

**FRIENDS OF THE SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION
PROGRAM FOR WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN (WIC)
(c/o National WIC Association)**

May 2, 2025

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair
Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Appropriations Committee U.S. House
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair
Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate

Re: FY 2026 Agriculture Appropriations, The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

Dear Chair Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chair Collins, and Vice Chair Murray:

For more than fifty years, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) has been known as one of the most impactful, cost-effective, and bipartisan programs ever established by Congress. WIC is a leader in the movement to Make America Healthy Again, providing healthy foods, nutrition education, and breastfeeding support for 6.8 million low-income pregnant and postpartum women, infants, and young children. In fiscal year 2025, the Trump administration requested and Congress appropriated full funding for WIC on a bipartisan basis, providing the resources to ensure that every eligible family who seeks WIC services can receive them. We, the undersigned organizations – a diverse coalition of religious organizations, children's advocates, agriculture partners, maternal and public health organizations, and retail and industry stakeholders – urge Congress to build on this success with continued, bipartisan investment in WIC. **We specifically urge appropriators to work with the Department of Agriculture to provide sufficient funding for the projected caseload and program costs at the time of bill passage, and to protect the scientific integrity of WIC's food packages.**

Investing in proven, early interventions to strengthen nutrition security has been demonstrated to grow a healthier population and reduce healthcare expenditures in the long-term. In 2018, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) estimated that Medicaid and Medicare spent more than \$207 billion to treat chronic diet-related conditions like diabetes and cardiovascular disease¹ -- approximately 15.3% of *all* Medicaid and Medicare spending.² WIC's role in assuring healthier birth outcomes more than doubles its return on investment: for every dollar spent on WIC, about \$2.48 is returned in healthcare cost savings.³ WIC is a time-limited program that yields lifelong healthy outcomes.

Consistent with decades of precedent, we ask Congress to ensure adequate funding to support WIC's projected caseload and prevent shortfalls that necessitate waiting lists or other measures that could

¹ U.S. Government Accountability Office (2021) *Chronic Health Conditions: Federal Strategy Needed to Coordinate Diet-Related Efforts*. <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-21-593>.

² U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (2019) *CMS Office of the Actuary Releases 2018 National Health Expenditures*. <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/cms-office-actuary-releases-2018-national-health-expenditures>.

³ Nianogo R, et al. (2019) Economic evaluation of California prenatal participation in the special supplemental nutrition program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) to prevent preterm birth. *Journal of Preventative Medicine*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpmed.2019.04.011>.

adversely impact the program's reach and public health impacts. State and local WIC agencies are hard at work implementing evidence-based updates to WIC's food packages, providing participants with greater flexibility and choice and improving balance across food categories.⁴ With limited resources that make up less than 10% of an average grocery budget, the WIC food packages are carefully crafted to deliver priority nutrients and introduce program participants to a broad range of nutrient-dense foods. **We are opposed to legislative efforts – including riders in the appropriations process – that would undermine implementation efforts already underway. Such interference would create administrative delays, confusion among participants, and logistical challenges for state and local WIC agencies.**

We also ask Congress to maintain the longstanding set-aside for breastfeeding peer counselors (\$90 million) and invest in program infrastructure (\$16 million) to contribute to WIC's ongoing efforts to modernize service delivery. Additionally, we request Congress to revitalize the Management Information System (MIS) set-aside authorized in 2010. Updates to WIC's complex computer systems will be essential as the program continues to transition to modern service delivery models, support continued implementation of the revised food packages, further integrate with healthcare databases, and scale up new transaction technologies like online and mobile payments. The National WIC Association recommends that Congress institute a \$50 million set-aside for Management Information Systems in fiscal year 2025. Finally, we request that appropriators provide \$20 million in funding for the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program and direct the Department of Agriculture to explore any flexibilities that would facilitate states maintaining their programs. This funding level is critical to prevent several states from leaving the program or drastically cutting caseload as a result of decreased funding over the last two fiscal years. WIC's long record of public health success is well positioned to have broader impacts as the program reaches more eligible families and modernizes operations to reflect commercial practice in healthcare and retail settings. As Congress begins the process of considering fiscal year 2026 appropriations, we urge Congress to build on recent bipartisan success and renew its ongoing commitment to WIC's role in strengthening nutrition security and improving health outcomes that lay the foundation for healthier futures for moms and young children.

Sincerely,
National WIC Association
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Alliance to End Hunger
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
American Heart Association
American Muslim Health Professionals
American Society for Nutrition
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
Association of State Public Health Nutritionists
Balanced
Bread For The World
Breastfeeding Family Friendly Communities
Center for Science in the Public Interest
Children's HealthWatch
City Harvest
Coalition on Human Needs
Common Threads

⁴ 42 U.S.C. §1786(f)(11)(C).

Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF)
Danone North America
Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC)
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
First Focus Campaign for Children
Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)
Healthy Horizons Breastfeeding Centers, Inc.
HealthyWomen
Helping Harvest Fresh Food Bank
Hunger Free America Inc.
International Fresh Produce Association
Islamic Relief USA
March of Dimes
MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Association for Family, School and Community Engagement (NAFSCE)
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Council of Jewish Women
National Education Association
National League for Nursing
National Military Family Association
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Law Center
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Parents as Teachers National Center
Poetry X Hunger
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)
RESULTS
Save the Children
Share Our Strength
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
The Center for Law and Social Policy
The National Service Office for Nurse-Family Partnership and Child First
Trust for America's Health
U.S. Breastfeeding Committee
UnidosUS
Unity Collaborative Nonprofit Corporation
Youth Villages
ZERO TO THREE