



STEVEN M. FULOP
MAYOR OF JERSEY CITY

CITY OF JERSEY CITY OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY HALL | 280 GROVE STREET | JERSEY CITY, NJ 07302
P: 201 547 5500 | F: 201 547 5442



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Contact: Kim Wallace-Scalcione
Press Secretary

***** PRESS RELEASE *****

Jersey City HHS Division Celebrated Nursing Moms Support Is USDA Gold Standard

JERSEY CITY, NJ – Members of the Health and Human Services Department's WIC Division received the USDA Gold Award of Excellence today during its fair in celebration of World Breast Feeding Week at City Hall Annex, 1 Jackson Square.

The USDA Gold Excellence Award, which was presented by Danielle Tropea, the NJ State WIC Breastfeeding Coordinator, certifies that HHS's Division of Food and Nutrition, epitomizes the best of service classification for WIC Breastfeeding Support Services for the Jersey City community.

"Providing needed services to communities that have been under served and are at risk is right at the top of what leadership and government is supposed to be about," said Mayor Steven M. Fulop.



"And that's why I am particularly proud of our HHS Department, its leadership, staff and employees who continuously raise the bar and hit that mark of excellent service everyday," Mayor Fulop" added.

Participation in the WIC program has been proven to improve birth outcomes, increase breastfeeding rates, and reduce childhood obesity. Breastfeeding is known to protect infants from infections by boosting immunity, reducing the risk of infant morbidity and mortality, and positively impacting racial and ethnic birth outcome disparities.

The USDA Gold Award of Excellence illustrates HHS's Division of Food and Nutrition's commitment to improving the health and well-being of mothers and infants high-quality breastfeeding support services. “We are honored to receive this award in recognition of our dedication to supporting breastfeeding mothers and their infants throughout Jersey City,” said HHS Director Stacey Flanagan. “We are committed to providing the highest level of care and support to ensure that all families have access to the resources they need to succeed in their breastfeeding journey.”

The Jersey City Department of Health and Human Services’ Food and Nutrition Division is committed to assuring that all residents have access to healthy food. In addition to the WIC program the Division feeds more than 450 homebound seniors through the Meals on Wheels program, and 200 seniors through the Congregate Lunch program at ten sites throughout Jersey City. The Summer Food Service program assures that more than 3,000 school aged children are fed daily at more than 50 sites throughout the city. The Healthy Greens JC vertical farming program provides members with fresh, leafy greens that are grown at the vertical farm on site. A new farm will be installed at 394 Central Avenue in the next few weeks.

WIC <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic> is a federally funded, state-run program that focuses on the nutritional well-being of pregnant, breastfeeding, and post-partum individuals and children up to age five. The WIC program provides participant-centered nutrition counseling, chest/breastfeeding promotion, protection and support and specific nutritious foods to this at-risk population. WIC also serves as a vital liaison between participants and a host of services, linking families to social and health resources, including healthcare and dental services, childcare assistance programs, wellness programs, food pantries, food delivery services, smoking cessation and substance use treatment, prenatal or pediatric care, postpartum and mental health care and pharmacies. WIC serves as a gateway to primary and preventive care./

All media inquiries should be directed to Kim Wallace-Scalcione at KScalcione@jcnj.org.