



Welcome to CIP-WIC's January Newsletter!

HELLO 2025!!

As we step into 2025, CIP-WIC remains steadfast in our commitment to empowering NWA members and the families they serve. Our priorities this year include advancing equity, expanding access to culturally responsive resources, and fostering innovation to address the evolving needs of WIC participants.

Looking ahead, our vision is to build a future where every WIC Agency is equipped to deliver impactful services that promote equity, belonging, and resilience across all communities. **Together**, we will continue to strengthen WIC's legacy and ensure it thrives for generations to come.

To support these goals, we are excited to announce the launch of [CIP-WIC's new webpage](#) on the NWA website (nwica.org). This new resource hub will provide updates, tools, and insights to help our partners implement meaningful changes in their communities. Thank you for your dedication to this vital work. We look forward to achieving great milestones **together** in 2025 and beyond!

The CIP-WIC team took a moment during our final meeting of 2024 to reflect on the year and share the personal themes we'd like to embody moving into 2025. Here's what our team members are focusing on:



Emily O'Hara, El Paso County Public Health

Erin Brock, Open Door Services

Erin Mason, El Paso County Public Health

Jade Chiu, Guilford County

Jentsy Philpot, Butler Health County
Department

Jenna Davis, St Louis County PHHS

Jean Zanni, Community Action Program

Jordan Pratt, Panhandle

Katie Caster-Horn, VNA Central NJ

Kristi Lozinto, Sonoma County Indian Health

Mary Walcott, North Central Health District

Melissa Satler Gordon, El Paso County Public
Health

Wendy Wither, Passaic County WIC

Here's to a bright new year and to making a difference for WIC families!



Exciting News: NWA Receives \$1.6 Million to Improve the WIC Participant Experience!

The National WIC Association is thrilled to announce a [\\$1.6 million two-year grant](#) to center and understand the WIC participant experience. Advancing Health Equity to Achieve Diversity & Inclusion in WIC (AHEAD) 3.0 will continue work conducted in AHEAD in WIC and AHEAD 2.0. AHEAD 3.0: Advancing Equity throughout the WIC Participant Journey will enhance

understanding of and address barriers to WIC participation, and explore how experiences differ for Black, Brown, and Indigenous participants and other disadvantaged, under-resourced communities.

The grant will focus on four bodies of work: 1) journey mapping the full continuum of the participant experience 2) developing recommendations and identify promising practices to address barriers and challenges that State, Local, Tribal and Territorial Agencies can implement 3) redesigning NWA's Participant Advisory Council to include Black, Brown, Indigenous, and geographically diverse WIC participants to provide direct feedback on their experience, and share their expertise and recommendations to help inform NWA's priorities for increasing enrollment and retention, and participant satisfaction and 4) conduct a 2025 WIC Multi-State Participant Satisfaction Survey, which will analyze results by race and ethnicity and build upon the 2023 survey, which included more than 38,000 participants across 19 states, one Indian Tribal organization and one territory.

If you have questions about this project, please email cipwic@nwica.org.

[Read Press Release Here!](#)

NWA is Seeking a Journey Map Consultant!

The National WIC Association is seeking a consultant to assist in the development of a comprehensive Journey Map as part of the AHEAD 3.0: Advancing Equity throughout the WIC Participant Journey project. The consultant will look to understand successful participant experiences and key pain points in enrollment, participation, retention, and service delivery, particularly exploring experiences that might differ for Black, Brown, and Indigenous families.

Proposals are due by **5:00 PM ET on Monday, February 3, 2025**. The deadline for question submissions is **Friday, January 24, 2025**. An electronic copy of the proposal shall be emailed to CIPWIC@nwica.org. Submission of missing application components or after the deadline will not be accepted. All questions must be submitted via email to the Center for Innovative Practices in WIC (CIP-WIC) at cipwic@nwica.org.

[View the RFP!](#)

AHEAD 2.0: Translation of Materials Subgrant Award Announcement!

Thank you to everyone who applied for NWA's AHEAD 2.0: Translation of Materials Subgrant Award! In December, we offered subgrant funding to State and Local WIC Agencies to support the translation of participant-facing materials into various languages. This initiative was driven by member feedback and the 2024 Membership Survey, which underscored the ongoing need for translation services in WIC agencies nationwide.

The proposals were highly competitive, with limited funding available. We received 11 applications, due to funding constraints, we were only able to award grants to four agencies.

Champaign (IL) - \$8,000

Forsyth (NC) - \$8,000

Franklin County WIC (OH) - \$8,000

Schenectady (NY) - \$4,100

NWA appreciates everyone who took the time to apply for this opportunity, we look forward to sharing the produced materials of the awarded Agencies with NWA membership!

What are your new years goals at your agency?

We encourage you to think about what theme you would like to embody for yourself. Share them with us and we will highlight them in next month's newsletter.



Share Your Vision 2025!

[National WIC Association](#)

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The National WIC Association (NWA) is the nonprofit voice of the 12,000 public health nutrition service provider agencies who serve over 6.7 million mothers, babies, and young children served by the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). NWA provides education, guidance, and support to WIC staff; and drives innovation and advocacy to strengthen WIC as we work toward a nation of healthier families.

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CIP-WIC

Center for

Innovative Practices
in WIC



Welcome to CIP-WIC's February Newsletter!

HAPPY BLACK HISTORY MONTH!



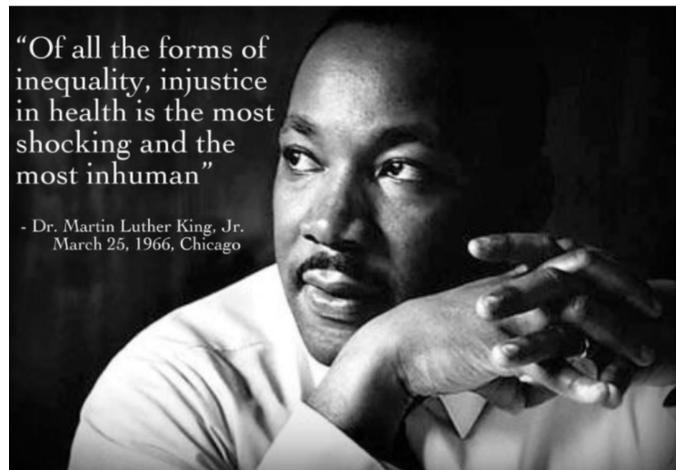
BLACK HISTORY MONTH

“Advancing Black maternal health is about more than providing prenatal and postpartum care. It's about creating systems that genuinely value Black lives.”- Stacy Davis, Director of CIPWIC

Each February, we honor and celebrate the rich heritage, excellence, resilience, and invaluable contributions of Black communities. Since its earliest days, WIC has played a vital role in supporting the health and well-being of Black families by providing access to nutrition, education, and essential resources. As we reflect on Black history, we also recognize the ongoing need for equity in maternal and child health, striving to ensure every family has the support they need to thrive.

#BlackHistoryMonth #WIC #HealthEquity.

CIPWIC stands united in our commitment to advancing diversity, racial and health equity, and addressing the systemic barriers that continue to affect Black maternal and child health outcomes. As we celebrate Black joy and resilience this month and throughout the year, we reaffirm our dedication to the ongoing journey toward liberation and justice. This commitment guides our work, shapes our practices and programs, and inspires our actions to create a more equitable future for Black mothers, children, and families.



Resources for Black History Month!

- [Championing Black Maternal - WIC as a catalyst for change](#)
- [Black Maternal Health Resource List](#)
- [All About Black Maternal Health](#)
- [Black History Month Toolkit](#)



CIP-WIC Updates

NWA Awarded Kaiser Permanente Grant to Strengthen WIC-Healthcare Partnerships

The National WIC Association (NWA) is excited to announce that we have been awarded a

The National WIC Association (NWA) is excited to announce that we have been awarded a \$195,936 grant from the Kaiser Permanente Fund at East Bay Community Foundation to support the project Strengthening Information Exchanges between Healthcare and WIC Providers. This two-year initiative, which will run from December 1, 2024, to November 30, 2026, aims to improve the coordination of care for marginalized families by enhancing information exchanges between healthcare and WIC providers.

Project activities will include conducting an environmental scan to identify best practices for information-sharing between healthcare providers and WIC. NWA will then disseminate the findings to WIC agencies and healthcare partners, providing technical assistance to promote the adoption of best practices.

The project will also create a WIC Technology community of practice and an online repository of resources to share knowledge and foster ongoing learning. NWA is excited to partner with Kaiser Permanente to strengthen WIC-healthcare collaboration and advance maternal and child health outcomes.



