



# Model WIC Online Application

Resource for WIC State agencies



The following six sections, at a minimum, are recommended for Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) online applications based on research with WIC State and local agencies and WIC-eligible individuals. Including these sections, in this order, ensures that eligibility questions come first before applicants enter personal information. State agencies can customize their own applications to best meet their needs.

## Section 1

### Introduce the application

This section tells applicants what to expect.

#### Tips

##### **"Start an application for [State agency] WIC"**

Avoid jargon that is unfamiliar to applicants. If you use a term like "application," make it clear that a certification appointment is still needed before their application is complete.

##### **"[State Agency]"**

Replace [State agency] with the actual name of the state, territory, or Indian Tribal Organization (ITO) wherever it appears in this form.

##### **"It should take about 5 minutes to complete."**

Help applicants expect how long it should take to fill out this form.

##### **"After you submit the form..."**

Set expectations up front about the rest of the process. Customize this timeframe based on your State agency's policy. State agencies are required to adhere to 7 CFR 246.7(f) following an applicant's first request for benefits. Note whether they are calendar days or business days.

##### **"Note: If you already use WIC and need help..."**

Consider adding a link to find local clinic contact information. Research showed that some duplicate applications came from current WIC participants wanting to contact their local agency. This helps redirect them.

#### Section

### Start an application for [State agency] WIC

[The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children \(WIC\) \(https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic\)](https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic) helps eligible people with healthy foods, breastfeeding support, nutrition education, and referrals to local resources.

This form starts the application process for WIC. **It should take about 5 minutes to complete.** Apply for yourself, or on behalf of a child (this includes foster children).

Information to have when filling out this form:

- Your [household](#) size
- An income estimate
- Other benefits programs you use

After you submit the form, your local WIC clinic will contact you within [X] business days to schedule a virtual appointment to complete the application process.

Your information will remain secure and confidential.

**Note:** If you already use WIC and need help, please contact the local WIC clinic where you receive benefits.

**Get started**

[Nondiscrimination statement \(https://www.fns.usda.gov/civil-rights/usda-nondiscrimination-statement-other-fns-programs\)](https://www.fns.usda.gov/civil-rights/usda-nondiscrimination-statement-other-fns-programs). This institution is an equal opportunity provider

### ***"Who counts in my household?"***

Provide additional detail on what is considered a "household" for applicants. Applicants can be unsure of what falls under that term, so providing additional guidance either within the form itself or with a modal (or pop-up) window can help define the criteria.

## **Who counts in my household?**

Your household is everyone you live with and share income and expenses with. This includes children, people you aren't related to, students away at school, and military service members even if they are away on active duty. If someone in your household is pregnant, you may increase your household size by one for each expected birth.

Foster children are considered separate households in WIC. Please complete one application for any foster children in your care and a separate application for any other household members (e.g., yourself and your children, children in your care). If you are not sure what your household size is, your local WIC clinic can provide more information.

**Close**

## Section 2

### Check eligibility

This section helps applicants learn whether they are likely to be eligible for WIC in as few questions as possible. It should come before “Collect contact information” so applicants can check if they could be eligible before entering personal information.

#### Conditional questions and answers

For your application to show or hide screens based on the applicant's answer in real time, the software must be able to save data across screens.

#### Tips

##### **"Do you live in [State agency]?"**

ITOs should customize this question based on their service area to best reflect how they calculate residential eligibility.

##### **"Continue"**

Asking one question per page reduces the cognitive burden for applicants so they don't have to answer a longer list of questions that may not apply. On the State agency side, it makes it easier implement the conditional logic and ideal user flow.

#### How to route an applicant

- **Selects “Yes”:** Direct them to the next question.
- **Selects “No”:** A modal should appear telling them to apply in the State agency where they live.
- **No selection:** Show them an [Error message](#).

#### Section

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**Required:**

Do you live in [State agency]?

Yes

No

**Continue**

### "Has had a baby..."

Avoid the term "postpartum," which is a specialized term not every applicant would know.

