

[Insert Center or Sponsoring Organization Letterhead]

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This letter is intended for parents or guardians of children enrolled in a child care center. [Name of Center] offers healthy meals to all enrolled children as part of our participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The CACFP provides reimbursements for healthy meals and snacks served to children enrolled in child care. Please help us comply with the requirements of the CACFP by completing the attached Meal Benefit Income Eligibility Form. In addition, by filling out this form, we will be able to determine if your child(ren) qualifies for free or reduced price meals.

1. Do I need to fill out a Meal Benefit Form for each of my children in day care? You may complete and submit one CACFP Meal Benefit Income Eligibility Form for all children enrolled in child care in your household only if the children in child care are enrolled in the same center. We cannot approve a form that is not complete, so be sure to read the instructions carefully and fill out all required information. Return the completed form to: [(Name of Center, address, phone number)].

2. Who can get free meals without providing income information? Children in households getting Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (formerly Food Stamps), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) benefits can get free meals. Foster children and children enrolled in Head Start are also eligible for free meals. Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for free meals.

3. Who can get reduced price meals? Your children can get low cost meals if your household income is within the reduced price limits on the Federal Income Chart, shown on this application. Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for reduced price meals.

4. May I fill out a form if someone in my household is not a U.S. citizen? Yes. You or your children do not have to be U.S. citizens to qualify for meal benefits offered at the child care center.

5. Who should I include as members of my household? You must include everyone in your household (such as grandparents, other relatives, or friends who live with you) who shares income and expenses. You must include yourself and all children who live with you. You also may include foster children who live with you.

6. How do I report income information and changes in employment status? The income you report must be the total gross income listed by source for each household member received last month. If last month's income does not accurately reflect your circumstances, you may provide a projection of your monthly income. If no significant change has occurred, you may use last month's income as a basis to make this projection. If your household's income is equal to or less than the amounts indicated for your household's size on the attached Income Chart, the center will receive a higher level of reimbursement. Once properly approved for free or reduced price benefits, whether through income or by providing a current SNAP, TANF, FDPIR case number, you will remain eligible for those benefits for 12 months. You should notify us, however, if you or someone in your household becomes unemployed and the loss of income causes your household income to be within the eligibility standards.

7. What if my income is not always the same? List the amount that you normally get. For example, if you normally get \$1000 each month, but you missed some work last month and only got \$900, put down that you get \$1000 per month. If you normally get overtime, include it, but not if you only get it sometimes.

8. What if I have foster children? Foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court are eligible for free meals. Any foster child in the household is eligible for free meals regardless of income. Households may include foster children on the Meal Benefit Form, but are not required to include payments received for the foster child as income. Households wishing to apply for such benefits for foster children should contact [name, address, phone number].

9. We are in the military, do we include our housing and supplemental allowances as income? If your housing is part of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative and you receive the Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance, do not include these allowances as income. Also, in regard to deployed service members, only that portion of a deployed service member's income made available by them or on their behalf to the household will be counted as income to the household. Combat Pay, including Deployment Extension Incentive Pay (DEIP) is also excluded and will not be counted as income to the household. All other allowances must be included in your gross income.

10. (Pricing program only) Will the information I give be verified? Maybe. We may ask you to send written proof to verify the information you submitted on the form. **What if I disagree with the decision about the information I complete on this form?** You should talk to your [Center or Sponsoring Organization].

In the operation of child feeding programs, no person will be discriminated against because of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

If you have other questions or need help, call [phone number].

Sincerely,

[signature]





United States Department of Agriculture



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



WIC Since 1974
The Foundation of
Healthy Families

What is WIC? WIC was established as a permanent program in 1974 to safeguard the health of low-income women, infants, and children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk. This mission is carried out by providing nutritious foods to supplement diets, nutrition education (including breastfeeding promotion and support), and referrals to health and other social services. Find out more:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/about-wic-wic-glance>

Where is WIC available?

The program is available in all 50 States, 34 Indian Tribal Organizations, American Samoa, District of Columbia, Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. While funded through grants from the Federal Government, WIC is administered by 90 State agencies, with services provided at a variety of clinic locations including, but not limited to, county health departments, hospitals, schools, and Indian Health Service facilities. To find the WIC offices serving your area go to:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/contacts>

What food benefits do WIC participants receive?

The foods provided through the WIC Program are designed to supplement participants' diets with specific nutrients. WIC authorized foods include infant cereal, baby foods, iron-fortified adult cereal, fruits and vegetables, vitamin C-rich fruit or vegetable juice, eggs, milk, cheese, yogurt, soy-based beverages, tofu, peanut butter, dried and canned beans/peas, canned fish, whole wheat bread and other whole-grain options. For infants of women who do not fully breastfeed, WIC provides iron-fortified infant formula. Spe-

cial infant formulas and medical foods may also be provided if medically indicated. Learn more about food benefits here: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-food-packages>

Program benefits include more than food.

WIC benefits are not limited only to food. Participants have access to a number of resources, including health screening, nutrition and breastfeeding counseling, immunization screening and referral, substance abuse referral, and more. Find out more:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-benefits-and-services>

Am I eligible?

Pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to age 5 who meet certain requirements are eligible. These requirements include income eligibility and State residency. Additionally, the applicant must be individually determined to be at "nutrition risk" by a health professional or a trained health official. To find out if you might be income eligible for WIC benefits go to:

<http://wic.fns.usda.gov/wps/pages/start.jsf>



How WIC Helps

WIC supplemental foods have shown to provide wide ranging benefits. They include longer, safer pregnancies, with fewer premature births and infant deaths; improved dietary outcomes for infants and children; improved maternal health, and improved performance at school, among others. In addition to health benefits, WIC participants showed significant savings in healthcare costs when compared to non-participants. Learn more about how WIC helps:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/about-wic-how-wic-helps>

What is “nutrition risk” and why is it important?

Two major types of nutrition risk are recognized for WIC eligibility: medically-based risks such as anemia, underweight, history of pregnancy complications, or poor pregnancy outcomes; and dietary risks, such as inappropriate nutrition/feeding practices or failure to meet the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Women, infants, and children at nutrition risk have much greater risk of experiencing health problems. Learn more about nutrition risk: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-eligibility-requirements>

I’m eligible, what do I do next?

Those who are interested in applying for benefits should contact their State agency to request information on where to schedule an appointment. Applicants will be advised on what to bring to the appointment in order to verify eligibility. Contact your State agency here:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/contacts/>

EBT makes it easier to use food benefits.

In most WIC State agencies, participants receive paper checks or vouchers to purchase food, while a few distribute food through centralized warehouses or deliver the foods to participants’ homes. However, all WIC State agencies have been mandated to implement WIC electronic benefit transfer (EBT) statewide by October 1, 2020. EBT uses a magnetic stripe or smart card, similar to a credit card, that participants use in the check-out lane to redeem their food benefits. EBT provides a safer, easier, and more efficient grocery experience and provides greater flexibility in the way WIC participants can shop. Find out more and check if your State supports EBT:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-electronic-benefits-transfer-ebt>

Focus on breastfeeding.

Even though breast milk is the most nutritious and complete source of food for infants, nationally less than 30% of infants are breastfed at 1 year of age. A major goal of the WIC Program is to improve the nutritional status of infants; therefore, WIC mothers are encouraged to breastfeed their infants, unless medically contraindicated. Pregnant women and new WIC mothers are provided breastfeeding educational materials and support through counseling and guidance. Explore the benefits of breastfeeding and find helpful resources here:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/breastfeeding-promotion-and-support-wic>

WIC Facts

- If you participate in another assistance program you may be automatically income-eligible for WIC.
- Breastfeeding mothers are eligible to participate in WIC longer than non-breastfeeding mothers.
- More than half of the infants in the U.S. participate in WIC.
- WIC participants support the local economy through their purchases.
- WIC works with farmers markets to help increase participant access to provide fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables. Find out more here:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fmnp/wic-farmers-market-nutrition-program-fmnp>

Where can I learn more?

Information on FNS programs is available at www.fns.usda.gov/fns/

WIC Locations in Mississippi

Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians

Iva Denson, WIC Director
210 Hospital Circle
Choctaw, MS 39350
Phone: (601) 389-4510
Fax: (601) 389-4511
VOC Contact: 601-389-4519
Email: IDenson@choctaw.org

Website: <http://www.choctaw.org/government/tribalServices/health/wic/index.html>

Mississippi State Department of Health

Lela Carter, WIC Director
805 S. Wheatley St., Suite 400B
Ridgeland, MS 39157
Phone: (601) 991-6000
Fax: (601) 956-4925
Toll Free: 1-800-545-7647 / 1-866-458-4948
VOC Contact: 601-991-6000

Email: lela.carter@ms.gov

Website: <http://www.msdh.state.ms.us>