

Be a Voice for WIC

Part 1: Advocacy Basics



National WIC
Association

Workshop Agenda

- Legislative Process 101
- Advocacy vs. Lobbying
- Anatomy of a Hill meeting
- Advocacy experiences



National WIC Association
Your child has you. And you have WIC.

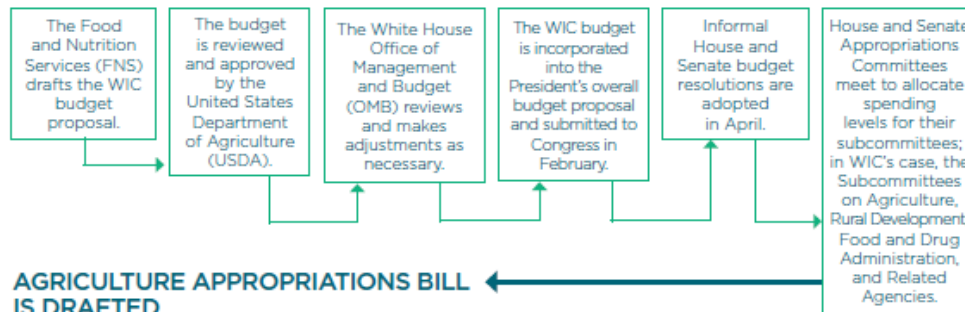


The WIC Program Funding Process

THE WIC PROGRAM

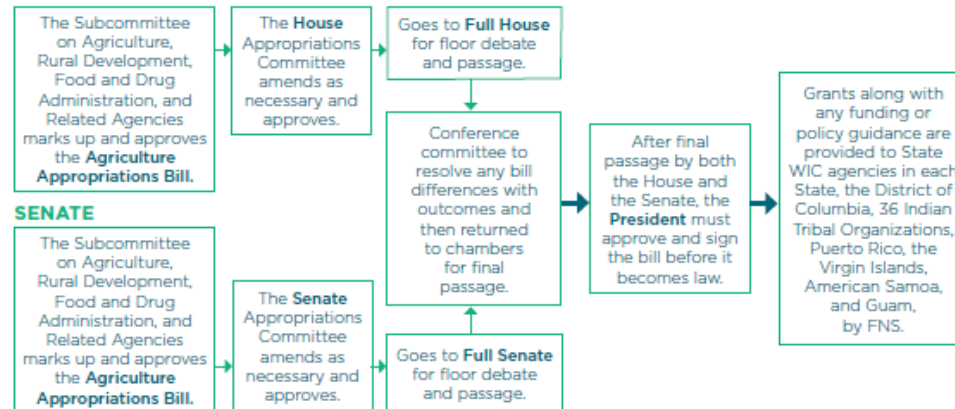
WIC is a public health nutrition program under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). It is a domestic discretionary program and is funded annually through the appropriations committee process, for the Federal fiscal year of Oct 1–Sept 30, by grants to each state. Implementing legislation, FNS provides funding and policy guidance and creates regulations.