Food Package Updates!



On Monday, January 13, NWA released its [2025 policy agenda](#), which includes supporting the implementation of the updates to the WIC food packages that are under way. NWA also sent a [letter](#) to the Trump transition team sharing these priorities.



Good To Know!



WIC Policy Memorandum #2025-3: Use of Banked Human Breast Milk in WIC

USDA Updates Policy on Banked Human Milk in WIC Program

The USDA and FNS issued an update early late month on guidance for banked human milk in WIC programs. WIC Clinics can support access to donor milk while addressing current infant feeding challenges. While banked human milk cannot be provided as a WIC benefit, the new policy allows WIC clinics to serve as collection depots through partnerships with milk banks. This change enables WIC to strengthen connections with healthcare providers and expand support for families facing infant feeding challenges. Particularly beneficial during formula shortages, WIC staff can now educate caregivers about banked human milk, provide referrals, and promote milk donation efforts. By enhancing access and awareness, this update helps ensure equitable optimal nutritional support for infants in need.

[Read More Here!](#)

HEC Spotlight: Meet Brisa Chavez!

Brisa Isela Chávez, Community Outreach Coordinator, WIC Lead Educator, Garfield County Public Health

Brisa was born in Mexico and raised in Colorado since the age of four. As a daughter of immigrants, Brisa is passionate about her work in community advocacy. She enjoys facilitating conversations and fostering greater awareness and engagement. Brisa has worked in public health for over 22 years. She graduated from Colorado Mesa University with a Bachelor of Arts with a focus in communication, literature, and English. She is committed to empowering and elevating marginalized voices and spends part of time volunteering on different community councils. Brisa was appointed to the State Board of Human Services in 2021 and has seen the amazing community work being accomplished in the State of Colorado. Brisa has lived in Garfield County with her husband and two amazing sons for over 27 years. She enjoys spending time outdoors with her family.



We asked Brisa,

What is something fun or relaxing you have done this winter break?

Having a senior in High School this year and almost being an empty nester is stirring new feelings to make more family memories. So, this winter I have made it a point to do things that my children enjoy doing. My weekends are filled with snowshoeing and helping at our small farm. We have seven sheep (first time having sheep!) and a beautiful horse. I say I am going to help, but in reality, I just go and watch my kids and take pictures, documenting memories that will last a lifetime. The freedom when I am surrounded by nature and animals is indescribable- it is where I feel at peace.

Can you share any insights, workshops, or books you have participated/read in this year that guided you in your WIC career?

Through my years working in nutrition and offering guidance on healthy eating and living, I strive to set my own achievable goals. For the past year, my commitment has been to my mental health. I purposely find time to work out three times a week either by going to the gym or hiking and being outdoors with my family and friends. The fresh air and the outdoor surroundings ground me to feel and hope for a healthier future for my own family.

Strawberry "Nice" Cream!



1 Cup Frozen or Fresh Strawberries

2 Bananas

½ cup plain yogurt

½ cup of milk

Blend and freeze to enjoy later!

Beckford (New Castle County) Chong Yi (Kent & Sussex County)



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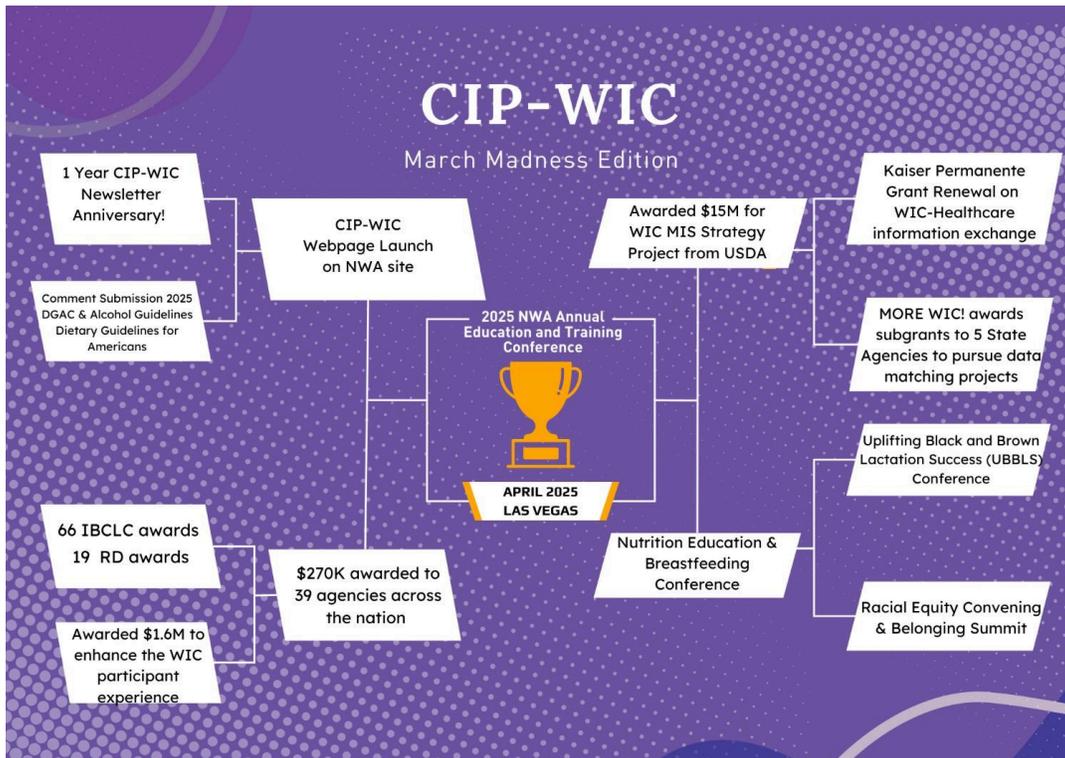
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Hello March!

Below is a recap of what CIP-WIC has been up to as we gear up for the NWA Annual Education and Training Conference, taking place April 22-25, 2025!



Be sure to visit our table for free swag, enter our raffle, and learn all about the CIP-WIC!

👉 Click Here To See What's Inside!

Explore the latest Research to Practice Newsletter, where we highlight:

- ✓ Key findings from USDA, NWA, and academic research
- ✓ WIC caseload trends and insights
- ✓ Updates from the member-led Evaluation Committee
- ✓ Upcoming webinars and research opportunities

🎉 Join Us In Celebrating IBCLCS, RDs, RNDTRs! 🎉

National Nutrition Month - March 1st-31st

IBCLC Day - March 5th

Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) Day - Wednesday, March 12th

Nutrition and Dietetics Technician, Registered Day - Thursday, March 13th

In honor of the month, CIP-WIC's intern, Nicola Acosta, connected with IBCLCs, RDs, and NDTRs to share their strategies, secrets, and stories to success. WIC staff from across the country share nuggets from exam-taking tips to what makes their work truly special. These professionals shared wisdom that will inspire current and aspiring nutrition and lactation professionals.

“ Don't rush. Talk to other IBCLCs and learn from their knowledge. You don't need to do this alone. ”

Amy Resnik, an IBCLC with the Maryland WIC Program

“ I find it tremendously fulfilling to offer support to moms who may not otherwise have access to these valuable services. ”

Danielle McMillan, an IBCLC with the Lenowisco Health District, Wise VA

“ There are no bad days when you are working with moms and babies. You will also be surprised by the success of your moms. ”

Christina Lowe, an IBCLC with the Valley Health - Cabell Co. WIC

Head over to [NWA's Instagram](#) page to see more posts honoring NDTRs, RDs, and IBCLCs in WIC!

DID YOU KNOW?

NWA has certified an IBCLC or 6 RDs on staff! To honor their contributions, we asked them to reflect on the most rewarding aspects of their work beyond their certifications, the unexpected ways their expertise shows up in their lives, and their hopes for the future of nutrition and lactation support.



“Be it their own nutrition questions, questions about feeding their baby, questions about their toddler's eating, I love being able to help people feel seen and heard and more calm about their situation, so they can be empowered to move forward.”

Sarah Younker, RDN, Senior Membership and Events Associate

“Seeing a parent gain confidence in their ability to nourish their baby or hearing that a family feels supported because of my guidance makes it all worthwhile.”

Stacy Davis, IBCLC, Director, Center for Innovative Practices in WIC

“I have a lot of optimism around the ways our profession has changed to be more responsive to where people are at, and to be less judgemental. I hope we can continue prioritizing work to diversify our profession...”

