

October 03, 2013

News Release

For Immediate Release

WIC services continue in county, state throughout October

Despite the ongoing federal government shutdown, the Springfield-Greene County Women, Infants & Children (WIC) program is still operating normally. Local families who rely on WIC for supplemental nutrition can continue to use their issued vouchers at local grocery stores. WIC staff is continuing to see clients daily, and no appointments have been cancelled.

The [local WIC program](#) is administered by the Springfield-Greene County Health Department, and WIC's approximately two dozen staffers are Health Department employees. However, WIC is a federally-funded program that is administered by state and local health departments. The Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services has informed local public health agencies it has enough funding in reserve to cover a short-term gap in federal funds throughout the month of October.

"After that, WIC services in Greene County and across Missouri are likely to be affected," said Kevin Gipson, Director of the Springfield-Greene County Health Department. "These actions by decision-makers in Washington, D.C., do have a very real impact on the lives of regular people."

WIC improves the nutritional health of pregnant women, breastfeeding moms, infants and children up to age 5 with the goal of improving the overall health of young families. WIC's core services include vouchers for supplemental foods such as milk, fruits and vegetables; breastfeeding education and support; and referrals to health care providers and other local agencies.

WIC also has a significant impact on the local economy. More than \$500,000 issued by WIC goes into the Springfield economy each month, as participating grocery stores redeem the checks used by young and growing families.

"Grocery stores are a major partner in making the WIC program work, and this shutdown creates a layer of uncertainty for them, too," said Mary Ellison, WIC Administrator.

Here is what WIC families need to know right now:

- Service remains unaffected at this time
- However, if and when funding stops, vouchers will no longer be redeemable at local grocery stores. This includes vouchers already issued
- If a WIC participant currently has October vouchers in hand but has not used it yet, they are urged to use them sooner rather than later

- Participants should keep an eye on the [Facebook page for WIC](#) and the [Health Department](#), as well as the [health department's website](#) for further information as it becomes available

The main WIC clinic is co-located inside Jordan Valley Community Health Center, 440 E. Tampa St. in Springfield. The WIC clinic has about 90,000 client visits annually.

For more information, contact: Mary Ellison, WIC Administrator, (417) 851-1586; or Mike Brothers, Public Information Administrator, (417) 874-1205.