

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is a federal public health nutrition program administered in Vermont by the Department of Health. The program serves income-eligible pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding/chestfeeding people, and infants and children up to age 5. The following is a report of participation trends. The State is served by 12 local health offices and regional data are also presented.

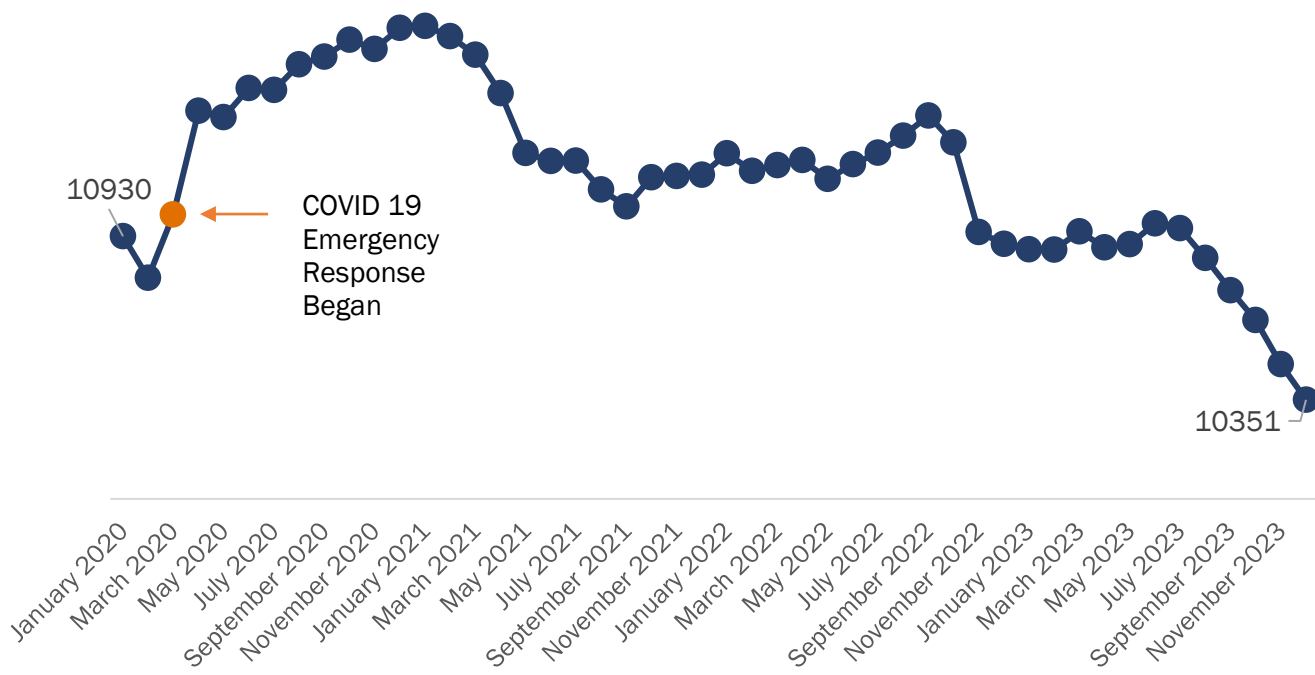
KEY POINTS

- **Approximately 38% of Vermont's infants and one-third of Vermont's children participate in WIC.**
- **The trend of people who have Medicaid but are not on WIC during pregnancy has been increasing over time.**
- **WIC participation among eligible people varies by region.**

Program Participation

WIC caseloads had been on a steady decline in Vermont, and across the country, prior to the COVID-19 public health emergency. In 2019, Vermont WIC served an average of just over 11,000 participants statewide. **The program saw a sharp increase at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic** which continued through early 2021. There has been a general decline since that time. WIC participation and enrollment trends can be found on the [Vermont WIC Data Dashboard](#) and are updated monthly.

