

## **WIC Food and Nutrition Centers Program**

The WIC Food and Nutrition Center (WFNC) project was implemented in 1993 to provide consumer-friendly centers that were safe and clean and offered a variety of WIC approved food choices previously unavailable to WIC participants. It ensured mothers, babies and children received the full nutrition benefit of the WIC program. The WFNC program has reduced fraud and abuse, improved program integrity and provided employment opportunities to many community residents. The Centers provide easy access to WIC and other maternal child health services. Many of the WIC Food and Nutrition Centers are located in current and identifiable food deserts throughout the City of Chicago. All foods in the Centers meet USDA Nutrition Requirements which simplifies shopping, addressing a common pain point of WIC participation nationally. With the implementation of EBT participants have the option to shop at WFNC or authorized retail vendors interchangeably.

Besides providing approved WIC foods, most of the Centers have been expanded and remodeled to include display kitchens and are being used regularly for supplemental WIC nutrition education including recipe testing, tasting and cooking schools for WIC participants. Ten of the Centers are co-located with a WIC Clinics creating a unique one-stop delivery service model. Other Centers offer an array of additional services such as Paternity Establishment, Mental Health Services for adults and children, Early Childhood, Senior Meals, Case Management and immunizations. All of the Centers serve as multi-service centers in their respective communities with nutrition education initiatives, employment opportunities and valuable linkages to other available services such as CityKey, a municipal identification card program, One Summer Chicago, a program to provide summer jobs city youth and Ladder-Up, a free tax preparation service.

The WIC Food and Nutrition Centers were conceptualized to have the capability of achieving the following goals and objectives:

### **Goals:**

1. to improve the health and nutritional status of WIC Program participants through the establishment of a cost-effective and accountable system of food distribution;
2. to engage in community economic development through job creation, job employment, job training, career placement services and neighborhood improvements; and,
3. to engage in personal and community empowerment by giving WIC participants and other community residents, particularly those on public assistance or unemployed, the opportunity and the necessary jobs and skills to have a sense of control over their lives and their health.

### **Objectives:**

1. to provide WIC foods to WIC families in WIC Food and Nutrition Centers that are geographically close to their homes, with a safe and user-friendly environment, and with supervised playrooms for children to use while their mothers' shop for WIC products.
2. to provide educational classes on how to prepare nutritious meals, tips for smart shopping, and meal planning with WIC foods.
3. to establish Centers which are accessible by public transportation and located on main transportation hubs.
4. to provide jobs, job training opportunities and mentorship to WIC participants, public assistance recipients, unemployed individuals and to high school youth.

Fifteen centers provide a variety of WIC-approved foods for eligible participants.

**WIC Food and Nutrition Center Sites**

2907 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago, IL 60616 Phone: (312) 326-5020
416 E. 43rd St., Chicago, IL 60653 Phone: (773) 924-7041
6202 S. Halsted St., Chicago, IL 60621 Phone: (773) 488-6800
5332 S. Western Ave., Chicago, IL 60609 Phone: (773) 778-1292
2310 W. Roosevelt Rd., Chicago, IL 60608 Phone: (312) 666-4193
3110 W. Armitage Ave., Chicago, IL 60647 Phone: (773) 395-1010
5125 W. Chicago Ave., Chicago, IL 60651 Phone: (773) 378-8760
1643 W. Cermak Rd., Chicago, IL 60608 Phone: (773) 523-0409
1802 E. 71st St., Chicago, IL 60649 Phone: (773) 667-3932
4622 W. Diversey Ave., Chicago, IL 60639 Phone: (773) 205-6575
11255 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60628 Phone: (773) 785-1786
8959 S. Commercial Ave., Chicago, IL 60617 Phone: (773) 978-6235
2400 S. Kedzie Ave., Chicago, IL 60623 Phone: (773) 522-7220
1106 W. 79th St., Chicago, IL 60620 Phone: (773) 651-6690