

# INTRODUCTION

## The Vendor Handbook

The Georgia Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (Georgia WIC) Vendor Handbook is an addendum to and incorporated into the Vendor Agreement. Retail grocery vendors, pharmacy vendors and military commissaries must adhere to all information provided in the most recent edition of the Vendor Handbook to ensure compliance with federal and state regulations, rules, policies, and procedures. The vendor's role is important to the success of Georgia WIC. Vendors must assure that only prescribed foods are sold to participants. Prices charged by the vendor must be reasonable and competitive. Competitive prices will enable Georgia WIC to maximize services to its citizens.

## Georgia WIC

WIC is a federally funded special supplemental food program intended to provide supplemental foods, nutrition education, and nutrition counseling to Georgia's citizens. WIC saves lives and improves the health of nutritionally at-risk women, infants, and children. Since its beginning in 1974, the WIC program has earned the reputation of being one of the most successful federally funded programs in the United States. Collective findings of studies, reviews, and reports illustrate that the WIC program is cost-effective in protecting and improving the nutritional status of low-income women, infants, and children.

A list of some of the positive health outcomes associated with WIC participation follows:

- Reduces fetal deaths and infant mortality
- Reductions in the rate of low birth weight infants
- Increases in pregnancy duration
- Improves the growth of nutritionally at-risk infants and children
- Decreases in the incidence of iron deficiency anemia in children
- Improves the dietary intake of pregnant and postpartum women and improves weight gain in pregnant women
- Increases early initiation into prenatal care
- Increases the number of children who have a regular source of medical care
- Helps children get ready to start school
- Improves intellectual development
- Improves children's diets.

Georgia's health professionals determine who is eligible to participate in the WIC program according to criteria established by federal regulations. These health professionals also provide nutrition education, counseling and prescribe nutritious foods. Instruments used to obtain the supplemental foods are called WIC food instruments, which are redeemed through WIC authorized vendors statewide.