

South Dakota WIC Program

2024 Annual Report



As a part of the Office of Family Nutrition Services, the WIC Program strives to:

- Serve with integrity & respect
- Demonstrate leadership & accountability
- Leverage partnerships
- Eliminate health disparities
- Focus on prevention & outcomes
- Promote innovation

Our Mission

South Dakota Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) aims to safeguard the health of women, infants, and children up to age five who are income-eligible and are at nutritional risk by providing personalized nutrition information, breastfeeding education and support, referral to healthcare and social services, and nutritious foods to supplement diets.



Vision

Every South Dakotan Healthy and Strong

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WIC Overview

History

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) is a nutrition program that provides assessment and education, supplemental foods, breastfeeding support, and referrals to healthcare and social services for women who are pregnant or post-partum, infants, and children up to age 5 who are income-eligible and at nutritional risk.

The WIC Program began in the United States in 1972 when Congress saw substantial numbers of women, infants and children who did not have adequate access to nutrition and healthcare services. The WIC Program was first implemented in South Dakota in 1974. Currently there are 62 office sites throughout the state.



Funding

WIC is implemented and funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) under Public Law 95-627, Child Nutrition Amendments of 1996 and P.L. 104-98, Section 17 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966. Final regulations were issued in July 1988 with consolidation of WIC Regulations published in the Federal Register, Part 7 CFR 246. The South Dakota Department of Health (SD DOH) administers the WIC Program and is responsible for all fiscal and operational requirements in accordance with state and federal regulations.

WIC is a discretionary grant and must be applied for each year through the State Plan. Congress authorizes a specific amount of funds for the program. The overall grant fund is divided into Food Funds and Nutrition Services and Administrative (NSA) dollars.

In South Dakota, infant formula rebate funds are used to purchase breast pumps and food benefits.

WIC Overview

What is WIC?

WIC is a nutrition, and breastfeeding support and counseling program that helps to improve healthy lifestyle choices, promote sound food buying habits, and provide referrals to community agencies, social programs, and preventative health. The supplemental food quantities and types are designed to address inadequate and excessive nutrient intake, contribute to an overall dietary pattern consistent with national nutrition guidelines for adults, toddlers, and infants, and deliver priority nutrients to participants to meet their supplemental nutrition needs.

Who is eligible?



Women

Pregnant (during pregnancy and up to 6 months after the birth of an infant or the end of the pregnancy).

Postpartum (for the infant's first 12 months of life, if breastfeeding; for the infant's first 6 months of life, if not breastfeeding; or 6 months after the end of the pregnancy).

Breastfeeding up to a year (until the infant's first birthday).



Infants

Until the infant's first birthday.



Children

Until the child's fifth birthday.



Residency

Applicants must live in the state, or tribe, in which they apply.



Income

Applicants must have income at or below 185% of the federal poverty level. Applicants on Medicaid, the Special Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) automatically meet income guidelines.



Nutritional Risk

Applicants must be seen by a WIC program health professional who will complete a nutrition assessment. This assessment helps determine if the applicant is at nutritional risk. "Nutritional Risk" means that a person has a medical or dietary-based condition(s) that nutritionally affects their health and well-being, such as anemia.

Benefits of WIC

WIC is a successful supplemental nutrition assistance program with a proven record of improving maternal and child health. Various studies have shown that the science-based, nutritious food packages, and referrals to health care and other social services offered by WIC have resulted in not only enhanced birth outcomes, diet quality, and child development among WIC participants, but also a decrease in healthcare costs.

Some of the specific WIC benefits include:

Healthy Birth Outcomes

WIC's food packages provide nutritious foods that are vital during and after pregnancy. Studies have shown that participating in WIC is associated with healthier pregnancies and reduced infant mortality. WIC participation is associated with a 29% in earlier weeks of pregnancy to 48% in the later weeks of pregnancy reduction in the risk of premature births*. It also reduces the risk of low birth weight by 22% to 36%, with greater reductions observed as pregnancy progresses*. Research shows that Black mothers who participate in WIC are 5% less likely to deliver a low birth-weight infant, their infants are 5% less likely to be small for gestational age, and there is a 36.6% reduction in WIC infant mortality all of which demonstrates that WIC is important in decreasing disparities in healthy birth outcomes by reaching and impacting minority groups*.

Improved Infant Feeding Practices

WIC promotes breastfeeding as the ideal method of infant feeding. Research shows that participating mothers who received breastfeeding advice from WIC were more likely to breastfeed compared to other WIC participants and eligible non-participants. The percentage of infants breastfeeding at 6 months increased from 12.9 % to 20.8% while 90% of formula-fed infants received iron-fortified formula, a recommended practice for non-breastfed infants in the first year of life**.

Adequate Growth, Development, and Immunization

Studies have shown that low-income children who never participated in WIC had a 5% to 19 % lower vaccination rate than WIC participants and low-income child immunization coverage comparable to high income counterparts*. Infants receiving WIC services have increased use of preventive care and increased diagnosis and treatment of common childhood illnesses. WIC children have a 5% reduction in attention-deficit and other common mental health conditions hence improving their cognitive and academic achievement*. Children whose mothers participated in WIC are 8% less likely to repeat a grade*.

