

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

March 31, 2023

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Chair
Appropriations Subcommittee
on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration,
and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Hoeven
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee
on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration,
and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Heinrich and Ranking Member Hoeven,

We respectfully ask that you fully fund the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) in the Fiscal Year 2024 Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. We recommend robust funding for WIC, including funding to serve projected caseload and an extension of enhanced fruit and vegetable benefits through Fiscal Year 2024, to strengthen WIC's role in improving maternal, infant, and child health outcomes.

WIC is the nation's premiere preventive public health nutrition program serving about 6.3 million low-income women, infants, and young children at nutritional risk each month. Numerous studies show that participation in WIC saves money by improving birth outcomes, reducing pre-term and low birth weight babies, enhancing breastfeeding rates, and reducing the prevalence of childhood obesity. For every dollar invested in WIC, approximately \$2.48 is returned in medical, education, and productivity costs. WIC improves the growth and development of approximately half of all infants born and a quarter of young children in the U.S by ensuring access to healthy and nutritious foods. Since 1998, appropriators of both parties have recognized the great value WIC adds to the nation's nutritional health and have worked to ensure that WIC has sufficient funding to serve all eligible mothers and young children who apply.

We recommend that appropriators sustain this bipartisan commitment, especially as WIC absorbed new and growing costs in the past year. Rising grocery prices affected several food categories that are issued by quantity in the WIC benefit – with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service estimating a 70% increase in egg prices, 16% increase in prices for whole grains and cereals, and 14% increase in dairy prices over the past year. WIC food funds were also depleted addressing the ramifications of Abbott Nutrition's recall of infant formula products, especially as State agencies that do not contract with Abbott offered brand flexibility to assure adequate access for program participants.

WIC shouldered these new costs at a time when program participation continued to increase, largely driven by enhanced retention of child participants. In fiscal year 2024, State agencies are positioned to sustain modern service delivery models that will further reduce barriers to access. The President's Budget estimates that WIC will serve 6.5 million participants in fiscal year 2024, marking a 3.9% increase over fiscal year 2022 participation rates.

We also urge that the expanded WIC fruit and vegetable benefit, which has reached more than 4.75 million women and children, be extended through fiscal year 2024. This benefit was expanded, starting in spring 2021, to bring the WIC food package into better alignment with science-based recommendations laid out by the National Academies of Sciences (NAS) to provide at least 50 percent of daily fruit and vegetable intake recommended by the recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs). Recent findings from the National WIC Association and the Nutrition Policy Institute indicate a ¼ cup daily increase in fruit and vegetable intake among participating children following implementation of the enhanced benefit. This increase is also reflected at retail stores and independent grocers, as well as farmers markets, as enhanced benefits resulted in more than triple the amount of fruit and vegetable transactions. This increased economic activity returns investment up the food supply chain, supporting producers and growers. Robust WIC finding should also be inclusive of critical program set-aside priorities authorized by the *Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010*, including funding to update Management Information Systems, as well as the breastfeeding and infrastructure investments included in recent spending packages.

In addition to providing healthy foods, WIC provides critical health and social service referrals. As a result, children enrolled in WIC are more likely to be immunized on time, consume key nutrients, and have higher cognitive development scores than their peers not participating in WIC. Removing families from the program as a result of funding cuts deprives young children of access to healthy food, a healthy start in life, and the opportunity to thrive.

We strongly urge you to robustly fund WIC in the FY24 Agriculture Appropriations bill and extend the enhanced fruit and vegetable benefits to continue protecting low-income women, infants, and children from hunger and improve their ability to access nutritious, balanced diets. Thank you for consideration of this request.

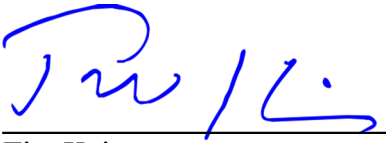
Sincerely,



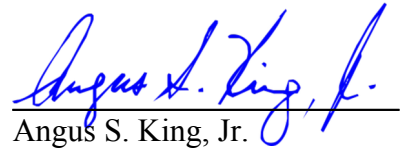
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



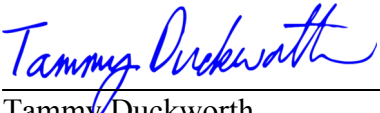
Roger Marshall M.D.
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



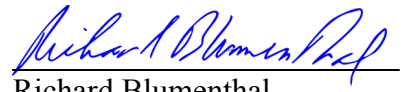
Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



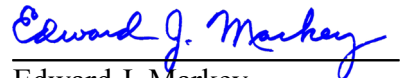
Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



