

# ASSEMBLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

### **ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 243**

with committee amendments

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 12, 2021

The Assembly Women and Children Committee reports favorably, and with committee amendments, Assembly Resolution No. 243.

This Assembly resolution respectfully urges the federal government to continue to modernize access to the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, also known as the WIC program, to allow for more flexible methods of program enrollment and benefit issuance. On average, the New Jersey WIC program serves over 130,000 total participants each year.

Despite the demonstrated nutritional and health benefits of the WIC program, participation has been steadily declining over the past decade. While there is no clear explanation for the decline, advocates and WIC administrators point to several contributing factors, such as misconceptions about program eligibility and the high-contact nature of enrollment and certification. In order to provide state agencies the flexibility to continue the WIC program during the COVID-19 pandemic, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued waivers that allowed for social distancing through remote certification and benefit issuance. Permanent adoption of the policies enacted under the USDA waivers may provide additional WIC enrollment and benefit issuance flexibilities, thereby expanding access to newly eligible populations.

#### COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the resolution to adopt technical corrections that improve the clarity of the resolution's provisions and correct minor syntax and grammatical errors.