Re: Participation Estimates, The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

Dear Chair Murray, Vice Chair Collins, Chair Granger, and Ranking Member DeLauro,

Since 1974, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) has strengthened food security, improved diet quality, and supported a strong start in life for America’s youth. Recent data show WIC participation exceeding previous projections as more families are accessing WIC’s vital nutrition services. In recognition of WIC’s health benefits and increasing participation, the more than 600 undersigned national, state, and local organizations representing maternal and child health organizations, family support advocates, and research partners respectfully urge Congress to include sufficient resources in a short-term Continuing Resolution to ensure that WIC can continue providing all eligible women, infants, and children who seek to participate with the full, science-based nutrition benefit. We also call on Congress to fully fund WIC for fiscal year 2024 to sustain current benefits and increasing participation.

WIC Improves Participants’ Health

WIC has a proven track record of reducing hunger, improving diet quality, and preventing disease. WIC participants are four times more likely to be food secure than eligible non-participants; enrollment during pregnancy is associated with a decreased risk of household food insecurity after birth.¹ When introduced in 2009, WIC’s fruit and vegetable cash value benefit (CVB) increased fresh fruit consumption by 28.6 percent, frozen vegetable consumption by 27.8 percent, and fresh vegetable consumption by 17.5 percent.² The CVB bump passed by Congress in 2021 and extended on a bipartisan basis in subsequent appropriations legislation further increased fruit and vegetable consumption by an average of ¼ cup per day.³ WIC alleviates food insecurity and nutrition insecurity significantly, reducing the risk

of cardiovascular disease of all participants⁴ and supports brain development and immunization rates in young children⁵.

**Additional Resources Needed to Ensure Continuation of Benefits**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) previously estimated that 6.5 million people would participate in WIC during fiscal year 2024. However, recently released data show that participation exceeded 6.7 million individuals in June 2023, with participation expected to continue to increase. Growing participation reflects WIC’s reduction of administrative barriers through modernization efforts and flexibility, the efficacy of the fruit and vegetable benefit, as well as rising food costs⁶.

If WIC does not receive the necessary investment for FY24, hundreds of thousands of postpartum women and children will be turned away from the program. Moreover, a lack of additional resources could further lead states to take measures to bring spending in line with available funds, such as scaling back outreach efforts, reducing clinic staff, shortening clinic hours, or even turning away eligible applicants⁷.

**WIC Must Be Fully Funded to Meet Participation**

Beyond the provision of additional resources, we urge Congress, as it works to complete appropriations bills for the 2024 fiscal year, to maintain nearly thirty years of precedent by keeping WIC fully funded for all eligible women, infants, and children who seek benefits. Unfortunately, the proposed appropriations for WIC in the Agriculture, Rural Development, and Food and Drug Administration appropriations legislation would leave many WIC participants with limited or no benefits, leading to a waitlist for the first time in decades.

The proposed $6.3 billion funding level for WIC in the Senate Agriculture appropriations bill (S. 2131), would require states to turn away an estimated 600,000 postpartum women and children⁸. Failure to provide WIC with the resources to serve projected caseloads jeopardizes the health and well-being of thousands of mothers and young children.

The House Agriculture appropriations bill (H.R. 4368) funds WIC at $6 billion, with a $500 million rescission⁹. This bill, if enacted, would not only result in eligible applicants getting turned away but also reduces benefits. Specifically, 600,000 participants would be turned away and the current allocation of

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⁶ Bergh and Neuberger, “Hundreds of Thousands of Young Children and Postpartum Adults Would Be Turned Away from WIC under House and Senate Funding Levels,” 4–5.

⁷ Bergh and Neuberger, “Hundreds of Thousands of Young Children and Postpartum Adults Would Be Turned Away from WIC under House and Senate Funding Levels,” 2.


the CVB would be cut by 56 to 70 percent, reducing fruit and vegetable availability and consumption for another 4.7 million participants\textsuperscript{10}.

For nearly 30 years, there has been a bipartisan agreement in Congress to provide WIC with the resources necessary to serve every eligible woman, infant, and child. We strongly urge lawmakers to honor this commitment, providing an urgently needed investment in a Continuing Resolution and fully funding WIC in the FY24 Appropriations law, so that no woman or child is turned away from the program and no participant has their benefits cut. We urge both the House and Senate to continue their bipartisan support for full funding of WIC so that mothers and their young children can lead a food and nutrition secure healthy life.

