



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—ensuring the health of our children.

NWA’S MISSION

NWA provides its members with tools and leadership to expand and sustain effective nutrition services for mothers and young children.

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 employee about the legislation.

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
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

The Relationship between Lobbying and Advocacy

All lobbying is advocacy, but not all advocacy is lobbying.

Non-lobbying Advocacy

Advocacy that is not lobbying provides the opportunity to lay the foundation for policy change. It includes educating the public and members of Congress about WIC, highlighting the achievements of WIC clinics in the media, and hosting events that promote, celebrate, or inform about WIC. In other words, you are educating policymakers. These actions help to promote a positive image of WIC and elevate its status in the public discourse. Hopefully this translates into favorable WIC policies in the future.

Communications that **do not** meet **all** of the following three criteria, are not considered lobbying, and therefore would be considered non-lobbying advocacy:

- ➔ 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 OR encourages the recipient to contact a legislator, employee of a legislative body, or any other government official or employee.

As an Individual, You are Permitted and Encouraged to Lobby

- ➔ It is your democratic right, protected by the first amendment, to voice your personal opinions on legislation and lobby your government officials. Your voice is important.
- ➔ Each state and community has specific laws for state and local employees about how much time and expenditures they are allowed to devote to lobbying efforts while on the job.
- ➔ 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 personal time not considered “work time.” Focus your time on educating about the benefits of the WIC Program and dispelling myths about the Program.

- ➔ While just about any private money can be used on lobbying, federal funds generally cannot be used for lobbying, or for the procurement of more contracts or grants.
- ➔ OMB Circular A-122 prohibits use of federal funds for lobbying or political activities (electioneering) and prohibits inclusion of overhead costs associated with these activities.
- ➔ The “Byrd amendment,” (31 U.S.C. 1352) prohibits recipients of federal grants, contracts, loans or awards from using federal funds to lobby for a grant or renewal of a grant.
- ➔ Some non-profits that administer federal grants and/or assistance programs are subject to the provisions of the Hatch Act. Check your grant agreement for specifics.

Examples of Non-Lobbying Advocacy

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 EIT to WIC	Offering to be a resource of information for Congressional staff in the future