WIC Program Statewide Participation Trends

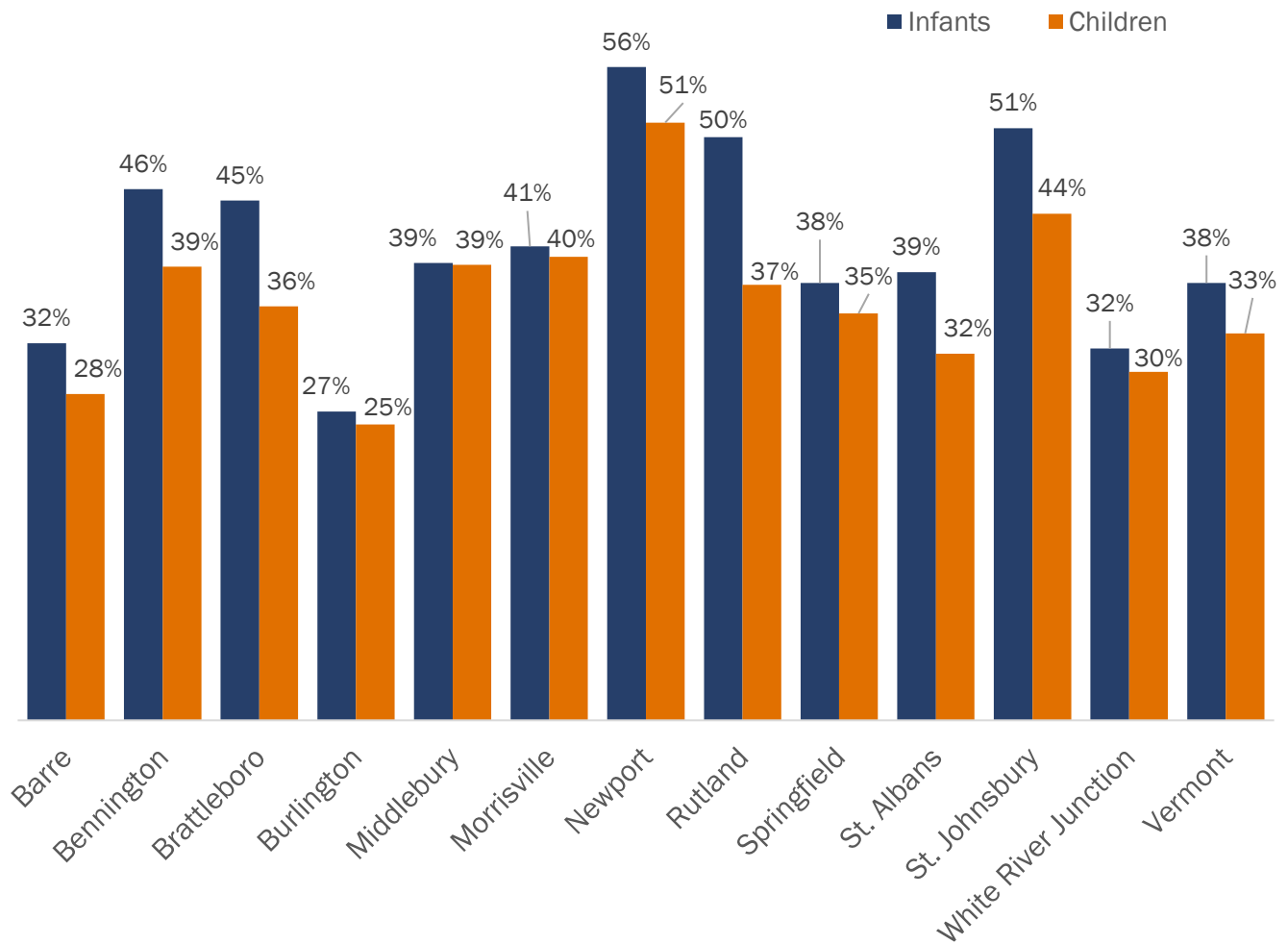


Vermont WIC Program Participation and Reach

Program Reach – Infants and Children

Statewide, 38% of Vermont infants and 33% of Vermont children participate in the WIC program. There is some regional variation on this statewide coverage as shown below. The following graph shows the average of multi-year results (2019-2022) for the regions served by the 12 district offices. Approximately half of the infants and children in the Newport region participate while a quarter of infants and children in the Burlington region participate in WIC.