Increased Consumption of Key Nutrients and improved health outcomes

WIC infants and children have higher intakes of essential vitamins and minerals, particularly iron*. Children who participate in WIC most of their first two years of life have better diet quality than those who stopped before 2 years*. WIC participation is associated with 5% improvement in nutritional quality of food purchases, increased consumption of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and lower-fat milk*. The improved diet quality associated with WIC participation may help reduce childhood obesity, and adequate essential mineral intake, particularly iron, has resulted in lower prevalence of anemia among WIC participants*.

References: *WIC Works: Addressing the Nutrition and Health Needs of Low-Income Families for More Than Four Decades:

<https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/wic-works-addressing-the-nutrition-and-health-needs-of-low-income-families>

**USDA Food and Nutrition Service- How WIC helps:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/helps#:~:text=Immunization%20Rates%20and%20Regular%20Source,care%20associated%20with%20WIC%20participation>

Benefits Information Resource: National WIC Association <https://www.nwica.org/> – Research articles are outlined on the website to support these proven benefits.

Nutrition & Breastfeeding Support

Nutrition Support

SD WIC has registered dietitians, nutrition educators, and public health assistants who provide nutrition support and education to all WIC participants throughout their time on the WIC Program.

The nutrition goal of WIC is to promote and encourage lifelong habits to increase participants' knowledge, attitude, and behaviors to achieve a healthy lifestyle. WIC staff show participants the relationship between healthy choices, improved physical and mental health, and living happier, longer, more active lives.

Breastfeeding Support

In addition to overall nutrition support and education, WIC staff provide similar services to support mothers to make educated choices about how to feed their babies. These services are offered free of charge through the WIC office to pregnant women and moms who choose to breastfeed.

A Breastfeeding Peer Counselor (BFPC) is a woman from the WIC community who has personal breastfeeding experience as well as specialized training in assisting moms with breastfeeding. In addition, they:

- ✧ Discuss common breastfeeding concerns with moms
- ✧ Help moms work breastfeeding into their lives
- ✧ Educate family and mom's personal support group on breastfeeding
- ✧ Provide moms with emotional support and encouragement during and after pregnancy



Return on Investments

Public Health Outcomes

By providing supplemental nutritious foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, healthcare referrals, WIC helps enhance healthier birth outcomes, and child development and decrease incidences of diet-related chronic diseases later in life such as diabetes and hypertension. Improved health outcomes result in decreased healthcare utilization, highlighting the impact of WIC for both public health and healthcare cost saving.

Healthcare Cost Savings

WIC serves 6.7 million mothers, infants, and young children per month throughout the United States, including around 40% of all infants born in the U.S., in rural, tribal, and urban communities*, **. Research shows that every dollar spent on prenatal WIC participation results in healthcare savings from \$1.77 to \$3.13 within the first 60 days after birth, while every dollar invested in WIC in general results in \$2.48 in cost saving for medical, educational and productivity***.

If WIC reached all 2 to 4-year-old eligible children, population health benefits could more than double. This would result in \$93.4 million savings in healthcare costs****.

Brings Money to Local Communities

Each year, \$4.9 billion in WIC foods are spent in approximately 47,000 authorized WIC retailers nationwide. Authorized retailers include large and small stores, with at least one-quarter of WIC benefits spent at small and medium size stores across the country. WIC cost containment initiatives saved between \$0.02 and \$0.61 per participant per month *****.

Improved awareness of and Access to Healthy Food for the Participants

WIC food packages improve access to healthy food for the WIC participants. WIC participating children are more likely to consume whole grains, age-appropriate milk and 100% juice compared to eligible non-participating children. 70% of WIC mothers indicated that they made at least one change to their own and their families food choices because of what they learned from WIC *****.

*See Page 14 for monthly benefit breakdown by category for 2024 in South Dakota

Pivotal to Achieving National Goals

WIC plays a key role in improving public health by helping reduce preterm births, childhood obesity, and the consumption of added sugars and sodium, while also supporting increased breastfeeding rates, fruit and vegetable intake, and both child and household food security—all of which align with the goals of the Healthy People 2030 initiative.

References: *USDA. WIC Program. 2024: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/wic-program/#:~:text=WIC%20served%20about%206.6%20million,billion%20in%20fiscal%20year%202023>.

**THE STATE OF WIC. Celebrating 50 Years of Impact. 2024: <https://media.nwica.org/state%20of%20wic%20report%202025.pdf>

***Nianogo RA, Wang MC, Basurto-Davila R, Nobari TZ, Preli M, Arah OA, Whaley SE. Economic evaluation of California prenatal participation in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) to prevent preterm birth. *Prev Med*. 2019 Jul;124:42-49. doi: 10.1016/j.ypmed.2019.04.011. Epub 2019 Apr 16. PMID: 30998955; PMCID: PMC6696990.

****Kenney EL, Lee MM, Barrett JL, Ward ZJ, Long MW, Craddock AL, Williams DR, Gortmaker SL. Cost-effectiveness of Improved WIC Food Package for Preventing Childhood Obesity. *Pediatrics*. 2024 Jan 1;153(2):e2023063182. doi: 10.1542/peds.2023-063182. PMID: 38258385; PMCID: PMC10827651.

*****WIC Food Cost-Containment Practices Study: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/research/wic/food-cost-containment-practices-study>

*****National WIC Association. For a Stronger, Healthier America. 2023: <https://media.nwica.org/2023%20state%20of%20wic%20report.pdf>.

