WIC POLICY 101: POLICY-MAKING PROCESS AND CURRENT ISSUES

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AT ITS CORE, WIC IS ABOUT CHANGING BEHAVIOR AND IMPROVING HEALTH

Nutrition Education

Breastfeeding Education and Support

Referrals to Healthcare and Social Services

Healthy Foods
SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL MODEL: SPHERES OF INFLUENCES ON HEALTH BEHAVIORS

Policy
national, state, and local laws and regulations

Community
cultural norms and values

Organizations/Institutions
environment, workplaces, schools, businesses, churches

Interpersonal
relationships between family, friends, providers, and social networks

Individual
knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs
CHANGES TO WIC POLICY CAN HELP OR HINDER YOUR ABILITY TO HELP CLIENTS ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS.
3 MAIN POLICY AREAS

- Appropriations (legislative)
- Reauthorization (legislative)
- Food Package (regulatory)
WIC APPROPRIATIONS
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• Also known as “WIC Funding”

• WIC is a discretionary program

• Congress must fund WIC each year

• Funding is not guaranteed
WHY IS THE YEARLY WIC APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS IMPORTANT?
COMMITTEES OF JURISDICTION

• Committees with the power to fund or not fund WIC

• House Appropriations Committee; Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, & FDA

• Senate Appropriations Committees; Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, & FDA
HOUSE

- Robert Aderholt (R-AL), Chair, Subcommittee
- Sam Farr (D-CA), Ranking Member, Subcommittee
- Harold Rogers (R-KY), Chair, Full Committee
- Nita Lowey (D-NY), Ranking Member, Full Committee

SENATE

- Jerry Moran (R-KS), Chair, Subcommittee
- Jeffrey Merkley (D-OR), Ranking Member, Subcommittee
- Thad Cochran (R-MS), Chair, Full Committee
- Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Ranking Member, Full Committee
WE WANT THEM TO KNOW ABOUT HOW GREAT WIC IS AND MAKE THEM OUR BEST FRIENDS.
STEPS IN THE APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

• President’s Budget Request <--- currently here in the process

• Congress’s Budget Resolution or Not and the 302 (a)

• House and Senate Appropriations Committees determine Subcommittee allocations 302 (b)s
STEPS IN THE APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

• House and Senate Agriculture, Rural Development, and FDA **Subcommittee markup** their versions of the bill, including the WIC program allocation

  • **Vote** by Subcommittee

• If passed by Subcommittees, **Full Appropriations Committees markup** their versions of the bill, including the WIC program allocation

  • **Vote** by Full Committee
STEPS IN THE APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

• If passed by Full Committee, House and Senate floor debate and amendment on their versions of the bills

• Vote by House and Senate on the different versions of the bill
STEPS IN THE APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

• If both versions of bill are passed, a Conference Committee is formed

• Conference Committee irons out differences between 2 versions of the bill

  • **Vote** by House and Senate on same conference bill

• If passed by House and Senate, bill goes to President Obama for **signature or veto**
APPROPRIATIONS CHALLENGES OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS

• Threats of funding cuts

• Funding uncertainty with numerous Continuing Resolutions

• The government shutdown
CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS (CRS)

- If Congress cannot agree on funding levels for government programs in the coming year, they may enact a Continuing Resolution (CR)

- Short-term funding to avoid a government shutdown

- Short-term funding makes program planning challenging
WHILE CRS ARE NOT IDEAL, THEY ARE BETTER THAN LETTING THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN.
WIC APPROPRIATIONS

**FY2016 LAW**

- $6.35 billion in new funding
- $60 million: breastfeeding peer counselor program
- $13.6 million: infrastructure
- $220 million from unobligated balances (carryover): MIS/EBT (eWIC)

**FY 2017 PRESIDENT’S REQUEST**

- $6.35 billion new funds
- $80 million: breastfeeding peer counselor program
- $75 million: MIS/EBT (eWIC)
- $14 million: infrastructure
- $26 million: program initiatives and evaluation
NWA FY 2017 APPROPRIATIONS ASKS

