

NATIONAL WIC ASSOCIATION'S 2025 POLICY AGENDA

For 50 years, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) has improved breastfeeding, nutrition, and health outcomes for participants during pregnancy, postpartum, infancy, and early childhood.

As we enter a new Congress and a new Presidential Administration, policymakers have a crucial opportunity to renew the nation's investment in WIC and ensure the program can continue providing healthy foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and healthcare referrals to give our nation's children a healthy start to life.

The National WIC Association (NWA) is the nonprofit voice of the 12,000 public health nutrition service provider agencies who serve over 6.8 million mothers, babies, and young children participating in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). NWA provides education, guidance, and support to WIC staff; and drives innovation and advocacy to strengthen WIC as we work toward a nation of healthier families.



APPROPRIATIONS

For nearly 30 years, Congress has provided WIC with the resources to serve every eligible individual who seeks WIC certification, “fully funding” WIC through the appropriations process on a bipartisan basis. **It is critical that lawmakers uphold this commitment in the coming fiscal years in order to protect participant trust and safeguard WIC's longstanding public health success.**

CONGRESS SHOULD

- **“Fully fund” WIC** to provide healthy food and breastfeeding resources for projected caseloads, ensuring that every eligible person 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.
- Expand Support for WIC FMNP to help more families benefit from local, fresh foods from approved local farmers and other small vendors.

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. **Congress must modernize WIC's physical presence requirement and create permanent hybrid services to provide participants with flexibility and choice.**

CONGRESS SHOULD

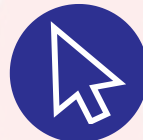
- Allow certification by phone or video appointment, at participant election, while maintaining in-person service options and protecting WIC as a highly effective public health program.
- Invest in updates to WIC's MIS to streamline certification and modernize service delivery.

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. Congress should support ongoing efforts at FNS to provide nationwide access to modern service delivery models, including through anticipated forthcoming rulemaking related to online shopping.

Please direct all questions to NWA at info@nwica.org.

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 **40 YEARS**
National WIC Association