



News Release

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Waiver extension: WIC will continue to provide remote services

OLYMPIA – Congress recently extended waivers that permit Washington WIC to offer remote services through September 30, 2020. WIC is the [Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children](#). While the rules normally require in-person meetings, the waivers allow WIC to enroll new applicants, provide nutrition education and breastfeeding support, and issue food benefits by phone or video chat. Since WIC started offering remote services, program participation grew by about 4 percent and the rate of missed appointments dropped from 15 percent to almost zero.

Washington WIC also expanded the list of allowed foods to give families more choices. Participants now shop for WIC foods using a WIC card, which makes shopping easier. The [WIC Shopper App](#) is another new tool that helps WIC families pick out the right foods. The app has parenting tips and recipes that are great for all young families, not just those on WIC.

WIC gives families access to nutritious food and provides health screening, risk assessment, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and referrals to health and social services. The program provides essential services for pregnant people, new and breastfeeding moms, infants, and children under five. Most pregnant people and young children on Medicaid or Basic Food (SNAP) qualify for WIC services.

“During this stressful time, good nutrition is more important than ever,” says Paul Throne, director of Washington WIC.

“It was difficult to figure out how more than 900 staff in 206 locations could provide all services remotely, but our local agencies did it,” Throne said. “This approach ensures that WIC families continue to receive essential nutrition support while preventing potential exposure to COVID-19. We hope we’ll be able to continue providing remote services throughout the pandemic.”

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Given layoffs and other economic consequences related to COVID-19, people may be seeking WIC services for the first time. WIC has capacity and welcomes new families. To find WIC services in your area:

- Text "WIC" to 96859
- [Visit ParentHelp123's ResourceFinder](#)
- Call the Help Me Grow WA Hotline at 1-800-322-2588

The [DOH website](#) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. [Find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#). Sign up for the DOH blog, [Public Health Connection](#).

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