

# How Common is Food Insecurity?

- In 2013, 17.5 million US households, or 14.3% of all households and 21% of all children, met the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) definition of a food-insecure household, one in which “access to adequate food is limited by a lack of money or other resources.
- Households with children are nearly twice as likely to be food insecure as households without children
- In 2013, 7.5 million American families with children lacked consistent access to adequate, nutritious food
- The federal poverty threshold for an average family of 4 people in 2013 was \$23 834; 185% of this threshold amount is \$44 093, but the federal poverty level is not a definition of economic hardship, and the amount to provide basic needs for a family of 4 often far exceeds this amount. Because 30% of food-insecure households have incomes above this level, it is clear the problem is not related solely to poverty.

# What about Vermont?

## What is Food Insecurity?

**Food insecurity** is defined as the lack of access to enough food to fully meet basic needs at all times due to lack of financial resources. Adults in households determined to be food insecure are so limited in resources that they are running out of food, reducing the quality of food their family eats, feeding their children unbalanced diets, or skipping meals so that their children can eat.

## Food Insecurity in Vermont

- **13%** of all **Vermont households** are food insecure  
**85,000 Vermonters**
- **21%** of **Vermont children** live in food insecure homes  
**25,400 Vermont Children**
- **6%** of **Vermont seniors** are living with food insecurity  
**7,800 Vermont Seniors**

The food insecurity data here are 3-year averages, from 2010-2012, from the Current Population Survey of the United States Census.

# Vermont continued

## What is Food Insecurity with Hunger?

Households that are classified as *food insecure with hunger* are those food insecure homes in which adults have decreased the quality and quantity of food they consume to the point where they are likely to be hungry on a frequent basis, or in which children's intake has been reduced to the point that the children are likely to be hungry on a regular basis and adults' food intake is severely reduced.

## Food Insecurity with Hunger in Vermont

- **30,000 Vermonters** living in food insecure homes struggle with hunger  
*5% of Vermonters*
- **7,900 Vermont children** live in households experiencing food insecurity with hunger  
*7% of Vermont Children*
- **3,800 Vermont seniors** are food insecure with hunger  
*3% of Vermont Seniors*

The food insecurity data here are 3-year averages, from 2010-2012, from the Current Population Survey of the United States Census.

# Impact on Families



- Like poverty, food insecurity is a dynamic, intensely complex issue; the current economic recovery has marginally diminished food insecurity, but levels remain near historic highs.
- Families and children do not only feel the effects of hunger just as missed or meager meals; food insecurity manifests itself in many other biopsychosocial outcomes, including health, education, and economic prosperity.
- More than 30% of families who identified as food insecure indicated that they had to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care

# Impact on Children

- The inability to consistently provide food creates stress in families, contributing to depression, anxiety, and toxic stress, which make optimal parenting difficult regardless of social class
- Children 36 months old or younger who live in food-insecure households have poorer overall health and more hospitalizations than do children who live in food-secure households
- Children with food insecurity are more likely to be iron deficient, as are adolescents with food insecurity
- Food insecurity also is associated with lower bone density in preadolescent boys.
- Children in food-insecure households generally have limited access to high-quality food



# Children continued



- Among children of all ages, food insecurity is linked with lower cognitive indicators, dysregulated behavior, and emotional distress.
- Children between 4 and 36 months of age who live in low-income, food-insecure households are at higher risk of developmental problems, which presage impaired school function, compared with children of the same age living in low-income, food-secure households
- Longitudinal studies have shown that food insecurity in kindergarten students predicts reduced academic achievement in math and reading over a 4-year period.
- Young children in food-insecure households are more likely to have behavior problems above and beyond those attributable to their mother's depression and anxiety.<sup>12</sup> Adolescents in food-insecure families are more likely to experience dysthymia and suicidal ideation

# Take away message for Families and Children

- School-aged children are aware of and distressed by food insecurity in their household. They often try to help manage food resources in the family, either by supporting the efforts of their parents or by initiating their own strategies for reducing food intake (including choosing to eat less than they want)
- Adolescents describe food insecurity in terms of quantity (eating less than usual, eating more or faster when food is available), quality (having only a few low-cost foods), affective states (worry, anxiety, or sadness about the family's food, shame or fear of being labeled "poor," feelings of having no choice or of adults trying to shield them from food insecurity), and social dynamics (using social networks to get food or being socially excluded)
- As with many pediatric conditions, the health effects of food insecurity and associated malnutrition may persist beyond early life into adulthood. Overall, the effects of food insecurity on the physical, mental, and emotional health of children and families are additive to the effects of low income alone.