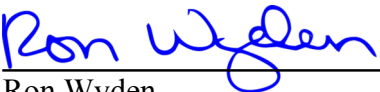
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



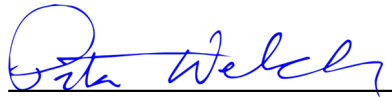
Jack Reed
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Peter Welch
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



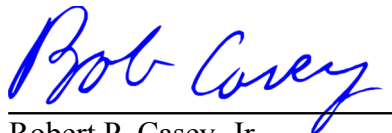
Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



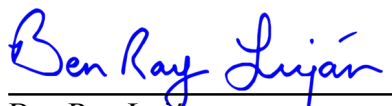
Tina Smith
United States Senator



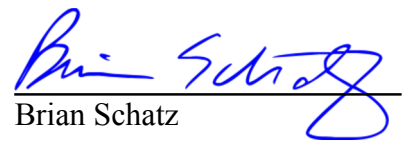
Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator




Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



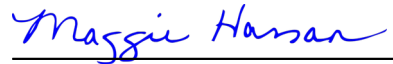
Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



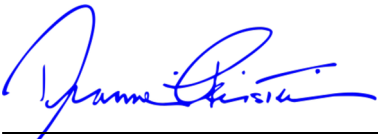
Mark Kelly
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Jon Ossoff
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator



Jon Tester
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

Agriculture Group Letter Table
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ID	Sub	Request Agency or Account	Request Project Name	Request (\$000)
92185	AG Group	[Title IV]/[Food and Nutrition Service]/[Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)] [Member Staff] - Claire Descamps Claire_Descamps@Gillibrand.senate.gov 202-224-0196	Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) [Member's Request (text)] - fully fund the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) in the Fiscal Year 2024	\$0
92186	AG Group	[Title IV]/[Food and Nutrition Service]/[Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)] [Member Staff] - Claire Descamps Claire_Descamps@Gillibrand.senate.gov 202-224-0196	WIC Infrastructure [Member's Request (text)] - Robust WIC funding	\$0
92187	AG Group	[Title IV]/[Food and Nutrition Service]/[Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)] [Member Staff] - Claire Descamps Claire_Descamps@Gillibrand.senate.gov 202-224-0196	WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselors [Member's Request (text)] - Robust WIC funding should also be inclusive of ongoing set-aside priorities	\$0
92188	AG Group	[Title IV]/[Food and Nutrition Service]/[Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)] [Member Staff] - Claire Descamps Claire_Descamps@Gillibrand.senate.gov 202-224-0196	Management Information Systems [Member's Request (text)] - Robust WIC funding	\$0

Request ID: 92185

Agency or Account:	[Title IV]/[Food and Nutrition Service]/[Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)]	Project Name:	Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
Member/s:	Gillibrand, Kirsten(D-NY); Baldwin, Tammy(D-WI); Bennet, Michael(D-CO); Blumenthal, Richard(D-CT); Booker, Cory(D-NJ); Brown, Sherrod(D-OH); Cantwell, Maria(D-WA); Cardin, Benjamin(D-MD); Casey, Robert(D-PA); Cortez Masto, Catherine(D-NV); Duckworth, Tammy(D-IL); Feinstein, Dianne(D-CA); Hassan, Margaret Wood(D-NH); Hirono, Mazie(D-HI); Kaine, Tim(D-VA); Kelly, Mark(D-AZ); King, Angus(I-ME); Klobuchar, Amy(D-MN); Luján, Ben Ray(D-NM); Markey, Edward(D-MA); Marshall, Roger(R-KS); Merkley, Jeff(D-OR); Murphy, Christopher(D-CT); Ossoff, Jon(D-GA); Padilla, Alex(D-CA); Peters, Gary(D-MI); Reed, Jack(D-RI); Rosen, Jacky(D-NV); Sanders, Bernard(I-VT); Schatz, Brian(D-HI); Shaheen, Jeanne(D-NH); Sinema, Kyrsten(D-AZ); Smith, Tina(D-MN); Stabenow, Debbie(D-MI); Tester, Jon(D-MT); Van Hollen, Chris(D-MD); Warner, Mark(D-VA); Warnock, Raphael(D-GA); Warren, Elizabeth(D-MA); Welch, Peter(D-VT); Whitehouse, Sheldon(D-RI); Wyden, Ron(D-OR)	Subcommittee:	AG
Request Type:	Group	Staff Contact:	Claire Descamps Claire_Descamps@Gillibrand.senate.gov 202-224-0196
Justification:	Fully funding WIC ensures that no eligible applicants are turned away and that the program has funds to ensure timely and responsible program management and reasonable staffing levels. WIC is the nation's premiere preventive public health nutrition program serving about 6.9 million low-income women, infants, and young children at nutritional risk each month. Numerous studies show that participation in WIC saves money by improving birth outcomes and reducing pre-term and low birth weight babies, and improves the growth and development of approximately half of all infants born and a quarter of young children in the U.S by ensuring access to healthy and nutritious foods. Since 1998, appropriators of both parties have recognized the great value WIC adds to the nation's nutritional health and have worked to ensure that WIC has sufficient funding to serve all eligible mothers and young children who apply.		
Proposed Bill Language:		Proposed Report Language:	
Member's Request:	\$0	Member's Request (text):	fully fund the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) in the Fiscal Year 2024
Enacted Level:	\$0	President's Request:	\$0
CDS Request:	No		

