



National WIC Association

The State of WIC: WIC Policy Overview and Current Issues

**Rev. Douglas Greenway, President and CEO
National WIC Association**

February 26th, 2017
National WIC Association
2017 Washington Leadership Conference

We know why WIC is important...

- Serves about 7.5 million participants across the US
 - > 50% of infants born in the US are enrolled in WIC
- Provides 4 core services: nutrition education, breastfeeding support, healthy food package, and referrals to health and social services
 - 10,000 WIC clinics nationwide
- Health outcomes—Participation in WIC:
 - Reduces likelihood of adverse birth outcomes including

- VLBW babies and pre-term births
- Increases breastfeeding initiation and duration rates
- Leads to healthier diets and lower food insecurity
- Leads to better dental health, higher immunization rates, and better cognitive outcomes in children
- Can reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect



Changes to WIC policy can help or hinder your ability to help clients achieve their goals.

A faint, light-colored illustration of a woman holding a child is visible in the background on the left side of the slide. The woman is shown in profile, facing right, with her arms around the child. The child is also in profile, facing right, and appears to be holding something. The illustration is composed of simple, rounded shapes and is rendered in a light pink or red color.

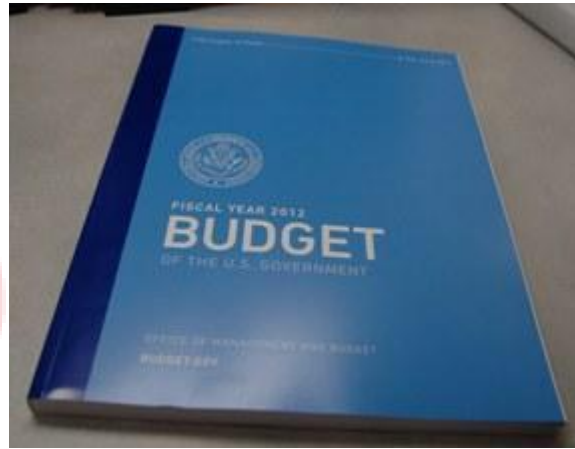
4 Main Policy Areas

1. Appropriations (legislative)
2. Reauthorization (legislative)



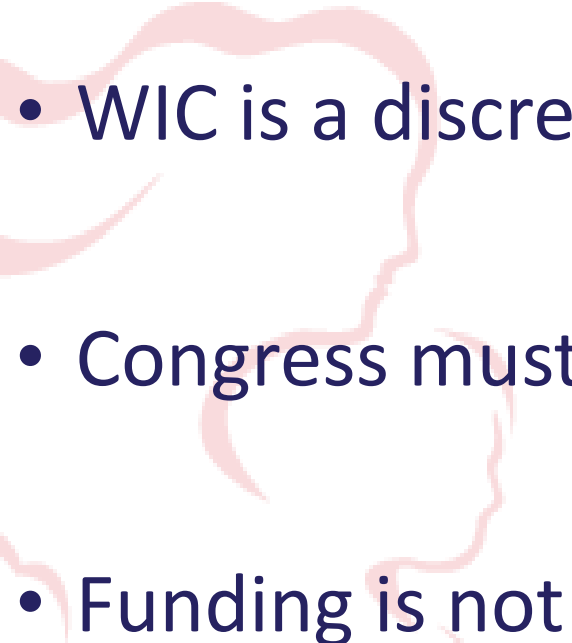
3. Food Package (regulatory)
4. Program Implementation (regulatory)

- In this session we will be focusing on 1-3; FNS will be talking to state directors tomorrow about issues relating to #4



WIC Appropriations

WIC Appropriations

- Also known as “WIC Funding”
 - WIC is a discretionary program
 - Congress must fund WIC each year
 - Funding is not guaranteed
- 



**Why is the yearly WIC Appropriations
process important?**

Committees of Jurisdiction

- Committees with the power to fund or not fund WIC
- House Appropriations Committee; Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, & FDA
- Senate Appropriations Committees; Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, & FDA


Committee Leadership

House

- Robert Aderholt (R-AL),
Chair, Subcommittee
- Sanford Bishop (D-GA),
Ranking Member,
Subcommittee
- Rodney Frelinghuysen
(R-NJ), Chair, Full
Committee
- Nita Lowey (D-NY),
Ranking Member, Full
Committee

Senate

- John Hoeven (R-ND),
Chair, Subcommittee
- Jeffrey Merkley (D-OR),
Ranking Member,
Subcommittee
- Thad Cochran (R-MS),
Chair, Full Committee
- Patrick Leahy (D-VT),
Ranking Member, Full
Committee



We want them to know about how great WIC is and make them our best friends.

