WIC
LIGHTING THE WAY FOR A BRIGHTER & HEALTHIER FUTURE

MomsRising.org
MamásConPoder.org
National WIC Association
Dear Friend,

Moms are superheroes who overcome all sorts of obstacles to keep our families safe and healthy. Many families face unexpected and uncertain periods of financial instability, which often compounds health and nutrition needs. When this happens, WIC helps light the way for a brighter and healthier future for our children.

WIC is a short-term program shown to improve health outcomes in babies, including improving birth weights and reducing infant mortality rates, as well as stronger outcomes for moms in managing weight gain in pregnancy, prolonging breastfeeding duration, and helping moms access breastfeeding support and pumping support as they return to work or school. WIC is hugely cost effective and strengthens both our local and national economy. Each month, WIC lifts up 7.5 million pregnant and nursing moms, and children aged 0-5 with vital nutrition assistance & counseling, health and social service referrals, and breastfeeding support.

Recently, MomsRising asked our more than one million members to share their experiences about how WIC has helped their families. In the following pages, you will find some highlights of the heartfelt stories we received from California.

Listen to the voices of moms like Elizabeth from San Diego who writes:

“My family was on WIC during 6 years of my husband’s military service. The transience of military life makes it hard for many spouses to hold well paying or full time jobs. WIC helped us make ends meet. My 3 children got a good nutritional start in life, and I had access to breastfeeding, nutrition, and parenting support. This can be extra important for military families because we are often far from our extended families and in extreme stress situations. When I had breastfeeding issues my mom wasn’t close by to help, but WIC was. And it was WIC who helped us find occupational therapy for my oldest when she needed it, by connecting us with a free program through the state. WIC helped me be able to pack healthy lunches for my husband so he had energy and focus on the job. WIC helped his mind be at ease (and on his mission rather than worrying if our kids were getting enough to eat) during deployments. And WIC helped ease the financial strain of our transition to civilian life last year. WIC was invaluable to us.”

These are the voices of moms and dads across California who remind all of us that WIC is truly a win-win for families, communities, and our economy.

Thank you for your work on behalf of America’s families!

Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner  
*Executive Director, MomsRising.org*

Rev. Douglas Greenaway  
*President & CEO, National WIC Association*

Karen Farley  
*Executive Director, California WIC Association*
When my husband was in the Navy, he was an enlisted man and his pay was not much, especially with cost of living in CA. The WIC program was a lifesaver in augmenting our meager income to make sure our 2 young daughters got adequate amounts of milk, whole grain cereals, etc. later, I worked in Head Start program and the families got lots of info from WIC regarding incorporating good nutrition for their children in planning meals for their families.

As Community college professor, many of my students were young single Moms participating in re-entry programs to further their education. Many shared with their classmates what they were learning about nutrition from their WIC classes.

– Mary, Valley Center, CA

My children are grown and have children of their own, but I do want to tell you my story. I raised my children on my own after my husband left me when I was pregnant with our last child. My husband started a new family with a young women and I was left to take care of our six children on our own.

The WIC program taught me to feed my children healthy meals and breastfeed my child. I also became a peer counselor and helped other mothers with nursing their babies. Then I became a Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Manager, then I went to school became a Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) and was able to raise my children on my own.

I owe everything to the WIC program for what they taught me, the confidence they gave me, the programs they have. Only my oldest child used the WIC program and it helped her tremendously, especially with breastfeeding, he was a long term breastfeeding, and has been very healthy all his life

– Anonymous, Elk Grove, CA

As a home visitor/parent educator for over a decade I have firsthand knowledge how critically important the WIC Program is to America’s most nutritionally vulnerable families.

– V K, San Diego, CA

As a mother of 2 children the WIC program was a huge help in my time of need. It provided food and nourishment as I nursed my infant children. Due to the WIC program I was able to always have healthy food in the house.

Many families live paycheck to paycheck. The WIC program is a program that is essential for these families. Please help to continue the funding for WIC.

– Veronica, El Monte, CA

As a social worker who has worked with families in various capacities, the WIC program has shown to be vital in the care for infants and young children of parents with limited means. A child’s early years are vital for their emotional, social, and cognitive well-being and WIC has proven to be tremendously helpful for families.

– Glenn, San Jose, CA

As an RN, I know that getting a child good prenatal nutrition will improve their health and reduce the taxpayer costs. You are what you eat….literally.