WIC Participation Rates, by Age Category and Local Health District

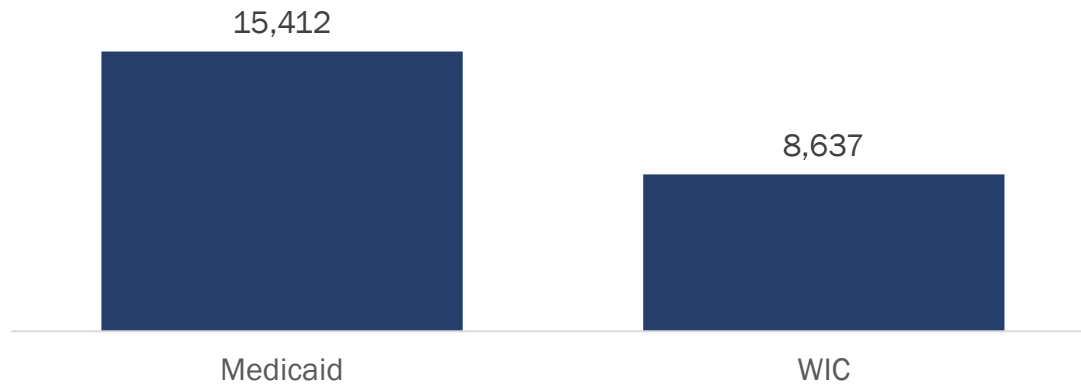


WIC Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System and Census Population Estimates Data, 2019-2022

Vermont WIC Program Participation and Reach

Infants and children enrolled in Medicaid or Dr. Dynasaur are automatically income-eligible for WIC. However, when comparing enrollment and participation counts for both programs, WIC is serving only 56% of this eligible population. This means there are approximately 6,700 infants and children that could be benefiting from the WIC program but are not.

Thousands of Eligible Vermont Infants and Children are Missing Out on WIC Benefits

