

We Need Your WIC Stories!

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August 3, 2015

Why are We Doing a
Story Collection Campaign?

It's *a/ways* great to hear stories about the importance of WIC in participants' and staff members' lives

However, right now, as Congress is drafting reauthorization legislation that will set WIC policy for the next 5 years, it is *particularly* important for members of Congress, their staff, the media, and the public to hear personal stories about the positive impacts of WIC

Some Context

- As you know, WIC is essential to ensuring millions of low-income families get the healthy food, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and referral services they need when they fall on hard times.
- Yet the WIC program, and the families served by WIC, are not well-understood by many elected officials nor the general public.
- We have seen a number of potential (and real) threats to WIC in Congress and in statehouses across the nation.
- With Congress due to reauthorize WIC this fall, all of us in the WIC community have an opportunity to build upon successes and make additional gains to ensure all of our mothers, infants, and children have access to crucial WIC services.

Why Personal Stories, and Not Just Facts and Data?

- A compelling personal story is worth 100 statistics and can help move *hearts and minds*.
- Our goal is to gather personal experiences about WIC from communities across the country and share them with media and policymakers to dispel myths and increase understanding of how WIC works and who WIC helps.
- By taking part in this campaign, you'll have the opportunity to educate the public and protect and strengthen the WIC program, which we know is vital for families and individuals in America.
- Also, keep in mind: Being a voice is very empowering. Not everyone is able to share their story so it is up to those of us who can to do so.

Why Stories from WIC Participants?

- People who have experienced poverty and poor nutrition and have participated in WIC are the true experts on how WIC works.
- It is participants' voices that need to be heard and truly listened to as Congress considers the WIC program.

What kinds of stories?

- To give policymakers and the public an understanding of the wide range of ways in which WIC is important, we are looking to paint a picture that includes:
 - How WIC impacts participants, service providers, and families.
 - How potential cuts to WIC benefits might harm families (or how past cuts have already harmed families).
 - The challenges related to putting nutritious meals on the table.
 - How WIC has helped improve economic security.
 - The diversity of those who participate in WIC – communities of color, faith and non-faith communities, etc. The more diverse voices we can share, the more people can relate to the importance of these programs.
 - How participation in WIC is connected to many other issues of poverty such as unemployment, underemployment, and issues relating to: education, healthcare, family, housing, transportation, etc.

Two Ways to Submit Stories

- “Postcards” available:
 - By email (in webinar follow-up)
 - On Facebook and Twitter
 - On nwica.org/advocacy
- Send us your story online!
 - Use our online engagement platform
 - Links available everywhere postcards are available

How to make this successful?

- Who can participate?
 - Anyone who has a personal story about how WIC has impacted them
 - WIC participants, service providers, family members, community members, teachers, librarians, etc.
- Spread the word! Make participation easy!
 - Put postcards in your waiting rooms
 - Make post cards available to staff
 - Share the links with your staff and on social media, if you're a user

What do local agencies need to do?

1. Download the postcards
2. Fill in your Congressional representatives
3. Print and put in your waiting rooms, provide coloring supplies
4. Encourage your staff to share stories also – put in the break room or copy room, wherever people gather

When is this done? How do we wrap up?

- Stories should be sent to Hannah by August 21
 - Scanned stories emailed to hshultz@nwica.org
 - Mailed stories to 2001 S St NW, Washington, DC 20009
- Hannah will send stories to Capitol Hill and district offices the week of August 24

How will stories be used?

- Sent to Congress
- Social Media
- Monday Morning Report
- Other NWA publications

Questions?