Sincerely,

National Collaborative for Infants & Toddlers
National WIC Association

1,000 Days, an initiative of FHI Solutions
A Better Balance
Abriendo Puertas/Open Doors
ACA Consumer Advocacy
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
ADAP Advocacy
Advocates for Better Children’s Diets
All Our Kin
Alliance to End Hunger
American Academy of Pediatrics
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Heart Association
American Medical Women’s Association
American Public Health Association
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of State Public Health Nutritionists
Autistic People of Color Fund
Benefits Data Trust (BDT)
Black Mamas Matter Alliance, Inc. (BMMA)
Blaze Associates
Bread for the World
Caring Across Generations
Catholic Charities WIC Program
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Center for Public Justice
Center for Science in the Public Interest
Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP)
Child & Student Nutrition Alliance
Child Welfare League of America

\textsuperscript{10} Neuberger and Bergh, “600,000 Young Children and New Parents Could Be Turned Away Unless Congress Adheres to a 25-Year Bipartisan Commitment to Fully Fund WIC.”
Children's Defense Fund
Children's HealthWatch
Church World Service
Circle of Protection
Coalition on Human Needs
Community Access National Network
Community Change
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Congressional Hunger Center
Council of Administrators of Special Education
Danone North America
Early Actions
Environmental Working Group
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Family Centered Treatment Foundation
Family Focused Treatment Association
Family Voices
FARE (Food Allergy Research and Education)
Feeding America
First Focus on Children
Food is Medicine Institute at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University
Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)
FoodCorps
Food Lifeline
Foster Love
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Generations United
Global Military Lactation Community
GMO/Toxin Free USA
Grubhub
Healthy Teen Network
HEAR US Inc.
Help Me Grow National Center
Hunger Free America Inc.
Institute for Educational Leadership
Integrated Community Solutions, Inc
International Fresh Produce Association
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Jewish Labor Committee
Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A.
League of Women Voters of the United States
LIFT Inc.
March For Moms
MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
Mental Health America
Military Family Advisory Network (MFAN)
MomsRising
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of Counsel for Children
National Association of Counties (NACo)
National Association of County Human Services Administrators
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Social Workers
National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR)
National Center on Adoption and Permanency
National Council of Churches
National Council of Jewish Women
National Diaper Bank Network
National Education Association
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Immigration Law Center
National Indigenous and Native American WIC Coalition
National Juvenile Justice Network
National League for Nursing
National Military Family Association
National Resource Center on Domestic Violence
National Skills Coalition
National WIC Association
National Women's Health Network
National Women's Law Center
Nemours Children’s Health
Network Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies
Operation Homefront
Oxfam America
Pajama Program
Parents as Teachers
ParentsTogether
ParentsTogether Action
Poverty Project at the Institute for Policy Studies
Primary Care Development Corporation
PsychArmor Institute
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)
Public Health Institute
Rabbinical Assembly
Reproductive Health Impact
RESULTS
Rural Coalition
RuralOrganizing.org Education Fund
Save the Children
SchoolHouse Connection
Shades of Blue Project
Shriver Center on Poverty Law
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Congregational Leadership
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Western Province Leadership
Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior
Society for Public Health Education
Sojourners-SojoAction
Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Funders
The Armed Services YMCA of the USA
The Root Cause Coalition
Trust for America's Health
U.S. Breastfeeding Committee
UnidosUS
Union of Concerned Scientists
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
United Church of Christ, Justice and Local Church Ministries
Vaccinate Your Family
Youth Villages
ZERO TO THREE
Alabama
Alabama Arise
Alabama Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics
Alabama Possible
Feeding Alabama
Food Bank of East Alabama
Franklin Primary Health Center, Inc.
Greater Birmingham Ministries
Harvest Tyme Food Ministries

Alaska
Alaska Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Alaska Children’s Trust

Arizona
Arizona Association for the Education of Young Children
Arizona Center for Economic Progress
Arizona Food Bank Network
Arizona Head Start Association
Children's Action Alliance
Navajo County Superintendent of Schools
William E. Morris Institute for Justice

Arkansas
Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families
Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance

California
AAP-Orange County Chapter
Abrazar, Inc.
Alameda County WIC
Alchemist CDC
American Academy of Pediatrics, California
American Red Cross WIC
Ampla Health WIC
BreastfeedLA
Butte County WIC
California Association of Food Banks
California Breastfeeding Coalition
California WIC Association
Center for Healthy Communities
Ceres Community Project
Child Care Law Center
Children Now
City of Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services
Clinica Sierra Vista
Community Bridges WIC
Community Medical Centers, Inc WIC
Community Resource Project WIC
Contra Costa County WIC
County of Sonoma WIC
County of Ventura
Del Norte County WIC Program
California Alternative Payment Program Association
DHHS County of Humboldt WIC
El Dorado County Health Department
El Sol Science and Arts Academy
Equality California
First 5 Alameda County
First 5 Sacramento
FM&LCE
Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission
Fresno EOC WIC
Gardner Health Services
Garfield Medical Center
GLIDE
GRACE/End Child Poverty California
Heluna Health WIC Program
Hunger Action Los Angeles
Inyo County Department of Health and Human Services
Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles
LA Alliance for a New Economy
LA CAN (Los Angeles Community Action Network)
Los Angeles Regional Food Bank
Lundquist WIC
Maryvale Early education Center
MCCAA- Merced WIC
Mendocino Food & Nutrition Program dba Fort Bragg Foos Bank
Montessori Academy of La Puente
NEVHC
Northeast Vally Health Corp.-WIC
Nourish California
Older Women's League Sacramento
Partners in Care Foundation
Pasadena WIC Program
PHFE WIC
Red Jen Ford Health & Wellness
San Bernardino County WIC Program
San Diego County Breastfeeding Coalition
San Francisco AIDS Foundation
Sanctuary of Hope
SDSU WIC
Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County
Solano County Health & Social Services
Sonoma County Indian Health Project, Inc.
Sonoma County WIC
The Childrens Collective Inc
The Community Development Center, Inc
Thriving Families California
UIHS WIC PROGRAM
Watts Healthcare Corporation
Yolo County Food Security Coalition

Colorado
Adams County Health Department
American Academy of Pediatrics, Colorado Chapter
Children's Hospital Colorado
Colorado Blueprint to End Hunger
Colorado Children's Campaign
Early Childhood Education Association of Colorado
Good Food Collective
Hunger Free Colorado
Metro West Housing Solutions
Nourish Colorado

Connecticut
Connecticut Alliance of Foster and Adoptive Families
Danbury Farmers Market Community Collaborative
Ellington Farmers Market
End Hunger Connecticut!
Gather New Haven
The Connecticut Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Coalition
Town of Westbrook, CT, Social Services
Wethersfield Farmers' Market
Willimantic Farmers Market

Delaware
Delaware Head Start Association
Food Bank of Delaware

District of Columbia
American Academy of Pediatrics, DC Chapter
D.C. Hunger Solutions
DC Action for Children
DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence
DC Greens
Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area (LSSNCA)

Florida
Children’s Trust of Alachua County
Florida Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics, Inc.
Florida Impact
Starlight Holy Temple
Georgia
Atlanta Community Food Bank
Feeding Georgia
Frey Evaluation, LLC
NCJW Atlanta Section
NCJW Georgia
Neighborhood Improvement Association
Thriving Families Thriving Children
Voices for Georgia’s Children

Hawaii
Get Fit Kauai
Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Hawaii Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Hawaii Children’s Action Network Speaks!
Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc.
Waimanalo Health Center

Idaho
Idaho Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Idaho Hunger Relief Task Force

Illinois
Bethel New Life
Beyond Hunger
Brightpoint
Chinese American Service League
Chosen Tabernacle Ministries
Equal Hope
Greater Chicago Food Depository
Hazel Crest Community UMC Food Pantry
Illinois Hunger Coalition
Illinois Public Health Institute
Kids Above All
Metropolitan Family Services
National Council of Jewish Women Chicago North Shore
NCJW Illinois
NCJW South Cook Section
Northern Illinois Food Bank
Raising Illinois PN3 Coalition
Safer Foundation
Share Our Spare
SIUE Early Childhood Center
The Friendship Center
Well Child Center
Wings Program, LLC
Women Employed
Indiana
Feeding Indiana's Hungry
Indiana Community Action Poverty Institute

Iowa
American Academy of Pediatrics - Iowa Chapter
Common Good Iowa

Kansas
Johnson County Kansas WIC Program
Kansas Action for Children
Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition
Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Konza Prairie Community Health Center WIC
Riley County WIC

Kentucky
Feeding Kentucky
Kentucky Center for Economic Policy
Kentucky Equal Justice Center
Kentucky Food Action Network
Kentucky Voices for Health
Mental Health America of Kentucky

Louisiana
Louisiana Partnership for Children and Families
ResourceFull Consulting
Total Community Action, Inc.