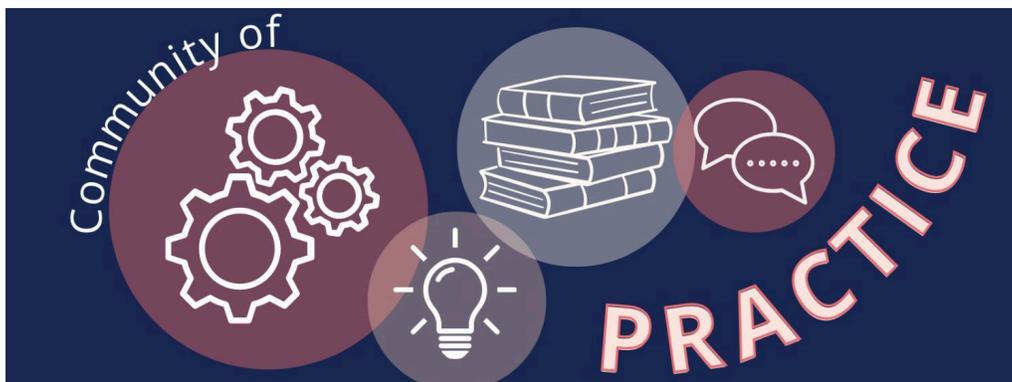
Alison Hard, RD, Public Policy Director

“The most rewarding part of being a WIC dietitian has been building relationships with families and being part of the support system WIC provides during formative years of life.”

Chloe Dillaway, RD, WIC Innovation and Technology Manager

CIP-WIC News & Updates

NEW: Announcing the WIC Technology Community of Practice



CIP-WIC is thrilled to announce a new [WIC Technology Community of Practice](#) hosted on the NWA Online Community.

The Community of Practice will launch as part of the *Strengthening Information Exchanges between Healthcare and WIC Providers* project, funded by the Kaiser Permanente Fund at East Bay Community Foundation. Over the next 2 years, the initiative aims to improve care coordination for WIC families by enhancing information exchanges between healthcare providers and WIC.

The Community of Practice will provide a space where WIC State and Local agency staff can share best practices and resources, explore challenges, and advance state and local-level initiatives to strengthen coordination between healthcare providers and WIC. NWA will also offer learning opportunities and uplift promising practices in the Community of Practice through webinars, resources, and other collaboration opportunities.

Whether your agency is looking to implement new streamlined referral and data sharing systems with healthcare providers, or is a leader in the field, the WIC Technology Community of Practice will offer a supportive space for learning and collaboration. Access the group [here](#) and click “Join” to connect with peers, hear real-world case studies, and discuss topics that matter most to you!

Register for the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program Landscape Scan Report Findings Webinar!

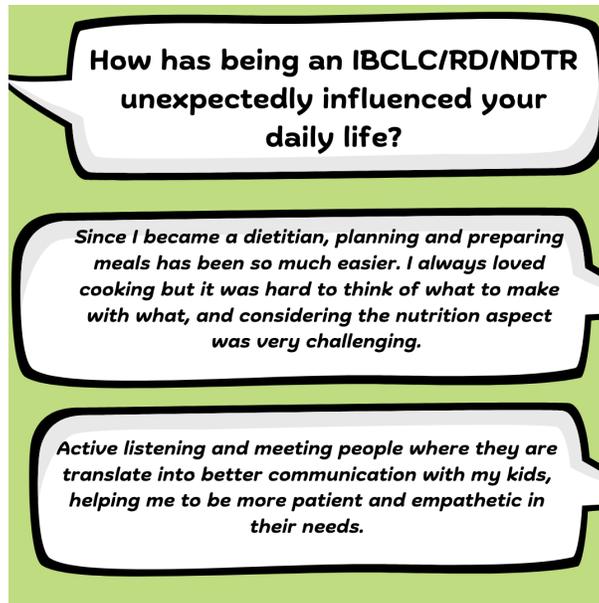
When: 3:00 - 4:00 PM EST on April 3, 2025

This webinar will present the findings of the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) Landscape Scan Report conducted under the *“Increasing Access to Healthy Food through Farmers’ Markets”* project. The presentation will expand upon findings in the Landscape Scan Survey administered to WIC State Agencies in Spring 2024 and in-depth interviews with WIC participants and farmers’ market staff conducted in Fall 2024 regarding FMNP practices across the nation. Learn about successes and challenges to implementation and redemption of FMNP benefits!

[Register Now!](#)

Food Package Update

In February 2025, NWA submitted two comments on behalf of the WIC community- one for the [2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee Scientific Report](#) and another regarding [Alcohol Guidance in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#). The DGAs provides a standard by which WIC and many other communities measure nutrition adequacy within populations, and influences WIC's nutrition education as well as the WIC food package. NWA is committed to ensuring the WIC voice is represented in these comment opportunities.



Thank you to all our healthcare heroes in supporting families!

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Celebrating Black Maternal Health Week- April 11-17!

This year's BMHW theme, *"Healing Legacies: Strengthening Black Maternal Health Through Collective Action and Advocacy"*, honors the resilience of Black Mamas while addressing systemic injustices that shape Black maternal health outcomes. Through advocacy, policy change, and community engagement, BMHW highlights the power of Black-led perinatal, maternal, and reproductive health organizations in driving systemic change and fostering community healing. This week highlights the necessity of collaboration, policy change, and community-based solutions to advance Black maternal health equity.

#BMHW2025



Maternal health is a key indicator of a functioning health system.

In the US, there is a serious maternal mortality crisis, [Black women are 3x as likely to die from pregnancy related complications postpartum than White women](#). This is due to systemic racism that exists within healthcare. Health disparities are enlarged by SDOH (Social Determinants of Health) based on race, socioeconomic status, age, and environment, directly impact health outcomes, and continues to expand the gap in access to equitable care. During BMHW use your voice to raise awareness, activism and build community around Black maternal health.



Black Maternal Health Organization Spotlight

[Cinnamoms](#): Space supporting Black/African American families through breastfeeding and parenthood support circles, located within PHFE WIC Offices in Los Angeles County.

[Black Mamas Matter Alliance](#): Black, women led alliance dedicated to the well-being of Black mothers championing maternal health through birthing justice, empowerment, and advocacy.

[Melanated Mammary Atlas](#): Atlas portal displaying mammary related conditions on Black and Brown individuals. This tool is specifically used by lactation specialists, midwives, doulas, ObGyns, family practitioners etc., to normalize equitable care and treatment for the Black and Brown community.

Legislation & Publications

- [Momnibus Act - The Solution to America's Maternal Health Crisis](#)
- [8 Guiding Principles for Improving Black Maternal Health through Community Collaboration](#)
- [BMHW Toolkit from Black Mamas Matter Alliance](#)

Thank you doulas for providing compassionate, culturally competent care and support during pregnancy, labor, and the postpartum period!

Thank you midwives for patient-centered care that centers the needs and experiences of Black mothers!

Thank you nurses for being front-line advocates working to improve maternal health outcomes & reduce racial disparities in healthcare!

Thank you nutrition/Lactation professionals for providing access to resources, education, and support to Black mothers and families!



Alert: New Blog Post!

Day in My Life as a Farmers Market Booth Manager

CIP-WIC Intern Nicole Acosta is making an impact beyond her internship, working as a farmers' market booth manager at The Denton Community Market (DCM) in downtown Denton, Texas!

As a booth manager, Nicole arrives at the market to help with setting up chairs and tables for customers to sit and enjoy, setting up tents for musical performances, and arranging the DCM info booth for kids activities and FMNP, SNAP and Double-Up Food Bucks (DUFB) voucher/token pick up. She coordinates with her fellow booth managers and the market coordinator to ensure that all FMNP, SNAP, and DUFB recipients understand how the programs work at the market, as well as provide them a list of the farmers that accept these benefits every week. She works hard to ensure that everyone who comes to the market feels welcomed, and assists vendors with any issues that may arise during the duration of the market day.

Nicole's experience working on the, "Increasing Access to Healthy Food Through Farmers' Markets Initiative," helping families receiving WIC services redeem their benefits at farmers'

★ Nicole's and Hanna Griffin's development of a social media toolkit which launches in **May!**

"Could you please guide me through a normal day at the farmers market?"