### "Has had a pregnancy end..."

Use language that generalizes the experience but does not use triggering words like "miscarriage."

#### How to route an applicant

- **Selects "Is a foster child" only:** Skip the adjunctive or income eligibility questions and route them directly to [Tell us about yourself](#).
- **Selects "Is a foster child" and another option:** A modal should appear telling them to complete a separate application for any foster children and for the rest of the household.
- **Selects one or more options:** Direct them to the next question.
- **Selects "None of these":** Make this response a single select radio button. This means that when it is selected all the other options are inactive. Route them to [Likely not eligible](#).
- **No selection:** Show them an [Error message](#).

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**Required (Select all that apply):**

## Which of the following apply to you or someone in your household?

Your household is everyone you live with and share income and expenses with. [Learn who counts in your household](#).

Foster children are considered separate households in WIC. Please complete one application for any foster children in your care and a separate application for any other household members (e.g., yourself and your children, children in your care).

Is pregnant

Has had a baby within the last 6 months

Has had a pregnancy end within the last 6 months

Is a breastfeeding and/or lactating parent of a baby up to 12 months

Is a child who is younger than 5 years old

Is a foster child who meets any of the above criteria

None of these

**Continue**

"[State agency]"

Replace [State agency] with the actual name of the state, territory, or Indian Tribal Organization (ITO) that is making and managing the form.

#### How to route an applicant

- **Selects "Yes...previously received"**: Direct them to the next question.
- **Selects "Yes...currently receives"**: A modal should appear asking them to call the WIC clinic where they receive benefits. This is to ensure only people new to WIC complete the form.
- **Selects "Yes...has recently moved"**: Direct them to the next question.
- **Selects "No" or "I'm not sure"**: Direct them to the next question.
- **No selection**: Show them an [Error message](#).

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**Required:**

Have you or [someone in your household](#) received WIC benefits before?

Yes, I or someone in my household **previously received** WIC benefits in [State agency]

Yes, I or someone in my household **currently receives** WIC benefits in [State agency]

Yes, I or someone in my household **has recently moved or is about to move to [State agency]** after receiving WIC benefits somewhere else

No

I'm not sure

**Continue**

### "...enrolled in any of the following programs?"

List the most common name and acronym for each benefit program. For example, this could be "SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)" if your State hasn't given it a State-specific name, but it could be "CalFresh" in California.

### "Medicaid"

State agencies may need to rename the Medicaid option depending on how it's funded. For example, different Medicaid programs may be available if they're funded through Title 19.

#### How to route an applicant

- **Selects one or more responses:** Direct them to [Collect contact information](#).
- **Selects "None of these":** Make this response a single select radio button. This means that when it is selected all the other options are inactive. Direct them to [Check income eligibility](#) if they aren't adjunctively eligible.
- **No selection:** Show them an [Error message](#).

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**Required (Select all that apply):**

Are you or [someone in your household](#) enrolled in any of the following programs?

Using any of these programs makes you income-eligible for WIC. You can also be eligible based on your household income.

Medicaid

SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)

TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)

[Insert State agency-specific program]

None of these

**Continue**

If necessary

Check income eligibility if an applicant isn't adjunctively or automatically eligible

This section lets applicants check whether they are likely to be income-eligible if they aren't adjunctively or automatically eligible through another program. This section should only be shown if they answered "None of these" for the previous question.

"How many people are in your household?" Display the program definition of "household" where it's relevant. This reduces confusion for the applicant. Include income eligibility information for household sizes up to 16, which corresponds to the information included in the WIC income eligibility table.

"Is your total household income below the amounts in the following table?" A table that shows the income threshold for their specific household size is easier for applicants to understand than a large table that shows all income thresholds at once. This question should be hidden until the applicant makes a selection in the previous question.

"If you are unsure about your income..." Many eligible applicants on the cusp of the income threshold believe they are not eligible. WIC staff should be the final decision makers.

"Do not include income..." Tribal payments received by local populations should be noted as exclusions from WIC income guidelines, according to policy.

