

**SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN (WIC)  
ELIGIBLES AND COVERAGE – 2013: NATIONAL AND STATE-LEVEL ESTIMATES (SUMMARY)**

**Background**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides food, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and referrals to health care and social services to nutritionally at-risk, low-income pregnant women, new mothers, infants, and children up to age 5.

This report offers updated estimates of the number of people eligible for WIC benefits in 2013, including: (1) estimates by participant category (including children by single year of age) and coverage rates; (2) updated estimates in U.S. territories; and (3) confidence intervals.

**Methodology**

The national estimates presented below are based on a methodology developed in 2003 by the Committee on National Statistics of the National Research Council (CNSTAT). The report’s State-level estimates use a methodology developed by the Urban Institute that apportions the national figures using data from the American Community Survey.

The estimates consider poverty level, adjunctive income eligibility (e.g., due to participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or Medicaid), national estimates of nutritional risk, and State-level estimates of duration of breastfeeding.

The estimates presented in this report are the fourth set of WIC eligibles estimates that reflect the results from the 2010 Census, which show fewer infants and young children in the U.S. population than the previous, intercensal Census estimates. Estimates before 2010 were extrapolated from the 2000 Census. Therefore, the estimates in this report are not directly comparable to estimates in this series published before 2010.

For the first time in this series of reports, State-level estimates (presented as 3-year averages) are

shown separately for two subgroups: children ages 1 through 4, and all infants and women.

**Results: WIC-Eligible Population**

- FNS estimates that the average monthly WIC-eligible population totaled 14.19 million in 2013, a slight increase from 14.05 million in 2012, due to more eligible children. (The increase is not statistically significant.)

Participant Group	# Eligible (Millions)	% of All Eligibles	# Participating	Coverage Rate
Infants	2.39	16.8%	2.02	84.4%
Total Children Ages 1-4	9.05	63.8%	4.51	49.8%
Children Age 1 <sup>a</sup>	2.29	16.1%	1.57	68.8%
Children Age 2 <sup>a</sup>	2.28	16.1%	1.14	50.0%
Children Age 3 <sup>a</sup>	2.22	15.7%	1.05	47.3%
Children Age 4 <sup>a</sup>	2.26	15.9%	0.74	32.9%
Pregnant Women	1.23	8.7%	0.84	68.4%
Postpartum Women	1.52	10.7%	1.18	77.8%
Breastfeeding Women	0.83	5.8%	0.59	71.9%
Nonbreastfeeding Women	0.69	4.9%	0.59	84.9%
<b>All Participant Groups</b>	<b>14.19</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>8.55</b>	<b>60.2%</b>

<sup>a</sup> These figures are derived from the total number of children participating in CY 2013 using the ratio of child enrollees by single year of age to the total number of children enrolled as reported in WIC PC 2012.

\*Calendar Year

**Results: WIC Coverage Rates**

The percentage of the eligible population that receives WIC benefits is the program’s “coverage rate.”

- In the average month of 2013, WIC served an estimated 60.2 percent of those eligible for WIC, a decrease of almost 3 percentage points from 2012.
- This decrease was caused primarily by a 3.6-percent decrease in the number of WIC participants from 2012 to 2013, combined with no statistically significant change in the estimated number of WIC eligibles.

