

**FRIENDS OF THE SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR
WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN (WIC)
c/o National WIC Association**

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
2365 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
1026 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

June 3, 2019

Dear Chair Lowey and Ranking Member Granger:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write in strong support of increasing the Fiscal Year 2020 funding levels for the WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program to its fully authorized amount of \$90 million. Increased investment will ensure that all eligible mothers can obtain the vital breastfeeding support offered by peer counselors.

Despite being a critical and effective breastfeeding support shown to increase the rate of both initiation and duration of breastfeeding, the WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program does not receive adequate appropriations to provide services at all WIC clinic sites. The Peer Counselor Program has not received a funding increase in nearly a decade, and some states have contracted their services as fixed costs increase with inflation. Recent data demonstrates that only 53% of pregnant and postpartum women are enrolled in peer counseling and over 30% of local agencies do not have access to a peer counselor at all.

We applaud the initial increase of an additional \$10 million (to a total of \$70 million) included in the bill recently offered by the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies. With the program having been flat-funded for so long, we strongly urge greater investment in WIC's Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program – to a total of \$90 million – in the final FY 2020 House Agriculture Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

1,000 Days
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Advocates for Better Children's Diets
American Academy of Pediatrics
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
American Heart Association
American Public Health Association
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
Bread for the World
Center for Science in the Public Interest
Child Care Aware® of America
Children's HealthWatch
Coalition on Human Needs

First Focus Campaign for Children
Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)
March of Dimes
MomsRising
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National WIC Association
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Nurse-Family Partnership
Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere
Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior
Trust for America's Health
U.S. Breastfeeding Committee
Vital Village Network Boston Breastfeeding Coalition
ZERO TO THREE