How to route an applicant
• Selects "Yes" or "I'm not sure": Direct them to Collect contact information.
• Selects "No": Route them to Likely not eligible.
• No selection: Show them an Error message.

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All fields are required

Check your income eligibility

You must be income-eligible to participate in WIC.

How many people are in your household?

Your household is everyone you live with and share income and expenses with. This includes children, people you aren't related to, students away at college, and military service members even if they are away on active duty. If someone in your household is pregnant, you may increase your household size by one for each expected birth.

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Is your total household income below the amounts in the following table?

If you are unsure about your income, select "I'm not sure." A WIC staff member can answer more specific questions about your situation when they follow up about your application.

Add up all sources of income, including:

- wages and wages and tips (before tax and deductions)
social security
child support and alimony
unemployment
worker's compensation
retirement payments
disability benefits

Do not include income from loans, AmeriCorps, some military exceptions, or non-cash assistance.

Table with 4 columns: Annual maximum, Monthly maximum, Bi-weekly maximum, Weekly maximum. Values: \$57,720, \$4,810, \$2,220, \$1,110

Radio buttons for Yes, No, I'm not sure

Continue



### **"Military income exceptions"**

To further define a "military exception," consider linking additional information within a modal. This will keep the flow of the form fluid, and allow for more explanation when needed.

### **Military income exceptions**

If your household includes a military service member, do not include income from combat pay, Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH), Overseas Continental United States Cost of Living Allowance (OCOL), Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance (FSSA), Family Separation Housing (FSH), or Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA).

**Close**

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## If necessary

### Likely not eligible

This section tells applicants they are likely not eligible for WIC based on their responses and redirects them to other programs to find support.

#### ***"Based on your answers, you are likely not eligible for WIC"***

Let the user know upfront to lessen confusion. If your software allows, create variations of this screen that explain why they may not be eligible, based on their responses.

#### ***"If you still think you may be eligible..."***

Provide an opportunity for an applicant to get more clarification about their eligibility by calling the State agency or providing a link to a clinic locator.

#### ***"You can also visit [hyperlink] to learn about other assistance in [State agency]."***

Give an applicant more opportunities to get help instead of just hitting a dead end.

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## Based on your answers, you are likely not eligible for WIC.

**You answered "None of these" to "Which of the following applies to you or someone in your household?" To receive WIC benefits in [State agency], one of the options must apply.**

If you still think you may be eligible, please call [State agency] WIC at XXX-XXX-XXXX

You can also visit [\[hyperlink\]](#) to learn more about other assistance in [State agency].

## Section 3

### Collect contact information

This section lets applicants fill in their contact information if they are likely eligible for WIC based on their answers.

#### Personally Identifiable Information (PII)

This section contains PII. State agencies must follow all necessary security protocols to handle and store PII.

#### Tips

##### "Thank you! Based on your answers..."

Provide an indication that applicants are likely eligible at this point in the process. This can help them feel like including personal information is worth their time.

##### "Your legal name"

Use text entry fields that support many special characters, accents, and lengths. People can have names with punctuation or names with as few as 2 letters. This makes it easier for applicants without English names to apply.

##### "Date of birth"

Ask for the applicant's date of birth to help your State agency locate existing application or MIS entries to prevent duplicates.

For more information on implementation and error validation [check out the U.S. Web Design System \(USWDS\) pattern for date of birth.](https://designsystem.digital.gov/patterns/create-a-user-profile/date-of-birth/) (<https://designsystem.digital.gov/patterns/create-a-user-profile/date-of-birth/>).

##### "Your ZIP code"

Customize this field based on how your State agency routes applications to local agencies. It may be full address, county, a 5- or 9-digit ZIP code, etc.

#### Section

### Thank you! Based on your answers, you are likely eligible for WIC.

We'll need more information so your local WIC clinic can contact you.

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All fields are required

## Tell us about yourself

All information must exactly match the proof of identity (i.e. a driver's license or birth certificate) you will provide the WIC office.

### Your legal name

First or given name

Last or family name

### Date of Birth

Month

Day

Year

### Your ZIP Code

This makes sure we send your information to the right WIC clinic.