- $6.366 million/ funding to meet all caseload needs
  - $90 million: breastfeeding peer counselor program
  - $75 million: MIS/EBT (eWIC) $14 million: infrastructure
  - $14 million: infrastructure
  - $26 million: Program Initiatives and Evaluation with $5 million for rigorous research
  - $6.02 million for enhanced breastfeeding CVV
- Maintain contingency fund at $150 million

NWA ASKS FOR MORE INVESTMENT IN WIC!
• WIC funding for FY2017 will likely be sufficient
  • Lower caseloads mean less money needed
  • The budget deal last year allows for decent overall funding caps for Congress to work with

• But, it’s not time to be complacent
  • There are no guarantees
  • Each year through FY2021, the overall funding allocation for Congress to fund all government programs is scheduled to decrease
  • WIC is prime for cuts as the largest program for the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee
WIC REAUTHORIZATION
WIC REAUTHORIZATION

- Occurs every 5 years
- Changes WIC Policy
- Committees of jurisdiction
  - House Education and the Workforce Committee
  - Senate Agriculture Committee
HOUSE : EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

• Todd Rokita (R-IN), Chair, Subcommittee
• Marcia L. Fudge (D-OH), Ranking Member, Subcommittee
• John Kline (R-MN), Chair, Full Committee
• Robert “Bobby” Scott (D-VA), Ranking Member, Full Committee

SENATE : AGRICULTURE

• John Hoeven (R-ND), Chair, Subcommittee
• Bob Casey (D-PA), Ranking Member, Subcommittee
• Pat Roberts (R-KS), Chair, Full Committee
• Debbie Stabenow (D-MD), Ranking Member, Full Committee
WE ALSO WANT THEM TO KNOW ABOUT HOW GREAT WIC IS AND MAKE THEM OUR BEST FRIENDS.
EXAMPLES OF PAST REAUTHORIZATION POLICY CHANGE

• Language to review and update the food package every 10 years

• The establishment of the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program

• Mandate to get all states to EBT by 2020

• The establishment of the use of adjunctive eligibility in WIC

• Language that establishes funding levels for set asides like the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program, MIS/EBT, and Infrastructure
STEPS IN THE REAUTHORIZATION PROCESS: SIMILAR TO APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS BUT WITH NEW COMMITTEES

- Hearings
- Marker bills introduced
- House Education and the Workforce Committee/Senate Agriculture Committee mark-ups of their respective bills
- House and Senate Floor Debate
- House and Senate vote on their versions of the bill
- Once passed, the bills are conferenced to iron out differences
- House and Senate vote on conferenced agreement
- If passed, bill is signed into law, or vetoed and returned for more work or an override.
Infant certification for 2 years!

* 

Moms until 2 years post-partum!

* 

Children to 6 years old!
NWA REAUTHORIZATION ASKS: BREASTFEEDING

$180 million per year for breastfeeding peer counselor program!

* Double the current amount!
NWA REAUTHORIZATION ASKS: MIS/EBT

$85 million for management information systems (MIS) and electronic benefit transfer (EBT)!
NWA REAUTHORIZATION ASKS: FOOD PACKAGES

Keep food packages based on science and with choice!
Protect the link between WIC and Medicaid that reduces a barrier to participating in WIC for many vulnerable families!
NWA REAUTHORIZATION ASKS: COST CONTAINMENT

Preserve the integrity of infant formula cost containment!
NWA REAUTHORIZATION ASKS: INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESEARCH

$40 million per year for infrastructure!

*$

$15 million per year for rigorous health outcomes research!
THE PROCESS SO FAR

HOUSE
• Hearings
• Marker bills

SENATE
• Hearings
• Marker bills
• Senate bill passed out of the Agriculture Committee with a bi-partisan vote
H.R. 2660: WISE INVESTMENT IN OUR CHILDREN (WIC) ACT

- Sponsored by Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Rep. Linda Sanchez (D-CA)

- Calls for giving states the option to extend WIC to 6 years old

- 71 Democrats co-sponsored the legislation
S. 1796: WISE INVESTMENT IN OUR CHILDREN (WIC) ACT

- Sponsored by Senator Bob Casey (D-PA)
- Calls for giving states the option to extend WIC to 6 years old
- Calls for giving states the option to certify infants for up to 2 years
- 5 co-sponsors: Senators Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Patty Murray (D-WA), Barbara Boxer (D-CA)
MAJOR THREAT THROUGHOUT!

