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# Colorado advocates call on Congress to fully fund nutrition program for women, infants and children

*25,000 Colorado families could lose access to WIC in 2024 if action is not taken*

DENVER (Jan. 9, 2024) – The health and well-being of approximately 25,000 Colorado families are in jeopardy if Congress does not sufficiently fund a national nutrition program for infants, children, and pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum adults.

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) provides food assistance, along with other health and nutrition supports, during pregnancy and breastfeeding, as well as for children under the age of five – some of the most important years for brain development and healthy growth. It is geared towards low-income families who may struggle to access adequate nutrition and healthcare due to high costs of living, low wages, inflation and other life storms.

Right now, the U.S. Senate and House appropriations bills do not fully fund the national program, meaning there could be a \$1 billion shortfall in 2024. The current continuing resolution that provides funding for WIC is scheduled to expire on Friday, Jan. 19.

“Funding WIC is an investment in our local communities and future generations,” said Greta Allen, policy director for the Colorado Blueprint to End Hunger, who is also a registered dietitian and former WIC clinic supervisor. “Access to nutrition and nourishment not only supports healthy development and improves educational outcomes for children but also reduces the burden on healthcare and other assistance programs in the long run.”

According to the Center on Budget & Policy Priorities, states would need to [reduce WIC participation by about 2 million nationwide](#) – including 25,000 young children and new or expecting parents in Colorado – by September if the program’s funding remains stagnant, with disproportionate impacts on Black and Latine families. Since people of color face greater economic hardship due to long-standing barriers to housing,

education and employment opportunities, in addition to other forms of discrimination, Black and Latine families may be more likely to qualify for and seek assistance from WIC than those of other races or ethnicities.

The Colorado Blueprint to End Hunger, Feeding Colorado, Hunger Free Colorado, Nourish Colorado and other advocates across the state are joining national partners to call on Colorado's Congressional delegation to help avoid massive funding cuts for WIC in the federal government's 2024 budget, especially with rising participation and food costs. Inadequate funding would result in benefit reductions as well as waitlists for eligible families for the first time in 25 years.

"WIC's enduring commitment to supporting parents and young children through targeted nutrition interventions is vital to ensuring that families receive the holistic care necessary for a healthy start in life, resulting in brighter futures for countless Coloradans," said Anya Rose, director of public policy for Hunger Free Colorado.

"Congress must uphold this commitment to supporting parents and the health and well-being of our children by fully funding WIC."

In Colorado, an average of 91,779 families participated in WIC each month during 2023, with more than \$35 million of the program's funds reinvested back into Colorado communities last year.

"WIC provides critical support to many families across our state during the prenatal, birth, early childhood and postpartum periods, which are critical to lifelong wellbeing," said Gretchen Groenke, nutrition programs manager for Nourish Colorado. "This program not only needs permanent funding, it specifically needs a permanent increase in funding to the fruit and vegetable benefit so that families can access both sufficient quantity and quality of food."

Food benefits can be used at WIC-authorized retailers to purchase infant formula, baby food, fruits, vegetables, and other approved, nutritious foods. Studies have shown that every dollar spent on WIC results in significant savings in healthcare costs by preventing low birth weights and improving child health outcomes.

"WIC delivers critical nutrition access to women, infants and children during life stages in which nutritional needs are great," said Sarah Mason, government relations manager for Feeding Colorado. "With the unprecedented rise in demand for food assistance through the charitable food network, now is not the time to limit access to programs like WIC."

Coloradans can show their support for WIC by contacting their U.S. Representative and Senators. Text FundWIC to 888-418-5699 or [send a message](#) through the National WIC Association's action center.

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