5 digits, for example 99999

[Continue](#)

**If necessary**

**Add children's information**

This section lets applicants add name and date of birth information for any eligible children. This page should only be shown if they said they have children under 5 years old in the earlier categorical eligibility question.

**"How many children are in your household?"**

The number selected in this dropdown should be the number of sections added to your form to hold information about each child.

**Section**

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**All fields are required**

## Add children's information

Add information for any children or foster children under 5 years old. All information must exactly match their proof of identity (i.e. birth certificate) you will provide the WIC office.

Complete a separate application for any foster children and for the rest of the household.

### How many children are in your household?

#### First Child

### Legal name

Enter their name as it is listed on the identification, not a nickname.

First or given name

Last or family name

### Date of Birth

Month

Day

Year

## Second child

### Legal name

Enter their name as it is listed on the identification, not a nickname.

First or given name

Last or family name

### Date of Birth

Month

Day

Year

**Continue**

**If necessary**

**Contact preference**

If your agency doesn't have multiple ways to contact applicants, don't include this question.

***"Contact preference"***

Only include contact methods your agency uses to connect with applicants. Selecting "No preference" opts into all methods.

***"Please select any preferred contact methods."***

Provide relevant information to help applicants make their selections.

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**Required (select all that apply):**

## Contact preference

To schedule an appointment, we need to be able to reach you. Please select any preferred contact methods.

Telephone call

Text message / SMS

Email

No preference

**Continue**

Only show the contact options that the user selected. For example, only include this question if a user selected they want to be reached by phone.

**"...within [X] business days..."**

Customize this timeframe based on your State agency's policy. State agencies are required to adhere to 7 CFR 246.7(f) following an applicant's first request for benefits. Note whether they are calendar days or business days.

**"...8 a.m. to 12 p.m... 12 p.m. to 6 p.m."**

State and local agencies may need to customize these time frames based on their operating hours.

**"Can your clinic leave a voicemail?"**

This question should only appear if an applicant selects telephone call as their contact preferences.

Not everyone has their own phone. Asking for permission to leave a voicemail respects an applicant's privacy.

**"Best number to text"**

Applicants who share phones may prefer texting and calling from different numbers. Asking which number they prefer respects their privacy. It is a best practice to collect written permission to text.

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**All fields are required:**

## Contact by phone

Your local WIC clinic will receive your information and will contact you within [X] business days to schedule an appointment.

## Best number to call

10 digits with U.S. area code, for example  
123-456-7890

## When's the best time to call you?

 Morning (8 a.m. to 12 p.m.) Afternoon (12 p.m. to 6 p.m.) No preference

## Can your clinic leave a voicemail?

If you share a phone and don't want others to know about your application, please select no.

 Yes, you may leave a voicemail No

## Best number to text

The number to call and text are the same

10 digits with U.S. area code, for example  
123-456-7890

**Continue**

### If applicable

#### Contact by email

Only require this question if an applicant selected they want to be reached by email.

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**Required:**

## Contact by email

Your local WIC clinic will receive your information and will contact you within [X] business days to schedule an appointment.

## Email address

**Continue**



## Section 4: Optional

### Collect other information ahead of an appointment

State agencies may choose to add additional questions to their online application in order to streamline the appointment. To learn more about these questions, reference the ["How to ask sensitive questions during WIC certification"](#) guide.

#### Tips

##### **"You're almost done."**

Let applicants know these questions will not impact their eligibility for WIC.

##### **"Ethnicity and race"**

This toolkit uses the race and ethnicity categories required by OMB standards prior to 3/29/2024, when the standards were revised. FNS will update this toolkit when guidance based on the revised race and ethnicity standards is available for WIC.

##### **"We collect this information to..."**

Asking applicants to share their race and ethnicity can feel confusing or invasive. Help them by explaining why WIC collects this information and how it will be used.

##### **"Ethnicity"**

Ask about the applicant's ethnicity before asking about their race to reduce confusion.

##### **"Select all that apply"**

Make it clear if applicants can choose more than one option. If your MIS does not currently allow it, consider exploring if your State agency can update it to collect more than one response for race.

#### Section

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### You're almost done.

There are a few more questions we're required to ask you. Your answers will not impact your eligibility for WIC.

**All fields are optional:**

## Ethnicity and race

We collect this information to understand who WIC is serving and improve the program. Your answers do not impact your eligibility for WIC. [You can read our non-discrimination notice here \(https://www.fns.usda.gov/civil-rights/usda-nondiscrimination-statement-other-fns-programs\)](https://www.fns.usda.gov/civil-rights/usda-nondiscrimination-statement-other-fns-programs).

## Ethnicity

Do you identify as Hispanic or Latino?

Select one:

Yes

No

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## Race

Which of the following best describes you? Select all that apply:

For example, "Black or African American" and "White"

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Black or African American

Native Hawaiian or other Pacific  
Islander

White

Some other race

**Continue**

### **"Voter registration"**

State agencies may choose to include this question on an online application but would still need to share the State agency's information form and voter registration form during the appointment. State agencies are encouraged to consult legal counsel and State election officials about handling voter registration assistance during WIC certification.

### **"If you are not registered to vote where you live..."**

The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) requires covered State agencies to use this specific wording to ask voter registration questions.

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**All fields are optional:**

## Voter registration

Benefit programs like WIC are required to help people register to vote. It's okay if you do not want to or cannot register to vote. Your decision will not impact your eligibility for WIC or the benefits you will receive. If you choose to register to vote, the form and assistance will be provided during your appointment.

If you are not registered to vote where you live now, would you like to apply to register to vote?

Select one:

Yes, I want to register to vote

No, I do not want to register to vote

If you do not select either, you will be considered to have decided not to register to vote at this time.

[Understanding your voting rights](#)

**Continue**

**"Understanding your voting rights..."**

Consider using a modal to provide applicants with additional information.

**"If you believe..."**

The X should be filled in with the name, address, and telephone number of the appropriate official.

## Understanding your voting rights

Applying to register or declining to register to vote will not affect the amount of assistance that you will be provided by this agency.

If you would like help in filling out the voter registration application form, we will help you during your appointment. The decision whether to seek or accept help is yours. You may fill out the application form in private.

You may file a complaint with [X], if you believe someone has interfered with your rights to:

- register
- decline to register
- your right to privacy in deciding whether to register
- applying to register to vote
- your right to choose your own political party or other political preference

Close

## Section 5

### Review and submit information

This section gives applicants the opportunity to correct any errors before submitting their form.

#### Tips

**"If you want to make changes..."**

Adjust the wording depending on your software's features.

**"Which of the following apply to you or someone in your household?"**

- **Is a child who is younger than 5 years old"**

Use bullet points for questions that can have multiple responses.

#### Section

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## Review

Review the information on this page before submitting. If you want to make changes, select "Edit" to go to the section you want to change.

### Eligibility questions

**Do you live in [State agency]?**

Yes [Edit](#)

**Which of the following apply to you or someone in your household?**

- Is pregnant [Edit](#)
- Is a child who is younger than 5 years old [Edit](#)

**Have you or someone in your household received WIC benefits before?**

No [Edit](#)

**Are you or someone in your household enrolled in any of the following programs?**

- None of these [Edit](#)

**Is your total household income below the amounts in the following table?**

Yes [Edit](#)

## Tell us about yourself

**First or given name**

Ángela [Edit](#)

**Last or family name**

Sanchez [Edit](#)

**Date of birth**

01/01/2000 [Edit](#)

**Your ZIP code**

12345 [Edit](#)

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## Children's information

**How many children are in your household?**

2 [Edit](#)

### First child

**First or given name**

Carlos [Edit](#)

**Last or family name**

Sanchez [Edit](#)

**Date of birth**

10/19/2021 [Edit](#)

### Second child

**First or given name**

Maria [Edit](#)

**Last or family name**

Sanchez [Edit](#)

**Date of birth**

09/20/2023 [Edit](#)

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## Contact information

### Contact preference

- Telephone call [Edit](#)
- Text message / SMS [Edit](#)
- Email [Edit](#)

### Best number to call

(123) 456-7890 [Edit](#)

### When's the best time to call you?

- Morning (8 a.m. to 12 p.m.) [Edit](#)

### Can your clinic leave a voicemail?

Yes, you may leave a voicemail [Edit](#)

### Best number to text

(123) 456-7890 [Edit](#)

### Email address

angela.sanchez@email.com [Edit](#)

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## Ethnicity and race

### Ethnicity

Do you identify as Hispanic or Latino?

Yes [Edit](#)

### Race

Which of the following best describes you?

- American Indian or Alaska Native [Edit](#)
  - White [Edit](#)
- 

## Voter registration

**If you are not registered to vote where you live now, would you like to register to vote?**

Yes, I want to register to vote [Edit](#)

**Submit**

## Section 6

# Confirmation

Use this section to let applicants know their submission worked. This is also an opportunity to help them understand what to expect next.

### Tips

#### **"...within [X] business days..."**

Make sure to save a date stamp with the form submission to track contact timeline.

#### **"If you are in urgent need..."**

Customize this phone number for your State agency to support applicants who need urgent assistance.

#### **"Prepare for your appointment"**

Provide applicants with information about what documents to prepare and what to expect at a certification appointment.

State agencies not widely offering virtual certifications yet may need to edit this language to fit their procedures.

If possible, send a reminder email or text before their appointment.

#### **"Medicaid, TANF, or SNAP"**

Customize this list based on program names within your State agency.

### Section

## Confirmation

### **Thank you for submitting your information**

You will hear from WIC staff within [X] business days to follow up on your application. If you are in urgent need of food or formula sooner, please call us at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

## Prepare for your virtual appointment

You'll need the following documents at your appointment:

- Proof of identity (such as a driver's license or birth certificate)
- Proof of residency (such as a utility bill)
- Proof of participation in Medicaid, TANF, or SNAP, if applicable
- Proof of income (such as [X] weeks of recent paystubs) if not enrolled in Medicaid, TANF, or SNAP
- [Insert any other exact proofs needed, like proof of pregnancy or infant birth documentation]

If you can't find your documents or have questions, a staff member will help you during your appointment.

At the appointment, we will review any proof documents and confirm eligibility for WIC. We will also talk with you about your and your children's health.

[Return to \[State agency\] WIC page](#)



## Other examples

### Example error state

This section describes best practices for error states.

An error state indicates to an applicant that their answer is not valid.

Generally, only show an error state if a field is empty. Only validate further if the answer must be in a specific format. For example, if an email address is missing the @ symbol or if a phone number does not have 10 digits.

Show the error message next to the form field. That makes it easier for an applicant to tell which field they need to fix.

Tell the applicant how to fix the error. You can repeat part of the question, if relevant.

### Your legal name

Enter your name as it is listed on the identification, not a nickname.

First or given name

Enter a first or given name

Last or family name

Enter a last or family name

### Example modal

This section describes best practices for a modal (also called a pop-up or lightbox) which is a web page element that displays in front of other page content.

Research has shown that some terms, such as “household,” can be confusing to applicants. Linking terms within a modal window can help provide the space to further expand on definitions or guidance. This method can help users refer to additional information as needed, while not interrupting the flow of the form. Ensure that the website allows for modal implementation when using this component, otherwise look into another option like a [tooltip](https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/tooltip/) (<https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/accordion/>), or [accordion](https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/tooltip/) (<https://designsystem.digital.gov/components/tooltip/>).

### Who counts in my household?

Your household is everyone you live with and share income and expenses with. This includes children, people you aren't related to, students away at school, and military service members even if they are away on active duty. If someone in your household is pregnant, you may increase your household size by one for each expected birth.

Foster children are considered separate households in WIC. Please complete one application for any foster children in your care and a separate application for any other household members (e.g., yourself and your children, children in your care). If you are not sure what your household size is, your local WIC clinic can provide more information.

Close