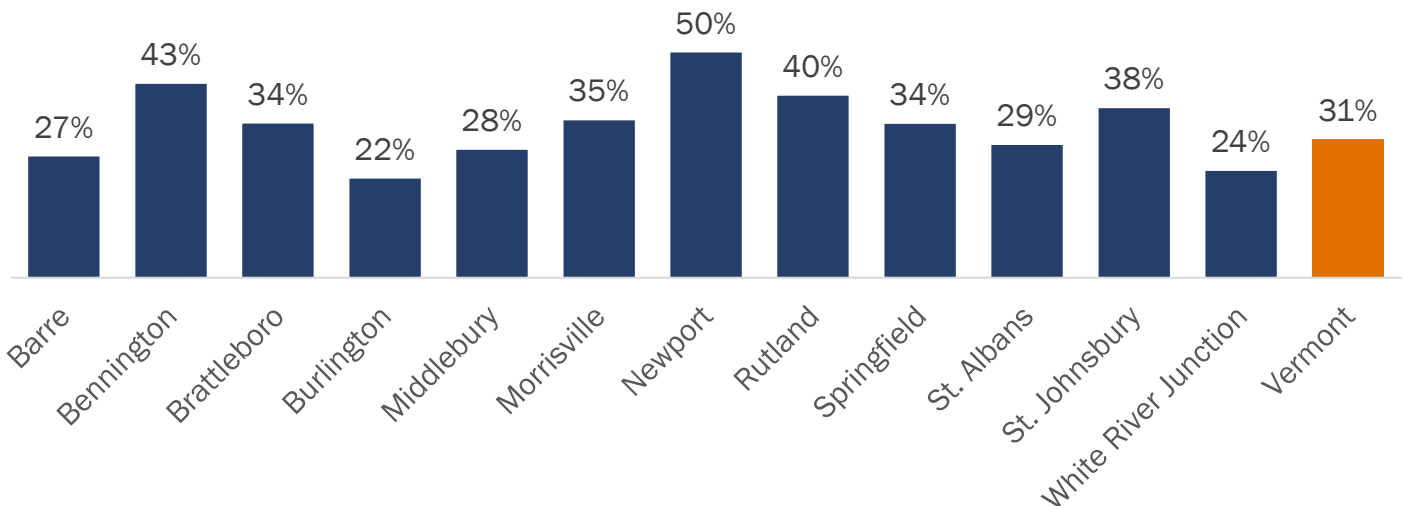


Medicaid and WIC Administrative Data, 2023

Program Reach – Pregnancy

Over 2018-2022, 31% of infants were born to Vermont birthing parents participating in WIC at the time of birth. This rate is decreasing over time. In 2011 this rate was 43%.

WIC Participation Rates During Pregnancy by Local Health District

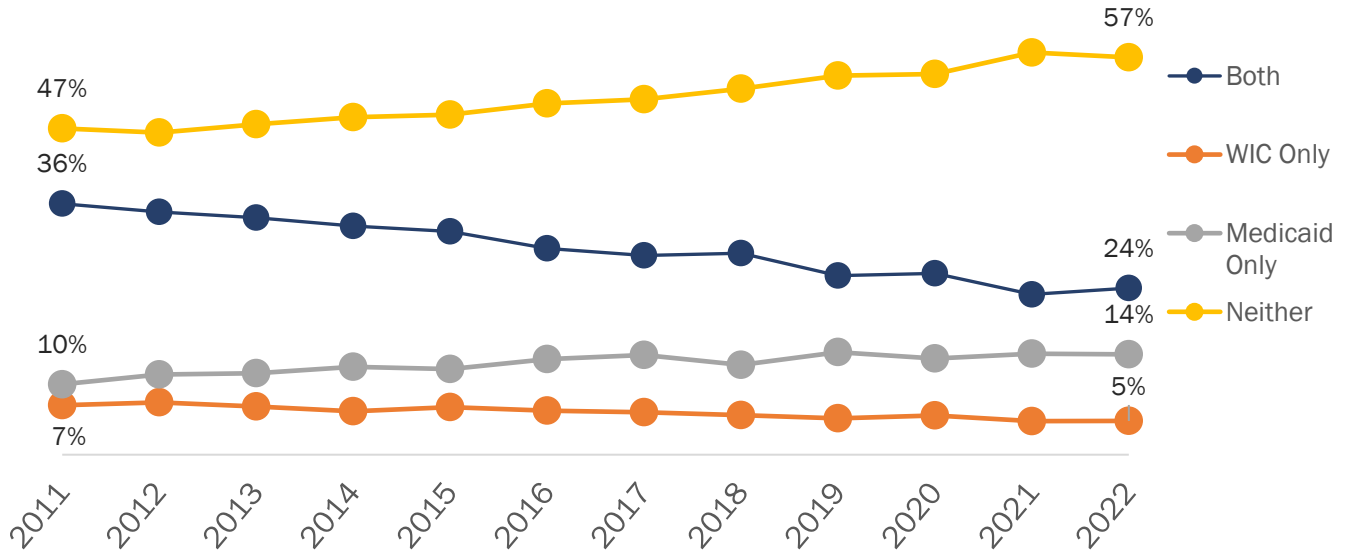


VT Vital Statistics, 2018-2022

Vermont WIC Program Participation and Reach

Among all births in 2022, 14% of birthing parents were on Medicaid but not enrolled in WIC. This is an increase from 10% in 2011. The trend in those participating in neither program has been increasing over time, while the trend in those participating in both is decreasing, as is the trend in those participating in WIC only. In 2022, 5% percent of infants were born to women participating in WIC but not Medicaid at the time of birth.