The Denton Community Market (DCM) is open every Saturday from 9am-1pm! As a Booth Manager, I arrive at the market at 7am to help with setting up chairs and tables for customers to sit and enjoy, setting up tents for musical performances, and arranging the DCM info booth for kids activities and FMNP, SNAP and DUFB voucher/token pick up. During the active hours of the market, I work with fellow Booth Managers and the Market Coordinator to ensure that all FMNP, SNAP, and DUFB recipients understand how the programs work at our market, as well as provide them a list of the farmers that accept these benefits every week. We work hard to ensure that everyone who comes to our market feels welcomed as they are, and assist vendors with any issues that may arise during the duration of the market day. I stay about an hour or two after the market is over along with other market staff to clean up. On a slow day our market averages about 2,500 attendees and on busy days it can get up to 4,000 attendees!



"Has anything you learned at the farmers market supported you with your internship?"

One of my favorite parts of working at the Denton Community Market is that I can apply the boots on the ground experience that I have learned to nationwide projects that I'm working on with the National WIC Association. One of these projects titled, "Increasing Access to Healthy Food

Through Farmers' Markets initiative," is a 3-year grant funded project from the Elevance Health Foundation designed to help families receiving WIC services redeem their benefits at farmers' markets, making it easier for those families to purchase fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs. I have been working closely with NWA's Research and Evaluation Manager, Hanna Griffin, to construct a Social Media Toolkit as a part of this project meant for WIC Participants, Farmers, and State and Local WIC Staff, which launches in May! I've gained many perspectives in my 6 months of working at DCM and 7 months interning with NWA, which have informed many of my suggestions for the toolkit as well as suggestions on how to make our market run smoother for food program participants. To increase farmer buy-in at DCM, I created a 1-pager detailing the positive effects that FMNP has on communities in North Texas and the effects the program has on fighting food insecurity. This was inspired by the NWA WIC State Fact Sheets, located on NWA's website. In addition, many participants that come to our booth inquiring about the FMNP program, aren't familiar with all of the details as to how the program operates. I was able to compare how we run FMNP at our market compared to other states so when creating the toolkit, we were intentional about using clear and precise language to make it as participant centered as possible.

Upcoming Webinar!

Register for the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program Landscape Scan Report Findings Webinar

When: 3:00 - 4:00 PM EST on April 3, 2025

This webinar will present the findings of the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) Landscape Scan Report conducted under the *"Increasing Access to Healthy Food through Farmers' Markets"* project. The presentation will expand upon findings in the Landscape Scan Survey administered to WIC State Agencies in Spring 2024 and in-depth interviews with WIC participants and farmers' market staff conducted in Fall 2024 regarding FMNP practices across the nation. Learn about successes and challenges to implementation and redemption of FMNP benefits!

[Register Here!](#)

Welcome New CIP-WIC Team Members, Shan & Tamika!

Shanzida is a Project Associate working with

the CIP-WIC team to provide administrative support to WIC stakeholders, healthcare providers, and federal partners across CIP-WIC's portfolios. Shanzida is an emerging health administration professional dedicated to health equity with a focus on innovation and modernization in healthcare delivery.

Before joining NWA, Shanzida gained valuable experience in pre-K teaching, where she learned about nutrition and early childhood development. Shanzida holds a Bachelor of Science in Public Health from George Washington University and will be graduating this May with a Master of Health Administration (MHA). She is eager to continue learning how technology and the power of personal stories can work together to improve healthcare systems and participant outcomes.



Shanzida Alam, Project Associate

How do you see the role of Management Information Systems (MIS) and AHEAD 3.0 in advancing health equity and improving healthcare access?

I'm especially excited about the modernization and journey capture efforts that will make it easier to reach families who previously faced challenges, such as those in rural areas or non-English-speaking communities. With improved data integration and accessibility, we can bridge administrative gaps in care and ensure that more WIC families get the support they need.

Provide a fun fact about yourself! (hobbies, etc).

In my free time, I like learning about music production and how songs are engineered. I especially enjoy artists like Billie Eilish, The Fray, & Olivia Rodrigo.

What are you most looking forward to this Spring/Summer!?

I am looking forward to fishing, bike riding on the boardwalk, and spending time with my new baby nephew, Elias!

Tamika is the Research Project Manager working with the CIP-WIC team. She brings



*Tamika Wallace, MPH - Research Project
Manager*

...working with me on the team she brings over 15 years of public health experience to her role at NWA, where she leads the WIC MIS Modernization Strategy Project. In this role, she collaborates with partners to assess the current WIC Management Information System (MIS), develop modernization strategies, and support system improvements that enhance efficiency for WIC agencies and participants. She works closely with stakeholders to gather insights, analyze data, and develop technical assistance resources that inform the future state of WIC MIS. Previously, Tamika worked as a nutritionist in WIC local agencies and later led operations management for the MIS Unit of the New Jersey State WIC Agency.

She holds a Bachelor of Science from the University of Connecticut and a Master of Public Health from Benedictine University. She is committed to leveraging her expertise in program operations, user acceptance, and technical training to help create impactful strategies to improve community services and access.

1. How do you see the role of Management Information Systems (MIS) in advancing health equity and improving healthcare access?

I'm excited about the future of MIS helping to ease the burden that is put on the frontline clinic staff. This will allow them to have higher quality interactions and focus on building trust with their communities. By streamlining data management, MIS should ensure accuracy while it empowers our WIC nutritionists to become key community advocates and champions for improved health equity.

2. Provide a fun fact about yourself! (hobbies, etc).

If I'm craving screen-free time, you'll find me reading or crocheting a stuffed toy for my kids.

3. What are you most looking forward to this Spring/Summer?

I'm looking forward to having lots of family trips to the beach this summer.

NWA Seeks a Graphic Designer Consultant

NWA received [\\$14.9 million](#) from USDA FNS via a four-year cooperative agreement to modernize WIC Management Information Systems (MIS) through the “WIC MIS Modernization Strategy” Project. NWA and its partners will assess the current WIC MIS landscape, plan for and support transitional improvements, develop a future state MIS product and market strategy, and assist USDA and State Agencies in implementation.

NWA received a [\\$1.6 million two-year grant](#) to support “AHEAD 3.0: Advancing Equity throughout the WIC Participant Journey,” which aims to center, understand, and address barriers to WIC participation, particularly for Black, Brown, and Indigenous participants. The project will map the WIC participant journey through Journey Mapping, develop recommendations that WIC Agencies can implement, expand the Participant Advisory Council to amplify diverse voices, and conduct a 2025 Multi-State WIC Participant Satisfaction Survey.

NWA is seeking a Graphic Designer Consultant to assist with activities related to both the MIS Strategy and AHEAD 3.0 grants. For the MIS Strategy Project, the consultant will assist in design and development of visual reports, infographics, and data visualizations. For the AHEAD 3.0 Project, the consultant will assist in development of the Journey Map to visually depict the full continuum of the WIC participant experience.

We encourage all qualified firms with experience in graphic design, focusing on nonprofit, public health, maternal child health, public health nutrition, WIC, and/or public policy to apply, and NWA members, partners, and stakeholders to share with their networks. Please submit questions about the RFP to cipwic@nwica.org by April 4, 2025. Proposals are due by 5:00 pm ET on April 10, 2025.

Are you attending the Annual Education and Training Conference in Las Vegas?

Stop by the CIP-WIC booth to meet the CIP-WIC team, learn about our projects, and enter for your chance to win CIP-WIC swag! Be sure to look for your chance to win a CIP-WIC-themed water bottle, notebook, and more in your conference tote bag!

Instructions

1. All Bingo cards will be placed in the tote bags that you receive when you check in!
2. Please provide your name and email on your Bingo card so we can contact you if you win.
3. Network and have connections sign your card!
4. Once you have filled out the full sheet, turn in your bingo card after the last concurrent session for each day at the NWA CIP-WIC table! All drawings will take place the following morning for the previous day.

Are you sitting for the RD or IBCLC Exam this Spring?



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🌸 Spring is Here, Embrace the Season of Renewal with CIP-WIC!



Annual Conference: Session Highlights



🌟 WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program: Landscape Report Findings and Recommendations

Speaker: Dr. Kimberley Broomfield-Massey

We want to thank Urban Metrics Consultants for presenting NWA's Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Landscape Scan Report. The data analyzed was collected from the 2024 Landscape Scan Survey and in-depth



🌟 Modernizing WIC's Management Information System: A Collaborative Approach to Shaping the Future

Speakers: Lucia Graves Jimenez, Carrie Harris, Claire Sadegzadeh, & Chloe Dillaway

In this session, attendees learned about the WIC MIS Modernization Strategy Project, a 4 year cooperative agreement between USDA-FNS and NWA, in partnership with Nava PBC

2024 Landscape Scan Survey and in-depth interviews with state staff, local staff, farmers, and farmers' market managers. In her presentation, Dr. Kimberley Broomfield-Massey touched on how both quantitative and qualitative data from State and Local agencies has shaped the current landscape and understanding of FMNP programs across the nation.