Maine
Full Plates Full Potential
Good Shepherd Food Bank
Locker Project
Maine Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Maine Children's Alliance
Maine Equal Justice

Maryland
Black Veg Society
Gaithersburg HELP
Manna Food Center
Maryland Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP)
Maryland Hunger Solutions
NCJW Maryland
Public Justice Center
RESULTS DC/MD
The Richman Foundation
Voices of Hope, Inc.
Massachusetts
Allston Brighton Health Collaborative
Boston Children's Hospital
Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee (CEOC)
Community Action Agency of Somerville (CAAS)
Disability Law Center, Inc.
Food Bank of Western Massachusetts
Gleason and Greenfield Pediatrics
Housing Families Inc
Immigrant Service Providers Group/Health
International Institute of New England
Just Roots, Inc.
Lane Gardens-Oakdale Farms
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
Merrimack Valley Food Bank
Mill City Grows
MLPB
Mobile Ministries, Inc.
Our Neighbors' Table
People Power United
Project Bread-The Walk for Hunger
Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership
Strategies for Children
The Greater Boston Food Bank
The Marion Institute's Southcoast Food Policy Council
The Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
United Way of Greater New Bedford
YMCA Southcoast

Michigan
Andrea's Daycare
Center for Civil Justice
Michigan Council for Maternal Child Health
Michigan League for Public Policy
Pathwaves Partnership LLC
PIE Parenthood is Essential
Sarah's Daycare

Minnesota
Jewish Family and Children's Service of Minneapolis
Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing
Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Our Spring Lake Store LLC
West Central Initiative
Parents In Community Action-Head Start

Mississippi
Magnolia Medical Foundation
Mississippi Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Missouri
Empower Missouri
Epiphany United Church of Christ
Faith Des Peres Presbyterian Church
Missouri Budget Project
Missouri Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Operation Food Search
St Louis Area Foodbank
WEPOWER

Montana
Montana Budget & Policy Center
Montana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Montana Food Bank Network
YWCA Great Falls

Nebraska
Angela Blaesi’s Childcare
Community Action of Nebraska
DHHS Nebraska State WIC Program
Nebraska Appleseed
Together
Voices for Children in Nebraska

Nevada
Food Bank of Northern Nevada
Nevada Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Silver State Equality

New Hampshire
Hanover Co-op Food Stores of VT & NH
Heron Pond Farm
New Hampshire Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
New Hampshire WIC Directors Association
NH Hunger Solutions
Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Hampshire (NOFA-NH)

New Jersey
Advocates for Children of New Jersey
Burlington County WIC Program
Fulfill
Hunger Free New Jersey

New Mexico
New Mexico Voices for Children
New York
ADK Strategy Group
Catholic Charities of Long Island WIC
Chemung County Health Department
Citizen Action of New York
City Harvest
Cornerstone Family Healthcare WIC Program
Dominican Sisters of Sparkill
East New York Diagnostic and Treatment Center WIC Program
Eastside WIC Program
Essex County NY WIC
Feeding New York State
Fellowship Baptist Church of Wyandanch
Fifth Avenue Committee
Food Bank of Central New York
Food Bank of the Southern Tier
Foodlink
Fulmont Community Action Agency WIC Program
Harmony Healthcare Long Island
Health & Welfare Council of Long Island
HHC
Hunger Solutions New York
Johnson Park Center (JPC)
Lab/Shul
LifeWorks Community Action, Inc.
Long Island Cares, Inc. - The Harry Chapin Food Bank
LSA Family Health Service, Inc.
Mexico (NY) Food Pantry
Morrisonia D&T WIC Program
New York Jewish Agenda
NYS AAP - Chapter 2
NYS AAP - Chapter 3
NYS Chapter 1 of the AAP
Public Health Solutions
Resurrection House, Inc.
Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy
Sisters of Charity of New York
St. Barnabas Health Systems WIC Program
St. Lawrence County Community Development Program, Inc.
St. Martin of Tours Outreach Center
Stony Brook University
SUNNYSIDE WIC
The Children's Agenda
United Way of Buffalo & Erie County
Westchester County Department of Health
WIC Association of NYS, INC
North Carolina
Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy
Hunger Solutions Consulting
Little Listeners of the Carolina’s
Loaves & Fishes/ Friendship Trays
Meals4Families
NC Conference of the United Methodist Church
NC Early Education Coalition
North Carolina Alliance for Health
P.O.S.T. Protect Our Stolen Treasures
Think Babies, NC Alliance
Toxic Free NC

