



PULAALI'I NIKOLAO PULA
GOVERNOR

PULUMATAALA AE AE JR.
LT. GOVERNOR

**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
AMERICAN SAMOA GOVERNMENT**

PAGO PAGO, AMERICAN SAMOA 96799
Telephone: (684) 633-4121

PROCLAMATION

**DHSS CELEBRATES 30 YEARS OF THE AMERICAN SAMOA WOMEN,
INFANTS, AND CHILDREN (ASWIC) PROGRAM**

February 20, 1996 - February 20, 2026

WHEREAS, the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program provides essential nutrition education, breastfeeding support, supplemental foods, and health referrals for pregnant women, postpartum mothers, infants, and young children; and

WHEREAS, on January 21, 1993, Governor A. P. Lutali submitted a formal request to USDA Secretary Mike Espy to extend WIC services to American Samoa, initiating federal negotiations that would ultimately make ASWIC a reality; and

WHEREAS, upon his return from President Bill Clinton's inauguration in January 1993, Governor Lutali established a task force to support one of his priorities: the establishment of social programs to assist low-income senior citizens, individuals with disabilities, and he designated (Muavaefa'atasi) John E. Suisala as American Samoa's chief negotiator with the federal government. This task force included TAOA Director Fuiavailili Mata'u Taele, Governor's Chief Legal Counsel Tuinei Tauivi, OPAD Director Mina Thompson, Governor's Assistant for Administration Solagaliua Solaita, and Congressman Faleomavaega's District Office Special Assistant, Dr. Oreta Crichton; and

WHEREAS, one year after the successful establishment of the ASNAP, Governor Lutali directed that negotiations proceed for the creation of the WIC Program. Through Governor Lutali's leadership and the continued efforts of (Muavaefa'atasi) John E. Suisala, USDA approved the establishment of ASWIC; and

WHEREAS, the American Samoa Government received its first approved State Plan award of \$4,345,329 in fiscal year 1996, creating the ASWIC Program on Tutuila and satellite clinics in Manu'a starting February 20, 1996. Today, American Samoa's WIC award averages over \$8.95 million.

WHEREAS, on February 20, 1996, Governor Lutali officially opened ASWIC, joining hundreds of mothers, infants, and young children to celebrate the launch of a program that would transform maternal and child health in American Samoa for generations; and

WHEREAS, over these 30 years, many transformative service initiatives have been realized for the ASWIC Program. For example, American Samoa joined a consortium made up of Arizona, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Navajo Nation, and Washington, DC. With Arizona leading, the consortium collaborated and cost-shared to create the Health and Nutrition Delivery System (HANDS) that is used to administer the WIC Program in all these jurisdictions. Initially, ASWIC benefits were issued in the form of paper checks each month to WIC participants to purchase WIC-approved foods at authorized WIC retailers. On May 2, 2018, the American Samoa WIC program rolled out its Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT), or eWIC, so participants receive benefits using an electronic card. Participant benefits are automatically loaded onto their eWIC card until the next WIC visit. Participants manage their benefits through an eWIC card or the EzWIC app. These modernizations strengthened benefit delivery, program integrity, and have enhanced the convenience and dignity for participating families; and

WHEREAS, over these 30 years, the annual ASWIC State Plans were approved by USDA FNS Regional Administrators Sharon Levinson and Jesus Mendoza. At the helm for DHSS were Directors Marie Ma'o [1997], Dr. Lealofi Uiagalelei [2001], (Vaitautolu) Talia Fa'afetai I'aulualo [2005], Leilua Stevenson [2009], Taeaofua Dr. Meki Solomona [2013], Muavaefa'atasi John E. Suisala [2018, 2021], and currently Director Panisia Neueli [2025]. Also, the ASWIC Program was led by Assistant Director Josephine Lutali, and currently by Nellie Faumuina, along with dedicated nutritionists, breastfeeding counselors, certifiers, and administrative staff working diligently to uphold the mission of the WIC Program with compassion and professionalism; and

WHEREAS, since its inception, ASWIC has served thousands of mothers, infants, and young children each year, resulting in a cumulative impact reaching tens of thousands of families across the Territory. For three decades, ASWIC has played a vital role in improving maternal and child health outcomes, reducing food insecurity, promoting breastfeeding, supporting early childhood development, and strengthening the local economy through the redemption of WIC food instruments and EBT benefits. Today, children who were among ASWIC's first participants are now enrolling their own children in the program; and

WHEREAS, we are thankful to everyone who made WIC possible for American Samoa, as well as those who continue to help it grow and better serve our communities. Fa'afetai to the U.S. Congress, the USDA FNS leadership and staff, the late Congressman Faleomavaega Eni Hunkin, Congresswoman Uifa'atali Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen, as well as the local government and stakeholders for their steadfast support of the ASWIC Program.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, PULAALI'I NIKOLAO PULA, Governor of the Territory of American Samoa, do hereby proclaim February 20, 1996, through February 20, 2026, in celebration of 30 Years of the American Samoa Women, Infants, and Children (ASWIC) Program. I encourage everyone to join me in recognizing our WIC participants and key stakeholders who are committed to further elevating the health of women, infants, and children in American Samoa.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto affixed my signature and the seal of my office on this 10th day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand twenty-six.