Medicaid and WIC Participation Rates During Pregnancy

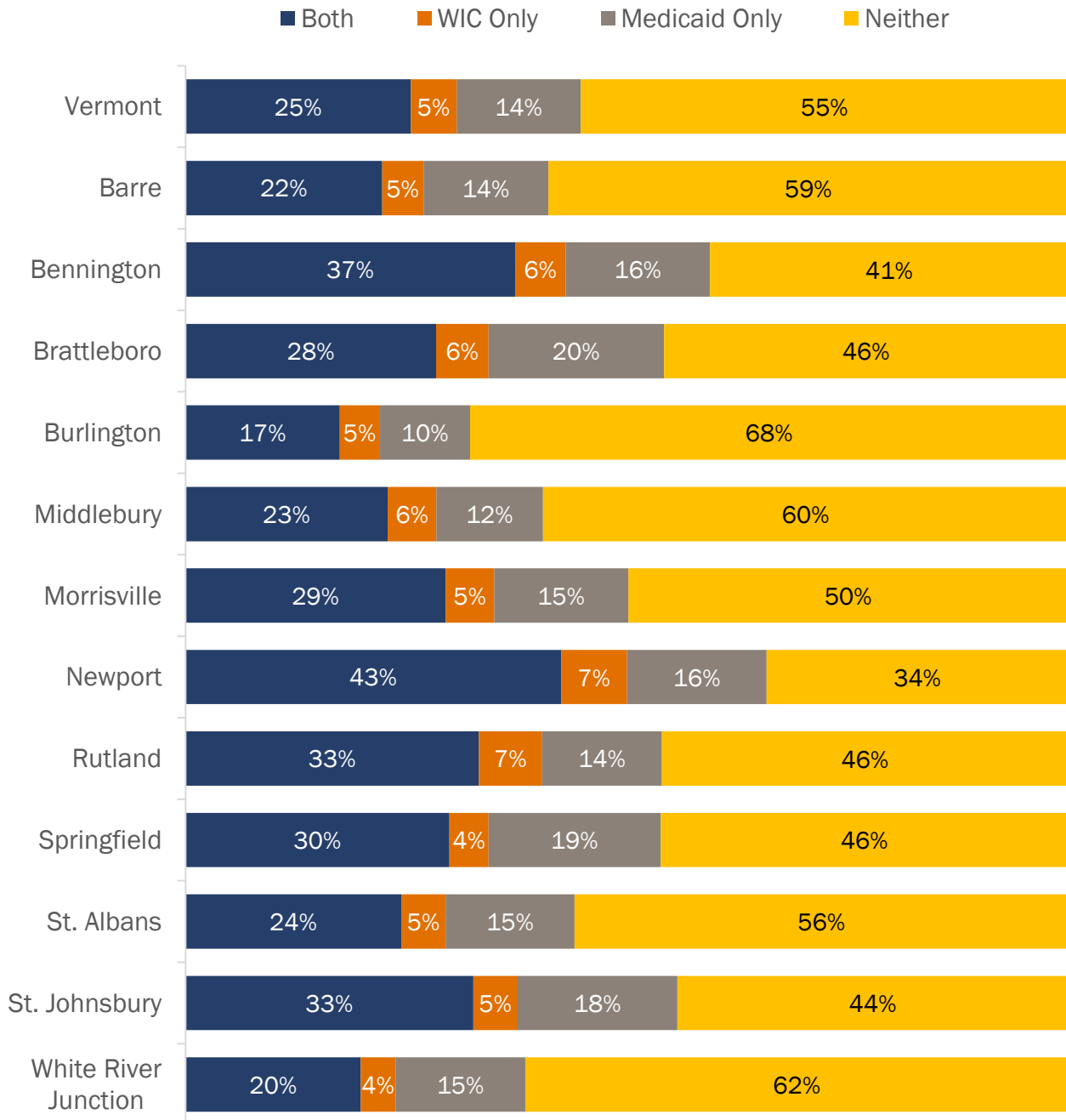


VT Vital Statistics, 2011-2022

Vermont WIC Program Participation and Reach

We also see variation in Medicaid and WIC participation during pregnancy by region. Brattleboro and Springfield have the highest percentage of those participating in Medicaid but not WIC. Burlington and White River Junction have the highest percentage of those participating in neither program.

