



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE INCREASED FRUIT AND VEGETABLE BENEFIT (Updated: 3/22/2022)**

### **What's going on?**

Most WIC participants get fruits and vegetables as part of their benefits. Before 2021, a woman on WIC could get \$11 per month to buy fruits and vegetables. A child between ages 1-5 could get \$9 per month. Today, those amounts are increased. A breastfeeding woman will receive \$47, a pregnant or postpartum woman will receive \$43, and a child will receive \$24 per month.

### **Do all family members get the increased benefit?**

This increased benefit goes to every active woman and child between ages 1-5 on WIC. So if you are a breastfeeding woman on WIC and you have a child between ages 1-5, you will have \$71 of benefits (\$47 + \$24) to spend on fruits and vegetables every month.

### **When do I see the increased benefit?**

If you are on Maryland WIC, you should see the increased benefit right now!

### **My benefit amount doesn't look right. How can I fix it?**

If you think you are supposed to get more benefits than what it shows in your WIC shopping list, contact your Local Agency.

### **Wait. Didn't we already have increased fruit and vegetable benefits?**

Yes. Starting in June 2021, the fruit and vegetable benefit was increased to \$35 per person. Now starting in October 2021, the benefit is \$47 per month for a breastfeeding woman and \$43 per month for a pregnant or postpartum woman, and \$24 per month for a child.

## **Why do we have increased benefits and why did the amounts change in October?**

On March 11, 2021, Congress passed the American Rescue Plan and President Biden signed it into law. One thing the American Rescue Plan did is increase the fruit and vegetable benefit for WIC participants to \$35 per person. However, the American Rescue Plan only allowed this increase for four months.

On September 30, 2021, Congress passed and President Biden signed into law the Extending Government Funding and Delivering Emergency Assistance Act (which some people call a "Continuing Resolution"). One of the things the Continuing Resolution did was change the fruit and vegetable benefit to \$47 for breastfeeding women, \$43 for pregnant and postpartum women, and \$24 for children. These benefit amounts were originally supposed to last until December 31, 2021, but a series of new bills passed in Congress and signed by the President have extended the increased benefit until September 30, 2022.

## **Why is this ending in September 2022? Can't this be permanent?**

Now that the increased fruit and vegetable benefit has been put in place until the end of September, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) can make it permanent by implementing a rule change about the WIC food package. The USDA is studying the issue, and we will post any updates here on this website.