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Temporary increase of WIC cash value benefits Financial relief for Hawai'i WIC families

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program will increase their cash value benefit (CVB) to \$35 for first-use dates of June, July, August, and September. In addition to the CVB that participants can use to purchase fruits and vegetables at authorized WIC vendors, participants receive milk, cereal, juice, whole grains, beans, peanut butter, and baby food as part of their monthly benefits. Funding for the temporary increase comes from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA).

“This pandemic has been incredibly hard on Hawai'i families,” said Melanie Murakami, Branch Chief, WIC Services Branch, Hawai'i State Department of Health. “The temporary increase of \$35 will allow families to maximize WIC benefits and continue to include more fruits and vegetables into their daily meals while helping ease the extra financial stress they had to endure this past year.”

The Hawai'i WIC Program started issuing future food packages with the new \$35 increase beginning with participants' June benefits. Current WIC participants are being informed of this implementation during their appointments and will see the updated benefits in their account if they were issued June benefits this month.

Those that are pregnant, breastfeeding, postpartum, or have children under 5 years old can see if they qualify for WIC benefits by contacting their nearest WIC office at signupwic.com.

Vendors will be notified of the temporary \$35 CVB increase and the possibility of increased demand for produce in their stores as the implementation date nears.

The ARPA is the third legislation signed by President Joe Biden to provide financial relief during the declared COVID-19 public health emergency. The temporary \$35 CVB increase is a

joint opportunity between the Hawai'i WIC Program and USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS).

Learn more about the Hawai'i WIC Program at health.hawaii.gov/wic.

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