

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE

WASHINGTON, DC 20250

MAR 17 1976

Honorable Paul E. Tsongas
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Tsongas:

Thank you for your recent letter concerning the application approval and funding policies of the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

Priority for available funding and caseload is being given to currently operating Supplemental Food (SFP) and Food Certificate Programs (FCP) wishing to take advantage of the additional WIC Program benefits not presently provided by these supplemental feeding programs. In order to equalize this priority on a national level, the Department recently implemented a policy which gives State agencies the flexibility to open programs in the neediest areas within their jurisdiction. Using this affirmative action policy, all States may, under the direction of the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), transfer authorized but unused funds and caseload to the neediest areas in order to reach those most in need of such supplemental benefits.

Due to the legislative funding limitations, the WIC Program will expand from its current approved monthly caseload level of 750,000 to 830,000. This additional 80,000 caseload will annualize the WIC Program at \$250 million. Funding and caseload available after March 31, 1976, will be allocated in line with the legislative mandate to begin operating the WIC Program in areas most in need of its nutritional benefits.

The Senate Report on the Agriculture and Related Agencies Appropriation Act, 1976, P.L. 94-122, reads in part "...The \$106,000,000 recommended herein, plus an anticipated carryover of approximately \$40,000,000 in Section 32 funds, will provide total funds of \$146,000,000 for the seven-month period. Projected on a 12-month basis this would be a program level of \$250,000,000..." Thus, the \$250 million authorization level is inclusive of all funds available for the WIC Program.

The availability of funds in FY 1976 is as follows: (a) approximately \$33 million in carryover funds from FY 1975, (b) \$106 million in direct appropriations and (c) \$111 million in Section 32 funds, for a total of \$250 million.



The FY 1977 budget shows an estimate that actual operations in FY 1976 will cost \$189 million. The Department has recommended a deferral of the remaining \$61 million available in FY 1976 to be used to fund the three-month Transition Quarter. These funds will be allocated at a level which will not exceed \$250 million on an annual basis.

We hope this information will answer your concerns.

Sincerely,

Joseph W. Harrison
Assistant to the Administrator