• Eliminating or capping adjunctive eligibility
SENATE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE BILL

- Protects adjunctive eligibility and calls for a study about it
- Gives states the option to extend WIC to six years old for children not enrolled in full-day kindergarten
- Gives states the options to certify infants for 2 years with a less intensive check-in at 1 year
- Increased administrative responsibilities
THIS IS AN EXCELLENT BILL, CONSIDERING THE CURRENT POLITICAL CLIMATE!
WE EXPECT THE HOUSE BILL WILL BE LESS FAVORABLE FOR WIC, SO EDUCATING MEMBERS ABOUT THE VALUE OF WIC REMAINS IMPORTANT!
NWA WILL BE LOBBYING FOR THE SENATE BILL.
WIC FOOD PACKAGES
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• Regulatory process

• Reviewed every 10 years

• USDA seeks recommendations from 3rd party scientific body, the Institute of Medicine (IOM)

• IOM is currently in the process of reviewing the WIC food packages
FOOD PACKAGE RULE-MAKING PROCESS

• USDA begins rule-making process and reaches out to IOM for their expert recommendations
• IOM reviews food packages
• IOM releases report of its recommendations to USDA and the public
• USDA publishes interim rule and accepts public comments
• USDA responds to all public comments and makes any changes to food packages rule, considering comments
• USDA publishes interim final rule and accepts public comment
• USDA responds to all public comments and makes any changes to food packages rule, considering comments
• USDA publishes final rule
• Process repeats every 10 years
ESSENTIALLY, THERE ARE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ANYONE TO PROVIDE INPUT THROUGHOUT PROCESS.
FOOD PACKAGE CHALLENGE: CONGRESS DECIDING TO PUT WHATEVER THEY WANT IN THE FOOD PACKAGES RATHER THAN GO THROUGH THE RULE-MAKING PROCESS.
STAY TUNED FOR MORE ABOUT THE LATEST ON WIC FOOD PACKAGES PROCESS LATER IN THE CONFERENCE!
It becomes increasingly important to tell the WIC story to policymakers!
Advocacy vs. Lobbying

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.

As the nation’s premier public health nutrition program, WIC is a cost-effective, sound investment—insuring the health of our children.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of Direct Lobbying</th>
<th>Examples of Grassroots Lobbying</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emailing a member of Congress to vote yes on H.R. 2112 while on paid work time</td>
<td>Sending an action alert to a listserv to encourage them to email their Congressmen and telling them to vote yes on H.R. 2112</td>
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<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>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</td>
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<td>Telling a member of Congress to support the President’s budget proposal for WIC</td>
<td>Requesting friends and colleagues to urge a Member of Congress to support the President’s budget proposal for WIC</td>
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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 refers to speaking out on issues or supporting a proposal or cause.

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)

Advocacy VS. Lobbying
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
ACTIVITY: LOBBYING VS. ADVOCACY

• The House is voting on a budget bill that would harm WIC, so you call your Congressman and tell him to vote against the bill.

• You get an NWA action alert to sign a letter stating the benefits of WIC, so you click to email your member of Congress.

• You do an interview with the local radio station on how funding shortfalls are influencing client services.
ACTIVITY: LOBBYING VS. ADVOCACY

- 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.

- There’s a bill to restore funding to WIC, so you tell your friends to call their Congressmen and request support of the bill.
YOU ARE PERMITTED AND ENCOURAGED TO LOBBY

• It is your democratic right

• Each state has specific laws for state employees about lobbying efforts while on the job

• Private money can be used on lobbying, federal funds generally cannot

• If you are confused..
  • Limit lobbying efforts to coffee breaks, lunch breaks, after hours and other times not considered “work time”
  • Focus your time on educating about the value of WIC
DURING NWA’S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE YOU WILL BE EDUCATING AND DOING NON-LOBBYING ADVOCACY.
NOW MORE THAN EVER, WE NEED YOUR VOICE FOR WIC FAMILIES!
KEEP INFORMED ABOUT WHERE CONGRESS IS IN THE PROCESS!

• Weekly Legislative Updates NWA’s Monday Morning Report

• All Legislative Updates are posted on NWA’s blog to get up to speed on the latest issues
QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?