

POLICY BRIEF: IMPACT OF CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET PROPOSALS ON WIC

Congressional Republicans are currently working on their proposal for a budget reconciliation package. Republicans aim to generate significant savings, and Speaker Mike Johnson has indicated a potential target of \$2.5 trillion. Earlier this year, a “[menu](#)” of potential cost-saving policies was leaked to the press.¹ Although this list does not include targeted cuts to the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), some of the leaked proposals would indirectly impact WIC through a mechanism called adjunct eligibility.

ADJUNCTIVE ELIGIBILITY allows families to qualify for WIC by providing proof of participation in other income-tested government programs, such as Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). This process streamlines eligibility, making it more efficient for families and program administrators.

Due to this connection, policies that limit Medicaid or SNAP eligibility would indirectly affect WIC, requiring families to provide alternative proof of income. This added administrative burden could discourage families in need from accessing WIC’s valuable services.

The leaked menu includes a proposal to eliminate a provision known as **BROAD-BASED CATEGORICAL ELIGIBILITY (BBCE)** in SNAP, which was also targeted for elimination during the first Trump administration. A [2019 analysis by the U.S. Department of Agriculture](#) (USDA) estimated that eliminating BBCE would cut off 3.1 million people from SNAP benefits.² If the policy were revoked today, the impact would likely be even greater, as more states have adopted BBCE over the past six years.

According to [FY 2022 data from USDA](#), 11.6% of SNAP recipients are preschool-aged children (0-4 years old) who would be adjunctively eligible for WIC.³ Assuming the 3.1 million people who would lose SNAP due to the elimination of BBCE have the same distribution of preschool-aged children as the overall SNAP population, at least **359,600 infants and young children could be at risk of losing their automatic eligibility for WIC** as a result of the proposed SNAP BBCE elimination policy.

Policies that limit Medicaid eligibility or make it more difficult for families to access Medicaid due to inadequate federal funding to states would have

a similar impact. According to 2022 data from USDA, nearly 80% of WIC participants are also on Medicaid, and we can assume most of them were determined to be income-eligible for WIC through their Medicaid adjunctive eligibility.⁴

As policymakers work to finalize their plans for budget reconciliation, the National WIC Association urges consideration of the interconnectedness of programs like Medicaid, SNAP, and WIC. Making access to WIC more difficult means fewer families will have access to WIC's life-changing benefits, including reduced infant mortality risk, better birth outcomes, improved academic performance, and better nutritional status for young children.



¹Politico, Ways and Means Committee Document (2024). Available online: <https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000194-74a8-d40a-ab9e-7fbc70940000>.

²United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (2019) Revision of Categorical Eligibility in SNAP Regulatory Impact Analysis. Page 3. Available online: <https://www.regulations.gov/document/FNS-2018-0037-0002>

³United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (2024) Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2022 Final Report. Page 29. Available online: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/research/snap/characteristics-fy22>

⁴United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (2024) WIC Participant and Program Characteristics 2022 Final Report. Page 38. Available online: <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/wic-ppc-2022-report.pdf>