amount of items on their check, if available in the store, and should not be held to quantity limitations. WIC participants may also inquire about the possibility of ordering formula from an authorized pharmacy for later pick-up within the same month if formula is not available in their immediate area.

Pregnant women, new mothers, and families with children from birth through their fifth birthday can learn more about qualifying and enrolling in the Missouri WIC program by visiting the Missouri WIC website at wic.mo.gov to locate their local agency's phone number, or by calling 1-800-TEL-LINK (1-800-835-5465). Contact the local agency to find out about program changes due to COVID-19, or if an appointment by phone is needed due to illness or quarantine.

ADDITIONAL FOOD DISTRIBUTION GUIDANCE

Maximum quantity on checks: The state agency will decrease the maximum quantity allowed on checks for the food items below to allow participants to purchase smaller quantities of food items on multiple visits to the same or different retailers. Participants can use all checks in one shopping trip if the total quantity is available.

1.
 - a. Formula
 - b. Tuna
 - c. Salmon
 - d. Sardines
 - e. Lactose free milk
 - f. Soy milk
 - g. 4 oz. container of infant fruits and vegetables
 - h. 2 pack of 4 oz. container of infant fruit and vegetables
 - i. Infant meats
2. **Formula:** If participants cannot locate formula at a retailer in their area, they may inquire about the possibility of ordering formula from the pharmacy for later pick-up. The formula must be redeemed for the month that it is issued.
3. **Milk:** Substitutions of half gallons or quarts to equal the number of gallons is allowed if gallons of milk are not available. **Milk varieties must remain the same as prescribed on the check (i.e. 1%, skim, whole).** Variety substitutions cannot be made at this time.
4. **Peanut Butter:** Substitutions of Jif, Peter Pan, and Skippy in 16-18 oz. containers of creamy, crunchy, regular, or smooth peanut butter is allowed if participants cannot locate store brand peanut butter.
5. **Eggs:** Substitutions of Medium for Large eggs.
6. **Whole Wheat Bread can't be substituted at this time.** Families may purchase whole wheat pasta, brown rice, or tortillas as listed in the Approved Food List, where available.

*This guidance will be expanded as new information is received from USDA.