



# Innovating WIC Outreach: How to Connect More Families to WIC



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**HUNGRY FOR ACTION**

OKLAHOMA'S ANTI-HUNGER  
CONFERENCE 2023

#HungryForActionOK



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# Making the WIC Connection

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Oklahoma State Department of Health

WIC Service





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# Objectives:

- Introduce the WIC program, eligibility requirements, and details of certification.
- Provide information on breastfeeding support, the supplemental food package, and application process.
- Discuss historical and current caseload numbers and trends.
- Present WIC recruitment and retention efforts.
- Call to action: how YOU can help!





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# What is WIC?

- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- Serves pregnant and postpartum women, infants, and children up to age 5 who meet eligibility requirements
- Provides supplemental foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and community referrals







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# Oklahoma WIC Programs (10 total)

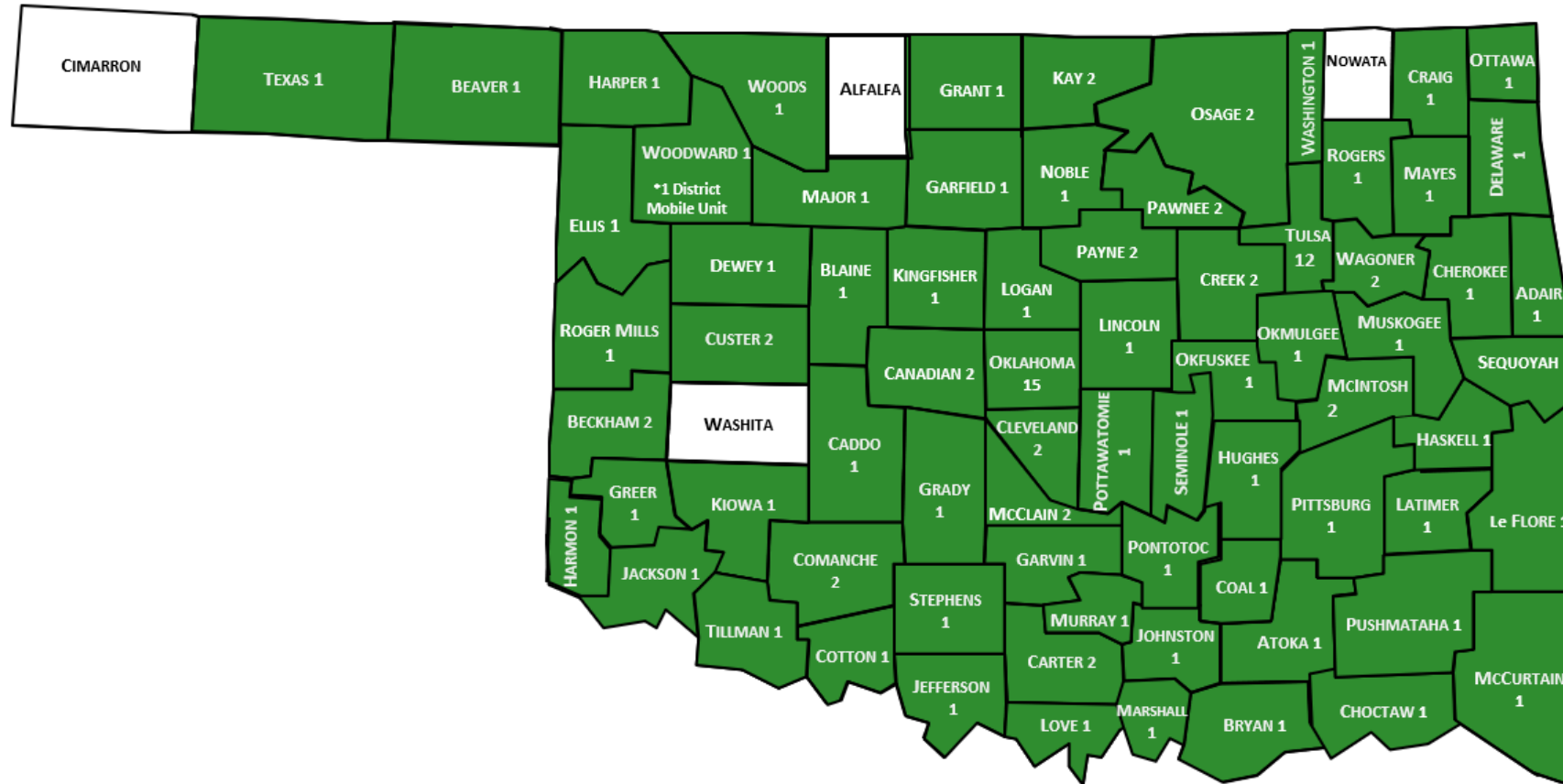
- Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH)
- Chickasaw Nation
- Cherokee Nation
- Choctaw Nation
- Citizen Potawatomi
- Inter-Tribal Council
- Muscogee/Creek Nation
- Osage Tribal Council
- Otoe-Missouria Tribe
- WCD (Wichita, Caddo & Delaware Tribe)



