

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program (WIC)

DESCRIPTION

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) serves women and children at nutritional risk by providing nutrition education, breastfeeding support, nutritious foods, and referrals to health care and community programs for pregnant, breastfeeding or postpartum women and infants and children until age 5. WIC is administered by the Food and Nutrition Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. WIC services are free of charge and are available at six WIC clinic sites in Ramsey County. Studies demonstrate that the WIC Program is cost effective in protecting and improving the health and nutritional status of low-income women, infants and children including positive birth outcomes; savings in health care costs; positive diet and nutritional outcomes; successful infant feeding practices; immunization rates; obtaining a regular source of medical care; cognitive development; pre-conception nutritional status; and more.¹

HOW WE ARE DOING

More than half of all Ramsey County children ages birth until five participate in WIC.² Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health's WIC program served 28,856 women, infants and children in 2017: 7,957 women; 8,201 infants under 1, and 12,698 children age 1-5. In Minnesota, several health indicators are tracked for infants, children age 2-5 and women enrolled in WIC. Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health increased WIC breastfeeding rates and reduced high weight in WIC children since 2012. Reflecting statewide trends, anemia in both women and children as well as high pre-pregnancy weight have increased since 2012.³

DISPARITIES

In 2017, 87 percent of Ramsey County WIC participants were non-white or Hispanic. African-American and Asian residents made up almost two-thirds of Ramsey County's WIC population. In August 2017, 37.5 percent of WIC's African-American participants self-identified as multigenerational U.S. black and 32.7 percent self-identified as Somali or Somali-American. Among Asian WIC participants, 68.5 percent self-identified as Hmong or Hmong-American, and 21.1 percent self-identified as Karen or Karen-American.²

WHAT RAMSEY COUNTY GOVERNMENT IS DOING

Saint Paul-Ramsey County Public Health WIC staff work collaboratively with other Ramsey County departments to establish and maintain space for working women to breastfeed or express breast milk. Other collaborative partnerships include WIC working with families who need assistance in the SNAP or MA application process, with libraries to increase early literacy among WIC participant households and with Ramsey County's six school districts to share demographic information about WIC's three-year-olds that the school districts will use to contact families about Early Childhood Screening.

Information to note

- During 2015, Saint Paul-Ramsey County Public Health issued \$14 million worth of food vouchers to WIC clients.
- Saint Paul-Ramsey County Public Health's WIC caseload declined slightly in 2016 but the percentage of those at higher nutritional risk increased.
- Breastfeeding rates for WIC mothers have increased since 2012, for initiation as well as duration at the 1, 3, 6 and 12 month marks.
- The percentages of overweight, obese and very obese Ramsey County 2-5 year olds all decreased since 2012.
- Ramsey County WIC has done better than the statewide average in getting Medicaid moms enrolled in WIC, and in getting these moms enrolled earlier in their pregnancies. The longer moms participate during their pregnancies, the better the birth outcomes.

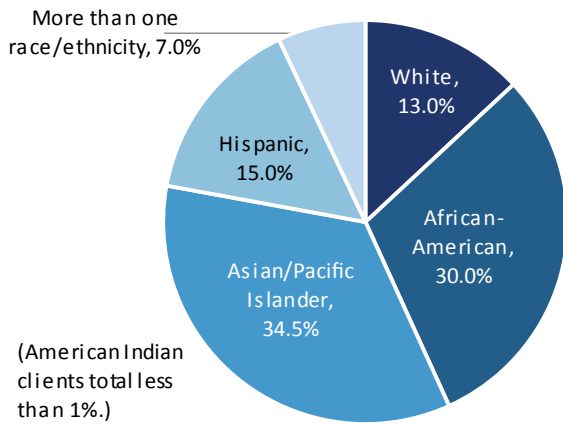
¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/women-infants-and-children-wic>. Accessed September 7, 2017.

² Saint Paul-Ramsey County Public Health WIC database. 2016.

³ Minnesota Department of Health WIC Information System, 2017. <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/fh/wic/localagency/reports/index.html>. Accessed March 6, 2018

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program (WIC)

Individuals Receiving WIC Services,
Ramsey County, 2017



Source: Saint Paul - Ramsey County Public Health

WIC Health Indicators Summary

	Minnesota		Ramsey County	
	2012	2015	2012	2015
Infants				
Breastfeeding				
Initiation	76.0%	80.6%	70.5%	77.9%
Duration 1 mo	57.7%	62.4%	55.0%	59.8%
Duration 3 mos	43.2%	47.8%	41.3%	45.6%
Duration 6 mos	32.1%	35.6%	30.9%	33.9%
Duration 12 mos	13.6%	18.6%	14.7%	18.1%
Women	2012	2016	2012	2016
Anemia				
Prenatal (any trimester)	10.2%	14.8%	12.2%	16.7%
Prenatal (3rd trimester)	26.6%	32.3%	32.6%	37.7%
Postpartum	31.0%	34.9%	39.6%	48.3%
Weight Status Pre-pregnancy				
Overweight/Obese/Very Obese	58.2%	65.5%	56.0%	63.5%
Children	2012	2016	2012	2016
Anemia 0-5yrs	10.9%	13.3%	15.1%	18.9%
Overweight 2-5 yrs (\geq 85th to $<$ 95th percentile)	16.0%	16.0%	16.7%	15.9%
Obese 2-5 yrs (\geq 95th to $<$ 97.5th percentile)	4.7%	4.5%	5.5%	4.3%
Very Obese 2-5 yrs (\geq 97.5th percentile)	8.0%	8.1%	9.0%	8.7%

Source: Minnesota Department of Health WIC Information System 2017.⁴

⁴ Minnesota Department of Health WIC Information System 2017. <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/fh/wic/localagency/reports/index.html> Accessed March 6, 2018