– Daphne, Roseville, CA

When I was pregnant with my first child I relied on WIC to get milk and cheese that I needed for a healthy pregnancy. I was working for the U.S. Forrest service but not making much money. WIC really helped!

– Tera, Somes Bar, CA

I am a full time mom and work full-time at my job also. Paying everything by myself WIC is very helpful when it came to helping me with breastfeeding. They would call and check up on me. Also now that my baby is a toddler they help guide me with how.much and what types of food I should try and feed my kid. They vouchers are the most helpful because I am just barely making enough to pay for my bills. They are very helpful and kind and understand some struggles we low income parents may have.

– Korena, Sacramento CA

I am a maternal child health professional who has seen hundreds of families with babies struggling to make ends meet and care for their children well. Without WIC these families will be left without vital support that makes them better parents, keeping their children healthy, well, monitored, cared for, and healthy attachments to happen... these attachments are vital to lifelong mental health.

– Anonymous, Ojai, CA

I am a mother of two young children and an elementary school teacher with a masters degree. I have worked full-time as a teacher for the past 17 years. However, due to the lack of paid maternity leave in this country, I qualified for WIC during both of my unpaid maternity leaves.

Even professional working mothers are confronted with financial hardship when they are forced to choose between time to heal from childbirth and breastfeed and bond with their newborn or making a living. I know that WIC made it possible for me to take maternity leave (only 4 months!) without sacrificing my health or the health of my children during some of the most developmentally crucial times in their lives.

I am happy to share my experience and tell my story in any setting, as I know from experience as a teacher and from extensive research that has been done.
that the first few years of a child’s life are key to long-term success. Let me know how I can help.

– Toni, East Palo Alto, CA

I became impregnated 11 years ago by an incident of sexual assault. I made the decision to keep the baby. At the time, I had a drug problem. Becoming pregnant forced me to finally stop using drugs and I entered a rehabilitation center for pregnant women and moms. I had no income while I was there, so I was referred to the WIC Program.

They were a lifesaver. Not only did they provide healthy food for me during my pregnancy, buy also supplied me with a breast pump that allowed me to breastfeed my baby after he was born. AND they helped supplement our groceries by supplying us with coupons for healthy food and milk for the next few years.

Because of the help of WIC and other programs of assistance, I completed my rehab program, went back to college, got my degree and today work as a social worker helping other moms-to-be and mothers who are struggling to make ends meet. I often refer moms to the WIC Program and share my story with them.

– Jessica, San Francisco, CA

I first got WIC services when I was 15 and about one month pregnant. It in 1986. The support and information gave me the opportunity to enjoy my baby in a healthy way. I had no idea I would start a career in WIC at 20 years old.

Now I’m a lactation consultant for a WIC program in Los Angeles. Giving back to the community. I started as a Breastfeeding Peer Counselor, then WNA. Then return to being. Breastfeeding a Peer Counselor when WIC offer to send me for the lactation consultant course. Both my family have benefited from the services as well as making a career. WIC is vital in our communities!

– Rosa, Los Angeles, CA

I had to use WIC services with my first child. I was a teenage parent. My mother had issues and could not assist me with taking care of my child. The assistance of WIC ensured that my child did not go without. I was able to continue my education instead of dropping out and seeking full time employment. Things were difficult but we made it through. I later became a employee for the City of Los Angeles. Without the assistance of WIC and child care services (another program that helped) I would have dropped out of school and did whatever work I could to take care of my child. There are many programs and advocates that help

underprivileged families and I appreciate each avenue that was available to me at my time of need.

– Ivilette, Los Angeles, CA

I really benefit from the WIC program from the specialist of breastfeeding to getting the essential food for my son. I have not gotten a salary increase at work and WIC is always welcome and allows my to pay my bills and other basic needs. Please keep WIC!

– Veronica, Sylmar, CA

I was never familiar with WIC until my daughter had a child. She works and provides everything as best she can. she does a wonderful job. After maternity leave was over WIC provided a breast pump so she could continue feeding her baby breast milk.

She also had access to baby food and healthy foods for herself and the child with WIC vouchers. WIC teaches mothers about proper nutrition. I think it’s a very valuable resource and I am happy that my taxes are used to support programs like this.