WIC BUDGET IS DRAFTED



AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS BILL IS DRAFTED

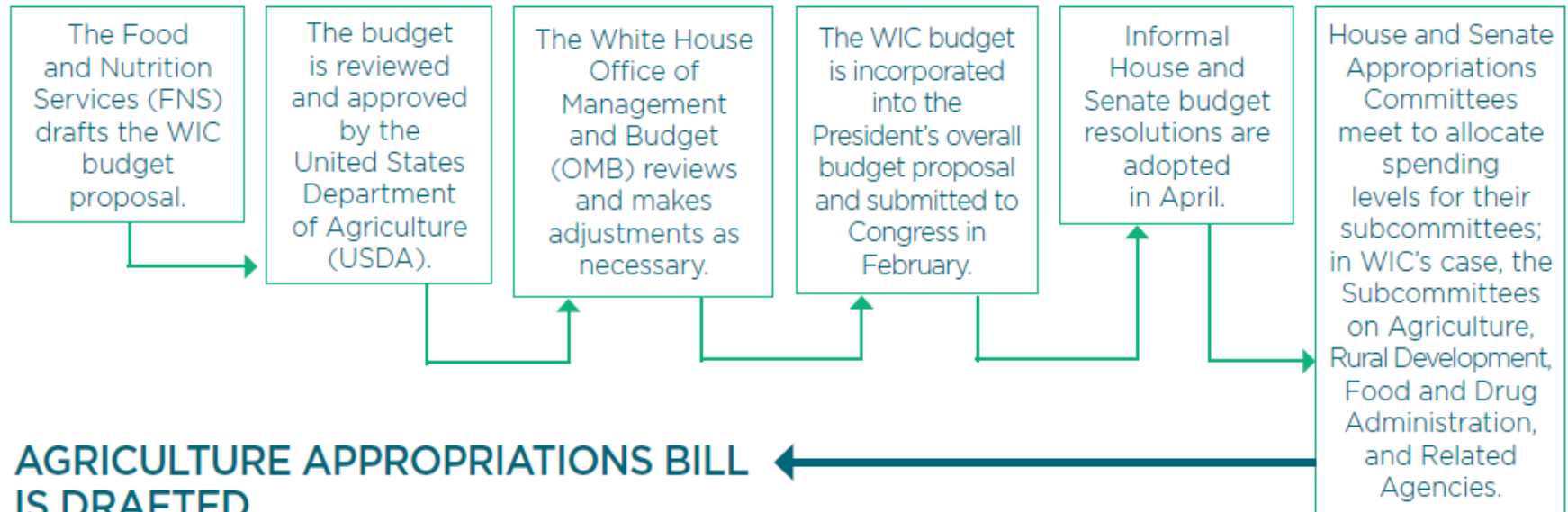
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



CONTINUING RESOLUTION, MINIBUS, AND OMNIBUS

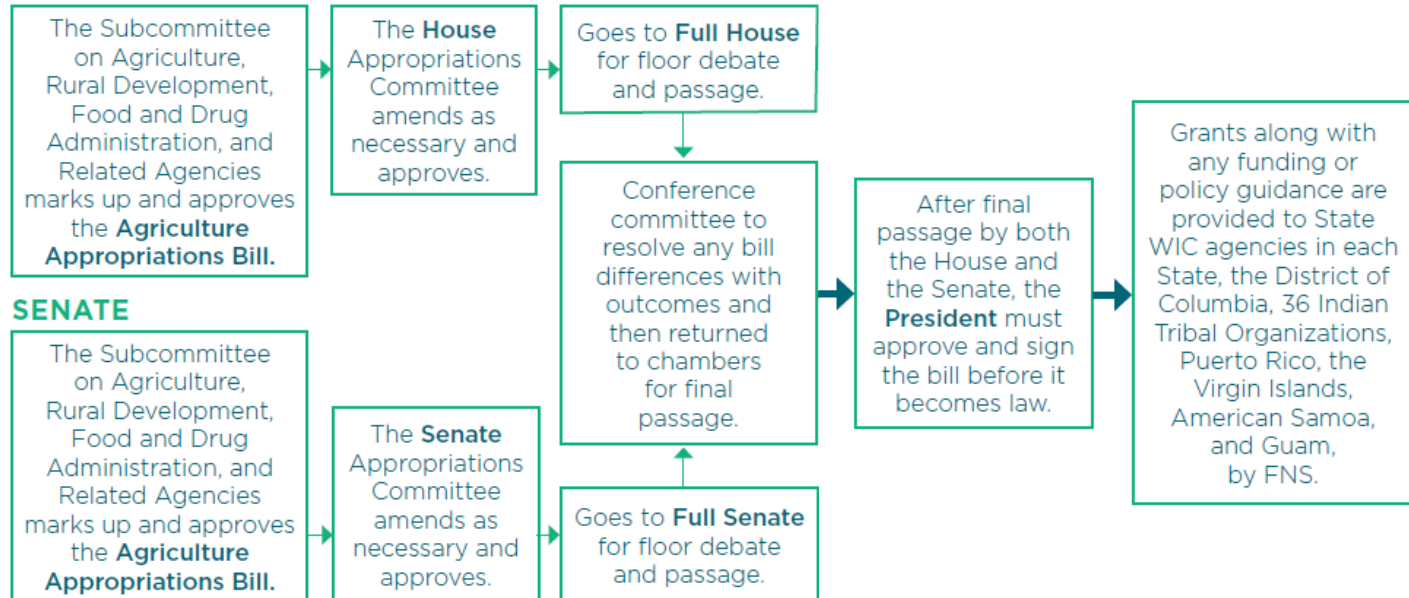
Congress can enact one or more Continuing Resolutions (CR) as a stopgap spending measure to keep federal departments, agencies, and programs functioning in the absence of completed appropriations, until a final agreement can be reached on a new fiscal year's spending priorities. Facing a legislative time crunch (like the end of a fiscal year), Congress will sometimes choose to pass CRs until funding agreement is reached or wrap some or all unapproved appropriations bills into a single legislative vehicle to assure passage. A "minibus" is where two or more appropriations bills are wrapped, and an "omnibus" is where all or all remaining unapproved appropriations bills are wrapped.