North Dakota
North Dakota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Ohio
Black Child Development Institute-Ohio
Children's Hunger Alliance
Crossroads United Methodist Church
Miami Valley Community Action Partnership
Ohio Association of Foodbanks
Ohio Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Ohio Education Association
SE Ohio Foodbank
Second Harvest Food Bank Champaign Clark Logan
Shared Harvest Foodbank, Inc.
The Foodbank, Inc.
United Way of Greater Cincinnati

Oklahoma
Cleveland County Health Department
Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy
Oklahoma Policy Institute

Oregon
Children's Institute
Oregon Food Bank
Oregon Women's Right Coalition
Our Children Oregon
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon

Pennsylvania
Allies for Children
Begin With Us Child Care and Preschool, Inc.
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Community Food Warehouse of Mercer County
Community Legal Services of Philadelphia
Feast of Justice
Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger
Hunger-Free PA
Just Harvest
Mary House, Inc.
Maternity Care Coalition
NORTH, Inc
PA Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
PA Coalition for Oral Health
Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children
Ramsey Educational Development Institute
The Foundation for Delaware County

Puerto Rico
PRAAP Chapter, INC

Rhode Island
Rhode Island Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Rhode Island Community Food Bank
Rhode Island KIDS COUNT
Right from the Start Campaign
URI Feinstein Hunger Center
West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation

South Carolina
FoodShare Greenville
FoodShare South Carolina
Lowcountry Street Grocery
NAACP SC
SCAAP
South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center
South Carolina Program for Infant/Toddler Care

South Dakota
The Beloved Early Education and Care Collective
Banana Bunch Children's Learning Center
Little Appel's Child Care
PorchLight
Precious Moments Daycare

Tennessee
Family Voices of Tennessee
Nashville Farmers' Market
Second Harvest Food Bank of East Tennessee
Second Harvest Food Bank of Northeast Tennessee
Tennessee Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Tennessee Justice Center
Vanderbilt Birth Center
Vanderbilt Midwives at Melrose

Texas
Every Texan
Feeding Texas
Learning Disabilities Association of Texas
National Council of Jewish Women Greater Dallas Section

Utah
American Academy of Pediatrics, Utah Chapter
Utah State University Student Nutrition Access Center
Utahns Against Hunger

Vermont
Addison Community Action / CVOEO
Alliance for Community Transformations
Brattleboro-area Farmers’ Market
Creative Healing & Fitness
Early Education Services
Greater Bennington Community Services
HANDS
Hardwick Area Food Pantry
Hunger Free Vermont
Intervale Center
Kingdom Community Services
Kitchen Soup Project
Mary Johnson Children's Center
Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op
Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont
Our Community Cares Camp, Inc
Rutland County Parent Child Center
Shrewsbury Community Church
Sunrise Family Resource Center
The Vermont Foodbank
Trinity Church
Vermont Farmers Food Center
Vermont Farmers Market Association Board
VT FEED-Shelburne Farms
Windham Southeast Supervisory Union

Virginia
Federation of Virginia Food Banks
Legal Aid Justice Center
March of Dimes
Virginia Hunger Solutions, a project of Virginia Poverty Law Center
Washington
American Indian Health Commission for WA State
Anti-Hunger & Nutrition Coalition
Ballard Food Bank
Faith Action Network
First Five Fundamentals
Foundation for Healthy Generations
Jefferson County Farmers Market
Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle
KidVantage
Northwest Harvest.org
Nutrition First, Washington State's WIC Association
Partners for Our Children
Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness
South Sound Lactation Network
University District Food Bank
Upper Valley MEND (Meeting Each Need with Dignity)
Washing Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Washington Association for the Education of Young Children
Washington Defender Association
Washington Low Income Housing Alliance
Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP
Washington State Partners for Social Change
Washington State Public Health Association
YWCA Spokane

West Virginia
Central WV WIC
Monongalia County Health Department WIC
Monongalia County WIC
Think Kids
WV WIC

Wisconsin
BCDI-Wisconsin
Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin
Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council
Healthy School Meals for All Wisconsin
La Crosse Health Department
Nutrition and Health Associates
Rusk County WIC
Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (WIAAP)
Wisconsin Early Childhood Association
Wisconsin WIC Association
Wood County WIC

Wyoming
Wyoming Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics