

March 30, 2012

The Honorable FIRST LAST
U.S. House of Representatives/U.S. Senate
ROOM BUILDING
Washington, DC ZIP

Dear SENATOR/REPRESENTATIVE LAST:

As Congress considers the FY 2013 Budget Resolution and Agriculture Appropriations, we strongly urge you to reject any funding cuts that will damage the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). While there are signs of economic recovery, sustained high unemployment and underemployment require that vulnerable mothers and young children continue to receive WIC's critical nutrition assistance and healthcare services.

The President has proposed to fully fund WIC at \$7.041 billion, providing \$14 million for infrastructure, \$30 million in support of cost containment and program integrity for management information systems (MIS) and electronic benefit service delivery (EBT), and \$60 million for breastfeeding peer counselors.

Under the Budget Control Act of 2011, WIC is slated for automatic cuts in FY 2013 as it is not a program that is protected from sequestration. This could result in over 800,000 mothers and young children losing critical nutrition benefits. Rather than allowing a sequester to go into effect and critical WIC funds to be cut, Congress should agree to a balanced deficit reduction package to replace the sequester and protect low-income programs, particularly WIC, from any funding cuts.

For 36 years, WIC has received strong bipartisan support in Congress. WIC is a well-respected and highly regarded program that elicits support across political, ideological, ethnic, and socio-economic lines. Voters oppose cutting funding for WIC. A national survey of 1,000 likely November 2012 voters indicated nearly 3 in 4 Americans want WIC funding to remain the same or increase with nearly twice as many favoring an increase as wanting a reduction.

WIC is a short-term, mission-driven preventive public health nutrition program designed to influence lifetime nutrition and health behaviors in a targeted, high-risk population. WIC provides nutrition and breastfeeding education, nutritious foods, and improved healthcare access for low- and moderate-income women and children with, or at risk of developing, nutrition-related health problems. Nationally, WIC serves approximately 9 million mothers and young children per month, including 53% of all infants in the U.S.

WIC is effective, providing significant returns on investment and is itself a deficit reduction strategy.

- WIC improves the consumption of key nutrients, improves pregnancy results, and substantially reduces the likelihood of adverse birth outcomes which mean fewer premature births, fewer low birth-weight babies, and fewer fetal and infant deaths. It has also been shown to improve at-risk children's health, growth and development and prevent health problems. Investing a small amount in WIC now results in significant health care cost savings in the future.
- Preterm births cost the U.S. over \$26 billion a year, with average first year medical costs for a premature/low birth-weight baby of \$49,033 compared to \$4,551 for a baby born without complications. It costs approximately \$743 a year for a pregnant woman to participate in WIC with an average participation length of 13 months. For every dollar spent on a pregnant woman in WIC, up to \$4.21 is saved in Medicaid.
- Participation in WIC's prenatal counseling program is associated with an increased rate of breastfeeding initiation. In 2010, survey data indicated that 63% of WIC infants ages 6-13 months were breastfed up from 41% in 1998. Funding for WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselors has helped to improve breastfeeding initiation and duration rates. It has been estimated that a minimum of \$3.6 billion would be saved if current US exclusive breastfeeding rates increased to at least 50% at 6 months old.

- WIC children have increased intakes of important nutrients for cognitive and physical development like iron, potassium, and fiber, and they have lower rates of anemia. In addition, four- and five-year-olds whose mothers participated in WIC during pregnancy have better vocabulary test scores than children whose mothers had not received WIC benefits. WIC nutrition education has been shown to lead to an increased consumption of whole grains, fruits, and lower-fat milk, and participation in WIC has been shown to reduce the risk of child abuse or neglect.

WIC is efficiently run with administrative costs, according to the USDA, averaging 9%, nationally.

WIC is entrepreneurial, funding approximately 25% of its food costs through cost-containment initiatives and not federal resources. In fiscal year 2010, \$1.7 billion in federal savings were generated through competitive bidding for infant formula and other cost containment initiatives to support approximately 1.9 million participants.

WIC increases demand for healthy food in local retail stores, encouraging them to stock WIC authorized and healthier foods making WIC healthy foods accessible to others in the community. In 2010, \$6.25 billion worth of WIC food benefits were spent in local economies.

With already low administrative costs and effective cost containment strategies, cutting funding from WIC means cutting mothers and young children off of the program and depriving young children of a healthy start on life and the opportunity to thrive. Cutting funding from WIC in the short-term will result in long-term health and economic consequences for the country.