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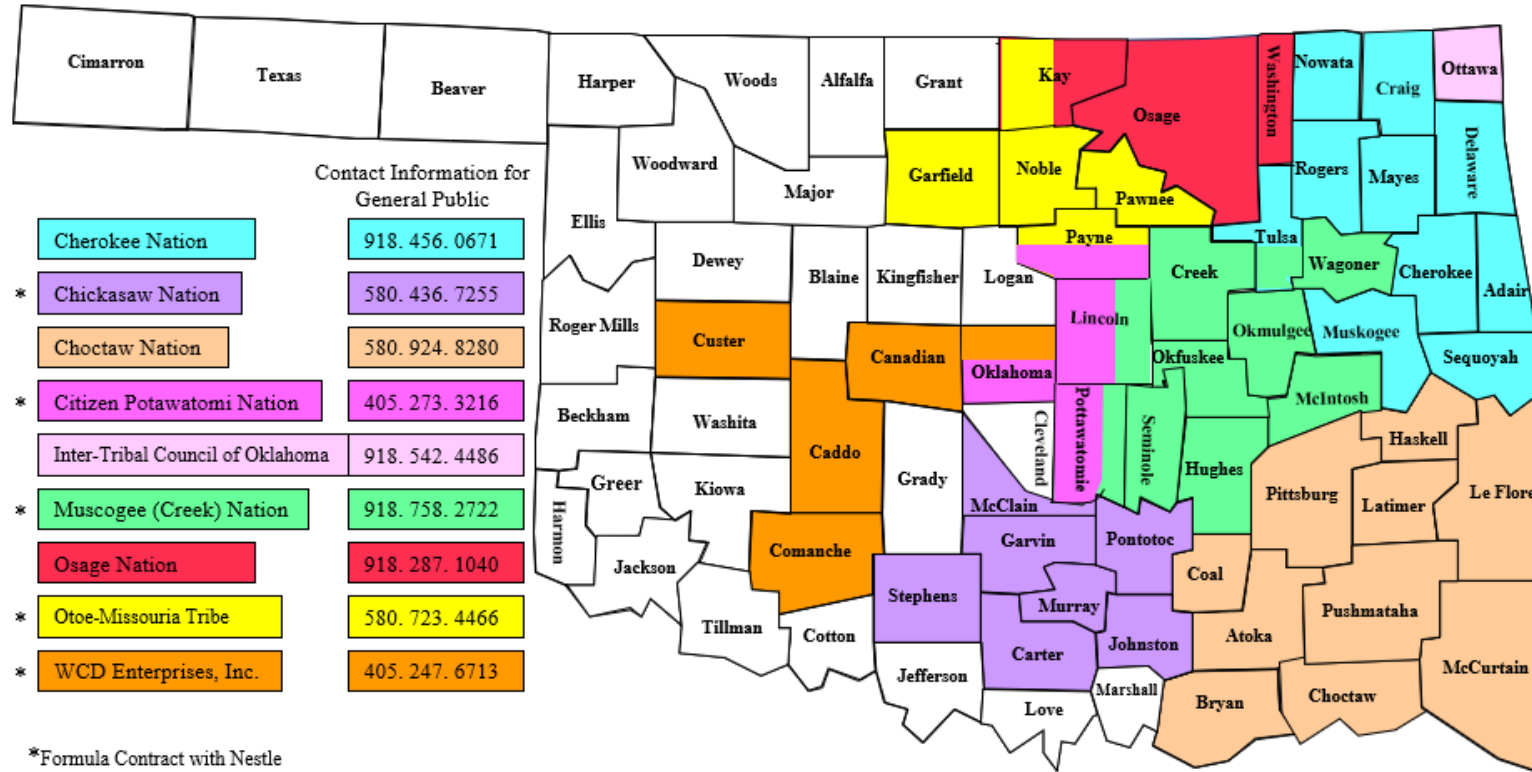


OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH – WIC SERVICE  
COVERAGE AREAS





**Tribal Programs  
WIC Clinic Coverage Areas**



\*Formula Contract with Nestle



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# Who Can Apply?

- Women
  - Pregnant
  - Post-partum
    - Up to 6 months if non-breastfeeding
    - Up to 1 year if breastfeeding
- Legal guardians (or designated proxies) for children under five
  - Parents (single fathers may apply for their children)
  - Grandparents (raising grandchildren)
  - Foster parents





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**WIC Income Eligibility Guidelines\***  
 April 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024

Family Size	Annual Income	Monthly Income	Twice Monthly	Biweekly	Weekly Income
1	\$26,973	\$2,248	\$1,124	\$1,038	\$519
2	36,482	3,041	1,521	1,404	702
3	45,991	3,833	1,917	1,769	885
4	55,500	4,625	2,313	2,135	1,068
5	65,009	5,418	2,709	2,501	1,251
6	74,518	6,210	3,105	2,867	1,434
7	84,027	7,003	3,502	3,232	1,616
8	93,536	7,795	3,898	3,598	1,799
9	103,045	8,588	4,294	3,964	1,982
10	112,554	9,380	4,690	4,329	2,165
11	122,063	10,172	5,086	4,695	2,348
12	131,572	10,965	5,483	5,061	2,531
13	141,081	11,757	5,879	5,427	2,714
14	150,590	12,550	6,275	5,792	2,896
15	160,099	13,342	6,671	6,158	3,079
16	169,608	14,134	7,067	6,524	3,262
For each additional family member add:	+ \$9,509	+ \$793	+ \$397	+ \$366	+ \$183

\*Annual WIC income guidelines were obtained by multiplying the Annual Federal Poverty Guidelines by 1.85 and rounding the results upward to the nearest dollar.

# Income Guidelines

- At or below 185% U.S. Poverty Income Guidelines
- Applicants can be working or unemployed
- Automatically income eligible if qualify for SoonerCare, SNAP, or TANF



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# Nutritional Risk

- Participants must have at least 1 nutritional risk to be eligible for WIC
- Identified during health and nutrition assessment portion of certification appointment



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# Community Referrals

- Referrals for other services are based on risks and needs identified
  - Examples:
    - a. Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)
    - b. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
    - c. Immunization
    - d. Well-Child Clinic
    - e. Prenatal care
    - f. Maternal and child health programs
    - g. Medicaid





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# Certification Lengths

- Pregnant moms: until 6 weeks after estimated due date, then recertify as post-partum
- Post-partum moms:
  - Breastfeeding: until infant turns 1 year
  - Non-breastfeeding: until infant turns 6 months, or 6 months after fetal loss
  - Can recertify with each pregnancy
- Infants: typically until 1<sup>st</sup> birthday, then recertify as child
- Children: 1 calendar year, recertify annually until child turns 5



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# Follow Up Appointments

- **Nutrition education:** completed about 3 months and 9 months after certification
  - Individual, group, online, or via self-paced lesson on the WIC Shopper App
- **Midpoint wellness check:** completed about halfway through certification period







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# Supplemental Food Benefit Packages

- Items chosen for each category based on Dietary Guidelines for Americans
  - Aim to fill common nutrition gaps
  - WIC approved foods must meet specific federal nutrition regulations and cost parameters
- USDA has proposed some updates for future food packages, awaiting final rule





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# Supplemental Food Benefit Packages

- May include:
  - Milk
    - Cheese, tofu, yogurt
  - Beans/peas (dry or canned) or peanut butter
  - Eggs
  - Cereal
    - Hot or cold
  - Juice
  - Whole wheat bread or other whole grain option
    - Whole wheat or corn tortilla, whole wheat pasta, brown rice, bulgur
  - Fresh, frozen, and/or canned fruits and vegetables
  - Fully breastfeeding mom: Canned Fish
  - Infant: formula, fruits/vegetables, cereals, meats





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# WIC Approved Food List

- Provided to participants at certification
- Available online at [Oklahoma.gov/health/wic](https://www.oklahoma.gov/health/wic)
- Available on the WIC Shopper App



For Free Help To Quit Tobacco Call 1-800-QUITNOW Today!

