



# WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

Advocacy is defined as public support for or recommendation of a particular cause or policy. Our cause is protecting and strengthening WIC. No one knows WIC as well as you and your key staff. That knowledge and experience present you and your colleagues with the unique opportunity to effectively advocate for protecting and strengthening WIC.

Advocacy can come in lots of different forms. It can involve a wide range of activities and stakeholders and can take place on the local, state, national, and international levels. For the purposes of advocating for WIC, you can focus on the local, state, and national levels.

**ON THE LOCAL LEVEL,** WIC advocacy can include the following activities:

- Participating on one or more community coalitions. Coalitions of interest might include ones focused on breastfeeding, women's health, community health/chronic disease prevention, maternal and child health, nutrition, food policy, childhood obesity, and/or hunger/food security.
- Attending town hall meetings.
- Educating local legislators such as mayors, city and county council members, and county commissioners about WIC.
- Educating city and county health officials about WIC.
- Hosting events that promote, celebrate, or inform about WIC.

- Meeting with other departments at your agency to make sure WIC is at the table in decision-making.
- Educating community residents about WIC.
- Highlighting WIC achievements in local newspapers, radio, and TV.
- Being a voice for WIC in stakeholder meetings.

**ON THE STATE LEVEL,** WIC advocacy can include the following activities:

- Educating state legislators such as state senators, representatives, assembly members, and governors about WIC.
- Advocating for WIC with state health officials and other state-level stakeholders.
- Participating in state-level coalitions. Coalitions of interest might include ones focused on breastfeeding, women's health, community health/chronic disease prevention, maternal and child health, nutrition, food policy, childhood obesity, and/or hunger/food security.

**ON THE FEDERAL LEVEL,** WIC advocacy can include the following activities:

- Educating federal legislators (Representatives and Senators) about WIC.
- Calling or visiting your legislators' DC office.

- Calling or visiting your legislators' local office.
- Hosting legislators when they are in their home district (e.g., during August recess).
- Participating in NWA activities such as committees and task forces.
- Participating in grassroots advocacy actions, including those led by NWA.
- Utilizing NWA as a way to communicate issues and needs to USDA/FNS headquarters staff.