No one denies that our nation is facing fiscal challenges, but balancing the budget on the backs of vulnerable, at-risk, low-income mothers and young children that need essential food and nutrition assistance is not the way to achieve financial or national security. We urge you to do everything in your power to protect our nation's struggling families from hunger and improve their nutritional health and well-being. As an efficient, entrepreneurial, and effective program that provides significant returns on investment and is itself a deficit reduction strategy, we strongly urge you to reject any funding cuts to WIC and the other nutrition programs and urge you to support the President's WIC budget request.

Sincerely,

9to5, National Association of Working Women
 A Minnesota Without Poverty
 A Woman's Place, Bucks County, PA
 A World Fit For Kids!
 Academic Pediatric Association
 Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
 ACCESS Family Care
 AD House, Inc.
 Agency 299, Nassau County, NY
 Alabama Council on Human Relations, Inc.
 Alabama Dietetic Association
 Alameda County Community Food Bank
 Alameda County Office of Education
 Alaska Dietetic Association
 Alcohol & Addictions Resource Center
 Allen County Health Department, Ohio
 Allen County WIC in Ohio
 Alliance for a Just Society
 Altarum Institute
 American Academy of Pediatrics
 American Association for Health Education (AAHE)
 American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
 American Mother's Political Party
 American Public Health Association
 American Red Cross WIC Program
 American Samoa

Appalachian Mountain Teen Project
Apple Processors Association
Arkansas Breastfeeding Coalition
Arkansas Dietetic Association
Artemis Center for Alternatives to Domestic Violence , OH
Ashtabula County Community Action Agency
Asian Law Alliance
Association of Arizona Food Banks
Association of Clinicians for the Underserved (ACU)
Association of Jewish Family & Children's Agencies
Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs
Association of State & Territorial Public Health Nutrition Directors
Auglaize County Health Department and WIC Program
Baby Beloved, inc.
Baby Gooroo
Bay Area WIC program, WI
Belleville Congregational Church UCC, MA
Best for Babes
Board of the International Childbirth Education Association
Break the Cycle of Poverty
Bread for the World
Breastfeeding Coalition of Oregon
Breastfeeding Task Force of Greater Los Angeles
Bright Future Lactation Resource Centre Ltd
Bronx Breastfeeding Coalition
Bronx Health Link
Brownstein Jewish Family Service
Bucks County Women's Advocacy Coalition
California Breastfeeding Coalition
California Center for Public Health Advocacy
California Center for Rural Policy, Humboldt State University
California Conference of Local Health Department Nutritionists (CCLHDN).
California Food Policy Advocates
California Partnership
California WIC Association
Call to Action Rio Grande Valley
Cambridge United for Justice with Peace
Cambridge/Somerville WIC
Campaign for America's Future
Campaign for Hoosier Families
Capital Area Food Bank
Caring For 2
Catholic Charities Diocese of Ogdensburg, NY
Catholic Charities of Buffalo
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago
Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Brooklyn
CBEACH
CDI/Choices For Children
CEDA (Community and Economic Development Association of Cook County, Inc.)
Center for Children and Families at the University of Notre Dame
Center for Communications, Health & the Environment (CECHE)
Center for Family Policy and Practice, WI
Center for Human Rights
Center For Latino - Progress
Center for Public Policy Priorities
Center for Science in the Public Interest
Central Pennsylvania Dietetic Association
Cherokee Nation WIC Program
Child and Family Resources, Inc.

Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc.
Child Care Resources of Rockland, Inc.
Child Care Solutions
Child Care Staffing for Quality Solutions LLC
Childbirth Graphics
Children First/Communities in Schools of Buncombe County, NC
Children's Alliance
Children's Coalition of the Lehigh Valley
Children's Defense Fund
Children's Friend
Children's HealthWatch
Children's Hunger Alliance, OH
Children's Mercy Hospitals and Clinics, Kansas City, MO
Children's Alliance of New Hampshire
Christian Churches United of the Tri County Area, PA
Church Women United
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York
Clark County WIC Program
Clinton County, IA Public Health
Coalition for Low Income Pennsylvanians
Coalition on Human Needs
Collaborative Center for Justice, Inc.
Colorado Breastfeeding Coalition
Commission on Economic Opportunity
Commission on Economic Opportunity for the Greater Capital Region (CEO)
Community Access National Network (CANN)
Community Action Organization of Scioto County, Ohio
Community Action Partnership
Community Action Partnership for Madison County
Community Action Partnership of Cambria County, Pennsylvania
Community Action Partnership of San Bernadino
Community Action Program Belknap-Merrimack Counties Inc.
Community Action, Inc.
Community Child Care Council (4C's) of Alameda County
Community Health Services, Inc., PA
Community Legal Aid Society, Inc. of Delaware
Community Peace Builders, OH
Community Relations Committee of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland
Community Relations Council of the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island
Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Silicon Valley
Community Voices Heard
Concilio Latino de Salud
Concilio Latino de Salud, Inc.
Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS)
Connecticut Dietetic Association
Connecticut Food Bank
Consumer Federation of America
Corinthian Christian Center
Coshocton County Maternal and Child Health
Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago
Count Wellstart International
Covenant House
Cquest
Crisis Center & Women's Shelter, IA
Cross-Lines Community Outreach, Inc
Cuyahoga County WIC Program
CWA Local 1081, NJ
D.C. Hunger Solutions
DC Breastfeeding Coalition

