



# Whatcom County WIC Facts: 2008

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

## Infants Born Served by WIC

Whatcom County ....46%  
Statewide .....50%

## Women, Infants and Children Served

Total: 6,925

Infants and children under 5 ..... 4,845

Pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women.... 2,080

## WIC and the Farmers Market Nutrition Programs Benefit the Local Economy

Dollars to grocery stores  
\$2,917,970

Dollars to farmers  
\$14,882

## WIC Families

Working families .....67%

Families living in poverty .....60%

Even though they are working, the majority of WIC families are living in poverty. In 2008, the monthly income for a family of four living in poverty was \$1,767 or less.

## WIC Nutrition Education Promotes Healthy Choices

Total nutrition education sessions ..... 17,928

WIC nutrition education:

- Emphasizes healthy habits so families can eat better and stay active to prevent obesity and other chronic diseases.
- Promotes breastfeeding for at least the first year of life. And, helps working mothers breastfeed longer by providing breast pumps.
- Helps prevent early childhood caries by giving parents ideas for healthy snacks and stressing dental care by age one.

## WIC Attracts Families to Preventive Health Services

WIC referrals ..... 41,267

WIC helps families get the services they need.



\* Maternity Support Services

# Washington WIC

"...improving the lifelong health and nutrition of women, infants and young children"

# Whatcom County

## WIC Sites

**Lummi Nation**  
Bellingham

**Nooksack Indian Tribe**  
Everson

**Sea Mar Community  
Health Center**  
Bellingham

**Whatcom County  
Health Department**  
Bellingham

## Statewide WIC Facts 2008<sup>1</sup>

**292,000 pregnant and breastfeeding women and children under age 5 benefit from WIC**

- 70% are from working families.
- 12,000 are from military families, including women serving in the armed forces.
- Families receive healthy foods, education and counseling on nutrition and physical activity, referrals, and breastfeeding support.

**\$127 million in grocery store sales**

- Each client receives checks to purchase an average of \$52 a month in healthy foods.
- Families buy healthy food with their WIC checks at more than 700 grocery stores statewide.

**\$738,000 in purchases from local farmers**

- With WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program checks, families can eat more fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers.

**83% of WIC mothers give their child a healthy start by breastfeeding, far exceeding the national rate of 53%.<sup>2</sup>**

- Children who are not breastfed are more likely to have asthma, diabetes, and childhood obesity.<sup>3</sup>
- Mothers who breastfeed lose pregnancy weight gain more quickly.
- Mothers who do not breastfeed have higher rates of breast cancer and osteoporosis.<sup>3</sup>

**In the past 30 years, Washington WIC has contributed more than \$1 billion in grocery sales and saved an estimated \$700 million in health care costs.<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Federal Fiscal Year 2008.

<sup>2</sup> "Mothers Survey, Ross Products Division, and Abbott Laboratories." 2006-Abbott Laboratories.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. HHS Blueprint for Action on Breastfeeding, Wash.D.C., DHHS, Office of Women's Health, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Mathematica Policy Research: The savings in Medicaid costs for newborns and their mothers from prenatal participation in the WIC program. Prepared for U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, October 1990.

## Contact Us

Visit [www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/wic](http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/wic) to find more information about Washington WIC, a copy of our Annual Report, and county-specific fact sheets. You can also call 1.800.841.1410 and press 0, or write PO Box 47886, Olympia WA 98504-7886. For persons with disabilities, this document is available on request in other formats. To submit a request, please call 1-800-841-1410 (TDD/TTY 1-800-833-6388). This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

