

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 31, 2014

The Honorable Robert Aderholt  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Agriculture  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sam Farr  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Agriculture  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member Farr,

We respectfully urge you to provide at least the President's request of \$6.82 billion for the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) in the Fiscal Year 2015 Department of Agriculture Appropriations bill. This includes ensuring that the WIC Contingency Fund is adequately funded so that it can protect access to the program in the case of unforeseen circumstances such as higher than anticipated caseload or food costs.

WIC is the nation's premiere preventive public health nutrition program targeted at low-income mothers and young children who have or are at risk for developing nutrition-related diseases and disorders. WIC provides needed nutrition education, breastfeeding education and support, referrals to medical and social services, and a scientifically determined food package targeted to the specific needs of each of its populations.

As a result of access to these interventions, children enrolled in WIC are more likely to be immunized on time, consume key nutrients, and have higher cognitive development scores than peers not participating in WIC.

We also express strong support for WIC's breastfeeding peer counseling services which have helped increase breastfeeding rates in the WIC population which has historically had lower rates than the general population. According to one estimate, if 90% of US mothers exclusively breastfed their infants to 6 months, the US would save \$13 billion per year in medical expenses and prevent over 900 deaths annually. Between 1998 and 2010 the breastfeeding rate in WIC rose from 41.3% to 63.1%.

We also request that you provide the following set asides, which contribute to increased program integrity and long-term deficit reduction:

- \$96.2 million in for breastfeeding peer counselors and breastfeeding support services;
- \$32 million in management information systems (MIT) and electronic service delivery systems (EBT) funding. WIC has a 2020 deadline to transition to an EBT system.
- \$14.9 million in infrastructure funding; and
- \$5 million for research

We cannot stress enough the importance of fully funding WIC. Without adequate funding, at-risk women, infants, and children may find themselves cut from the program and miss out on its

many benefits. A lack of adequate funding will deprive young children of access to healthy food, a healthy start in life, and the opportunity to thrive.

Again, we strongly urge you to fully fund WIC in the FY 2015 Department of Agriculture Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

  
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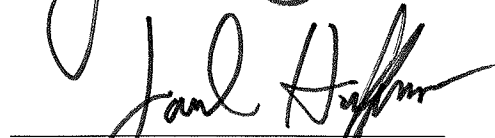
  
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