✨ WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program: Social Media Toolkit

Speakers: Hanna Griffin & Victoria Micalizzi

NWA is excited to announce the launch of the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Social Media Toolkit in May! This toolkit uses the findings from the Elevance Landscape Report and includes social media captions, customizable templates, and participant facing infographics that serve to increase awareness and redemption of FMNP benefits all over the country!

FNS and NWA, in partnership with Nava PBC and Code for America. Panelists discussed how research is uncovering challenges with current systems such as lack of interoperability, and opportunities to improve the participant experience. They also highlighted that local agency staff are centered in the planning and implementation of new updates. Overall, the session showed how important it will be to modernize the WIC MIS systems to support WIC families and staff!

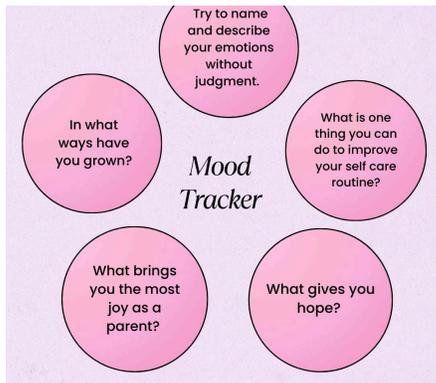


✨ Bridging the Gap: Solutions for Safer Pregnancies and Birth Outcomes

Speakers: Stacy Davis, Dr. Tyra Gross, Mona Liza Hamlin, & Olivia Harper

Our speakers did a wonderful job articulating the importance of maternal health awareness, especially in Black communities in the United States. We are so lucky to have connections with such dedicated and hardworking professionals who work every day to provide safe and culturally informed care to moms and babies!

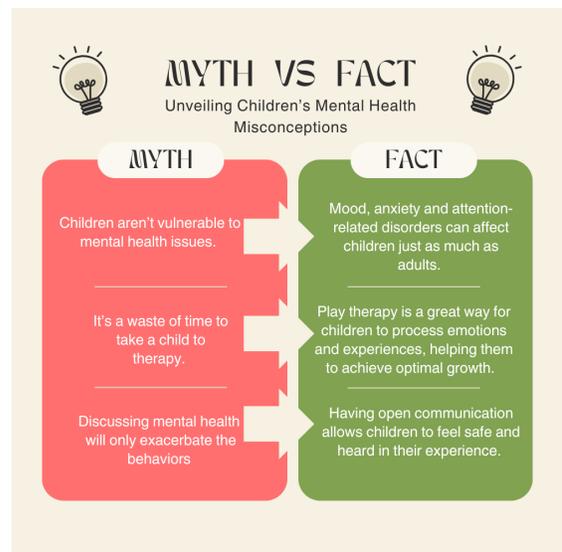
Mood Tracker for Maternal Mental Health Awareness Week! (May 5-11)



Journaling offers a safe and private space to release built-up stress and overwhelming emotions. With so many changes - physically, emotionally, and mentally - writing things down can help process feelings that might be hard to say out loud. The purpose of this Mood Tracker is to allow moms to reflect on their experiences and gain clarity, all while creating a space for healing!

Debunking Myths: Children's Mental Health Awareness Week! (May 3-9)

Debunking myths about children's mental health ensures that they get the support that they need without stigma or delay. Misconceptions can prevent early intervention, which is key for healthy emotional development. We create a more informed and compassionate environment where children feel seen and heard when we challenge these myths.



Sources:

- Gill, Jess. "The Power of Play: How Play Therapy Turns Toys into Tools for Healing | the Graduate School of Education and Human Development | the George Washington University." *The Graduate School of Education and Human Development*, 2024, gsehd.gwu.edu/child-centered-play-therapy.
- Kalia, Saira, and Jacquelin Esque. "Busting Myths: Understanding Children's Mental Health." *The University of Arizona Health Sciences*, 5 May 2024, healthsciences.arizona.edu/news/blog/busting-myths-understanding-childrens-mental-health.

Food Allergy Awareness Week! (May 9 – 15)

It's Recipe Remix time! Enjoy a couple of your favorite meals, but subtract the allergens.



Baked Sweet Potato Bites - Peanut Free

Ingredients:

- 2 medium sweet potatoes
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons orange juice
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 cup corn flakes, crushed

Recipe:

1. Microwave or bake sweet potatoes until soft; scoop out flesh and mash.
2. In a mixing bowl, combine the mashed sweet potato, butter, brown sugar, orange juice and cinnamon.
3. Shape mixture into 1½ inch balls; roll in crushed cornflakes and place on a baking sheet coated with cooking spray.
4. Bake at 350 degrees for 15-20 minutes or until cornflakes are golden and sweet potato balls are heated through. Makes 12 balls.

Source: <https://texaswic.org/recipes/baked-sweet-potato-bites>

Better Than Store-Bought Hummus - Dairy Free

Ingredients:

One 15-ounce can of chickpeas (garbanzo beans)

¼ cup tahini

¼ cup fresh lemon juice (about two lemons)

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 garlic clove, minced

3 tablespoons aquafaba (canned chickpea liquid), and more as needed for desired consistency

Salt to taste

Optional toppings: sprinkle of sumac, paprika or ground cumin and additional olive oil

Source: <https://texaswic.org/recipes/better-store-bought-hummus>

Recipe:

1. Drain chickpeas, reserving liquid (aquafaba) in a small bowl.
2. Combine tahini and lemon juice in a blender or food processor, and blend for 30 seconds.
3. Scrape sides and blend for an additional 20-30 seconds until mixture appears whipped.
4. Add olive oil, garlic, ½ can chickpeas and blend for one minute.
5. Scrape sides, add remaining chickpeas and reserved aquafaba. Blend for 1-2 minutes until smooth and creamy.
6. If hummus is too thick, add additional aquafaba one tablespoon at a time and blend to reach desired consistency.
7. Add salt as needed for desired taste. Because aquafaba usually contains added salt, only add salt after tasting the hummus.
8. Sprinkle desired toppings on hummus and add a drizzle of olive oil before serving.

Happy Mother's Day from NWA!

PAC Member Spotlight!

"How has your experience in WIC empowered you as a mother?"

“ WIC BRINGS MY FAMILY AN EXTRA SENSE OF SECURITY THAT ALLOWS ME TO HAVE PEACE OF MIND WHILE CARING FOR THE NUTRITIOUS NEEDS OF MY FAMILY. I'M AT EASE KNOWING THAT I DON'T HAVE THE EXTRA WORRY WHEN IT COMES TO FOOD AND I CAN FOCUS ON PLAYING, LAUGHING, AND ENJOYING MY CHILDREN'S CHILDHOOD. THE FINANCIAL STRESSES CAN BE A LOT AND TO HAVE THIS PROGRAM BE SO ACCESSIBLE AND LOVELY, IS JUST AN ADDED PLUS ”

- Lucia, New Hampshire WIC Participant

“ HELPED ME TO GIVE MORE NUTRITIOUS FOODS TO MY SON AND HELPED TO FEED HIM IN HIS EARLY INFANCY, WITH FORMULA BEING SO EXPENSIVE. ”

- Shannon, Alabama WIC Participant

Project Updates

NEW RELEASE: Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Landscape Scan Report

The National WIC Association is thrilled to announce the release of the *Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Landscape Scan Report*. This report was developed under the three-year *Increasing Access to Healthy Food through Farmers' Markets* initiative funded by the Elevance Health Foundation.

Guided by an equity-focused, mixed-methods approach, this evaluation draws on data from the NWA's Farmers' Market Landscape Analysis Survey with responses from 32 WIC Agencies across 27 states and in-depth interviews with 26 WIC stakeholders across 6 states. By synthesizing quantitative and qualitative insights, the report highlights promising practices that can enhance program accessibility and improve redemption rates.

MOREWIC! Data Matching Community of Practice

Join the MORE WIC! Team for the second quarterly MORE WIC! Data Matching Community of Practice – a space for State and Local WIC Agencies to connect, share strategies, and learn from peers.

The next meeting is scheduled for **May 14th, 2025, at 3:00 PM EDT/12:00 PM PDT** and will feature a robust discussion on effective ways to contact WIC-eligible individuals and families identified through data matching for the purpose of WIC enrollment.

Don't miss this opportunity to collaborate and gain insights from others in the field. Staff from WIC State and Local Agencies, as well as from their data matching partner agencies, are welcome to join. [Sign up today](#) to receive your meeting invitation!