Request ID: 92186

Agency or Account:	[Title IV]/[Food and Nutrition Service]/[Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)]	Project Name:	WIC Infrastructure
Member/s:	Gillibrand, Kirsten(D-NY); Baldwin, Tammy(D-WI); Bennet, Michael(D-CO); Blumenthal, Richard(D-CT); Booker, Cory(D-NJ); Brown, Sherrod(D-OH); Cantwell, Maria(D-WA); Cardin, Benjamin(D-MD); Casey, Robert(D-PA); Cortez Masto, Catherine(D-NV); Duckworth, Tammy(D-IL); Feinstein, Dianne(D-CA); Hassan, Margaret Wood(D-NH); Hirono, Mazie(D-HI); Kaine, Tim(D-VA); Kelly, Mark(D-AZ); King, Angus(I-ME); Klobuchar, Amy(D-MN); Luján, Ben Ray(D-NM); Markey, Edward(D-MA); Marshall, Roger(R-KS); Merkley, Jeff(D-OR); Murphy, Christopher(D-CT); Ossoff, Jon(D-GA); Padilla, Alex(D-CA); Peters, Gary(D-MI); Reed, Jack(D-RI); Rosen, Jacky(D-NV); Sanders, Bernard(I-VT); Schatz, Brian(D-HI); Shaheen, Jeanne(D-NH); Sinema, Kyrsten(D-AZ); Smith, Tina(D-MN); Stabenow, Debbie(D-MI); Tester, Jon(D-MT); Van Hollen, Chris(D-MD); Warner, Mark(D-VA); Warnock, Raphael(D-GA); Warren, Elizabeth(D-MA); Welch, Peter(D-VT); Whitehouse, Sheldon(D-RI); Wyden, Ron(D-OR)	Subcommittee:	AG
Request Type:	Group	Staff Contact:	Claire Descamps Claire_Descamps@Gillibrand.senate.gov 202-224-0196
Justification:	Fully funding WIC ensures that no eligible applicants are turned away and that the program has funds to ensure timely and responsible program management and reasonable staffing levels. WIC is the nation's premiere preventive public health nutrition program serving about 6.9 million low-income women, infants, and young children at nutritional risk each month. Numerous studies show that participation in WIC saves money by improving birth outcomes and reducing pre-term and low birth weight babies, and improves the growth and development of approximately half of all infants born and a quarter of young children in the U.S by ensuring access to healthy and nutritious foods. Since 1998, appropriators of both parties have recognized the great value WIC adds to the nation's nutritional health and have worked to ensure that WIC has sufficient funding to serve all eligible mothers and young children who apply.		
Proposed Bill Language:		Proposed Report Language:	
Member's Request:	\$0	Member's Request (text):	Robust WIC funding
Enacted Level:	\$0	President's Request:	\$0
CDS Request:	No		

