



Press Release

DHHS Announces WIC Program Will Stop Issuing Benefits Due to Federal Shutdown

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Raleigh, N.C. - Due to the federal shutdown, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, also known as the WIC program, will discontinue issuing benefits at close of business on Tuesday, October 8, 2013. Approximately 80 percent of eligible clients already have been issued food benefits for the month of October. DHHS has determined that federal WIC funds available to the state will be sufficient to cover WIC vouchers already issued for the month of October, but not sufficient to issue additional vouchers.

WIC clients should keep their nutrition appointments and continue redeeming October vouchers and WIC vendors should continue normal operations to accept existing vouchers. The Department will continue to monitor the daily availability of federal funds and will announce changes if they become necessary.

"Some of our most vulnerable citizens, pregnant and breastfeeding women, infants and young children, will be affected by the interruption of WIC services due to the federal shutdown," said DHHS Secretary Aldona Wos.

DHHS encourages families impacted by this change to apply for North Carolina's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (also known as food stamps). Local WIC staff may also refer clients to food banks and pantries in their communities.

While some staff furloughs may be necessary in order to sustain essential program operations as long as possible, DHHS is working with the federal government to identify federal funding to keep local WIC clinics open. During this time, WIC staff will continue to support clients by providing nutrition education and referrals to local resources.

The WIC Program has an annual budget of \$205 million and is 100 percent federally funded. During September, the program provided supplemental food, health care referrals and nutrition education for almost 264,000 women, infants and young children in North Carolina. WIC also impacts local grocery stores and other food businesses. Every month, North Carolinians using WIC make nearly \$16.6 million in food purchases at more than 2,000 food vendors around the state.