

May 8, 2019

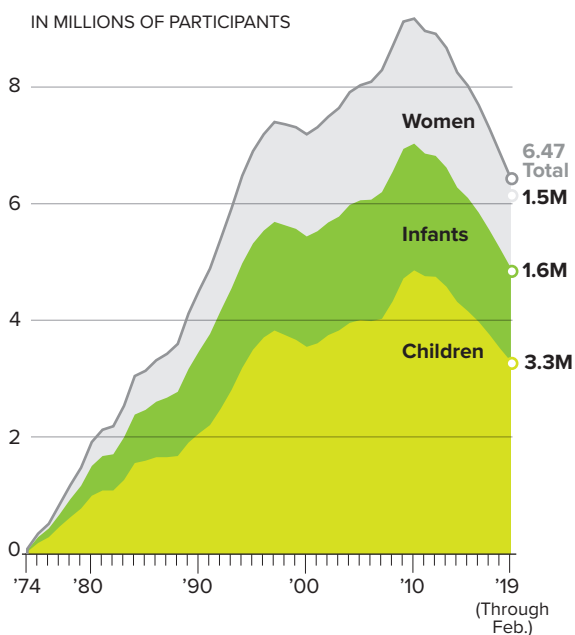
## Participation in WIC program continues post-recession decline

Participation in USDA's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children has been steadily decreasing since 2010. The number of average monthly participants has fallen to 6.47 million so far in fiscal 2019, the lowest level since 1995. In fiscal 2018, WIC served an average of 6.9 million people each month.

A new report by the anti-hunger group Food Research and Action Center recommends that USDA take steps to dispel misconceptions about eligibility requirements to increase awareness and boost enrollment. WIC provides food and infant formula, nutrition education and health care referrals for low-income women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or experiencing postpartum depression, and for their infants and children up to the age of 5.

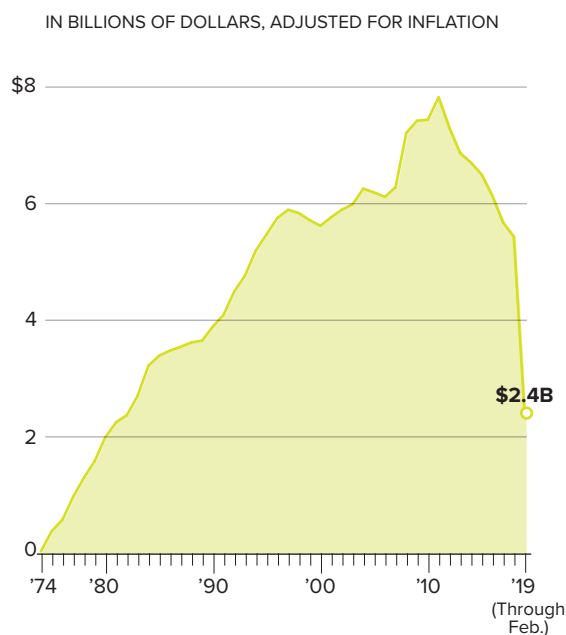
### Average monthly participation

By fiscal year, October through September



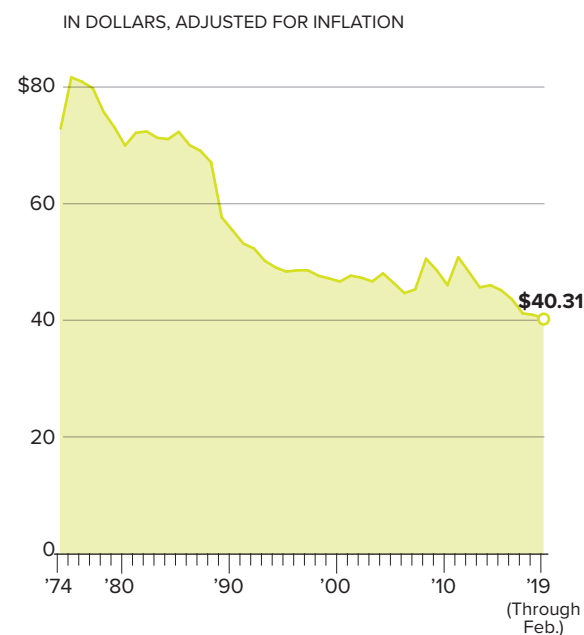
### Annual WIC program costs

By fiscal year, October through September



### Average monthly food cost per person

By fiscal year, October through September



Note: Program costs include expenditures for food, Nutrition Services and Administration, funds for program evaluation, Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (fiscal 1989 onward), special programs and infrastructure. Nutrition Services and Administration costs are for nutrition education, preventative and coordination services (such as health care), and promotion of breastfeeding and immunization.

Sources: USDA; Economic Research Service using data from USDA, Food and Nutrition Service; FRAC May 2019 report "Making WIC Work Better: Strategies to Reach More Women and Children and Strengthen Benefits Use;" POLITICO staff reports

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