

January 13, 2025

Co-Chair Linda McMahon
Transition Team
President-Elect Donald Trump

Co-Chair Howard Lutnick
Transition Team
President-Elect Donald Trump

Dear Co-Chairs McMahon and Lutnick,

For more than fifty years, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), has proven to be one of the most cost-efficient federal investments. WIC delivers healthy food and nutrition support to moms, babies, and young children at nutritional risk. And, for decades, WIC-enrolled families have accessed dairy, produce, whole grains, and other healthy foods, which has supported American farmers, growers, and retailers nationwide. 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

The National WIC Association represents the 12,000 service provider agencies who serve over 6.7 million mothers, babies, and young children served by the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). We serve as a resource for federal policymakers on WIC, and look forward to working with your administration during the coming years, as we did with Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue and Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services Brandon Lipps.

WIC has enjoyed strong, bipartisan support from Congress and the administration throughout its history. As you prepare for the beginning of your second administration, we wanted to share with you some opportunities to support WIC and ensure the program can continue providing nutritious foods, breastfeeding support, and healthcare referrals to give our nation's children a healthy start to life.

Appropriations:

For nearly 30 years, Congress has provided WIC with the resources to serve every eligible family who seeks WIC certification, "fully funding" WIC through the appropriations process on a bipartisan basis. We seek your administration's commitment in your budget requests in the the coming fiscal years to:

- **"Fully fund" WIC** to provide healthy food and breastfeeding resources for projected caseloads, ensuring that every eligible family can receive benefits.
- Invest in set-asides to support the WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor program, necessary updates to WIC infrastructure and Management Information Systems (MIS), and program evaluation and monitoring costs.
- **Protect the integrity of WIC's evidence-based food packages**, rejecting any riders that would halt or interfere with implementation of the April 2024 rule updating WIC's food packages to reflect advancements in nutrition science and offer participants more choices.
- Invest in the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) to allow more state agencies to establish FMNP projects and to allow more WIC families, counties, and farmers markets to realize the benefits of participating in FMNP.

Establish Permanent Virtual Service Options:

Modernization waivers from USDA have allowed WIC agencies to take huge strides in advancing service delivery and better meeting the needs of busy families. Most significantly, many State and Local Agencies have used these waivers to create virtual service options, allowing participants to be certified by phone or video appointment, akin to modern telehealth options, while protecting quality of service and program integrity. Since the establishment of virtual appointments, WIC participation has grown significantly, and research by the National WIC Association and the Nutrition Policy Institute found that 80% of participants surveyed indicated that remote services reduced preexisting barriers like transportation. However, without Congressional action, these flexibilities will expire on September 30, 2026. **We ask for your support to work with Congress to modernize WIC's physical presence requirement and create permanent hybrid services to provide participants with flexibility and choice.** Congress should pass bipartisan legislation to:

- Allow certification by phone or video appointment, at participant election, while maintaining in-person service options and protecting WIC as a highly effective public health program.
- Invest in updates to WIC's Management Information Systems (MIS) to streamline certification and modernize service delivery.

Legislative proposals to advance permanent virtual services in WIC have always been bipartisan.

Support continued efforts to build a modern WIC program:

Recent bipartisan actions from Congress have allowed State and Local WIC agencies, with support from USDA's Food and Nutrition Service, to pilot innovative models to modernize the WIC program, including virtual appointments, online shopping, and renewed cooperation with healthcare providers. We ask for continued support from USDA to provide nationwide access to modern service delivery models, including through finalizing the proposed rule on online shopping in WIC.

We know that supporting Americans' health, American families, and American farmers are key priorities for your incoming administration. We hope that you will take advantage of the opportunity to achieve these goals by supporting WIC. We look forward to continuing to serve as a resource for your administration in the coming years.

Sincerely,



Georgia Machell, PhD
President and CEO
National WIC Association

cc: The Honorable John Thune
The Honorable Mike Johnson
Ms. Brooke Rollins