DC WIC
Dearborn County WIC, Indiana
Defeat Diabetes Foundation
Delaware Dietetics Association
Delaware Ecumenical Council on Children and Families
Delaware Opportunities
Delta Health Care WIC Program
Democratic Women's Club of Northeast Broward
Direct Action Welfare Group (DAWG)
Disciples Justice Action Network
Disciples Women, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada
Early Care & Learning Council, Albany, NY
Earth Day Network
Easter Seals Iowa
Edgerton Women's Health Center
El Rio Health Center
eLatinaVoices.org
Elk River Health Services, Inc
Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties Head Start Consortium
Elkhart Housing Authority
Equal Opportunity Professional Services
Every Mother, Inc.
Fairbanks Counseling and Adoption, AK
Family and Children's Ministries, Disciples Home Missions, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada
Family Therapy Institute of Suffolk
Farmworker Association of Florida
Feeding America
FGE Food & Nutrition Team
First 5 LA
First Focus Campaign for Children
First Pittsburgh Chapter, National Organization for Women
Flexicare
Florida Breastfeeding Coalition, Inc
Food and Nutrition Network of Solano County
Food Bank For New York City
Food Bank of Alaska
Food Bank of Central New York
Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano
Food Bank of Northern Nevada
Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)
FoodBank of Western New York
Franklin Hampshire North Quabbin WIC Program
Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Friends of Yates, Inc.
Friendship and Peace Society
Gateway Northwest MCHN
Georgia Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Georgia Alliance to End Homelessness
Georgia Rural Urban Summit
Georgia Women for a Change
Glade Church (United Church of Christ and Alliance of Baptists) Blacksburg, VA
Graham County Interfaith Care Alliance, AZ
Great Kids, Inc.
Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger
Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank
Health Council at United Way of the Midlands
Health Imperatives

Healthy Children Project, Inc.
Heartland International Health Center
Hillcrest Family Services, IA
Hope Cottage Pregnancy and Adoption Center
Hope House, LA
HOPE of East Central Illinois
Houston Peace
Hudson Perinatal Consortium
Humility of Mary Health Partners Trumbull County WIC Program
Hunger Action Network of NYS
Hunger Free Colorado
Hunger Free Vermont
Hunger Solutions New York
Hunger Task Force
Idaho Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Illinois Chapter of the AAP
Illinois Dietetic Association
Illinois Hunger Coalition
Indiana Dietetic Association
Indiana Perinatal Network
Indiana Rural Health Association
Initiative Foods, LLC
Interfaith Impact of New York State
Inter-Tribal Council, Inc. of Oklahoma
Iowa Coalition against Domestic Violence
Iowa Coalition for Juvenile Justice
Iowa Dietetic Association
Jefferson County WIC, OH
Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island
Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Southern Arizona
Jewish Community Relations Council of the Milwaukee Jewish Federation
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles
Jewish Family Service of Metropolitan Detroit
Jewish Family Service of the Cincinnati Area
Jewish Federation of Nashville, Community Relations Committee,
Jewish Labor Committee Western Region
Johnson County WIC Program
Judith C Christensen, LLC
Julie's Family Learning Program, MA
Just Harvest
Justice Center and Pax Christi Houston
Kalindi Press & HOHM Press Publishers
Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition, Inc.
Kansas City's Childhood Obesity Collaborative-Weighing In
Kansas Dietetic Association
Kansas, Social Justice Office of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth
Kern County Network for Children
Khmer Health Advocates
Kno-Ho-Co-Ashland CAC Head Start
La Crosse County WIC Program
La Fe Policy Research and Education Center
Lactation Improvement Network of Kentucky
Lafayette Urban Ministry
Lamaze International
Land Stewardship Project
League of United Latin American Citizens
Legal Momentum
Legal Voice