# The Good News!

## **Federal Nutrition Programs Improve Health and Well-Being**

- Participation in **3SquaresVT** (formerly called Food Stamps) reduces food insecurity and improves children's diet quality
- Participation in **3SquaresVT** and/or **WIC** decreases risk of poor health, anemia, and malnutrition
- **3SquaresVT** and **WIC** participation is associated with decreases in child abuse
- Participation in **3SquaresVT** and **school meals** reduces obesity in school-age girls
- Children in families receiving **3SquaresVT** benefits have higher achievement in math and reading
- Children who participate in **school meals** have improved diets and lower risk for diabetes
- Participation in **school meals** improves student behavior, social interactions, and academic performance



# How WIC Helps In the Community

**WIC** WOMEN  
INFANTS  
CHILDREN  
VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



# Mission of WIC

To assure healthy pregnancies, healthy birth outcomes and healthy growth and development for women, infants and children up to age 5 who are at nutrition risk, by providing nutritious foods to supplement diets, information and education on healthy eating, and referrals to health care and critical social services.

WIC Ensures  
that Children  
get a Strong,  
Healthy Start In  
Life.

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# Who does WIC Serve?



**8 MILLION**  
mothers and young  
children each month  
through 10,000 clinics  
nationwide



**773,000**  
pregnant  
women



**593,000**  
breastfeeding  
women



**2.0 MILLION**  
infants  
(under the age of 1)



**4.2 MILLION**  
children  
(aged 1 until their  
5th birthday)

# Who participates in WIC in Vermont?

• Pregnant Women	1,010
• Fully Breastfeeding Women	[784]
• Total Breastfeeding Women	1,118
• Postpartum Women	593
• Infants	2476
• Children	7558
• Total	12,756
• Coverage (% eligible)	60%

• Vermont WIC Participation FY 2016





**WE  
HELP  
MOMS  
BE  
MOMS.**

**WIC** VERMONT  
HEALTH  
DEPARTMENT'S  
CHILDREN  
MINIMUM IMPACTMENT BY HEALTH

**IF YOU HAVE DR. DYNASAUR OR  
MEDICAID YOU QUALIFY FOR WIC.**

**Access to free wholesome food,  
Nutritionists and peer counselors who help you be your best,  
Referrals connecting you to the care you and your family need,  
To be healthy in every way.**

**CALL TODAY FOR AN APPOINTMENT.**

**786-5811 or 888-253-8802**

Vermont Department of Health  
Rutland District  
300 Asa Bloomer State Office Building  
Rutland VT 05701



**This institution is an equal opportunity provider.**

**Got Medicaid? Get WIC.**

**Categorically-eligible  
women, infants and  
children who participate in  
Dr. Dynasaur, Medicaid,  
Reach-Up, or 3SquaresVT  
are automatically income-  
eligible for WIC.**

# WIC for Foster Children



## WIC FOR FOSTER CHILDREN

### AT WIC YOU'LL FIND

- Wholesome foods and infant formula
- Personalized nutrition support and nutrition resources
- Referrals for healthcare and community services (Parent Child Centers, Head Start, and Children's Integrated Services)
- Kids' health screenings, including growth assessments and nutrition screenings

### WHO QUALIFIES?

Any child under 5 years old in Vermont state custody is eligible for WIC services.

If the foster child you are caring for is currently on WIC, contact us to transfer them to your case.

If the child was not previously on WIC, we will schedule your appointment as soon as possible.

### WHAT'S INVOLVED?

Attend a WIC Appointment twice each year AND complete a WIC Nutrition Education Activity twice each year.

We'll make sure your child has access to nutritious food, and show you how to shop for it with your eWIC card. Plus, our dedicated nutrition staff will help you and your family stay healthy in every way.

### CALL TO SIGN UP!

**786-5811**

When you schedule your first appointment, we'll let you know what to bring with you.

WE'RE LOCATED AT  
88 MERCHANTS ROW  
RUTLAND, VT 05701

THE RUTLAND DISTRICT OFFICE  
SERVES Benning, Brandon, Castleton,  
Chittenden, Clarendon, Daring, Fair Haven,  
Goshen, Hubbardston, Ira, Mendon,  
Middleton Springs, M. Holly, M. Tabor,  
Pawlet, Peachfield, Pittsford, Ploutney, Proctor,  
Rutland, Sherburne, Shrewsbury, Sudbury,  
Tirneouth, Wallingford, Wells, West Haven  
and West Rutland.