2024 WIC Priorities & Goals Overview

Below are the priorities (in blue) and goals identified for WIC in 2024:

Align participant needs with our service delivery to increase participation & retention	Improve shopping success
	Implement the online ordering and transactions and food delivery revisions to meet the needs of a modern, data-driven program rule when it is released
	Increase participation and retention of children ages 1-4
Increase efficient & effective service delivery at the local agency level	Improve the quality and effectiveness of staff trainings
	Enhance the Management Information System (MIS) to support the restructure of the WIC Program
	Enhance processes for internal and external referrals
	Establish Quality Improvement (QI) projects to streamline WIC services
Create financial stability in the SD WIC program	Implement a paraprofessional model and a case management structure for WIC services to ensure fiscal responsibility.*

References: *'South Dakota Department of Health Celebrates Success of Restructured Community Health Services' (2024) South Dakota Department of Health. Available at: <https://doh.sd.gov/news/south-dakota-department-of-health-celebrates-success-of-restructured-community-health-services/>.

Program Accomplishments

Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2024

The WIC program served an average monthly caseload of **13,540 participants**.

***See page 10 for detailed breakdown of participant characteristics.*

Since expanding statewide in 2017, WIC continues to see a steady increase in the number of participants using the Breastfeeding Peer Counseling (BFPC) Program. From 2021 to 2024, participation grew from 46% to 56%, reflecting the increasing value moms find in the supportive resource. To better support and empower breastfeeding moms and expectant mothers exploring their options, the BFPC program has updated its website (www.SouthDakotaBreastfeeding.com). The site now features a wide range of resources, including a video library, Q&A articles, and a community forum where moms can connect and share their experiences.

In 2024, an exciting online shopping pilot launched at Buche's grocery stores—a highly requested service from WIC participants. This new option enhances convenience by, allowing families to confirm WIC-approved foods online, shop with ease, and avoid the stigma sometimes experienced during in-store checkout.

Two (2) local SD WIC agencies were the recipients of the USDA WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence-Premiere Award!

- Rapid City (Pennington County)
- Sisseton (Roberts County)

Three (3) local SD WIC agencies were the recipients of the USDA WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence-Gold Award!

- Custer (Custer County)
- Viborg (Turner County)
- Yankton (Yankton County)



Beginning in March 2024, three state-of-the-art Wellness on Wheels (WOW) vans were introduced to expand access to essential services for participants in rural areas. These mobile units have been strategically deployed throughout the year, ensuring that even the most remote communities receive the care and support they need.

South Dakota WIC proudly launched a newly revamped website (www.sd.gov/wic), designed with the public in mind. While familiar features like the client portal remain, the site has been significantly enhanced. New additions include a comprehensive list of approved foods, shopping assistance, an expanded health and nutrition section, a detailed contact information page, and dedicated resources for partners. Visit the site to explore all the exciting updates and features!

In 2024, the WIC program underwent a transformative shift in service delivery with the adoption of a case management approach, designed to provide more personalized care for participants. The state is now divided into five geographical regions, with twelve local agencies responsible for reaching even the most rural areas. The goal is for each family to work consistently with one dedicated WIC staff member throughout their time in the program, ensuring continuity of care, unless specialized assistance is needed.

The USDA has announced a new Food Rule for WIC that expands the variety of foods available to participants. South Dakota will begin implementing these changes through 2025 and 2026.

Income Guidelines

Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2024



Year-end Financials

Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2024

Financial Explanation

Nutrition Services and Administration (NSA) Funds support includes:

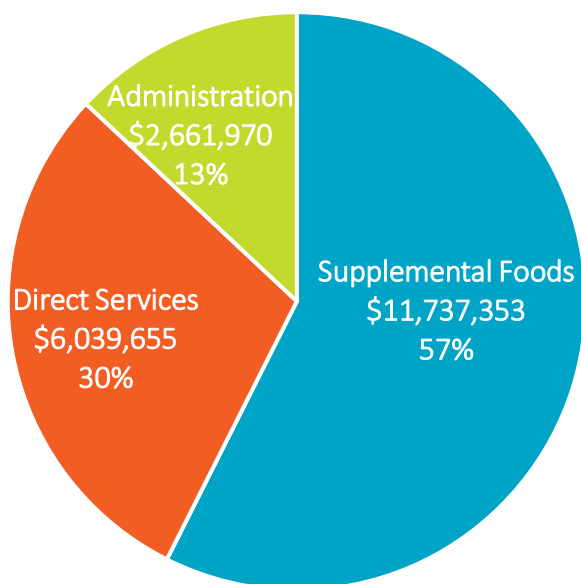
- ✧ Delivery of WIC services to participants
- ✧ Nutrition support (development of nutrition education and materials for participants)
- ✧ Breastfeeding promotion and support
- ✧ Training staff
- ✧ Program monitoring
- ✧ Program integrity (prevention of fraud, general oversight, and WIC transaction accountability)
- ✧ Outreach
- ✧ WIC-authorized vendor monitoring
- ✧ Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) services to support eWIC cards
- ✧ MIS development and maintenance

Food and Infant Rebate Funds Support

These are funds used for food benefits for WIC participants. In Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 24 (October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2024), Federal Food Funding and Infant Formula Rebate totaled \$11,737,353. See page 14-15 for details regarding food package benefits.

Page 13 also includes a breakdown of WIC food funds redeemed per county, along with a statewide total of \$11,676,788.52 spent on WIC food benefits. This does not include spending on breast pumps or special formula purchases needed in specific situations.

