

WIC PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Common Ground Food Co-op Now Accepts WIC

[Urbana, IL] Common Ground Food Co-op is excited to announce that they are an official Authorized WIC Vendor and now carry pre-approved foods for Illinois WIC customers. The WIC program is one of several food access initiatives offered by Common Ground with the aim to improve the affordability of healthy foods for families in Central Illinois.

The Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), provides supplemental food, nutrition counseling, and access to health services to low-income women, infants, and children. In 2023, over 2,877 Champaign County families were supported through WIC and received more than 5,174 referrals to other programs and services, according to the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District's Annual Report. The WIC program expands household grocery budgets and nutrition counseling in Champaign County where 1 in 12 residents face food insecurity. The program operates by providing eligible WIC customers an EBT card with a monthly balance to purchase special healthy foods like fruits and vegetables, milk, formula, juice, eggs, cheese, cereal, whole grains, beans and peas, and peanut butter.

Any Illinois WIC customer can now purchase WIC foods at Common Ground Food Co-op. As a grocery store that is cooperatively owned by more than 13,000 residents in Central Illinois, Common Ground Food Co-op is a leader in building an equitable, robust, and environmentally sound local food system. The Co-op has been a community staple since 1974 and is located inside Lincoln Square Mall in Downtown Urbana. In addition to supporting the local food system with nearly a million dollars a year in sales to local family farms, Common Ground offers cooking classes, houses a community art gallery, hosts student tours and food education programs, and raises over \$50,000 annually to local organizations through the Round Up For Good Program.

Common Ground offers more ways to save at the store through their three additional food access programs, SNAP, Link Match, and Food For All. Link Match gives \$25 per day in free vouchers to SNAP customers to purchase fresh, local produce. Since the program's inception in August 2023, Common Ground has provided more than \$110,000 in free local produce through the Link Match program, benefiting local farms, food-insecure families, and the Co-op. Their Food For All program is a community-funded food access program that covers the \$60 equity share of Co-op Ownership and provides a 10% discount on Co+op Basics pantry staples and the entire produce department. There are also a multitude of weekly sales for all shoppers and special perks and savings for Co-op Owners who invest equity in the store.

To learn more about Common Ground Food Co-op's WIC program and other food access programs, visit:
www.commonground.coop/wic