[healthvermont.gov/wic](http://healthvermont.gov/wic)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

# WIC Core Services

**Nutrition Education:** supporting families to make healthy changes

- how to shop, how to prepare, and how to entice children to eat it
- monthly classes offer a wide-range of topics

**Breastfeeding Support:**

- supporting women in breastfeeding successfully

**Referrals To Health And Social Services**

- connecting families to prenatal or pediatric care, dental care, immunization and social services

**Healthy Foods:** providing a wide range of healthy foods

- monthly benefits on WIC's EBT card to buy wholesome foods at the local grocery store
- in summer, WIC offers farmers' market coupons



# Group Activities

- Breastfeeding Basics
- Preparing for Birth & the First 10 Days
- Breastfeeding and Returning to Work
- Baby Behavior: Understanding Your Baby's Cues
- Make your own Baby food
- Toddlers at the Table
- Ways to Use Your WIC Foods
- Container Gardening





WIC: A  
Community  
of Support

# Healthy Food – Fueling Healthy Growth And Development

## WIC Foods Include:

- Eggs
- Milk
- Cheese
- Yogurt
- Whole grain breakfast cereals
- Whole grains (bread, brown rice, whole wheat pasta)
- canned and dried beans, peanut butter
- Canned fish
- Juice
- Infant fruits and vegetables and meat
- Infant cereal
- Iron-fortified formula (as needed)



And,

- Fruits and Vegetables

# Vermont WIC Works

- In December 2016, 78.3% of the fruit and vegetable benefit was redeemed. This is up from 49.9% in 2014
- 2015 WIC farmers' market coupons redeemed: 75%



# How WIC Positively Impacts Local Communities

- WIC brings money into local economies with over 47,000 retailers in the US (and 113 in Vermont),
- brings healthy food to local communities,
- supports local farmers, and
- helps foster community partnerships that improve access to healthy food and ensure that local health and social service networks are strong and efficient.

# WIC in your Community

A decorative graphic in the top right corner consisting of several overlapping, curved, and straight lines in various colors: green, blue, red, and light green.

Vermont Department of Health Rutland Local Health Office offers WIC clinics in Rutland, Brandon, and Castleton

Call to apply or with any questions about WIC:  
**802-786-5811** or **toll free 1-888-253-8802**

or visit the Vermont Department of Health website:  
[healthvermont.gov/wic](http://healthvermont.gov/wic)



# Spread the Word

- Refer families to WIC



# Other resources

- Cash Crop
- Fruit and Veggie Coupons
- Veggie Van Go
- Health Care Share
- VT Fresh
- Healthy in a Snap
- School Lunch Programs
- Summer Food Service Program



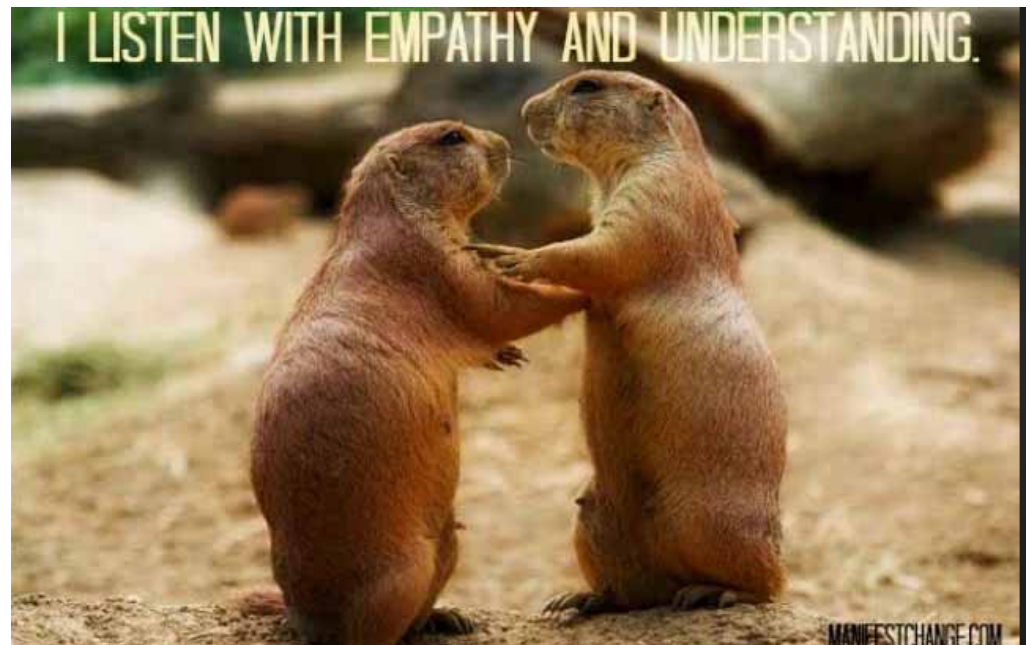


## Having Tough Conversations



# Helpful Tips

- Participant Centered
- Open ended questions
- Active Listening
- Reflections and Affirmations
- Express empathy
- Assess readiness for change
- Empower for moving forward
- Non Judgemental



Thank you!

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Sources

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