WIC and Medicaid Participation Rates During Pregnancy by Local Health District

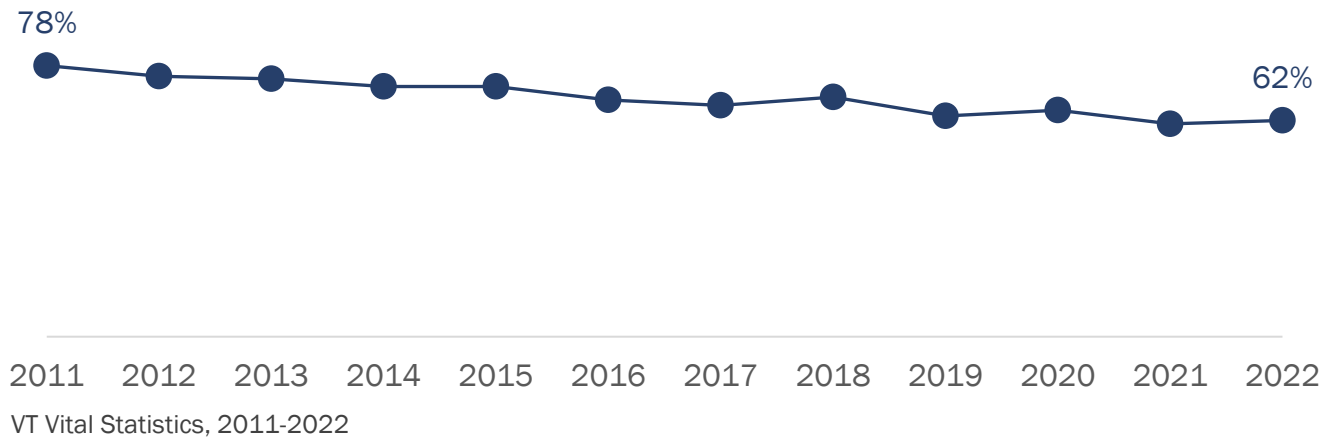


VT Vital Statistics, 2018-2022

Vermont WIC Program Participation and Reach

Among Medicaid recipients, 62% were also enrolled in WIC during pregnancy. This trend has declined from 78% in 2011.

Rate of WIC Enrollment among Medicaid Recipients



Key Takeaways

Vermont WIC serves a large portion of pregnant, postpartum, breastfeeding/chestfeeding people and infants and children in the state. Participation has fluctuated over time, likely due to the impacts of COVID-19, but overall there is a decrease in enrollment. The overall birth rate in Vermont has also been declining which impacts the number of potentially eligible people.

Vermont WIC is aiming to increase enrollment and participation among eligible people through several quality improvement and modernization efforts. These efforts include:

- Streamlining access and eligibility information with Vermonteres enrolled in Medicaid, 3SquaresVT and Reach Up Financial Assistance.
- Expanding services like remote appointments and online and app-based education.
- Improving the WIC shopping experience.
- Partnering with community organizations to offer nutrition education.

**More eligible
Vermonters could be
participating in WIC.**

Data Notes

Data sources included in the brief are labeled on each chart and include: Vital Statistics, Pregnancy and Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance data collected by the WIC program, along with other administrative data, Census Population Estimates, and Medicaid enrollment data.

Vermont WIC Program Participation and Reach

The Standard Monthly Participation Report is run directly from the WIC Management Information System. It is a count of all active participants who have received benefits within the month. In Vermont Vital Statistics data, WIC status is included in the birth file. It represents birthing parents who are receiving WIC benefits at the time of birth. Therefore, the WIC data status assignment does not include people who enroll in the WIC program in the postpartum period which differs from the WIC status assignment in the Pregnancy Nutrition Surveillance System (PNSS).

The PNSS provides prevalence and trends for nutrition, health and behavioral indicators in pregnant and postpartum people enrolled in Vermont's WIC program. This population is not representative of Vermont's pregnant and postpartum populations and findings reported here should not be generalized outside the population receiving WIC services.

The Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System (PedNSS) provides data on prevalence and trends for nutrition related indicators for children (infants and children < 5 years of age) participating in WIC. This population is not representative of the Vermont child population and findings reported here should not be generalized outside the population receiving WIC services.

For more information: Please contact the Vermont WIC program at WIC@vermont.gov.