

Definition of Indicator

The Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) provide nutrition services to women and children in Orange County. WIC provides food, nutrition education, and breastfeeding support to low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women and young children from birth up to five years of age who are at nutritional risk. CSFP provides nutritious food supplements to women during the perinatal period and to children from birth up to six years who are from low-income families and vulnerable to poor nutrition.

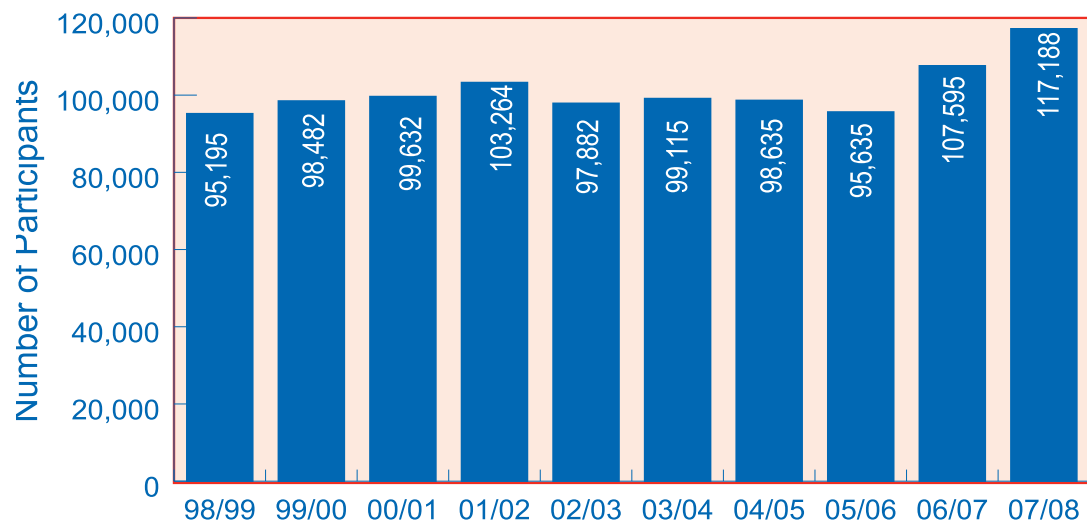
Findings

The total number of participants served by Orange County's four organizations providing WIC services in 2007/08 was 117,188. The same year, CSFP served 1,746 women and children.

STATEWIDE:

In 2008, California had 1,412,210 WIC participants. In 2007, there were 1,378,794 participants.⁴

Number of Participants Served by the WIC Program, 1998/99 to 2007/08



Trends

There was an 23.1% increase in the total number of participants served by WIC since 1998/99. In 1998/99 WIC participants numbered 95,159 compared to the 117,188 served in 2007/08. After initial growth the level stabilized around 98,000 per year between 1998/99 and 2005/06. Then there was a 22.5% increase in the last two years.

From 1998/99, the number of CSFP perinatal women and children participants decreased from 11,128 to 1,746 in 2007/08, a 84.3% decline. (Because CSFP decreased its services to women and children, and increased its services to seniors due to WIC's improved services and outreach to women and children, the number of CSFP participants has declined).

RELATED INDICATORS:

- Early Prenatal Care
- CalWORKs
- Low Birth Weight
- Access to Healthcare
- Infant Mortality

Number and Percent of Participants in the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), 1998/99 to 2007/08

Participants	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08
Total Number of Participants Served	19,280	20,545	24,270	21,643	25,257	24,153	23,756	19,958	21,763	22,180
Number of Women and Children Served*	11,128	8,980	4,860	5,693	7,658	5,228	3,587	1,797	2,485	1,746
Authorized Caseload	19,800	22,082	21,392	21,392	23,092	23,092	23,096	21,814	21,814	21,283
Percent of Authorized Caseload Served	97%	93%	113%	102%	109%	105%	104%	92%	100%	96%

*Services to pregnant/postpartum women and children only; excludes low-income senior participation.

✓ See page 155 in Supplemental Tables for additional data

Why is this Important?

The WIC program is considered one of the most effective federal human service programs. Studies have found that WIC reduces infant mortality and low birth weight and increases duration of pregnancy. WIC improves the growth of nutritionally at-risk infants and children and decreases the incidence of iron deficiency anemia in children. Even mild forms of under-nutrition can cause impaired cognitive development, fatigue, trouble concentrating in school, and stunted growth. Children enrolled in WIC are more likely to have a regular source of medical care, have more up-to-date immunizations, and demonstrate improved intellectual development.¹

Child Hunger and Poor Nutrition

The American Institute of Nutrition provides evidence showing a relationship between a family's food security and assurance of healthy life. Households with food insecurity are more likely to experience reduced diet quality, anxiety about their food supply, increased use of emergency food sources or other coping behaviors, and sometimes, hunger. In 2000, over half a million U.S. children, 0.8%, lived in households with child hunger. For children with families living below poverty, food insecurity and hunger become more prevalent. Approximately 2.2% of the children living in poverty experienced hunger compared to 0.5% of children living at or above poverty.²

What's Happening in Orange County?

WIC and the CSFP provide nutrition services to women and children in Orange County.

- There are 4 WIC Providers: Orange County Health Care Agency, Public Health Foundation Enterprises, Planned Parenthood of San Bernardino and Orange County, and Camino Health Centers. There is one CSFP Provider: Community Action Partnerships of Orange County.
- Over 100,000 Orange County WIC participants receive vouchers monthly. Over 1,700 CSFP women and children participants receive food boxes monthly.
- WIC and CSFP participation increases during hard economic times.

What's working:

- The General Accounting Office in 1992 estimated that each \$1.00 spent on WIC food and nutrition counseling for pregnant women averts \$4.21 in medical costs, income support, and special education expenditures for low-birth weight infants.³
- Children enrolled in WIC are more likely to have a regular source of medical care, have more up-to-date immunizations, and demonstrate better intellectual development.

NATIONWIDE:

WIC served 8,704,510 participants in 2008. This is a 5.1% increase from 8,285,249 participants served in 2007.⁵

DATA SOURCES:

Orange County Health Care Agency/Nutrition Services - WIC Program
 Orange County Community Development Council CSFP

NOTES:

¹U.S. Department of Agriculture, WIC
²America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2002
³U.S. General Accounting Office. Early Intervention: Federal Investments Like WIC Can Produce Savings. GAO/HRD 92-18. Washington DC: GAO, April 1992
^{4,5}United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, 2009