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Two sample articles for community partners to use to provide COVID-19 updates to potentially new and current participants.

WIC is OPEN!

WIC is OPEN for new AND current participants! If your income has been affected by recent events, and you are pregnant or have a child younger than 5 years old, WIC can help provide nutritious foods and resources to keep your growing family healthy. Call your local WIC agency to determine what changes have been made in response to COVID-19. Many agencies will set up a phone call to conduct your appointment. WIC benefits are provided electronically on an eWIC card and can be purchased in more than one shopping trip. Find your local agency here:

health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/wic/local_agencies.htm. Learn more about NYS WIC's response to COVID-19 at health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/wic/. To learn if you might be eligible for WIC visit WIChelpNY.org.

NYS WIC continues to serve current participants and welcomes newly eligible individuals and families WIC supports many working families. If your income has been affected by recent events, and you are pregnant or have a child younger than 5 years old, WIC can help provide nutritious foods and resources to keep your growing family healthy. This includes moms, dads, foster parents, guardians, pregnant women, grandparents and step-parents. Caregivers, including those who are part of other programs such as foster care, medical assistance, or SNAP, may be eligible.

NYS WIC provides healthy food, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and family resources to women, children, and families across New York State. Parents and caregivers use their eWIC card just like a debit card at the WIC-approved store's register to buy their WIC-approved foods and may buy food when it works best for them. WIC participants can also download and use the free WIC2Go app on their smartphone. WIC2Go helps participants find WIC-approved stores, and WIC Clinics, scan foods at the market to see if they are WIC-approved, check their WIC benefit balance, and view their next appointment.

For additional food access resources, please visit: HungerSolutionsNY.org/get-food-help-0/

COVID-19 Updates:

WIC CONSIDERS CURRENT INCOME:- WIC eligibility is based on your current income. This means that if you were recently laid off or furloughed, your current income is considered.

WIC BENEFITS REMAIN VALID - WIC is not planning to make any changes to the way in which participants receive their benefits. In many areas, benefits are now issued remotely to a participant's eWIC card.

WIC IS SHARING THE FACTS - Due to the uncertainty around the ever-evolving COVID-19 pandemic, misinformation regarding WIC has been circulating. NYS WIC has addressed these misconceptions on their website, <https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/wic/>.

Are You Recently Unemployed or Furloughed? Sign up if You Are Eligible:

WIC serves income eligible pregnant, postpartum, breastfeeding women, infants, and children under age 5 who have health or nutrition risks. Many working families are part of WIC. In addition, an expectant mom may count as two people in determining household size. For example, a family of three expecting a baby can earn up to \$47,638 a year and be income eligible to receive WIC benefits. Dads, grandparents, and other caregivers of children under the age of 5 may also sign up kids for WIC. Foster children and Kinship Care recipients under age 5, and foster teens who are pregnant are eligible for WIC.

To be eligible for WIC, you must:

- Live in New York State
- Pregnant or breastfeeding woman, woman within the first 6 months postpartum, infant up to age one, or a child up to age 5
- Have a health or nutrition need
- Be income-eligible

(The program is exempt from the Federal Public Charge rule that affects self-sufficiency, which went into effect Feb. 24.)

For detailed information about qualifying for WIC, visit WIChelpNY.org.

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