FFY 2024 funding breakdown



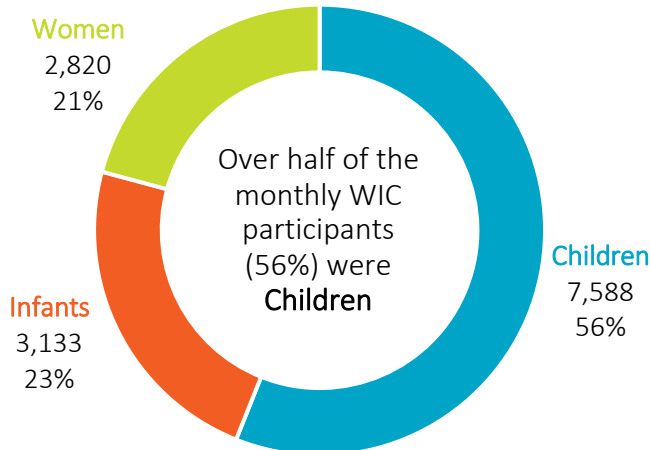
- **58%** of funds were for **Food Dollars** which includes supplemental foods and infant formula
- **30%** of the funds were for **Direct Services funds** which include Nutrition education, breastfeeding support and client services.
- **13%** of the funds were for **Administrative Services**.

Participant Characteristics

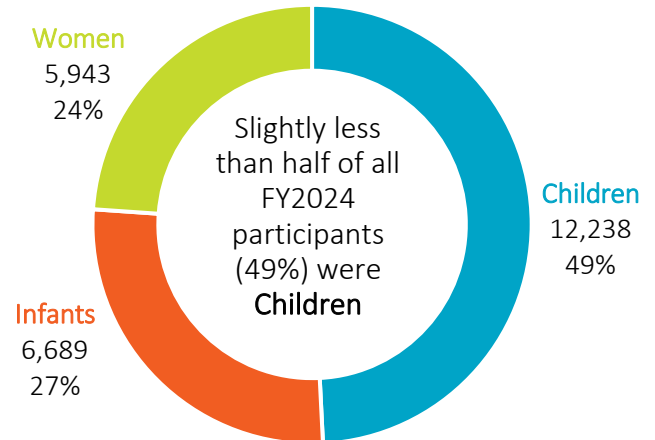
Participant Categories

Disclaimer: The data in this report reflects the South Dakota WIC Program, which is administered by the South Dakota Department of Health. There are three (3) other tribal communities (Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, and Standing Rock Sioux Tribe) that provide WIC services outside of the State WIC services.

In 2024 on average, SD WIC served **13,540 participants** every month

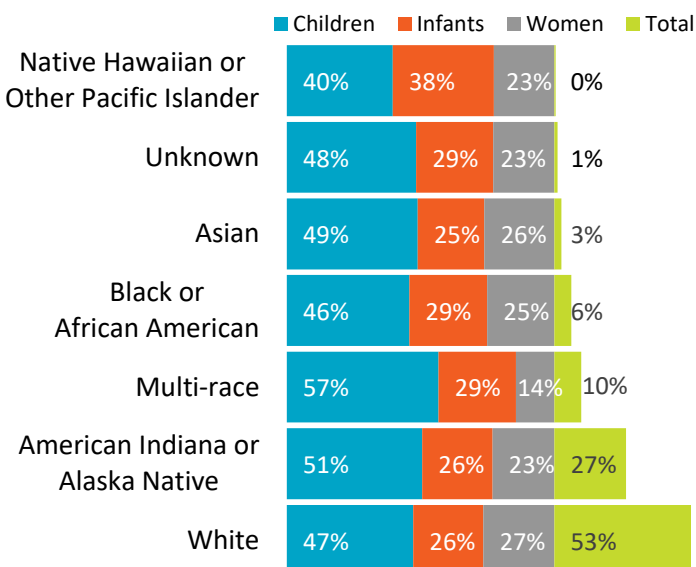


In FY2024, SD WIC served a total of **24,870 unique participants**

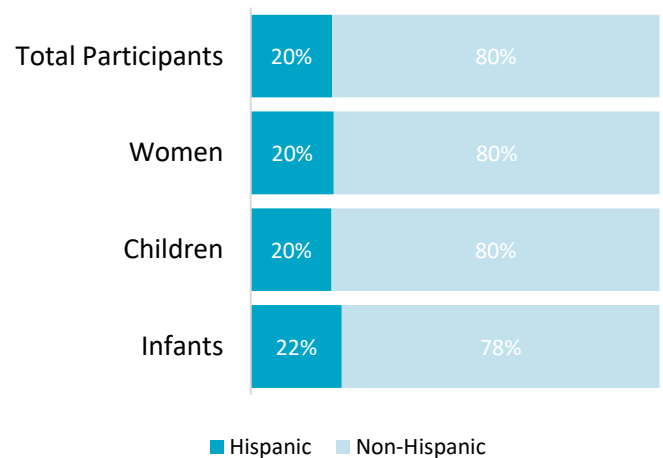


Participant Race and Ethnicity

In FY2024, 53% of all SD WIC Participants identified as **White**.

