# [WIC 50th Anniversary](https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/localagency/celebrate50.html) **News Release Template 2024**

[Date]

[Organization]

Contact: [Name]

[Phone], [Email]

## [Headline Options – select one]

**[Insert WIC Agency] celebrates 50 years of helping families eat well and be healthy**

**[Insert WIC Agency] celebrates 50 years of improved health and nutrition for Minnesota families**

**[insert WIC agency county] health leaders gather to mark 50 years of the [local WIC agency] program**

For half a century, the Minnesota Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) has increased access to healthy food, nutrition education, and breastfeeding support.

**[Local WIC agency]** is celebrating 50 years of empowering families, building healthier communities, and nurturing the future.

Over the decades, Minnesota has been one of the top five states in the nation for enrolling eligible families. In 2022, about 38% of all infants born in the state were served by WIC.

***[INSERT QUOTE FROM LOCAL WIC AGENCY STAFF]***

WIC started as a pilot project with doctors prescribing healthy food as medicine and grew into a U.S. public health success story supporting generations of Minnesota families from pregnancy to age 5 years. The first WIC site officially opened in Pineville, KY, on Jan. 15, 1974. By the end of the year, WIC was operating in 45 states, including Minnesota. In 2023, Minnesota WIC served an average of 106,000 women, infants, and children monthly, about 7,000 more than the 2022 monthly average. Nearly 95% of eligible Minnesota infants received WIC benefits in 2022.

Decades of studies show WIC works. Available research suggests parents who participate in WIC give birth to healthier babies and buy and eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products. In 2022, MN WIC participants purchased $78 million in WIC foods at grocery stores in Minnesota, including fruits and vegetables, whole grains, beans and peanut butter, milk, eggs, etc. In addition, children who receive WIC benefits show improved cognitive development, are more likely to be up to date on immunizations, have a regular source of medical care and are less likely to suffer anemia due to iron deficiency, according to research.

Minnesota WIC has also evolved over the years implementing peer breastfeeding support, transitioning from paper to online applications, providing remote services during the pandemic, launching the My MN WIC app eight years ago, and now participants use an eWIC card to scan and receive WIC food benefits instead of using paper vouchers. An online shopping pilot was also launched with Hy-Vee stores this year. During the pandemic, WIC provided additional dollars for participants to purchase fruits and vegetables. The change is now a permanent part of the WIC food package.

Minnesota WIC is available in every county and seven Tribal nations in the state. Families can apply for WIC online. Pregnant people, parents – including foster parents and guardians – with an infant or child younger than age 5 years can apply. Families must be income eligible and live in Minnesota.

Learn more about the Minnesota WIC program and the positive impact it has on Minnesota families: **[local WIC agency website]**

For more information, contact [insert local WIC contact here].

###