The MORE WIC! Project (Matching, Outreach, Referrals for Enrollment in WIC) is led by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in partnership with the National WIC Association and funded through a cooperative agreement with USDA's Food and Nutrition Service.

Read the Full Report

Sign Up Here

NEW: Announcing the FMNP Community of Practice!



CIP-WIC is thrilled to announce a new [FMNP Community of Practice](#) hosted on the NWA Online Community.

The Community of Practice will launch as part of the *Increasing Access to Healthy Food through Farmers' Markets* initiative funded by the Elevance Health Foundation. This three-year project aims to increase access to fruits and vegetables by helping WIC participants redeem their FMNP benefits and the core WIC fruit and vegetable Cash Value Benefit (CVB) at farmers' markets.

The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) Community of Practice is a collaborative space for sharing best practices and resources, exploring challenges, and advancing the WIC FMNP through innovative solutions. The Community of Practice aims to strengthen FMNP implementation and increase the use of FMNP and WIC Cash Value Benefit (CVB) benefits at farmers' markets.

The Community of Practice will foster peer learning and knowledge exchange through interactive webinars, the development of new resources, and the collection and centralization of existing FMNP materials for easy access and use. Members will collaboratively explore programmatic and technical challenges, elevate promising practices, and accelerate the adoption of strategies that enhance access, advance equity, and increase impact across State and Local Agency FMNP efforts.

Access the group [here](#) and click "Join" to connect with peers, share best practices, review FMNP

resources, and strengthen WIC FMNP together!

[National WIC Association](#)

1099 14th Street, NW, Suite 510, Washington, DC 20005

202.232.5492 | comms@nwica.org

Follow Us



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Dad's Make a Difference: NWA Father's Day Spotlight

WIC Dad Feature!

This month, we want to shine light on Jeffrey Larsen, a WIC dad whose unique experiences have contributed to his family's health and nutrition journeys. See what he has to share about how WIC has supported him as a caregiver and what fatherhood within WIC means to him.



What insight has your experience in WIC provided to you that you wouldn't have know otherwise?

That men are eligible for WIC help as well.

What do you wish that the WIC community knew more about when it comes to fatherhood?

More single fathers need to know about this program. I feel like even less single fathers know they are eligible for this program than women.

World Pride: Inclusion for Every Family & Rainbow Wellness Kits!

(June 1 - June 30)

Pride Month is a powerful reminder of the importance of equity, visibility, and inclusion. At CIP-WC, we recognize that not all families reflect a traditional structure, and we support all families, including LGBTQIA+ parents, chosen families, and other non-traditional caregivers. Every family deserves access to care, support, and respect.

We invite you to explore our “Rainbow Wellness Kits,” which consist of two colorful and delicious recipes and inclusive parenting resources designed to celebrate and uplift every kind of family.

Honey Lime Fruit Salad



Ingredients

- 1 lb fresh strawberries, diced
- 1 lb fresh pineapple, diced
- 12 oz blueberries
- 12 oz red grapes
- 4 kiwis, peeled and diced
- 1 mandarin orange
- ¼ c honey
- 2 tsp lime zest

Instructions

1. Combine honey and lime zest together and set aside.
2. Mix all fruit in a large bowl and drizzle the honey mixture over it and combine.

Nutrition Information: 8 Servings

Calories per serving: 122
Total Carbohydrates: 36 g
Total Fat: 0.5 g
Total sugars: 25 g
Fiber: 3.5 g
Vitamin C: 75 mg
Cholesterol: 0 mg
Potassium: 307 mg
Protein: 1 g
Vitamin K: 24 mcg

Source: [Food Bank of Delaware](#)

Stir Fry



Ingredients

- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 lb beef/chicken in strips
- 1 ½ c broccoli florets
- 1 red bell pepper, sliced
- 2 cups cooked brown rice
- 1 green onion, chopped
- 2 tbsp soy sauce
- 1 tsp minced garlic
- 2 carrots, thinly sliced

Instructions

1. Chop & slice vegetables accordingly
2. Heat vegetable oil in large frying pan over medium-high heat. Cook and stir beef/chicken until cooked well-done. (3-4 min)
3. Add broccoli, bell peppers, carrots, green onion, and garlic. Cook and stir vegetables for 2 minutes.
4. Season mixture with soy sauce. Continue to cook and stir until vegetables are tender, about 2 more minutes.
5. Serve over cooked rice!

Nutrition Information: 4 Servings

Calories: 359
Fat: 13 g
Carbohydrates: 31 g
Protein: 30 g
Sodium: 544 mg
Fiber: 4 g

Source: [Utah WIC](#)

Inclusive Family Resources

● **Rainbow Families** supports, educates and connects LGBTQ+ families, parents and prospective parents by offering a wide variety of education programs, support groups, opportunities to connect and more. Rainbow Families is a volunteer led non-profit organization supported by members, community sponsors, private and public grants and foundations. (<https://rainbowfamilies.org/>)

● **Eisner Health** is committed to empowering patients of all gender identities and sexual orientations. They foster a welcoming and supportive environment for you and your family while

providing complete medical, dental, behavioral health, and specialty services to meet patients' needs. (<https://eisnerhealth.org/fatherhood-programs/>)

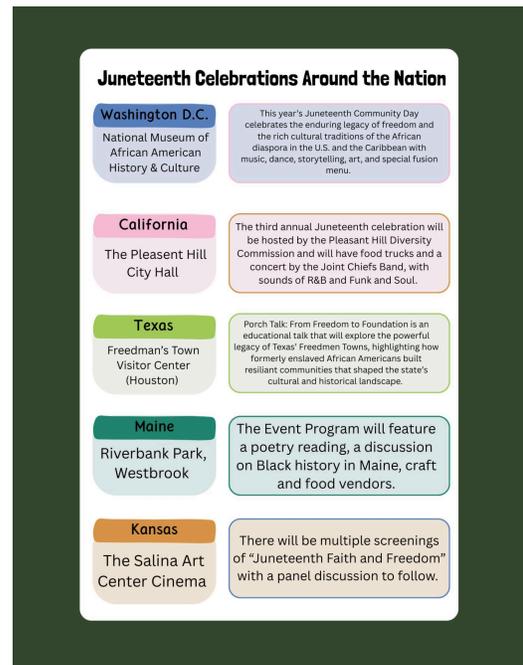
Jose Luis Diaz, WIC Director, CCI Health Services, identifies as a cisgender gay male and is committed to continuing to find ways to ensure that the WIC program is an inclusive space for all. Read his blog to learn more about his perspective of inclusive care that is delivered through evidence-based, person-centered strategies such as active listening, peer learning, and culturally responsive communication. (<https://www.nwica.org/blog/wic-programs-are-a-welcoming-place-for-all-including-lgbtq-individuals>)

Juneteenth: Honoring Freedom, Culture, and Community!

Juneteenth, observed on June 19th, marks a pivotal day in American History - the day in 1865 when enslaved people in Galveston, Texas, learned they were free - more than 2 years after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued. Communities across the country observe the day with parades, music, storytelling, and family and community gatherings, honoring the enduring strength, culture, and contributions of Black Americans.

As we celebrate Juneteenth, we also recognize the ongoing pursuit of justice, equity, and liberation.

 **How is your community celebrating?**
We'd love to hear about the local events, traditions, or personal reflections that make this day meaningful to you.



Juneteenth Celebrations Around the Nation

- Washington D.C.**
National Museum of African American History & Culture
This year's Juneteenth Community Day celebrates the enduring legacy of freedom and the rich cultural traditions of the African diaspora in the U.S. and the Caribbean with music, dance, storytelling, art, and special fusion menu.
- California**
The Pleasant Hill City Hall
The third annual Juneteenth celebration will be hosted by the Pleasant Hill Diversity Commission and will have food trucks and a concert by the Joint Chiefs Band, with sounds of R&B and Funk and Soul.
- Texas**
Freedman's Town Visitor Center (Houston)
Porch Talk: From Freedom to Foundation is an educational talk that will explore the powerful legacy of Texas' Freedmen Towns, highlighting how formerly enslaved African Americans built resilient communities that shaped the state's cultural and historical landscape.
- Maine**
Riverbank Park, Westbrook
The Event Program will feature a poetry reading, a discussion on Black history in Maine, craft and food vendors.
- Kansas**
The Salina Art Center Cinema
There will be multiple screenings of "Juneteenth Faith and Freedom" with a panel discussion to follow.

Project Updates

NEW RELEASE: Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

Landscape Scan Report with Appendix and Social Media Toolkit!