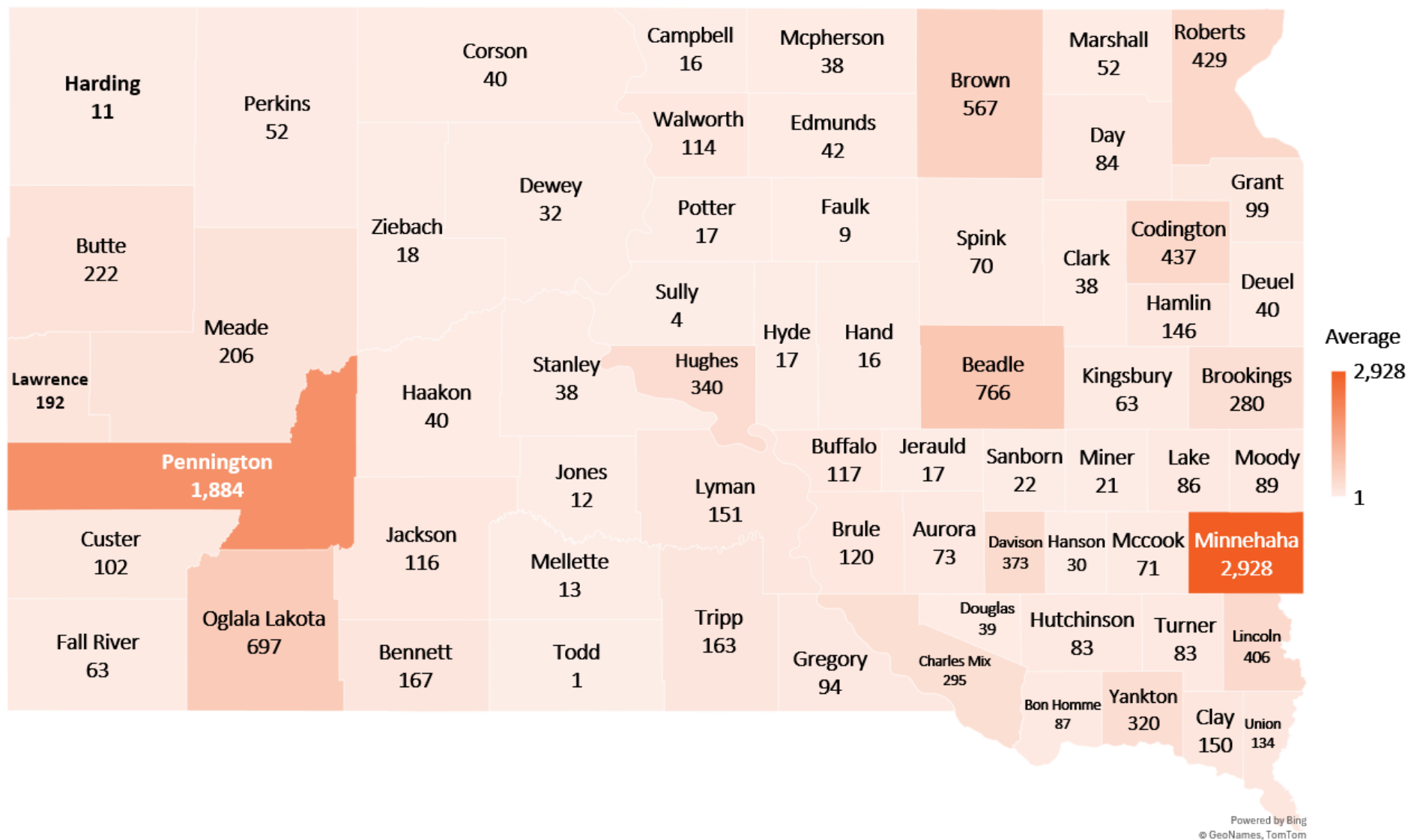


In FY2024 21% of SD WIC participants identified as **Hispanic**.