Steps in the Appropriations Process

- President's Budget Request <---has not been released yet for FY 2018
- Congress's Budget Resolution or Not and the 302 (a) – spending by function distributed to Committees
- House and Senate Appropriations Committees determine Subcommittee allocations – 302 (b)s – spending suballocations

Steps in the Appropriations Process

- House and Senate Agriculture, Rural Development, and FDA Subcommittee markup their versions of the bill, including the WIC program allocation
 - Vote by Subcommittee
- If passed by Subcommittees, Full Appropriations Committees markup their versions of the bill, including the WIC program allocation
 - Vote by Full Committee


Steps in the Appropriations Process

- If passed by Full Committee, House and Senate floor debate and amendment on their versions of the bills
 - Vote by House and Senate on the different versions of the bill

Steps in the Appropriations Process

- If both versions of bill are passed, a Conference Committee is formed
- Conference Committee irones out differences between 2 versions of the bill
 - Vote by House and Senate on same conferenced bill
- If passed by House and Senate, bill goes to President for signature or veto

Appropriations Challenges Over the Past Several Years

- Threats of funding cuts
 - Funding uncertainty with numerous Continuing Resolutions
 - Possibility of government shutdown
- 

Continuing Resolutions (CRs)

- If Congress cannot agree on funding levels for government programs in the coming year, they may enact a Continuing Resolution (CR)
- Short-term funding to avoid a government shutdown
- CRs make program planning challenging
- We are still operating under a CR for FY 2017
 - Current CR expires April 28, 2017
 - Remains to be seen if there will be another CR for remainder of the year or if there will be an omnibus spending bill

eating and health

Shutdown Leaves Program Feeding Women And Infants In Lurch

by ELIZA BARCLAY AND ALLISON AUBREY

October 01, 2013 3:49 PM

While CRs are not ideal, they are better than letting the government shutdown.

Shutdown threatens nutrition for mothers, children

CNNMoney

By Steve Hargreaves @hargreavesCNN October 1, 2013 9:37 AM ET

Government shutdown could soon have impact on family WIC program in Cuyahoga County

WIC program for women, children could soon be hurt

BY: Joe Pagonakis, newsnet5.com

POSTED: 4:16 PM, Oct 8, 2013

UPDATED: 11:08 AM, Oct 9, 2013

WIC Appropriations

FY 2016 Law (last time Appropriations bills were actually passed – in the form of an Omnibus bill)

- \$6.35 billion in new funding
- \$60 million: breastfeeding peer counselor program
- \$13.6 million: infrastructure
- \$220 million from unobligated balances (carryover): MIS/EBT (eWIC)

WIC Appropriations

FY 2017 President's Request

- \$6.35 billion new funds
- \$80 million: breastfeeding peer counselor program
- \$75 million: MIS/EBT (eWIC)
- \$14 million: infrastructure
- \$26 million: program initiatives and evaluation

FY 2017 House Bill

- \$6.35 billion in new funding
- \$60 million: breastfeeding peer counselor program
- \$14 million: infrastructure
- \$100 million rescission of carryover funding

FY 2017 Senate Bill

- \$6.35 billion in new funding
- \$60 million: breastfeeding peer counselor program
- \$13.6 million: infrastructure
- \$200 million rescission of carryover funding

What will happen in April for remaining 5 months of FY 2017 remains to be seen

NWA FY 2018 Appropriations Asks



| REQUEST | AMOUNT |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Total Funding Request | \$6.36 Billion + Contingency Fund |
| Set Aside for Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program | \$90 Million |
| Set Aside for WIC Infrastructure | \$14 Million |
| Set Aside for Program Initiatives and Evaluation | \$15 Million |
| Maintain the Contingency Fund at \$200 Million | Up to \$200 Million |

FY 2018 Funding Outlook

- President expected to release his detailed FY 2018 budget in April or May
- Large amount of WIC carryover funds due to declining caseload
- Appropriators could use carryover as reason to reduce WIC's topline funding number
- We have leftover food dollars but NSA funds are being completely spent – the ratio of food dollars: NSA funding is not flexible
- WIC is also prime for cuts as the largest program for the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittees



In the future we could be looking at deeper cuts – Trump administration wants to cut \$10 trillion in domestic spending over the next 10 years

Additional Appropriations Concern: Riders

- Riders – additional policy changes attached to a larger legislative vehicle that have very little to do with the legislation
- Potential WIC riders
 - Attacks on adjunctive eligibility
 - Legislative changes to WIC food package

WIC Reauthorization



WIC Reauthorization

- Occurs every 5 years
- Changes WIC Policy
- Committees of jurisdiction
 - House Education and the Workforce Committee
 - Senate Agriculture Committee

Committee Leadership

House: Education and the Workforce

- Todd Rokita (R-IN), Chair, Subcommittee
- Jared Polis (D-CO), Ranking Member, Subcommittee
- Virginia Foxx (R-NC), Chair, Full Committee
- Robert “Bobby” Scott (D-VA), Ranking Member, Full Committee

Senate: Agriculture

- Luther Strange (R-AL), Chair, Subcommittee
- Bob Casey (D-PA), Ranking Member, Subcommittee
- Pat Roberts (R-KS), Chair, Full Committee
- Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Ranking Member, Full Committee



**We also want them to know about
how great WIC is and make them our
best friends.**

Examples of Past Reauthorization Policy Change

- Language to review and update the food package every 10 years
- The establishment of the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program
- Mandate to get all states to EBT by 2020
- The establishment of the use of adjunctive eligibility in WIC
- Language that establishes funding levels for set asides like the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program, MIS/EBT, and Infrastructure

Steps in the reauthorization process: Similar to Appropriations process but with new committees

- Hearings
- Marker bills introduced
- House Education and the Workforce Committee/Senate Agriculture Committee mark-ups of their respective bills
- House and Senate Floor Debate
- House and Senate vote on their versions of the bill
- Once passed, the bills are conferenced to iron out differences
- House and Senate vote on conferenced agreement
- If passed, bill is signed into law, or vetoed and returned for more work or an override.

2015 Reauthorization Process:

- House and Senate Committees missed original deadline (September 30, 2015)
- Senate Agriculture Committee passed bipartisan bill in January 2016
 - Contained several positive WIC provisions including WIC to Six, 2 year infant certifications, and protecting adjunctive eligibility with a 3 year study
- House Ed and Workforce Committee passed partisan bill in April 2016
 - Bad for WIC and other child nutrition programs; no positive WIC provisions
- Neither bill passed in the full chamber
- Now, unlikely that CNR will be taken up in 2017 due to other competing legislative priorities in these committees

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**Lack of reauthorization bill leaves
WIC more vulnerable to legislative
threats like Appropriations riders
and structural changes**

One potential structural change: Block grants

- WIC is currently a categorical grant program
- If we changed to block grants, the results would be extremely damaging:
 - Inadequate funding (competing with other programs for the same pot of state funding)
 - Lack of federal oversight and enforcement of WIC standards such as nutrition standards
 - State governments would have the authority to make other damaging changes to WIC

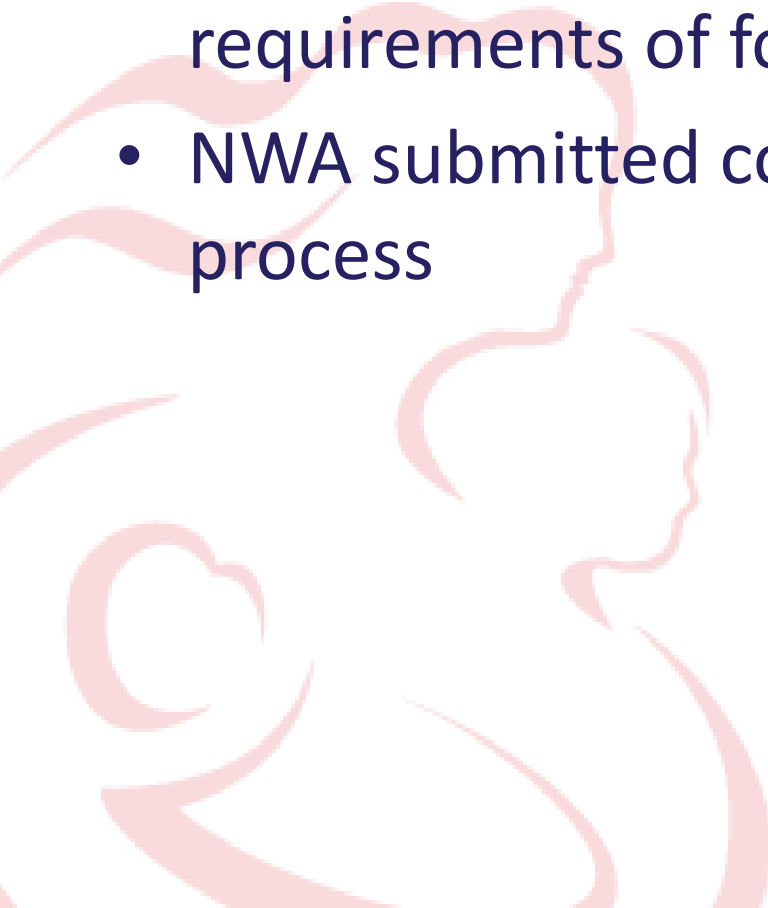
Another potential policy change: Citizenship check and/or changes in public charge definition

