



## NEWS RELEASE

### ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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## WIC can serve more women and children in Alabama

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Attention Alabama families! You may qualify for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, better known as WIC. If you are a pregnant or breastfeeding woman or the parent or guardian of a child up to age 5, you are invited and encouraged to apply for WIC at your local county health department.

Under the recently released 2002 federal poverty guidelines, even more families can be served through the program. WIC is open to participants whose incomes are up to 185 percent of the federal poverty level. Check the table below to see whether your family qualifies:

Family size	Annual Income	Weekly Income
1	\$16,391	\$316
2	\$22,089	\$425
3	\$27,787	\$535
4	\$33,485	\$644
5	\$39,183	\$754

WIC participants must have both a limited income and a nutritional need. Families who receive Medicaid, Food Stamps, or TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) already meet the income qualifications for WIC. Even families who do not qualify for these three programs may be eligible for WIC because of its less-restrictive income limits.

For example, a single mother and her baby can have an income of up to \$425 per week (before taxes are deducted) and qualify for WIC. A husband and wife with three children can have a total weekly income of as much as \$754 (before taxes) and meet the income requirements to participate in WIC.

WIC is a nutrition education and supplemental food program that historically has proven to be an extremely valuable preventive health program. Studies have shown that WIC helps prevent low birth weight, premature babies, and anemia in children. WIC also provides nutrition education and supplemental foods during the early, formative years.

Wendy Blackmon, WIC Director, Alabama Department of Public Health, said, "We especially want to reach women during their pregnancies because good prenatal nutrition reduces the risk of low birth weight and other problems. We want to educate families about the importance of good nutrition. For example, if a mother is anemic, she is issued a food prescription redeemable at grocery stores to buy foods high in iron. A nutrition plan is tailored to the individual's needs."

For more information contact your local county health department or call the statewide toll-free Healthy Beginnings line at 1-800-654-1385.

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