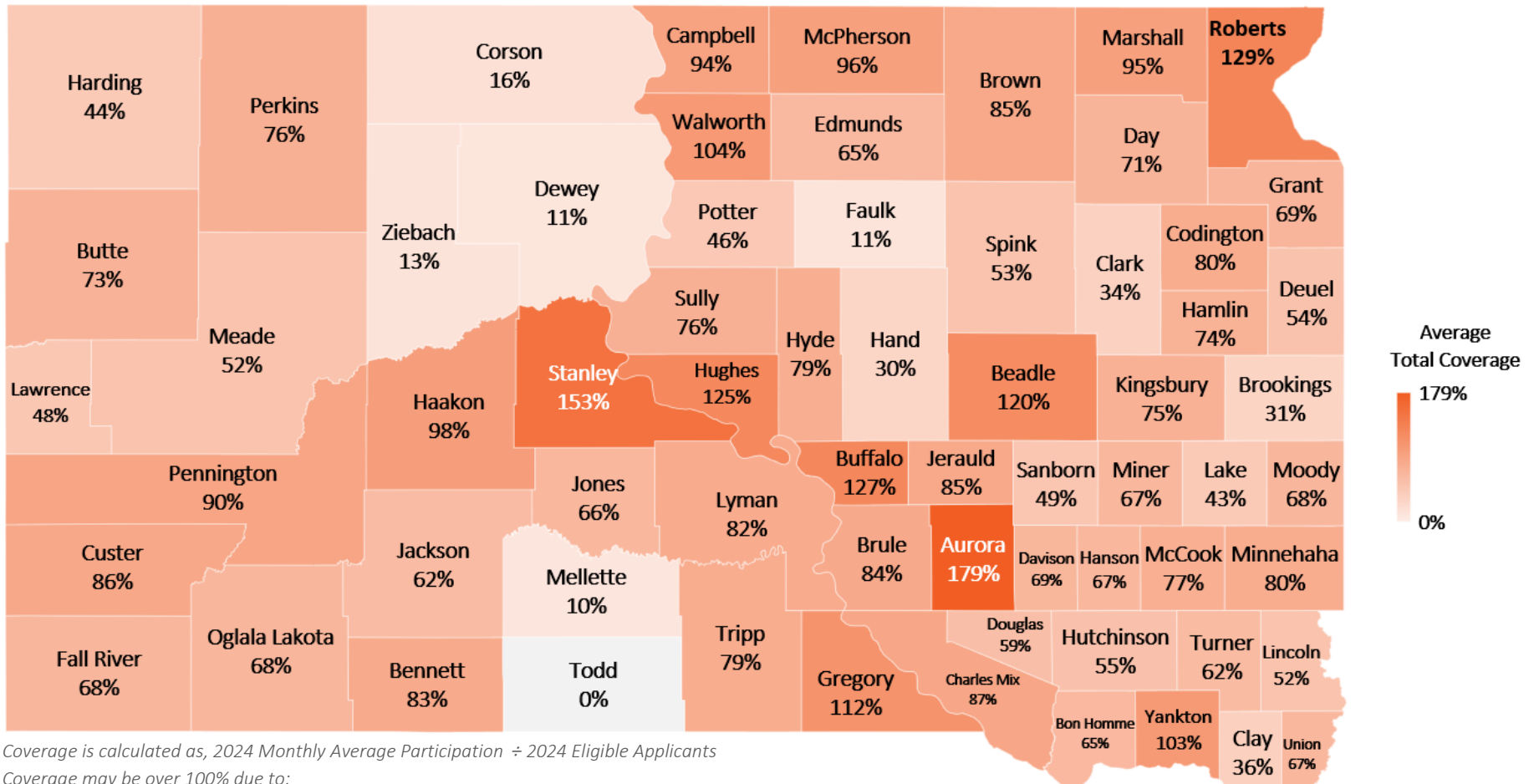
Monthly Average Participation

In 2024, WIC served on average **13,540 participants** every month, with over half (56%) being children



County Coverage

Total coverage for South Dakota in 2024 for all WIC categories was **70%**



Coverage is calculated as, 2024 Monthly Average Participation ÷ 2024 Eligible Applicants

Coverage may be over 100% due to:

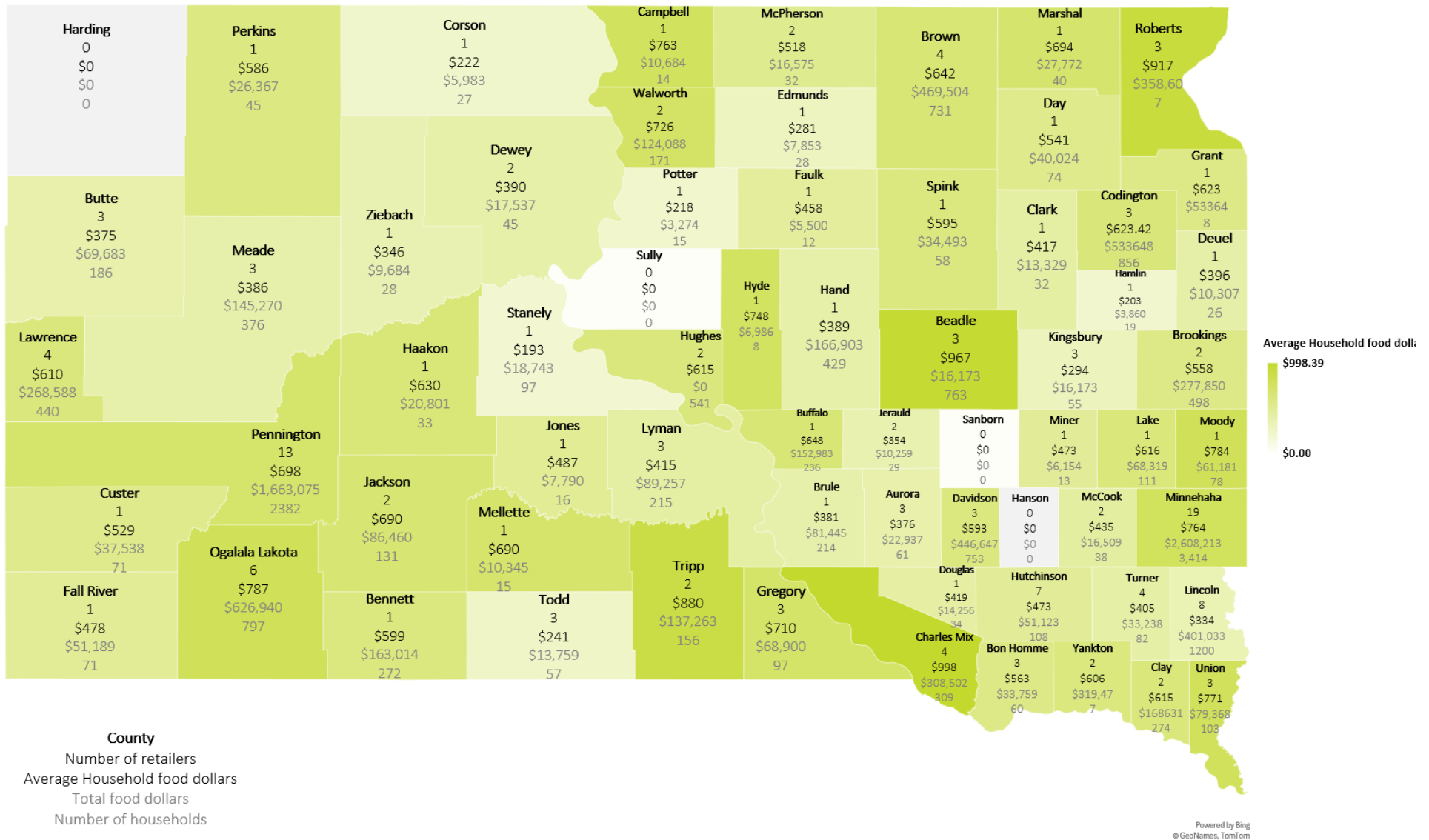
- County eligible applicant numbers are small (e.g., single digits, so one over Eligible Applicants can make Coverage over 100%).
- Populations shift over the course of a year and people can move in and out of counties.
- Participants are not in the official population count used for Eligible Applicants.

