



**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA**

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*EDWARD G. RENDELL, Governor*

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## **GOVERNOR RENDELL SEEKS FEDERAL RECOVERY FUNDING TO IMPROVE WIC NUTRITION PROGRAM**

**HARRISBURG** – Governor Edward G. Rendell today announced Pennsylvania applied for nearly \$500,000 through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act to enhance and modernize the state's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, or WIC, administered by the Department of Health.

“These funds enable us to take the necessary steps toward modernizing Pennsylvania's WIC program and begin planning activities to implement a fully automated Electronic Benefits Transfer, or EBT, system,” said Governor Rendell. “This planning will allow us to begin the upgrade from a paper check delivery system to a plastic card based system.”

WIC is a federally funded program through the United States Department of Agriculture, or USDA. The program provides healthy supplemental foods and nutrition services for pregnant women, postpartum and breastfeeding women, infants and children under age five.

WIC began in 1974 in Pennsylvania to decrease the risk of poor birth outcomes and improve the health of the participants during critical stages of growth and development. Recently, the USDA provided new guidelines which will be implemented in October 2009 which give participants healthier food options.

“Pennsylvania's WIC program serves nearly 261,000 individuals with more than 1,700 participating grocery stores statewide,” added Governor Rendell. “By moving to an EBT system, we will be better equipped to monitor the program and make necessary adjustments in a timely manner. In addition, we will be able to ensure funding is being used appropriately.”

Planning activities to convert to the new system are scheduled to begin in September 2009 and conclude by December 2010. An Electronic Benefits Transfer pilot will begin in 2011 pending federal approval of Pennsylvania's planning efforts.

For more information visit [www.health.state.pa.us](http://www.health.state.pa.us) or call 1-877-PA-HEALTH.

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*The Rendell administration is committed to creating a first-rate public education system, protecting our most vulnerable citizens and continuing economic investment to support our communities and businesses. To find out more about Governor Rendell's initiatives and to sign up for his newsletter, visit: [www.governor.state.pa.us](http://www.governor.state.pa.us).*