– Julie, McKinleyville, CA

As a young mother I needed WIC support. I was young alone and a poor student when I had my daughter. Working and going to college full time I still needed help to get the health care my baby and I needed.

I am eternally grateful for that assistance and i went on to get my degree and help others with my work and service to others as a mental health counselor. Thank you for fighting for women and children.

– Karen, Lebac, CA

“Women need support during pregnancy and after delivery. WIC provided the nutritional support that pregnancy and breastfeeding demand.”

Julie, McKinleyville, CA

I work for WIC as a nutritionist. It is a great program that works. If you are Pro-life you have you be pro mother and infant. Keep supporting the programs that support women and children. Women need support during pregnancy and after delivery. WIC provided the nutritional support that pregnancy and breastfeeding demand. Support Women, infants and children now.

– Wendy, Montara, CA
I worked for many years as a maternity nurse in a major birthing hospital in the San Francisco Bay Area and many, many of my mothers needed and received WIC vouchers to help make sure that they and their babies got off to a good start. Babies brain development in the first three years is critical so, of course, encouraged breastfeeding but mothers need that extra nutrition during breastfeeding as well.

– Pam, Richmond CA

My daughter is a nursing student. She receives WIC benefits to feed herself and her two young daughters, ages 1 and 4 years old. Without WIC benefits she would not be able to remain in school, because she would have to drop out and work a minimum wage job to feed her children. Our country is in dire need of qualified registered nurses. Please let her maintain her benefits so she can graduate from college, and become a viable and contributing member of society.

– Lori, San Pedro, CA

My daughter is a nursing student. She receives WIC benefits to feed herself and her two young daughters, ages 1 and 4 years old. Without WIC benefits she would not be able to remain in school, because she would have to drop out and work a minimum wage job to feed her children. Our country is in dire need of qualified registered nurses. Please let her maintain her benefits so she can graduate from college, and become a viable and contributing member of society.

– Lori, San Pedro, CA

I’m proud to say that I am a WIC mom/nutritionist that can say great things about the WIC PROGRAM. The WIC PROGRAM goes beyond beans and peanut butter! WIC has helped many families in many different ways such as offering support, healthy choices for disease prevention, options for low-income population in terms of diet, referrals for regional centers, food banks etc!!! Being able to build a relationship with families have the greatest part of my job! If I became an advocate of healthy eating is because of the great support form the WIC PROGRAM.

– Julia, Los Angeles, CA

Twelve years ago, I gave birth to a baby girl with my longtime partner of eight years. Three weeks later, I found out he had been cheating on me since I was 6 months pregnant. I had stopped working, as we agreed that he would work and I would stay home with the baby. But staying with him was no longer an option, as not only had he been cheating but he had also begun using drugs prior to her birth. She was 21 days old when I left the house in the middle of the night amidst a drunken rage on his part. I moved in with my sister and much to my dismay, signed up for State assistance. Those early years of being a single parent left an indelible mark on me and, to be honest, I could not have done it without the WIC program. There are many nights I went to sleep hungry so she could eat, and she did it thanks in part to WIC.

Today, I am a special educator and giving back to society. But truly, without State assistance and the WIC program, it would have been a lot longer before I could have found my way.

– Monique, Sylmar, CA

When I was pregnant with my second child, my husband lost his job. We had to go on WIC to be able to get enough food for myself, my unborn child, and my 2 1/2 year. If it wasn’t for WIC, I’m not sure how we would have survived. We were able to get lots of fruits and vegetables which my children, now 13 and 17, still love. If you are in favor of healthy children and healthy families, please support the WIC program.

– Priya, North Hollywood, CA

My mother needed to rely on the WIC program for a time when my siblings and I were younger. My father left our family and didn’t pay child support. My mom went back to college to get an accounting degree during the day, while we were in school, then stayed up studying until 2am until she finished her two year program. She had a BA degree from the 1950s, but needed two more years for the accounting degree.

When she graduated, I was a senior in high school and had 3 younger siblings. My mom got a job and bought a house for us. This program allowed my mom to get the additional education needed to get a good job to support our family. She went on to pay for all of our college educations because her accounting job (at a law firm) had matching funds for college tuition. A helping hand is all we needed!

– Andrea, Woodside, CA

To learn more about our stories or to contact our staff, please e-mail: donnahc@momsrising.org