



## WE NEED WIC:

### **CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT WIC FUNDS FOR FY 2012 AND BEYOND**

WIC is in trouble. For the first time in 15 years, the program faces the prospect that there could be insufficient funding to support current and future participation. WIC [Nutrition Services are also at risk of being slashed](#), threatening to derail efforts to modernize operations and destroy recent public health strides WIC has achieved.

WIC is vulnerable to cuts in both the Super Committee process, when everything will be “on the table.” Moreover, if the Super Committee fails to make a deal, and automatic, across-the-board cuts are implemented, **WIC is not exempt!** We must ensure that WIC is protected from these devastating cuts.

**While scary, these cuts are not in any way inevitable.** With your help, CWA will work strategically and aggressively to ensure that there is sufficient funding in the coming years to support both food and nutrition services. More than ever, it is essential to tell Congress why *WE NEED WIC*.

This document reviews the WIC funding situation, and lays out the top priorities, key messages, and timeline for the *WE NEED WIC* CAMPAIGN. It is important to remember that the WIC community has successfully fought back draconian proposals to cut our funding before, **and we can do it again.** Over the next 4 months, we invite you to join an aggressive campaign to protect current and future WIC funding. **Your participation is critical to our success!**

#### **BACKGROUND ON WIC FUNDING DANGERS**

The Agriculture Appropriations measure passed by the House this summer funds WIC for FY ‘12 at the level of \$6.0001 billion, \$733 million less than last fiscal year’s level. The House-passed levels, if enacted, would mean [cutting caseload by as many as 700,000 participants](#) nationally, with approximately 111,300 of them in California.

Earlier this month, the Senate Appropriations Committee reported out its Agriculture Appropriations bill for FY ‘12 with a proposed funding level \$581 million higher than the House version, but still \$152 million below the amount appropriate for FY ‘11. The Senate level is sufficient to avoid WIC cuts in FY 2012 but [only](#) if the USDA taps into the \$125 million WIC contingency reserve and uses carryover funds from FY ‘11 as usual, [and](#) if food cost inflation does not continue to rise above 2% – [which has already happened](#).

Making the process even murkier this year is the creation in the Budget Control Act of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction, or “[Super Committee](#).” While it is up to congressional appropriators what to cut to meet the spending caps in FY 2012, the Super Committee is tasked with cutting an additional **\$1.5 trillion** over ten years by November 23. It is expected that the Super Committee will focus mostly on changes in entitlement programs, but there is no guarantee that they will not make further cuts in domestic discretionary programs. The Super Committee has 12 members, including California Congressman **Xavier Becerra (D-CA)**.

During the Super Committee deliberations, everything will be on the table – entitlements, taxes, military, crop subsidies and WIC. If the Super Committee fails to reach a deal, a trigger or “sequester”

will [automatically cut up to \\$1.2 trillion](#) in federal spending over the next 10 years, split between domestic and defense spending, effective January 2013. While some nutrition programs than are exempt by law from sequestration, **WIC is [not statutorily protected](#) from these cuts, and is thus more vulnerable than is widely recognized.**

### **KEY STRATEGY POINTS**

#### **Priority #1 – Focusing on Educating California Republicans**

While the WIC program has traditionally enjoyed strong bipartisan support, there are a growing number of Republican House members who do not feel that same affinity for the program and are looking to cut any and all federal programs. WE NEED WIC campaigners will reach out to California’s Republicans, with stronger messages, provide them with more information about the WIC program’s effectiveness, engage partners that Republicans are more likely to listen to -- like the business and medical community.

#### **Priority #2 – Keeping in Close Touch with Key California Democrats**

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and her key lieutenant, George Miller, should get special attention in Washington and back home. In addition, California members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) and Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) should receive extra attention. CHC members are: Cardoza (18), Costa (20), Becerra (31), Roybal-Allard (34), Napolitano (38), Linda Sanchez (39), Baca, (43), and Loretta Sanchez (47). CBC members are Lee (09), Bass (33), Waters (35), and Richardson (37).

#### **Priority #3 – Educating the Public and Advocating for the WIC Program**

FY 2013 could be grim for the WIC program from a fiscal point of view. It is important to build public support for the program to help in funding fights in 2013 and long term. CWA needs to publicize the effectiveness of the WIC program in order to build public support.