Lenox Hill Neighborhood House
Lincoln County Health Department, MO
Logan County Department of Public Health, IL
Long Island Cares, Inc., The Harry Chapin Food Bank
Louisiana Breastfeeding Coalition
Louisiana Dietetic Association
Love Your Child's Care Childcare LLC
Lucas County WIC Program
Lutheran Family & Children's Services of Missouri
Lutheran Metro Ministry, Omaha, NE
Maine Dietetic Association
Maine NASW
MAPS - Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers
March of Dimes
Marin Grassroots
Marion County Commission on Youth (MCCOY), Inc.
Maryland Breastfeeding Coalition
Maryland Dietetic Association
Maryland Family Network
Mary's House Catholic Worker, AL
Massachusetts Association for Community Action (MassCAP)
Massachusetts Association of WIC Directors
Massachusetts Public Health Association
Maternal and Child Health Access
Maternal and Family Health Services, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
Maternity Care Coalition
McLean County Health Department WIC Program, IL
MDC, NC
Meadville Medical Center, PA
Medela, Inc.
Medina County Health Department
Memorial Hospital Prenatal Care Coordination
Metropolitan NYC WIC Association
Michigan Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Network
Michigan's Children
Mid Michigan Community Action
Mid-Iowa Community Action, Inc
Migrant Legal Action Program
Minnesota Dietetic Association
Minnesota FoodShare
Mississippi Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities
Missouri Citizen Education Fund & Missouri ProVote
Missouri Dietetic Association
Mohave County Dept of Public Health
Montana Dietetic Association
Montana Food Bank Network
Montana Women Vote
Montgomery County Community Action Development Commission
Morgan County Health Center, MO
Morrisania D&TC WIC Program
Muskingum County WIC Program
National Advocacy Center, Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National African American Drug Policy Coalition, Inc.
National Assembly on School-Based Health Care
National Association for the Education of Young Children
National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW)
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Center on Family Homelessness
National Council of Jewish Women

National Council of Jewish Women - St. Louis Section
National Council of Jewish Women, NJ State Public Advocacy Network
National Council of Jewish Women, Union County Section
National Council of Jewish Women, West Morris Section
National Council of La Raza (NCLR)
National Economic and Social Rights Initiative (NESRI)
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National WIC Association
National Women's Conference Committee
National Women's Health Network
Nationwide Children's Hospital WIC Program
Nebraska Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Nebraska Head Start Association
Nebraskans for Peace
Nevada Dietetic Association
New Hampshire Community Action Association
New Hampshire Dietetic Association
New Hampshire WIC Directors' Association
New Jersey Dietetic Association
New Mexico Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty
New York City Coalition Against Hunger
New York Statewide Breastfeeding Coalition
Nia's Ark
NJ WIC Advisory Council
North Carolina Breastfeeding Coalition
North Carolina Council of Churches
North Carolina Dietetic Association
North Dakota Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
North Hudson Community Action Corporation
Northeast PA AHEC
Northeast Valley Health Corporation
Northern Manhattan Perinatal Partnership, Inc.
Northwest Harvest
Northwest Pennsylvania Dietetic Association
Nursing Mothers Counsel of Oregon
Nutricion Fundamental, Inc
Nutrition and Health Associates, WI
Nutrition First
NYC Breastfeeding Leadership Council
Ohio Public Health Association
Older Women Embracing Life (O.W.E.L.) of Baltimore
Open Pantry Community Services, Inc., MA
Optimus Health Care, Inc.
Oral Health America
Orange County Cerebral Palsy Association
Oregon Pediatric Nutrition Practice Group
Oregon Public Health Association
Oregon Public Health Institute
Orthodox Catholic Church, San Francisco, CA
Ounce of Prevention Fund
Parents as Teachers
Parents Organizing for Welfare and Economic Rights (POWER)
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon
PathWays PA
Pax Christi Texas
Pediatric Nutrition Practice Group (PNPG)
Pennsylvania Breastfeeding Coalition
Pennsylvania Coalition of Nurse Practitioners

Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Pennsylvania Hunger Action Center
Philadelphia Dietetic Association
Pittsburgh Dietetic Association
Plainfield WIC Program
Planned Parenthood of Orange and San Bernardino Counties
Plattsburgh, NY United Methodist Women
Poor Peoples United Fund
Portage Columbiana County WIC Program
Preble County WIC Program, Ohio
Project Bread – The Walk for Hunger
Project EAGLE Programs
Project IRENE, statewide organization, Illinois
Promise the Children
Protecting Arizona's Family Coalition (PAFCO)
Public Health Institute
Public Health Law & Policy
Public Health Solutions, NY
Public Justice Center, MD
Pueblo Of Isleta WIC Nutrition Program
Pueblo of Zuni
Pueblo of Zuni Head Start Program
Pueblo WIC Program
Quay County, New Mexico Health Council
Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York
Resource Center for Parents and Children
RESULTS
RESULTS-Santa Fe
Rhode Island Breastfeeding Coalition
Rhode Island Dietetic Association
Rooftop of Virginia Community Action Program
Rural Health Corporation of NE PA
Saint Croix County WIC Project 31
Saint Mary's WIC Program in Reno, NV
San Francisco Department of Public Health
San Francisco Food Security Task Force
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
SC Appleseed Legal Justice Center
SC Progressive Network
School Social Work Association of America
Seeds of Health, Inc
SEIU Local 668, PA
Seneca County Ohio WIC
Share Our Strength
Single Stop USA
Siskiyou County PHD, CA
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Congregational Leadership
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Western Province Leadership
Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Justice Team
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur Justice and Peace Network
Sisters of St. Joseph Justice Committee, Albany NY Province
Social Action Linking together (SALT)
Social Agenda, Inc.
Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior
Sojourner Truth House
SoL Center at University Presbyterian Church in San Antonio Texas
Somerville Commission for Women
Somerville Homeless Coalition
Soul Food for Your Baby

South Bronx Community Congress
South Carolina Columbia Dietetic Association
South Carolina Dietetic Association
South Central Missouri Dietetic Association
South Central WIC Program, MA
South Dakota Dietetic Association
Southern Adirondack Child Care Network
Southern Nevada Breastfeeding Coalition
Southern New Hampshire Services, Inc.
Southwestern Community Services
Southwestern WI Community Action Program (SWCAP) WIC Project
Soyfoods Association of North America
Squirrel Hill Chapter, National Organization for Women
St. Mary's Center, Oakland, CA
Stop Targeting Ohio Poor
Survivors Inc.
Susquehanna Consulting, Harrisburg, PA
Tapestry Health
Temple B'nai Israel
Texas Dietetic Association
Texas Food Bank Network
The Access Community Action Agency
The Capital Area Food Bank
The Center for Immigrant Healthcare Justice
The Diaper Bank of CT
The Episcopal Church, DC
The Erin Kimball Memorial Foundation
The Exchange Club Family Center, TN
The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts
The Greater Hudson Valley Family Health Center WIC Program
The Inter Tribal Council of Arizona
The Jewish Federations of North America
The MetroHealth System
The Ministry of Caring
The National Congress of Black Women, Inc.
The National Indian and Native American WIC Coalition (NINAWC)
The National Indian Head Start Directors Association
The SOURCE
The Wisconsin Dietetic Association, an Affiliate of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Tidewater Area Lactation Consultant Association
Tompkins County Health Department, NY
Tulare County Breastfeeding Coalition
TVCCA WIC
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
United Food Bank
United Fresh Produce Association
United Jewish Community Advocacy Relations and Enrichment
United States Breastfeeding Committee
United States Lactation Consultant Association
United Way of Beaver County, PA
University District Food Bank in Seattle, Washington
Utah State Breastfeeding Coalition
Utahns Against Hunger
Venice Community Housing Corporation, CA
Veritable Vegetable, Inc.
Vermont Academy for Nutrition and Dietetics
Vida Y Salud Health Systems
Violence Intervention Program, NYC

Virginia Dietetic Association
Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy
Virginia Organizing
Visiting Nurse Services of Iowa
Voices for America's Children
Warren County Health Department, Warrenton, NC
Washington State Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP
Washtenaw County, Michigan, Human Services Board
WCD WIC Program in Oklahoma
Webster County Health Department
Wellness Pointe
West Side Campaign Against Hunger
WIC Association of Maryland
WIC Association of NYS, Inc.
Williams County WIC
Winfield Township, DuPage County, West Chicago, IL
Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards (WALHDAB)
Wisconsin State Dietetic Association
Wisconsin WIC Association
Witnesses to Hunger, Philadelphia, PA
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Boston chapter
Worcester County Food Bank, Shrewsbury, MA
Worcester Food & Active Living Policy Council, MA
World Knowledge Bank
Wyandot County WIC
YWCA Elgin, IL
Zuni Tribe of New Mexico