

# FY 2014 WIC Food Packages and Costs Report

Client: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service

## Overview

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) helps to safeguard the health of low-income, nutritionally at-risk women, infants, and children up to age 5. The program provides supplemental foods, nutrition education such as breastfeeding promotion and support, and referrals to health and other social services. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers the program at the federal level, defining food packages by regulation to help ensure dietary quality and healthy eating habits.

In fiscal year 2014, the total federal expenditure for WIC was \$6.4 billion. Of that amount, \$4.3 billion was for food costs. Other costs were related to program administration and evaluation, the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, special projects, and infrastructure. Although the state agencies provide monthly data on total food costs, participant food costs, and total rebates received, the information is reported in aggregate. This study sought to supplement administrative data by estimating average per-participant food package costs by participant category and food package type and total food costs by WIC-eligible food category.

As part of this project, Insight—

- Obtained and analyzed household purchase data to identify likely WIC-eligible foods



- Collected data on the expenditures and costs of Food Package III
- Combined data from (1) FY 2014 FNS administrative data, (2) WIC Participant and Program Characteristics 2014 data, and (3) Food Package III cost data collected from nine State agencies, and (4) Information Resources Inc. household purchase data to estimate food package costs by participant category, food package type, and WIC-eligible food category

## Products

Final Report:

Kline, N., Warner-Griffin, C., Wilcox-Cook, E., & Thorn, B. (2018). *Fiscal year 2014 WIC food package costs report*. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Policy Support.