#### **Priority #4 - Maintenance of Traditional Congressional Support among California’s Democrats**

It remains important to ensure continued to be cultivated - providing their offices with up-to-date information, inviting Members of Congress to clinic openings, visiting their offices when CWA members are in Washington.

### **KEY MESSAGES:**

1. **“WE NEED WIC!”** WIC is vital safety net program that feeds the hungry and saves lives. It also generates jobs and helps local economies. Cutting WIC should not be an acceptable deficit reduction option no matter which side of the aisle you are on. If WIC is cut, mothers and children will go hungry and babies will die.
2. **“WIC WORKS!”** WIC is one of the most effective federal programs ever devised. It is cost-efficient and well-managed. WIC saves federal dollars with a time-limited investment that prevents poor birth outcomes and chronic ill health by providing at-risk young families with modest food prescriptions and education that they need to stay healthy. New evidence shows that WIC’s modernized food benefits are reducing obesity and increasing breastfeeding.

### **PHASE 1 ACTIONS: OCTOBER 1 – NOVEMBER 23, 2011**

#### **WASHINGTON:**

1. As noted above, the House and Senate leadership have already begun negotiating the funding levels for FY 2012. Until a deal is reached and passed, all of California’s Congressional delegation should hear from CWA members with a message to **“support at least the Senate**

**Appropriations Committee funding level but base final FY 2012 WIC funding on most recent available estimates.”** CWA has already sent this message to all members.

2. Ensure that the staff of Super Committee member **Rep. Becerra** is kept regularly apprised with updates about the WIC program. Rep. Becerra is likely to be inundated by every group under the sun so we need to be judicious in the contacts, picky about the information, but persistent.

**CALIFORNIA:**

1. Create and widely circulate a sign-on or endorsement **letter from state and local electeds** urging Congress to support adequate WIC funding in 2012 and to hold WIC harmless from Super Committee and sequestration cuts in deficit reduction decisions and votes. Reach out to Legislature, Boards of Supervisors, City Councils, and Mayors. CWA has already begun this process, but local advocates need to work at their level.
2. Launch **WE NEED WIC Grassroots Advocacy Campaign**. A low-budget grassroots **Paper Plate** campaign will enable us to generate energy and enthusiasm for this work, and collect stories to share with our Congressional targets and the media. People need a way to be active and engage staff and participants in a fight to protect the WIC program, and Congress needs to hear a steady drumbeat from now until Christmas.
3. Build a new **Web Page** and post materials, updates, and have people upload **videos** that describe why they need WIC. The videos should be shared with Congress, and we will look for additional opportunities to distribute and share links to our videos to help broaden our reach.
4. Update the **Save WIC video** produced by Mothers' stores and post a link to it on the web page.
5. Kick off **“WIC WORKS” Media Campaign**: CWA and local WIC Partners will hold a series of press conferences at local WIC clinics to highlight the issue that is before us and the devastating impacts of significant cuts to WIC funding. We will release our WIC WORKS **Policy Briefs** to help give strength to our overall message. Photos and coverage clips will then be forwarded to congressional targets and key partners to raise the volume on this issue.
6. Develop a **“California Business-WIC Alliance.”** Ideally, the Alliance, put together by CWA, will include grocers, WIC-only store owners, food and breast-pump manufacturers, medical/public health community and others in the business community who benefit from the WIC program (e.g., California Hispanic Chamber of Commerce). The goal of the Alliance is to be prepared in the spring of 2012 to find opportunities to speak out in support of the WIC program, with an emphasis on messages that resonate with California Republicans.

**PHASE II ACTIONS: NOVEMBER 23 – DECEMBER 23, 2011**

1. After the Super Committee finishes its work, we will re-group and assess the damage. Once there is more information about the impact of the Super Committee's work or the sequestration cuts, if any, we should ramp the campaign up or down.
2. If WIC is included in either Super Committee or sequestration cuts, we should **continue with all steps listed above**. If WIC is held harmless, we can thank all members and ramp the campaign down but continue work described below.

**PHASE III ACTIONS: AUGUST 2012 – OCTOBER 2012**

**1. Questionnaires and Town Hall Attendance for Congressional Candidates**

Each major candidate for congressional office will receive a questionnaire with 2-3 questions about the WIC program. CWA Ambassadors will attend election events and town halls and ask questions about support for the WIC program.

**TO GET INVOLVED, CONTACT DONNA HOFFMAN AT CWA! [dhoffman@calwic.org](mailto:dhoffman@calwic.org)**