WIC BUDGET IS DRAFTED



AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS BILL IS DRAFTED

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES





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

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

Be an “advocate” for WIC

- To members of Congress
- To media
- In your local communities
- To your family, friends, people you sit next to on a plane

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)

Examples of Direct Lobbying	Examples of Grassroots Lobbying
Emailing a member of Congress to vote yes on H.R. 2112	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
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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

Examples of Non-Lobbying Advocacy

Explaining all NWA key messages and talking points about the importance of WIC	Providing WIC statistics on your state or local agency
Clearing up misconceptions about WIC	Describing personal stories of WIC impact in your clinic(s)
Describing the importance of Adjunctive Eligibility to public health outcomes and streamlining administration	Explaining impact of current funding levels and of potential future funding shortfalls—e.g. with this year's allocations, we have had to reduce clinic hours of operation, which inadvertently reduces caseload to stay within budget, but we may not be reaching families who need WIC that cannot get to the clinic during those hours
Explain the positive impacts of the improved WIC food packages, including the fresh fruit and vegetable cash value vouchers	
Describing the importance of Breastfeeding Peer Counselors and convey WIC successes	Hosting a member of Congress to tour your WIC clinic
Explaining the benefits of EBT to WIC	Offering to be a resource of information for Congressional staff in the future

You are Permitted & Encouraged to Lobby

- It is your democratic right
- Each state has specific laws for state employees about how much time and expenditures they are allowed to devote to lobbying efforts while on the job
- Private money can be used on lobbying, federal funds generally cannot
- If you are confused about what you are allowed to do while on paid work-time, limit your lobby efforts to coffee breaks, lunch breaks, after hours and other times not considered “work time.” Also, focus your time on educating about the benefits of WIC and dispelling myths about the Program.

**During the Leadership Conference
you will be “educating” and
Doing non-lobbying advocacy**

Activity: Lobbying or Advocacy

1. The House is voting on a sequestration replacement bill that would harm WIC, so you call your Congressman and tell him to vote against the bill.
2. You get an NWA action alert to sign a letter stating the benefits of WIC, so you click to email your member of Congress.
3. You do an interview with the local radio station on how funding shortfalls are influencing client services.
4. 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.
5. There's a bill to restore funding to WIC, so you tell your friends to call their Congressmen and request support of the bill.

Anatomy of a Hill Meeting

- Thank staff for meeting
- Introductions, exchange of business cards
- Ask if staffer knows about WIC
 - If limited knowledge, provide WIC basics—# clients served, eligibility, services provided
- Talk about some of WIC successes
- Describe state/local-specific data and experience
- Share a personal story
- Q&A between staffer and you
- Thank staffer for meeting
- Write thank you email, including answers to any questions from meeting

Be a Voice for WIC:

Media examples

- "It's concerning," says Mary Ellison. "We've had a lot of folks call. They're worried they won't be able to receive services or that actually we're going to close on Friday and so the important message is that we're here and as soon as we get good information from the state then we will pass it along." Springfield-Greene County Health Department referenced in the Missouri Ozarksfirst.com
- "If I lose one mother off of this program who is at nutrition risk, there's a real health consequence to her and to her unborn child. And the long-term consequence for this nation in reducing health care costs are significant because those contribute to the deficit." – **NPR**; Douglas Greenaway, NWA President & CEO
- "Administrators with the Women, Infants and Children program say they would have to trim their caseloads by 600,000 applicants or participants across the country because of the spending cuts. Four- and five-year-olds would probably be affected before infants and toddlers, said Douglas Greenaway, president of the National WIC Association, a Washington nonprofit group." – **Bloomberg Businessweek**



Stories & Experiences