



September 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue  
Secretary of Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave. SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue,

The undersigned Maryland organizations are writing in support of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), which is a critically important tool in addressing food insecurity, especially for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five years old.

As an organization that is working in Maryland to address food insecurity, we know that the lingering economic hardships resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic have caused unprecedented levels of hunger across the state. Many families are turning to state and federal nutrition programs, like WIC, for assistance for the first time. With the need for nutrition assistance continuing to rise along with growing health and safety concerns, we urge the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to use the authority granted by Congress through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act to extend the waivers granted to WIC in order to ensure that service providers are able to safely serve these families in a remote capacity past the September 30 deadline.

The program flexibilities permitted by these waivers have successfully allowed WIC providers to grow participation through the use of innovative telehealth models and remote enrollment. Additionally, the expanded list of allowable food items for WIC shoppers has helped to ensure that participants are able to access their benefits regardless of supply limitations in stores. These waivers are critical in allowing WIC to continue providing safe access to healthy foods, nutrition services, and breastfeeding support that so many pregnant individuals, new parents, infants, and young children are relying on to remain healthy during these uncertain times.

We firmly believe the need for these waivers will continue well beyond September 30. It is crucial that families and children continue to be protected from unnecessary risk while accessing WIC's critical services. As such, we respectfully urge USDA to extend these waivers to help WIC continue supporting healthy pregnancies, babies, and kids throughout the duration of the public health emergency.

Sincerely,

Maryland Hunger Solutions