The National WIC Association Unveils the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Landscape Scan Report

The National WIC Association is pleased to announce the release of the **Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Landscape Scan Report**, complemented by an **Appendix** and a **Social Media Toolkit**.

This comprehensive report and toolkit were developed under the **Increasing Access to Healthy Food through Farmers' Markets** initiative, funded by the **Elevance Health Foundation**.

Employing an equity-focused, mixed-methods approach, this evaluation utilizes data from the NWA's Farmers' Market Landscape Analysis Survey, featuring responses from 32 WIC agencies across 27 states, alongside in-depth interviews with 26 WIC stakeholders from 6 states. By synthesizing both quantitative and qualitative insights, the report illuminates promising practices aimed at enhancing program accessibility and improving redemption rates.

The newly added **Appendix** encompasses:

- **2024 NWA Landscape Survey Questions**
- **Interview Guides** used with FMNP non-implementing agencies, high-redemption paper voucher implementers, and high-redemption eFMNP implementers
- **FMNP State Profiles**, derived from data submitted by State Agencies participating in the Landscape Survey

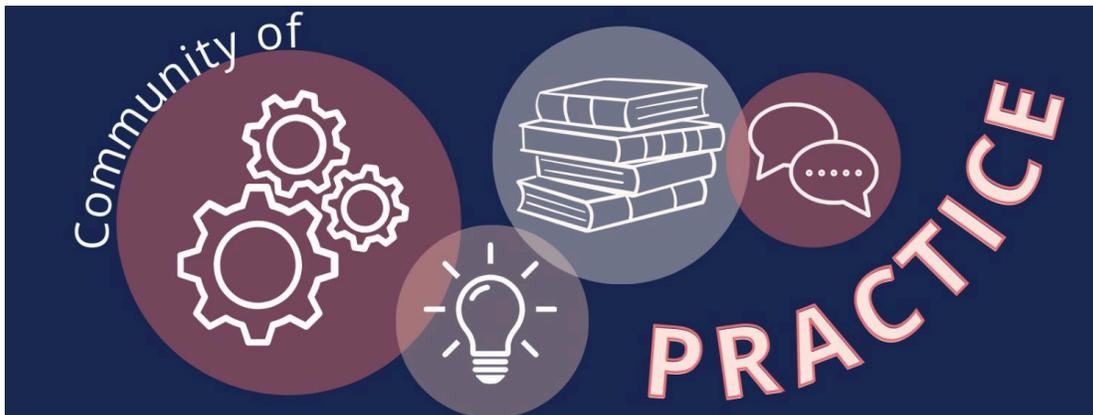
This expanded resource offers profound insights into the methodology of the landscape evaluation.

The findings from the Landscape Scan Report reveal valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities within the FMNP, underscoring critical areas where heightened awareness and education could foster improved participation. These insights have directly informed the development of the Social Media Toolkit, designed to bridge these gaps by providing resources and engaging content to effectively promote the program.

[Read the Landscape Report Here!](#)

[Access the Full Social Media Toolkit Here!](#)

Join the FMNP Community of Practice



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The Community of Practice will launch as part of the *Increasing Access to Healthy Food through Farmers' Markets* initiative funded by the Elevance Health Foundation. This three-year project aims to increase access to fruits and vegetables by helping WIC participants redeem their FMNP benefits and the core WIC fruit and vegetable Cash Value Benefit (CVB) at farmers' markets.

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Access the group [here](#) and click "Join" to connect with peers, share best practices, review FMNP resources, and strengthen WIC FMNP together!

NWA Seeks a Videographer Consultant!

NWA is seeking a **videographer consultant** to assist with activities related to two projects: the **WIC Management Information Systems (MIS) Modernization Strategy** and the **AHEAD 3.0**.

WIC Management Information Systems (MIS) Modernization Strategy and the AHEAD 3.0: Advancing Equity throughout the WIC Participant Journey projects.

The MIS Strategy project is a four-year cooperative agreement between USDA FNS and NWA, in partnership with Nava Public Benefit Corporation and Code for America. NWA and its partners will assess the current WIC MIS landscape; develop a near-term transitional plan for improvements to current MIS; develop a long-term MIS planning, product, and market strategy; and assist USDA and State agencies in implementing the strategy. . For this project, the consultant will develop videos to highlight research findings and create compelling visual assets to accompany reports and publications.

NWA received a \$1.6 million two-year grant to support “AHEAD 3.0: Advancing Equity throughout the WIC Participant Journey,” which aims to center, understand, and address barriers to WIC participation, particularly for Black, Brown, and Indigenous participants. NWA will map the WIC participant journey through Journey Mapping; develop actionable recommendations for WIC Agencies; expand the Participant Advisory Council to amplify diverse voices; and conduct a 2025 Multi-State WIC Participant Satisfaction Survey. For this project, the consultant will develop videos that illustrate the full WIC participant journey as well as videos presenting solutions to pain points in WIC participation.

We encourage all qualified firms with experience in videography, focusing on nonprofit, public health, maternal child health, public health nutrition, WIC, and/or public policy to apply, and NWA members, partners, and stakeholders to share with their networks. **Please submit questions about the RFP to cipwic@nwica.org by June 13, 2025. Proposals are due by 5:00 pm ET on June 26, 2025.**

WIC Agency Referral & Data Sharing Practices Survey - Deadline Extended!

Share Your Agency's Experience with WIC Referrals and Data Sharing with Healthcare Providers!

Thank you to all the Local and State Agencies who have already completed NWA's survey on WIC referrals and data sharing with healthcare providers! Your insights are incredibly valuable.

To ensure we capture as many perspectives as possible, we're extending the deadline by **one week**. You now have until **Friday, June 6th** to complete the 15-minute survey. **[Click here to take the survey now!](#)**

This survey is part of NWA's two-year initiative, funded by Kaiser Permanente, to improve care coordination for WIC families by strengthening referrals and data sharing between healthcare

providers and WIC Agencies. Your input will guide future recommendations and tools to support WIC agencies.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Chloe Dillaway at cdillaway@nwica.org.

Thank you again for your participation—we look forward to learning from your agency!



Welcome to the NWA Research to Practice Newsletter

Welcome to the NWA *Research to Practice* Newsletter! In this quarterly newsletter, we highlight research from USDA, NWA, nonprofit organizations, and academic institutions. We will also provide insights on WIC caseload trends and updates from our member-led Evaluation Committee. If there are studies or reports you would like us to highlight in the next issue, please contact Hanna Griffin, NWA's Research and Evaluation Manager (hgriffin@nwica.org). If you are conducting research and would like support from the NWA, we invite you to complete the [NWA WIC Researcher Survey](#).

Evaluation Committee

Supplemental foods are one of the most important benefits offered by the WIC program. Following behavioral, health, medical, and risks assessments during a client's certification appointment, supplemental food benefits are assigned to the WIC clients, tailored for the nutritional needs, and given to them via electronic benefit transfer card. Research over the years has shown the vital role these foods play in improving the health outcomes of the WIC population. However, the value of these foods can be perceived differently by various stakeholders -- for program administrators, some understand the value of the food benefits being provided from program management and outreach perspective as administrators, whereas knowing the monetary value, type, and quantity of foods they can receive may be necessary in WIC participants and potential clients' decisions to participate and stay enrolled in the program.

As Agencies implement the [finalized food package updates](#) within a year, WIC programs and participants will reassess their experience of the value of the food package. The Final Rule aims to provide WIC participants with more food choices based on evidence-based research and the latest scientific findings and provides WIC State Agencies with more flexibility to meet or accommodate participants' needs.

To get a deeper understanding and present the various complexities of value with respect to the

To get a deeper understanding and present the various complexities of value with respect to the food package, the Evaluation Committee has planned a series of webinars to discuss food package value in different forms and what it means to the WIC community. The webinars are intended to give WIC State Agencies ideas and tools to examine their approach to valuing food packages and present value to participants as a way to conduct outreach, improve client retention, and assess program management.

The first webinar on this topic was presented by Dr. Erica Kenney on the *Cost-effectiveness of improved WIC food package for preventing childhood obesity*. She shared the effect of the 2009 food package changes on the WIC population, presented inputs and outputs of the CHOICES model, and elaborated on a strategy that models cost-effectiveness for the WIC food packages in the prevention of childhood obesity. This information can be beneficial to State Agencies and researchers planning to evaluate the effect of these WIC food package updates on other important maternal and child health outcomes.

