What’s the Difference Between WIC & SNAP?

Program Mission

Prevent nutrition-related illness and improve overall health outcomes

Prevent and Reduce Hunger

Who Can Participate?

Discretionary
Program does not necessarily receive funds to serve every eligible person.

Entitlement
All who apply, have incomes below 130% of the poverty line and meet eligibility criteria can receive benefits.

Who Can Participate?

Pregnant women, postpartum women, infants, and children up to 5 years old with a nutrition risk and with incomes at or below 185% of the poverty line can participate.

# of Participants

>8 million

>46 million

Food Costs

$43.65 average cost per participant per month

$125.36 average cost per participant per month

Is there Nutrition Education?

Yes. It is a required WIC service.

Yes, but it is not required.

Other Services

Breastfeeding promotion and support
Health risk assessment
Healthcare and social services referrals

None

What Foods Can Participants Choose?

Only healthy foods recommended by the Institute of Medicine to meet nutritional needs.

Participants can choose any food except some prepared foods.

SOURCES

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly Food Stamps)