**Breastfeeding is a very special gift for your baby.**

**Questions about breastfeeding?**  
WIC can help you!

**Oklahoma Breastfeeding Hotline**  
1-877-271-MILK (6455)  
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

**Breastfeeding Information & Support**  
<https://www.oklahoma.gov/health/breastfeeding>

**Know Your Rights! It's the Law!**

- Employers shall provide reasonable break time and a private place for an employee to express breast milk for her nursing child for one year after the child's birth.  
Infant Protection and Affordable Care Act signed into law March 23, 2010 (P.L. 111-148)
- Mothers in Oklahoma have the right to nurse their baby anywhere they have the right to be.
- Nursing mothers shall be exempt from jury duty upon their request.

ODH P 449 Effective: October, 2022



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# WIC Benefits for Breastfeeding Moms

- Larger volume & variety supplemental food package
- Free access to lactation experts
- OSDH Breastfeeding Helpdesk: 405-426-8502
- Free breast pumps upon qualification
- Partnership with Oklahoma Breastfeeding Hotline & Coalition of Oklahoma Breastfeeding Advocates (COBA)
  - Hotline: 1-877-271-MILK (6455) or Text OK2BF to 61222





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# Infant Formula

- Provided as needed for first year
- Tailored amount if mother also breastfeeding
- Maximum allowable amounts per USDA regulations
- WIC contract formulas





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# How to Apply

- Online Enrollment Request
  - [oklahoma.gov/health/applywic](http://oklahoma.gov/health/applywic)
  - Oklahoma WIC on Facebook & Instagram
- If no internet access or needs assistance: call state office at 405-426-8500 and we can route to appropriate clinic to help complete application



English ▼

## Oklahoma Women, Infants, and Children Enrollment Request

Completion of the enrollment request begins the process of applying for WIC, but does not guarantee you will receive WIC benefits. If you have questions about the application process or the WIC program please call 1-888-OKLAWIC (1-888-655-2942).



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# Let's Talk Numbers!





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# Oklahoma WIC Caseload

- Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) WIC alone:
  - Total caseload >70,000 (June 2023)
  - Breakdown: ~50% children, 25% women, 25% infants
    - ½ of all babies born in Oklahoma receive WIC
- Combined data with tribal partners: statewide caseload ~93,000
- Any eligible person can receive WIC from any program in the state, regardless of tribal status.

