



**November 13, 2023**

Representative Barbara Lee  
Representative Eric Swalwell  
Representative Mark DeSaulnier  
Representative Ro Khanna  
Senator Alex Padilla  
Senator Laphonza Butler

**RE: Protect Access to WIC**

Dear Alameda County Congressional Delegation Members:

First 5 Alameda County (First 5) urges Congress to act swiftly and **support full funding of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) at the level needed to support increased participation in the program and provide adequate nutrition supports to eligible families.** WIC is a critical program that offers supplemental nutritious foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and referrals to health care to an estimated 25,000 to 30,000 nutritionally at-risk pregnant and postpartum people, infants and children up to 5 years old with low-incomes in Alameda County.

First 5 is guided by a “whole community, whole family, whole child” policy and programming approach that seeks to ensure that all children in Alameda County are ready for kindergarten by creating the conditions that position all for success. Findings from our [2021-22 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment](#), a participatory research project that surveyed over 3000 parents/caregivers, early care and education professionals, and TK and Kindergarten teachers in Alameda County, show that **family health & well-being and access to basic needs are associated with school readiness.** We know that sufficient income and supports to ensure families can meet their basic needs for housing, food, utilities, diapers, and resources are required to create a safe, healthy and enriching environment.

Unfortunately, due to higher-than-expected participation and food costs, the WIC program faces a looming funding short fall that could interrupt participation, benefits, or services, and could force states to place eligible children and families in waiting lists. Current proposals advancing in the House and the Senate fail to support the needs of eligible children and their families. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities estimates that the proposed cuts will force states to turn away [600,000 eligible postpartum adults and young children](#), resulting in new parents and children missing out on the program’s benefits and services during critical windows for child development. **Congress must protect access to WIC and include additional funding for WIC in the next short-term spending bill and fully fund it in the final fiscal year appropriations package.**



We are grateful for your continued leadership and support for children, families, and communities and **urge your strong support of this request to protect critical WIC nutrition services**. Please reach out to me at [kristin.spanos@first5alameda.org](mailto:kristin.spanos@first5alameda.org) if you have any questions or if we can help with additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kristin Spanos". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kristin Spanos  
Chief Executive Officer  
First 5 Alameda County