Request ID: 92187

Agency or Account:	[Title IV]/[Food and Nutrition Service]/[Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)]	Project Name:	WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselors
Member/s:	Gillibrand, Kirsten(D-NY); Baldwin, Tammy(D-WI); Bennet, Michael(D-CO); Blumenthal, Richard(D-CT); Booker, Cory(D-NJ); Brown, Sherrod(D-OH); Cantwell, Maria(D-WA); Cardin, Benjamin(D-MD); Casey, Robert(D-PA); Cortez Masto, Catherine(D-NV); Duckworth, Tammy(D-IL); Feinstein, Dianne(D-CA); Hassan, Margaret Wood(D-NH); Hirono, Mazie(D-HI); Kaine, Tim(D-VA); Kelly, Mark(D-AZ); King, Angus(I-ME); Klobuchar, Amy(D-MN); Luján, Ben Ray(D-NM); Markey, Edward(D-MA); Marshall, Roger(R-KS); Merkley, Jeff(D-OR); Murphy, Christopher(D-CT); Ossoff, Jon(D-GA); Padilla, Alex(D-CA); Peters, Gary(D-MI); Reed, Jack(D-RI); Rosen, Jacky(D-NV); Sanders, Bernard(I-VT); Schatz, Brian(D-HI); Shaheen, Jeanne(D-NH); Sinema, Kyrsten(D-AZ); Smith, Tina(D-MN); Stabenow, Debbie(D-MI); Tester, Jon(D-MT); Van Hollen, Chris(D-MD); Warner, Mark(D-VA); Warnock, Raphael(D-GA); Warren, Elizabeth(D-MA); Welch, Peter(D-VT); Whitehouse, Sheldon(D-RI); Wyden, Ron(D-OR)	Subcommittee:	AG
Request Type:	Group	Staff Contact:	Claire Descamps Claire_Descamps@Gillibrand.senate.gov 202-224-0196
Justification:	Fully funding WIC ensures that no eligible applicants are turned away and that the program has funds to ensure timely and responsible program management and reasonable staffing levels. WIC is the nation's premiere preventive public health nutrition program serving about 6.9 million low-income women, infants, and young children at nutritional risk each month. Numerous studies show that participation in WIC saves money by improving birth outcomes and reducing pre-term and low birth weight babies, and improves the growth and development of approximately half of all infants born and a quarter of young children in the U.S by ensuring access to healthy and nutritious foods. Since 1998, appropriators of both parties have recognized the great value WIC adds to the nation's nutritional health and have worked to ensure that WIC has sufficient funding to serve all eligible mothers and young children who apply.		
Proposed Bill Language:		Proposed Report Language:	
Member's Request:	\$0	Member's Request (text):	Robust WIC funding should also be inclusive of ongoing set-aside priorities
Enacted Level:	\$0	President's Request:	\$0
CDS Request:	No		

Request ID: 92188

Agency or Account:	[Title IV]/[Food and Nutrition Service]/[Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)]	Project Name:	Management Information Systems
Member/s:	Gillibrand, Kirsten(D-NY); Baldwin, Tammy(D-WI); Bennet, Michael(D-CO); Blumenthal, Richard(D-CT); Booker, Cory(D-NJ); Brown, Sherrod(D-OH); Cantwell, Maria(D-WA); Cardin, Benjamin(D-MD); Casey, Robert(D-PA); Cortez Masto, Catherine(D-NV); Duckworth, Tammy(D-IL); Feinstein, Dianne(D-CA); Hassan, Margaret Wood(D-NH); Hirono, Mazie(D-HI); Kaine, Tim(D-VA); Kelly, Mark(D-AZ); King, Angus(I-ME); Klobuchar, Amy(D-MN); Luján, Ben Ray(D-NM); Markey, Edward(D-MA); Marshall, Roger(R-KS); Merkley, Jeff(D-OR); Murphy, Christopher(D-CT); Ossoff, Jon(D-GA); Padilla, Alex(D-CA); Peters, Gary(D-MI); Reed, Jack(D-RI); Rosen, Jacky(D-NV); Sanders, Bernard(I-VT); Schatz, Brian(D-HI); Shaheen, Jeanne(D-NH); Sinema, Kyrsten(D-AZ); Smith, Tina(D-MN); Stabenow, Debbie(D-MI); Tester, Jon(D-MT); Van Hollen, Chris(D-MD); Warner, Mark(D-VA); Warnock, Raphael(D-GA); Warren, Elizabeth(D-MA); Welch, Peter(D-VT); Whitehouse, Sheldon(D-RI); Wyden, Ron(D-OR)	Subcommittee:	AG
Request Type:	Group	Staff Contact:	Claire Descamps Claire_Descamps@Gillibrand.senate.gov 202-224-0196
Justification:	Fully funding WIC ensures that no eligible applicants are turned away and that the program has funds to ensure timely and responsible program management and reasonable staffing levels. WIC is the nation's premiere preventive public health nutrition program serving about 6.9 million low-income women, infants, and young children at nutritional risk each month. Numerous studies show that participation in WIC saves money by improving birth outcomes and reducing pre-term and low birth weight babies, and improves the growth and development of approximately half of all infants born and a quarter of young children in the U.S by ensuring access to healthy and nutritious foods. Since 1998, appropriators of both parties have recognized the great value WIC adds to the nation's nutritional health and have worked to ensure that WIC has sufficient funding to serve all eligible mothers and young children who apply.		
Proposed Bill Language:		Proposed Report Language:	
Member's Request:	\$0	Member's Request (text):	Robust WIC funding
Enacted Level:	\$0	President's Request:	\$0
CDS Request:	No		