Investing in the Future:  
*The importance of nutrition support*  

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Background
Administered at Federal Level

Funding to States, Indian Tribal Organizations, the District of Columbia, and Five Territories

Services provided at local level through health departments, hospitals, schools, Indian Health Services facilities, etc.

Nutritious foods, breastfeeding support and counseling, health screening, and nutrition education (and more!)
Program Impact

WIC participation improves:

- Infant and child health outcomes
- Access to health care
- Rates of breastfeeding
- Diet quality and diet-related outcomes
- Short-term cognitive development
- Healthy food access for all consumers
Challenges and Solutions During COVID-19 Pandemic

Physical Presence Waiver
- Allowed individuals seeking enrollment or re-enrollment to do so virtually rather than being in person.

Remote Benefit Issuance Waiver
- Removed requirement that WIC participants must come into the clinic to pick up EBT cards or coupons.

Extended Benefits Issuance Waiver
- Allowed WIC participants to continue receiving important services without having to go into the clinic.

Minimum Stock Waiver
- WIC-authorized stores not required to meet stocking requirements if facing supply issues.

Food Package Substitution Waiver
- Allowed participants flexibility in purchasing WIC-approved foods if availability was limited in store.
Policy Recommendations

1. Make remote services permanent
2. Allow WIC participants to shop and purchase groceries online
3. Invest in program modernization
95% of schools participate in NSLP, providing lunches to more than 30 million children every day, and breakfast to more than 15 million.
Program Impact

- Reduces food insecurity, obesity rates and poor health

- Improved healthfulness of meals served and diet quality of participants
Challenges and Solutions During COVID-19 Pandemic

Meal Times Waiver
- Allows meals to be served to kids outside traditional times to maximize flexibility for meal pick-up.

Parents and Guardians Pick-Up
- Parents/guardians can pick-up meals and bring them home.

Meal Pattern Flexibility
- During the public health emergency, states don’t have to serve meals that meet meal pattern requirements.

Seamless Summer Option
- Allows Seamless Summer Option to operate when school is open during the regular school year, which provides meals to all children at no cost.
Policy Recommendations

1. Expand the availability of free meals to all students
2. Increase access to meals during the summer and future pandemics
3. Update the school meal financial model
4. Align the nutrition standards for all school meals with the most recent Dietary Guidelines
SNAP

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

- Served nearly 42 million individuals in 2021.
- Offers nutrition assistance by providing households with an Electronic Benefit Transfer card.
Program Impact

Benefits of SNAP participation include:

- Stabilizing the economy
- Reducing food insecurity
- Reducing poverty
- Reducing health care expenditures
- Improving health outcomes
Challenges and Solutions During COVID-19 Pandemic

Waive initial and recertification interviews
- Agencies permitted to conduct streamlined interviews for some applicants.

Extend certification periods
- Allows states to extend certification periods and temporarily waive periodic report form submissions for some households.

Telephonic Signature
- Allows the state to document in writing that a client verbally confirms information on the application, instead of requiring an audio recording.
Policy Recommendations

1. Additional administrative funding is needed to help state agencies modernize their IT infrastructure.

2. Expand program access by improving access to broadband services in rural areas and tribal nations.

3. Ensure benefit sufficiency of SNAP participants.
Questions?