



NEWS RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Doug Bolnick, Public Information Officer, (636) 949-7408

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 7, 2017

EXPANDED INCOME GUIDELINES QUALIFY MORE FAMILIES FOR WIC

ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO – To provide more assistance to growing families, the St. Charles County Department of Public Health’s Division of Health Services — in partnership with the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) — announces the expansion of income eligibility guidelines for participation in the Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC). The new guidelines are effective through March 31, 2018.

WIC provides specific nutritious supplemental foods and nutrition education at no cost to nearly 2,000 qualifying pregnant and breastfeeding women, postpartum women, infants, and children up to age five each month in St. Charles County. To qualify for this program, participants must meet income guidelines, live in Missouri and be individually determined to be at “nutrition risk” by a health professional. Persons interested in applying for WIC services in St. Charles County should make an appointment by phone at (636) 949-7402.

For these guidelines, pregnant women are counted as *two family members*:

Family Size	Annual	Monthly	Weekly
2	\$30,044	\$2,504	\$578
3	\$37,777	\$3,149	\$727
4	\$45,510	\$3,793	\$876
5	\$53,243	\$4,437	\$1,024

To view the entire income guideline schedule for larger families, as well as a Spanish language table, please visit http://health.mo.gov/living/families/wic/eligibility_income.php.

“WIC gives growing families a healthy start, with the program tailored to the specific nutritional needs of each family member,” Program Manager **Eva Obirek** notes. “It is important for pregnant or breastfeeding mothers and their children receive proper nutrition and guidance during these crucial developmental periods. These expansions in the participation requirements will allow more families to receive the help they desire.”

Studies confirm that women who participate in WIC have fewer low birth-weight babies, experience fewer infant deaths, see the doctor earlier in pregnancy, and eat healthier. The primary services provided through this no-cost program are health screening, risk assessment, nutrition education and counseling, breastfeeding promotion and referrals to additional health care. By participating, eligible families will receive supplies designed to improve their health and aid in development.

(MORE)

(WIC GUIDELINES – Page Two)

WIC supplemental food packages are specially chosen to provide foods high in protein, iron, calcium and vitamins A and C. Eligible families receive milk and cheese, eggs, whole-grain bread products and hot or cold cereals, 100% fruit juices and fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables. The WIC program recommends breastfeeding and provides breastfeeding support, baby foods and infant cereal. For women who cannot or choose not to breastfeed, infants may receive supplemental, iron-fortified formula.

To provide accurate information and support to those who wish to breastfeed their children, the St. Charles County WIC program also offers a Breastfeeding Peer Counseling program and an interactive education program. Trained staff and women in the community with personal breastfeeding experience lead these innovative programs. Peer counselors are women who have breastfed their own babies and have undergone essential training to help assist others. Through regular contact during the pregnancy and after the birth of the child, counselors assist families with resources, training and support. The WIC program also provides families with direct referrals to other agencies that can offer additional assistance.

Funded and administered at the federal level through the USDA and managed at the state level by the Missouri DHSS, Bureau of Nutrition Services and WIC, the St. Charles County WIC program is operated at the Division of Health Services office on the Lower Level at the Department of Public Health, 1650 Boone's Lick Road in St. Charles. For more information, please visit <http://www.sccmo.org/WIC> or call 636-949-7402.

-end-

In accordance with Federal law and USDA policy, the St. Charles County Department of Public Health is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington DC, 20250-9410 or call 800-632-9992 (voice) or 800-877-8339 (TTY) or 800-845-6136 (Spanish). This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

The mission of St. Charles County's Division of Health Services is to promote healthy choices and improve the health of the community. To achieve these goals, program services include Immunizations, WIC Program, STD Prevention, Treatment and Counseling, Communicable Disease investigation, educational programming, the collection and distribution of birth and death certificates, assistance in applications for U.S. passports, and much more. For information on programs offered and to discover ways the division assists the community, visit <http://www.sccmo.org/HealthServices> or call 636-949-7400.