PULAALI'I NIKOLAO PULA
Governor



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**POLOAIGA FA'ALAU'ITELE
FA'AMANATUINA ELE DHSS LE 30 TAUSAGA, POLOKALAMA MO TINĀ,
TAMAITI LAITI MA PEPE I AMERIKA SAMOA
Fepuari 20, 1996 - Fepuari 20, 2026**

- TALUAI,** O le Polokalama a Tamaiti Pepe, ma le (WIC) o lo'o tu'uina atu ai a'oa'oga fa'alesoifua maloloina lelei mo taumafa, e fesoasoani i susu, mea'ai fa'aopo'opo mo le maloloina lelei o taumafa a tinā ma'itaga, tinā failele, pepe ma tamaiti laiti ma;
- TALUAI,** na tu'uina atu e Kovana A. P Lutali se talosaga aloa'ia i le USDA ia Ianuari 21, 1993, o le Failautusi o Mike Espy, o lenei talosaga ina ia tatala mai lenei a'ua'unaga o le WIC mo Amerika Samoa, ma sa fai feutagaiga ma le Feterale ma i'u ai ina tino mai lenei miti i le avea ai o le WIC ma mea moni; ma
- TALUAI,** ina ua toe tofia Bill Clinton ia Ianuari 1993 i le tofiga Peresetene, na fa'avaeina ai e Kovana Lutali se Sosaiete e galulue ma lagolago mo se Polokalama e fesoasoani ai i tagata matutua e maua ma galulue maua, fa'apea tagata e iai mana'oga fa'apitoa, ma o lenei Sosaiete sa tofia iai Muavaefa'atasi John E Suisala, o ia lea sa fa'a'ulu'ulu i ai le vā ma le Feterale, Faatonusili o le TAOA Fuiavailiili Mata'u Taele, Lōia Fauautua a le Kovana ia Tuinei Tuivi, Faatonu o le OPAD Mina Thompson, Sui o le Ofisa a le Kovana ia Solagaliua Solaita, ma le sui fa'apitoa mai le ofisa o le Konekeresi i Itumalo, Dr Oreta Crichton; ma
- TALUAI,** na ulua'i fa'atuina le ASNAP i le tausaga e tasi, e ala i le finagalo o le Kovana Lutali, toe fa'agasolo lea o feutagaina ma fa'atuina ai loa le Polokalama WIC na tofia ai Muavaefa'atasi e Kovana Lutali na te ta'ita'iina lea Polokalama ina ua fa'amaonia e le USDA ma fa'amautuina ai loa le ASWIC
- TALUAI,** na ulua'i fa'amanuiaina Amerika Samoa i se fuafuaga a le Setete, ile \$4,345,329 i le tausaga fa'aletupe 1996, na fausia ai le Polokalame ASWIC i Tutuila ma falema'i i Manu'a ia Fepuari 20, 1996. O fa'amanuiaga tau tupe ua maua e le WIC ā Amerika Samoa ile taimi nei, ua ausia le \$8.95 miliona; ma
- TALUAI,** na ulua'i tatalaina ai e Kovana Lutali le ASWIC ia Fepuari 20, 1996, na silia ma le selau o tinā, pepe, ma fanau laiti sa auai le tatalaina o lenei Polokalama, ma avea ai

lea suiga fou fa'alesoifua maloloina o tinā ma fanau i Amerika Samoa, aemaise o tupulaga fai mai; ma