- Draft Executive Order (EO) leaked last month
 - Expands definition of public charge (someone likely to be dependent on government for survival and for that reason is subject to deportation)
 - US Citizenship and Immigration Services currently excludes a number of programs from public charge consideration, including WIC, but this EO would include numerous additional programs
- If and until the EO is signed, we are unable to know if WIC will be affected
- However, rumors of EO, combined with other immigrant-hostile executive actions and rhetoric, have created fear among WIC participants
- We will have an entire session dedicated to this topic later today



WIC Food Packages





Food Package Review Process

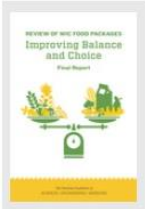
- The review process is scientifically based
 - Specifies the types and minimum nutritional requirements of foods in the WIC food package
 - NWA submitted comments throughout the process
- 

Food Package Review Process

- Where we are in the now –
 - NASEM released its report in Jan. 2017

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This PDF is available at <http://www.nap.edu/23655> SHARE    



Review of WIC Food Packages: Improving Balance and Choice:
Final Report

DETAILS

1200 pages | 6 x 9 | PAPERBACK
ISBN 978-0-309-45016-4 | DOI: 10.17226/23655

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Brief Summary of Recommendations

- NWA is very excited about, and supports, the recommendations. Highlights:
 - CVV amount should be increased across all food packages
 - Reduce juice and allow CVV option
 - Reduce milk
 - More choice and flexibility around package sizes
 - Reduce amount of formula
- Alas, the recommendations given by NASEM are just that – RECOMMENDATIONS.
- It is up to FNS to determine which recommendations will be implemented. We do not know how long this will take.

Steps Still Left in the USDA Rule-Making Process

- USDA will publish interim rule and accept public comments
- USDA will responds to all public comments and make any changes to food packages rule, considering comments
- USDA will publish interim final rule and accept public comment
- USDA will respond to all public comments and makes any changes to food packages rule, considering comments
- USDA will publish final rule

**Food Package Challenge: Congress
deciding to put whatever they
want in the food packages
rather than go through the
rule-making process.**





Stay Tuned:

**We will have a session dedicated to the
WIC Food Package tomorrow**

NWA Legislative Priorities

- First and foremost, protecting WIC from funding cuts and structural changes
- Also:
 - Protecting and Preserving the Scientific Integrity of the WIC Food Packages
 - Protecting and Strengthening WIC's Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program
 - Supporting WIC's Transition to Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT)
 - Maintaining Adjunctive Eligibility and Strengthening WIC-Medicaid Linkage

**Refer to Fact
Sheets: WIC
2018
Legislative
Priorities and
The Power of
Peer
Counselors: A
WIC Success
Story**

Lifting Up Your WIC Voice

- It is essential given our new political environment that we all work together to protect WIC from potential threats
- Policymakers need to learn about the value of WIC
 - You can advocate without lobbying



National WIC Association
WIC for a Healthier America



Advocacy vs. Lobbying

As the nation's premier public health nutrition program, WIC is a cost-effective, sound investment—insuring the health of our children.

NWA'S MISSION
NWA Inspires and empowers the WIC community to advocate for and promote quality nutrition services for all eligible mothers and young children, and assure effective management of WIC.

Advocacy

Advocacy refers to speaking out on issues or supporting a proposal or a cause.

Lobbying

Lobbying is one type of advocacy legally defined by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The IRS defines two types of lobbying - direct lobbying and grassroots lobbying.