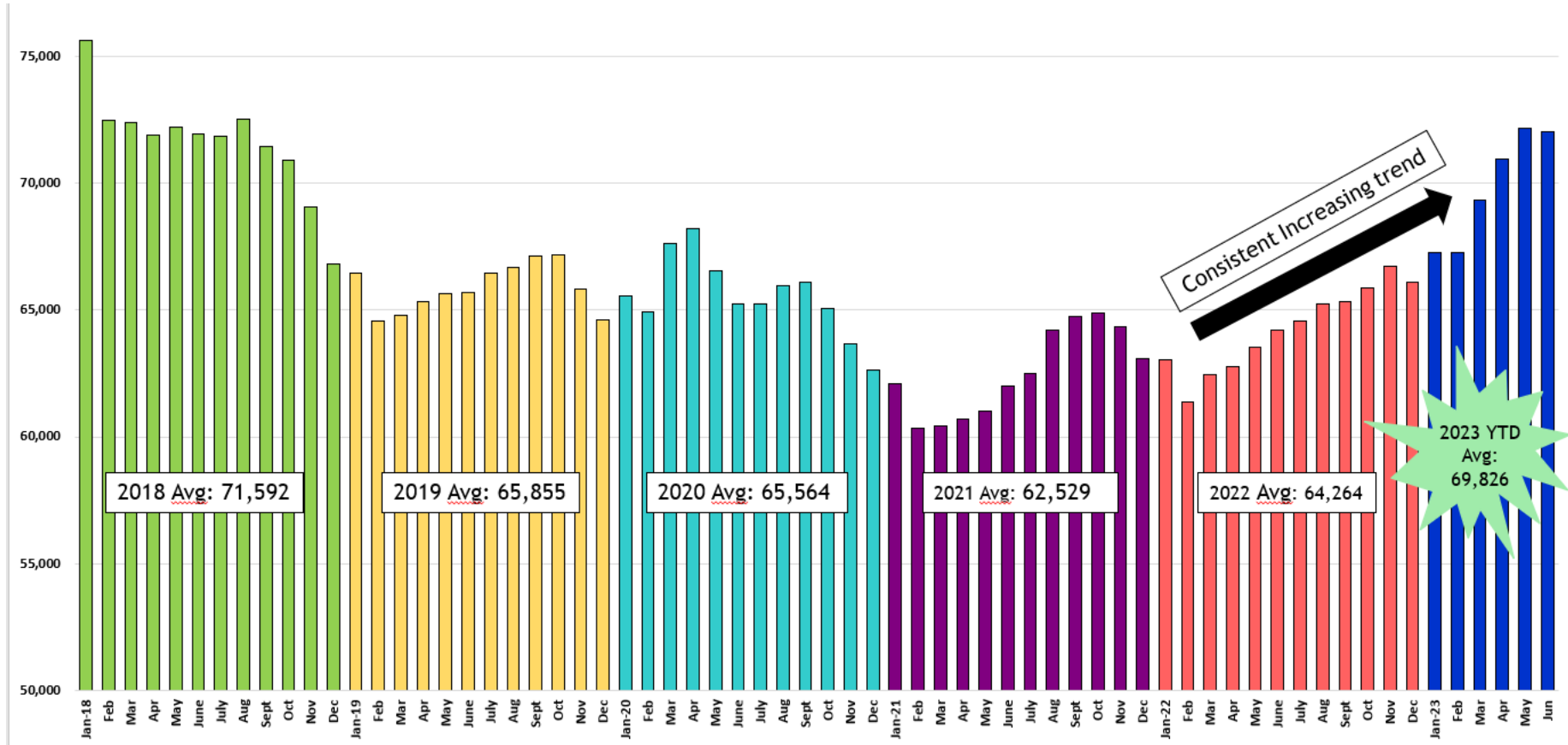


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# OSDH WIC Caseload

January 2018-  
June 2023

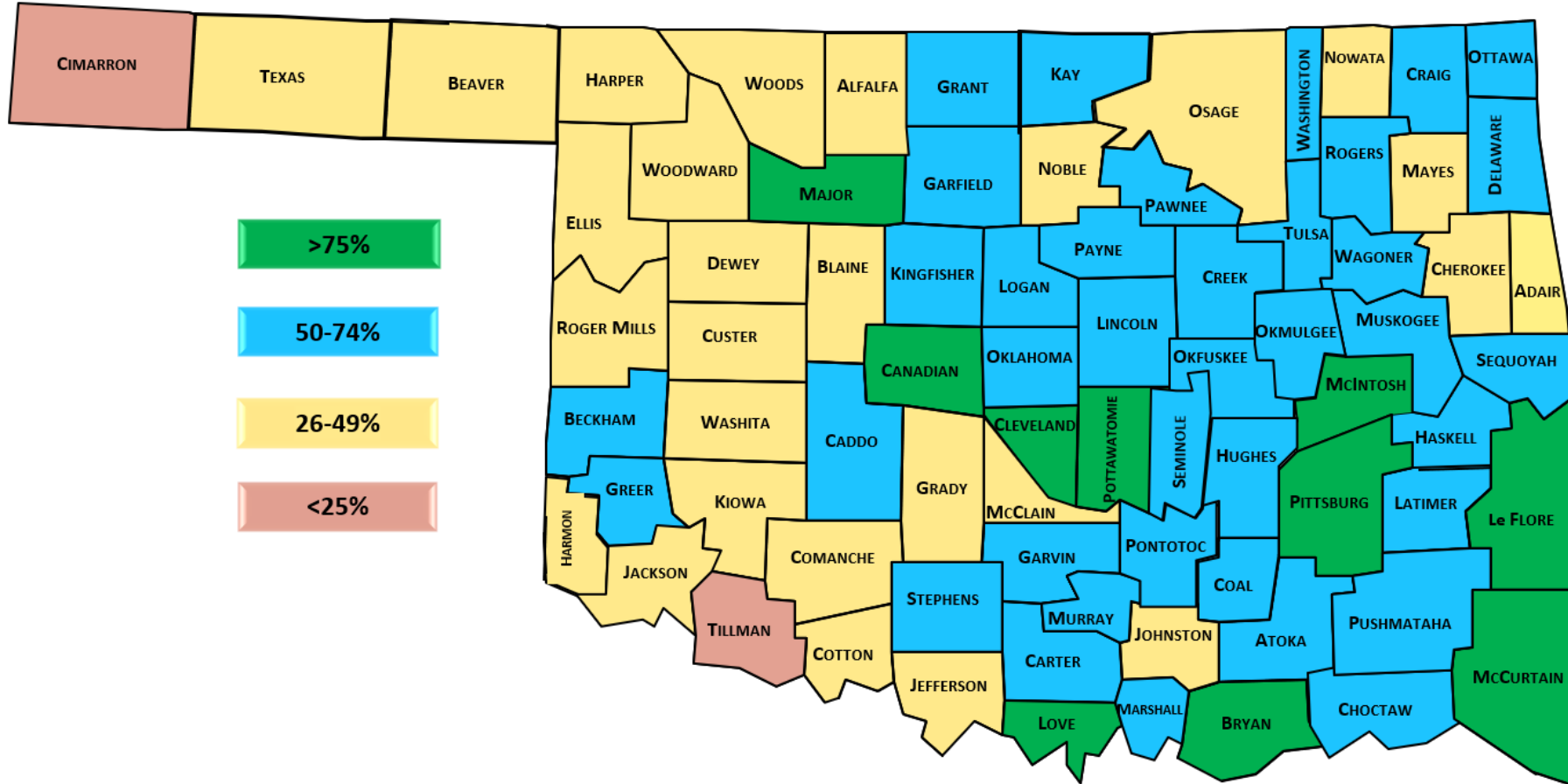




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WIC ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS SERVED BY COUNTY OF RESIDENCE  
OSDH AND TRIBAL COMBINED, JANUARY 2023



*Overall estimate:  
64% of eligible Oklahomans receiving WIC*





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### Barriers to WIC Participation





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## Recruitment: What we're doing

- Community Outreach Events
  - Community Baby Showers
  - Community Health Fairs
  - 1,2,3 Play With Me (Metro Library System)
  - National Breastfeeding Month Celebrations
- Vendor Booths at Conferences
- WIC Outreach Brochure distribution
  - Head Starts
  - Daycares
  - Other community settings



We help families  
stay healthy





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## Recruitment: What we're doing

- Physician Outreach
- Information Sessions (examples)
  - Sunbeam Family Services
  - Head Start
  - Palomar
  - Catholic Charities
  - Safe Care
  - Home Visitors Coalition





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# Recruitment: What we're doing

- Social Media
  - Annual reach >73,000 Facebook, >13,000 Instagram
  - Multiple posts per week
    - Nutrition and breastfeeding education
    - Program updates and information
    - Recipes
    - Staff spotlights
    - Participant feedback
    - Community resources



## Oklahoma WIC Program

5.2K followers • 274 following

WIC is a supplemental nutrition program for women, infants and children up to age five.



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# Retention: What we're doing

- **Streamlining application process**
  - Online Enrollment Request
  - Accessible via Facebook, Instagram, and OSDH Website ([oklahoma.gov/health/wic](http://oklahoma.gov/health/wic))
  - Completely automated process to route to closest clinic



English ▾

## Oklahoma Women, Infants, and Children Enrollment Request

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# Retention: What we're doing

- **Data match with SNAP**
  - Twice a year (working towards quarterly)
  - Text about eligibility for WIC
- **Link to application on Medicaid Application**





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# Retention: What we're doing

- Texting
  - Appointment reminders
  - Program information
  - Benefit issuances
  - Targeted intervention





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# Retention: What we're doing

**Pregnant?**  
We are here for you from day one.



**WIC can help with this and so much more.**

We know as a new mom-to-be you want to:

- Look and feel good.
- Have a healthy pregnancy and baby.

**wic**  
Apply today. 

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**"I wouldn't have gotten through so many things without WIC's support."**



**Save Money, Stick with WIC.**

When you stick with WIC, you can save up to \$2,880 on grocery bills.

WIC offers more than free, healthy food. We provide:

- Practical tips on how to help your kids eat well.
- Nutrition Education classes on meal planning, healthy snacks, picky eaters and more.
- Referrals to other services such as pediatric and dental care, and social services.

**wic**  
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**"I came to WIC for help feeding my baby. I stayed because they offer so much more."**



**Stick with WIC. Your kids will thank you.**

WIC offers more than free, healthy food. We provide:

- Practical tips on how to help your kids eat well.
- Nutrition Education classes on meal planning, healthy snacks, picky eaters and more.
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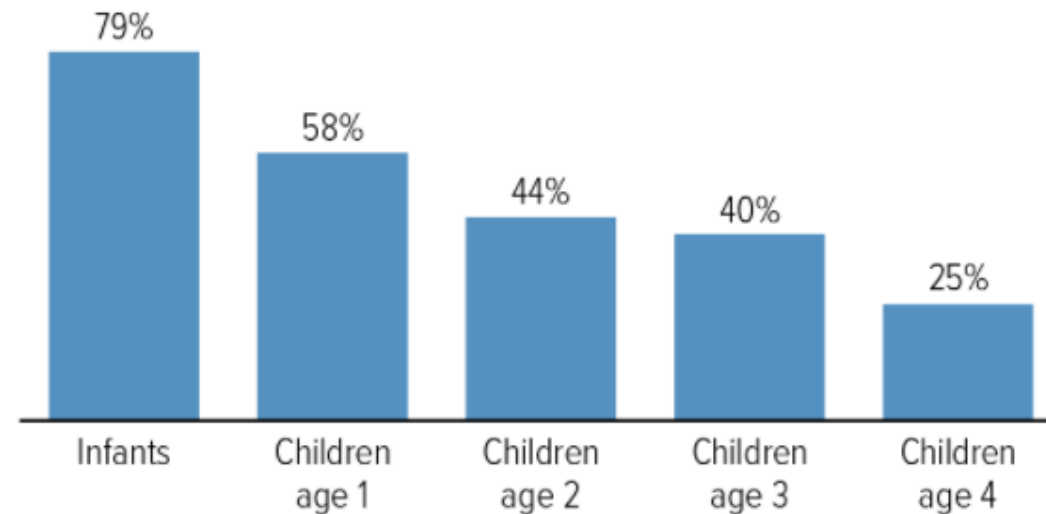
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What we know:  
Participation  
decreases with  
child age

### Eligible Toddlers Less Likely Than Eligible Infants to Participate in WIC

WIC participation rates by age



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, "National and State-Level Estimates of Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Eligibility and WIC Program Reach in 2017," December 2019.



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# Retention: What we're doing

- “WIC Bits”
  - Appointment reminders
  - Program information
  - Benefit issuances
  - Targeted intervention





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### Barriers to WIC Participation







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# How YOU can help: Correct Misinformation!

## Common WIC Myths

- Taking away from others
- Cannot be employed
- Must be US Citizen
- Can only participate in one food program
- Only provides formula
- Only for babies
- Mom must apply for child(ren)
- Mom doesn't qualify until after baby is born





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## How YOU can help!

- Spread the word
- Promote the food package
- Highlight free access to nutrition and lactation professionals
- Refer potential participants
- Encourage adjunct eligibility
- Direct to our website and/or social media



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**State WIC Office: 405-426-8500**

**[Oklahoma.gov/health/wic](https://oklahoma.gov/health/wic)**

**Laura Stout**  
**405-426-8526**

**[laura.stout@health.ok.gov](mailto:laura.stout@health.ok.gov)**



# Collaborative Learning in ACTION!

Don't forget to visit the  
debrief boards between sessions!

Share what you learned and  
resources that might help others.



# Scan to Give Session Feedback

...and find lots of other resources!



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