TALUAI, ua 30 tausaga o lenei Polokalama. Sa mafai ona auai atu Amerika Samoa i se fonofono mo Polokalama a le WIC, sa auai Guam, le Commonwealth, o Northern Marianas Islands, Navajo Nation, ma Uasigitone DC. Fa'atasi ai ma le Setete o Arisona sa faia ai le Fonotaga, fa'alia le tele o suiga ma a'ua'unaga lelei ua fa'ataunu'uina e ala le galulue fa'atasi. E tūa le fa'asoa auā o le fatu o tagata o le soifua ina ia maloloina ma lelei mea taumafa, lea o lo'o fa'afoeina e le Polokalama a le WIC ona pulega uma. O le taimi muamua o fa'amanuiaga o ASWIC, na tu'uina atu i pepa Siaki i masina taitasi mo e agava'a mo le WIC, ona fa'atuga o le WIC, o mea'ai ua fa'amaonia ma fa'atagaina i faleoloa. I le masina o Me 02, 2018, o le WIC a Amerika Samoa sa fa'ataunu'u ai le isi o ana Polokalama o le Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT), e fa'afaigofieina ai e tagata ona fa'aaoga latou penefiti e ala i auala fa'atekonolosi: ma

TALUAI, mai lenei 30 tausaga, o Fuafuaga a le Setete mo ASWIC faaletausaga na fa'amaonia e le USDA FNS, Pule Fa'aitulagi Sharon Levinson ma Jesus Mendoza. Ma sa fa'atautaia mai le pulega a le DHSS o Amerika Samoa, Susuga le Faatonusili, ia Marie Ma'o (1997), Dr Lealofi Uiagalelei (2001) Vaitautolu Talia I'aulualo (2005) Leilua Stevenson (2009) Taeaoafua Dr Meki Solomona (2013) Muavaefa'atasi John E. Suisala (2018-2021) o lo'o Faatonusili ai nei Neueli Panisia (2025). O le polokalama a le ASWIC na ta'ita'iina lea e le sui Fa'atonu ia Josephine Lutali, ma o le taimi nei ua ta'ita'iina e Nellie Faumuina faatasi ai ma le mamalu o le aufaigaluega o lo'o galulue ma lagolago i le Polokalama, ma o i latou ia ua maua pasi ma tomali aloa'ia mo le tausia lelei o taumafa o le Polokalama a ASWIC

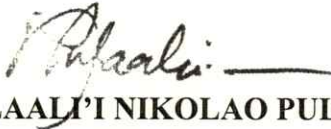
TALUAI, mai lava i le amataga o lenei Polokalama ua mafai ona tautuaina e le ASWIC le faitauafe o tinā, pepe, ma tamaiti laiti, i tausaga ta'itasi ma ua o'o atu le fia afe o nisi o aiga o le Teritori. O lea ua atoa le 30 tausaga o le a'ua'unaga a le ASWIC, ma o se sao tūa ua fa'aleleia ai le soifua maloloina o tamaiti, fa'aiti'itia le lē saogalemu o mea'ai, fa'alauiloa le fa'asusuina o pepe ma nisi o atina'e ua fa'amalosia ai le tama'oaiga o le atunu'u ma le toe fa'aola'ola o taumafa WIC ma penefiti EBT i aso nei, ma o tamaiti lava sa auai muamua lava, ua latou omai e resitala latou fanau i le Polokalama; ma

TALUAI, matou te fa'afetai ma to atu le pulou mo le mamalu o le atunu'u ma tagata uma, na fa'aga'aga i ai le polokalama o le WIC ā Amerika Samoa, fa'apea foi le mamalu o lo'o fa'aaau pea lo latou fa'aaogaina o le fesoasoani mo le tuputupu a'e o lenei tautua i totonu o aiga ma nu'u. Fa'afetai fa'apitoa ile Konekeresi o Amerika, (USC) le USDA FNS i le ta'ita'iga ma le aufaigaluega, le Sui Aoao ua tu'umalo, Faleomavaega Eni Hunkin, Sui Aoao o lo'o i ai nei, Uifa'afatali Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen,

fa'apea le Mālō Fa'alotoifale ma pa'aga ma i latou uma o lagolago malosi tumau le talitonuina o lenei Polokalama o le ASWIC.

ONA O LEA, O A'U, PULAALI'I NIKOLAO PULA, Kovana o le Teritori o Amerika Samoa, e poloa'ina Fepuari 20, 1996, seia oo ia Fepuari 20, 2026, e faamanatuina ai le 30 Tausaga o le Polokalama mo Tamaitai, Pepe ma Tamaiti Amerika Samoa (ASWIC). Ou te talosaga atu i tagata uma e auai fa'atasi ma a'u i le fa'alauiloaina o le WIC ma pa'aga o lo'o naunau e fa'asilisili le soifua maloloina o tinā, pepe ma tamaiti i Amerika Samoa.

I LONA MOLIMAUINA, ua ou tu'uina ai la'u saina ma le fa'aailoga o lo'u tofiga i le aso 10 lenei o Fepuari, i le tausaga o lo tatou Ali'i e lua afe ma le sefulu ma le ono.


PULAALI'I NIKOLAO PULA
Kovana