Direct Lobbying

A direct lobbying communication is any attempt to influence legislation through communication with any member or employee of a legislative body or any other government official or employee who may participate in the formulation of the legislation through communication that refers to specific legislation and reflects a view on that legislation.

Grassroots Lobbying

A grassroots lobbying communication is any effort to influence legislation by attempting to affect the opinions of the general public or any segment of the public through communication that refers to specific legislation, reflects a view on that legislation, and encourages the recipient to contact a legislator, employee of a legislative body, or any other government official or employee about the legislation.

| Examples of Direct Lobbying | Examples of Grassroots Lobbying |
|--|--|
| Emailing a member of Congress to vote yes on H.R. 2112 while on paid work time | Sending an action alert to a listserv to encourage them to email their Congressmen and telling them to vote yes on H.R. 2112. |
| If a bill is introduced that contains a provision that cuts WIC funding, speaking out against that funding cut measure to a Congressional staff member | If a bill is introduced that contains a provision that cuts WIC funding, telling people in your email address book to speak out against that funding cut measure to a Congressional staff member |
| Telling a member of Congress to support the President's budget proposal for WIC | Requesting friends and colleagues to urge a Member of Congress to support the President's budget proposal for WIC |

Advocacy vs. Lobbying


Advocacy

- Advocacy refers to speaking out on issues or supporting a proposal or cause.

Lobbying

- **Lobbying is one type of advocacy** legally defined by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
- A lobbying communication:
 - Refers to **specific legislation or measures** in a piece of legislation
 - **Reflects a view** on that legislation, and
 - **Involves a communication** with any member or employee of a legislative body or any other government official or employee who may participate in the formulation of the legislation (direct lobbying) **OR encourages the recipient to contact** a legislator, employee of a legislative body, or any other government official or employee (grassroots lobbying)

Non-lobbying Advocacy

- **Educating** the public and members of Congress about WIC
 - **Highlighting** the achievements of WIC clinics in the media
 - **Hosting** events that promote, celebrate, or inform about WIC
- 

Activity: Lobbying vs. Advocacy

- The House is voting on a budget bill that would harm WIC, so you call your Congressman and tell him to vote against the bill.
- You get an NWA action alert to sign a letter stating the benefits of WIC, so you click to email your member of Congress.
- You do an interview with the local radio station on how funding shortfalls are influencing client services.

Activity: Lobbying vs. Advocacy

- You host your district's member of Congress at the clinic, explaining all the wonderful aspects of WIC. The Congresswoman ends up talking with a WIC client who is aware of a bill to cut funding for WIC. The client expresses her disapproval.
- There's a bill to restore funding to WIC, so you tell your friends to call their Congressmen and request support of the bill.

You are Permitted and Encouraged to Lobby

- It is your democratic right
- Each state has specific laws for state employees about lobbying efforts while on the job
- Private money can be used on lobbying, federal funds cannot
- If you are confused...
 - Limit lobbying efforts to coffee breaks, lunch breaks, after hours and other times not considered “work time”
 - Focus your time on educating about the value of WIC



**During NWA's Leadership Conference
you will be educating and
doing non-lobbying advocacy.**



**Now more than ever, we need your
voice for WIC families!**

Keep informed about WIC policy

- Weekly Legislative Updates NWA's Monday Morning Report
- All Legislative Updates are posted on NWA's blog to get up to speed on the latest issues



National WIC Association

NWA is the non-profit education arm and advocacy voice of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).



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NEWS & BLOG

**WASHINGTON
UPDATE**

Weekly WIC Policy Update

February 9, 2015

2016 Budget Update: House Appropriations Committee Chairman Hal Rogers (R-KY) has scheduled several hearings this week on President Obama's FY 2016 budget request. Hearings on the president's budget will also take place before other committees in the House and Senate this week.

Affordable Care Act Update: Last week, the House passed H.R. 596 by a vote of 239-186. H.R. 596, if enacted, would repeal the 2010 Affordable Care Act and direct three House committees to draft replacement legislation. Senate Majority

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Stay tuned for more presentations and workshops on how to be a strong WIC advocate

- Later Today:
 - 2016 Federal Election Panel Discussion with WIC Experts
 - Video Story Telling Workshop
 - Developing WIC Messages Workshop
- Tomorrow:
 - WIC Budget Update
 - WIC Leadership in States and Communities Panel Discussion
 - Other National Programs that Serve the WIC Population Panel Discussion
 - Community Policy and Systems Change Panel Discussion



Questions? Comments?