Three tribal communities: Rosebud Sioux Tribe (Todd County), Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe (Dewey and Ziebach Counties) and Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (Corson County) provide WIC services separately from South Dakota WIC. SD WIC 2024 Annual Report | Page 12

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Authorized Vendors & Food Dollars Redeemed in FY 2024

Total Number of Authorized Vendors in FY 2024: 162



Total Amount of food dollars spent in South Dakota in FY 2024: \$11,676,788.52

Monthly Food Benefits

Available WIC foods, as defined by the USDA FNS federal food rule, are prescribed by Registered Dietitians based on their nutrient content and placed into “packages” to meet the specific needs of our participants. These needs are identified by dividing **women**, **infants**, and **children** into categories and assigning nutritional benefits to each category. Benefits can be redeemed in the store to help participants fill nutritional gaps. Packages are issued monthly, and the cost below is the average price for different participant categories:

Women

- Women Breastfeeding Exclusively
\$121.44
- Woman Breastfeeding Exclusively,
Multiple Infants
\$182.15
- Women Breastfeeding &
Supplementing with Formula
\$106.94
- Woman Postpartum,
Not Breastfeeding
\$90.77
- Pregnant Woman
\$106.94

Infants

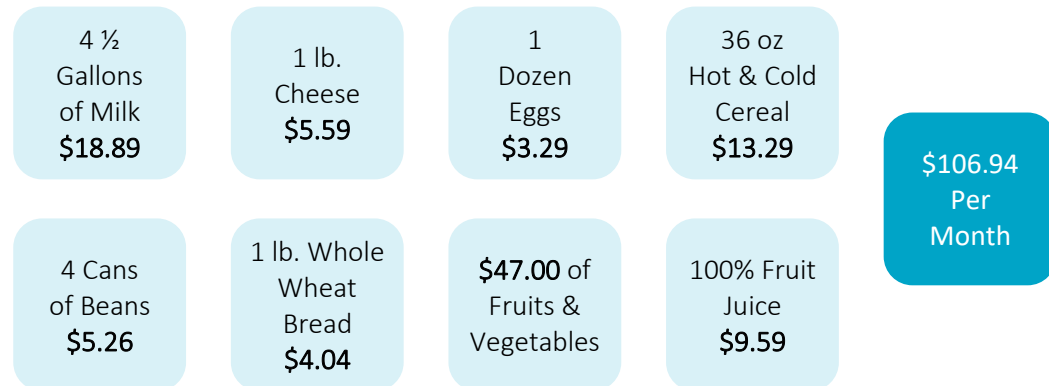
- Infant Breastfeeding Exclusively
\$94.85 – \$118.88
- Infant Breastfeeding Partially
\$20.96 – \$234.37
- Formula-fed Infant
\$188.60 – \$288.54

* Infant benefit amounts vary for
different months of age

Children




















- Child, 13 – 23 months old
\$81.15
- Child, 2 years – 4 years old
\$81.14

Example Food Package for a **Pregnant Woman**:



Pricing from FY 2024

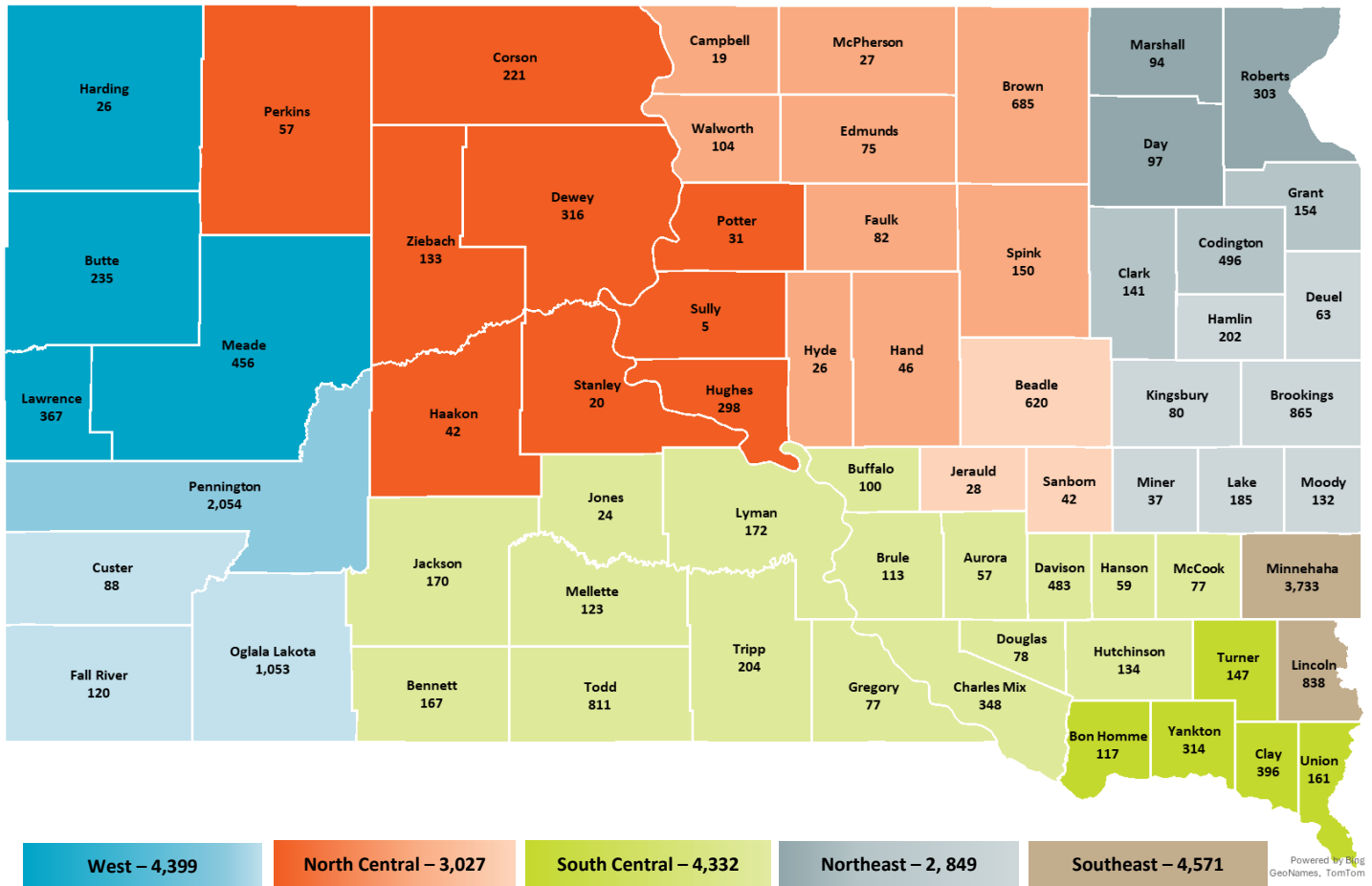
Food Redemption by Category

Category		FY2024 Amount	Percent of Total Food Redemption	Percent Difference from FY2023
Infant Formula		\$3,655,576.05	31.3%	9.2% (\$307,274.47) ↑
Fruit & Vegetables Cash Value Voucher		\$2,778,000.42	23.8%	2.7% (\$73,620.76) ↑
Exempt Infant Formula		\$1,063,005.22	9.1%	18.7% (\$167,386.07) ↑
Low-Fat/Fat-Free Milk or Soy		\$792,306.86	6.8%	-10.0% (-\$87,722.54) ↓
Breakfast Cereal		\$611,522.69	5.2%	-1.8% (-\$11,145.56) ↓
64 Ounce Juice		\$473,342.96	4.1%	-4.2% (-\$20,655.99) ↓
Cheese		\$415,086.06	3.6%	-2.3% (-\$9,814.80) ↓
Bread/Whole Grains		\$314,611.86	2.7%	-7.5% (-\$25,495.46) ↓
Eggs		\$303,055.57	2.6%	25.3% (\$61,128.98) ↑
Whole Milk		\$276,566.80	2.4%	-5.1% (-\$14,878.19) ↓
Infant Fruits and Vegetables		\$255,783.83	2.2%	1.2% (\$3,003.75) ↑
Mature Legumes		\$211,175.91	1.8%	-1.2% (-\$2,473.57) ↓
Yogurt		\$174,937.43	1.8%	1.0% (\$1,727.99) ↑
WIC-Eligible Nutritionals (Wen)		\$148,961.89	1.3%	-12.6% (-\$21,487.01) ↓
12 Oz Frozen Juice		\$91,260.77	0.8%	1.3% (\$1,131.13) ↑
Infant Cereal		\$53,454.15	0.5%	-0.5% (-\$263.04) ↓
Infant Meats		\$23,524.02	0.2%	-3.6% (-\$880.78) ↓
Fish		\$21,034.01	0.2%	-10.4% (-\$2,444.47) ↓
2% Milk		\$13,491.75	0.1%	-10.8% (-\$1,633.03) ↓
Grand Total		\$11,676,698.25		3.7% (\$416,378.71) ↑

Eggs experienced the greatest increase when compared to its 2023 redemption amount.

Looking Ahead to 2025

2025 Eligible Applicants by Service Area and Local Agency



Fiscal Year 2025 Goals



Enhance the shopping experience by restarting the vendor liaison program and introducing online shopping and self-checkout options.



Use the WOW vans to deliver WIC services across and better meet participant needs.



Increase participation and retention of children, ages 1-4.