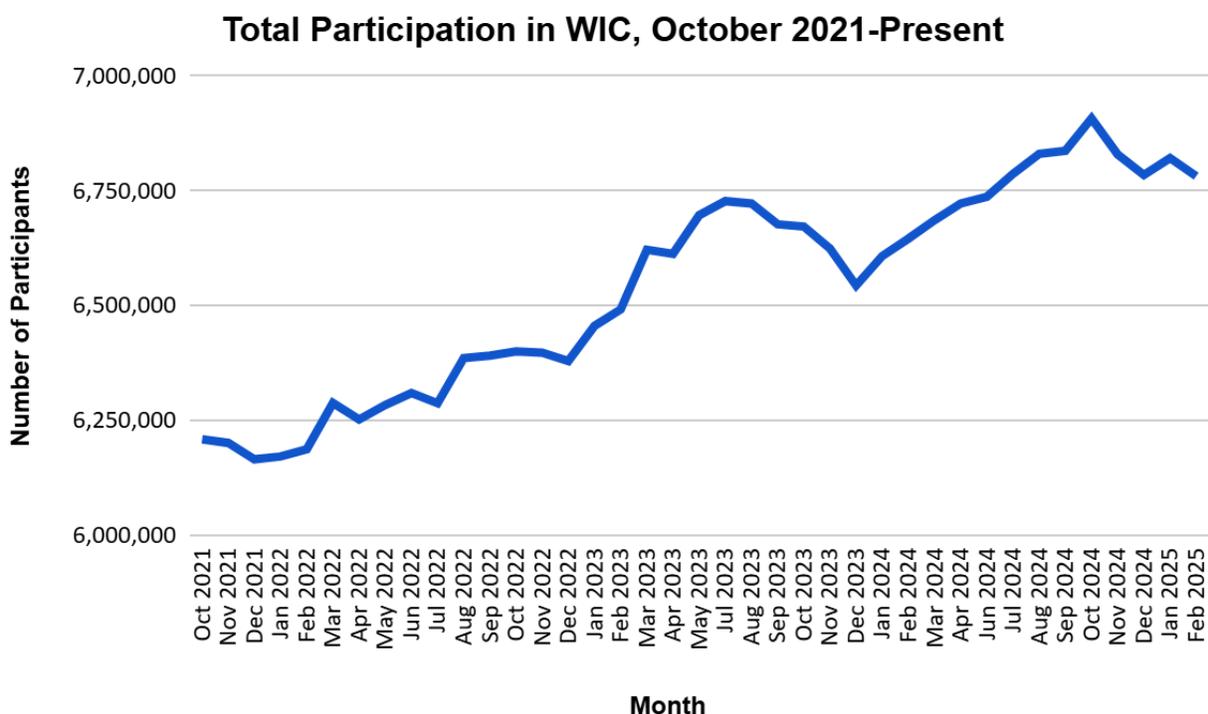
Save the Date Thursday, July 31st 3:00 - 4:00 PM EST

Join the Evaluation Committee for another discussion on the value of the WIC food package! This upcoming webinar will turn to client perspectives of food package value and will take a closer look at the impact of increased CVBs in Michigan.

If you have questions or comments for the Evaluation Committee, please contact the Committee Chair, Bagya Kodur (KodurB@michigan.gov). Stay tuned for next quarter's issue for ongoing priorities and updates from the Committee!

WIC Caseload Trends

In each newsletter, we will present the latest WIC participation data. According to preliminary data from FNS, WIC caseloads steadily increased from January 2024, with the highest participation seen in October 2024. In October, total WIC participation reached 6.9 million, up from 6.83 million in September 2024. Since October, WIC participation has slowly decreased, at 6.82 million in November and 6.78 million in December. There was an increase in participation in January at 6.82 million. However, in February 2025- the most recent month for which data is available, total WIC participation dropped from 6.82 million to 6.78 million participants, reflecting a 0.57% decrease in participation in one single month. For a deeper dive into state-level participation, food costs, participant breakdown, and additional data, please visit the [FNS WIC data tables](#).



USDA Research



USDA, FNS Research Updates

NEW RELEASE: Development of a WIC Participant and Program Characteristics Longitudinal Data Set

On April 15th, FNS published the [“Development of a WIC Participant and Program Characteristics Longitudinal Data Set”](#).

Since 1992, FNS has collected Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program Characteristics (PC) data every two years. The WIC PC data are a census of WIC participants and describe participant-level information on demographics, income, nutritional risks, anthropometrics, hematology, breastfeeding status, and food package prescriptions during the month of April for each WIC PC year. Currently, WIC PC data can only be used to identify population trends in the program over time. Because the WIC PC data lack identifiers to link participants over time, individual-level longitudinal analyses such as participant retention cannot be measured. This report describes the process of working with one WIC state agency to create a pilot WIC PC longitudinal data set of infant and child participants and the challenges and successes of this effort.

NEW RELEASE: WIC and FMNP Modernization Annual Evaluation Report, 2024

On April 21st, FNS Published the “[WIC and FMNP Modernization Annual Evaluation Report, 2024](#)”.

In 2021, Congress provided the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) with \$390 million and waiver authority for outreach, innovation, and program modernization in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and the WIC Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (FMNP). The [WIC and FMNP Modernization Evaluation](#) tracks the progress and outcomes of these efforts.

This first annual report provides an overview of the WIC and FMNP modernization efforts underway and highlights early implementation findings, covering activities from September 2022 – September 2024.

Key Findings:

- FNS awarded grants to all 88 WIC state agencies to modernize technology and service delivery, improve the shopping experience, and improve access to farmers’ markets.
- As of September 2024, many WIC and FMNP state agency projects were in the planning stage.
- Total WIC participation increased from 6.24 million participants in FY 2021 to 6.58 million in FY 2023. This upward trend continued into FY 2024. WIC participation grew to 6.84 million in September 2024. As WIC and FMNP modernization progresses, the WIC and FMNP Modernization Evaluation will determine whether these efforts are associated with changes in participation and other outcomes.

USDA, ERS Research Updates

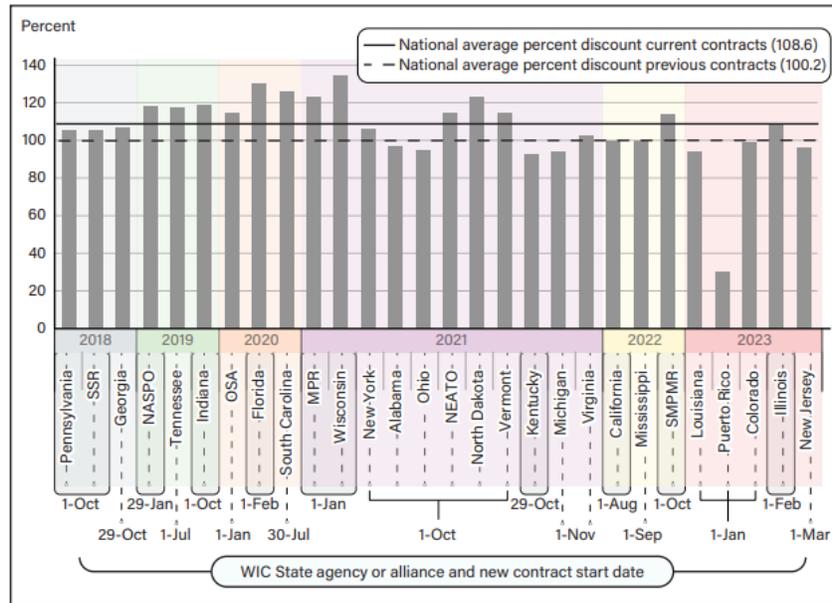
NEW RELEASE: Manufacturers’ Bids for Infant Formula Rebate Contracts, 2013-23

This study summarizes trends in infant formula rebate contracts and examines how factors, such as declining shares of infants born in the United States participating in the Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), contribute to these trends. For contracts in effect in March 2023, WIC State agencies, on average, received rebates that exceeded manufacturers’ wholesale prices for their formula. This resulted in greater savings to WIC compared with previous contracts. Manufacturers’ net wholesale price bids are positively correlated with the share of infants participating in WIC. On average, when the share of infants in a State participating in WIC decreases, net wholesale price bids decrease. Read the report [here](#).

Percent discounts for contracts in effect in March 2023

(Figure 5 in Manufacturers’ Bids for Infant Formula Rebate Contracts, 2013-23 Report)

Percent discounts for contracts in effect in March 2023



WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. SSR=Southwest/Southeast Regions (Arkansas, New Mexico, and North Carolina). NASPO = National Association of State Procurement Officials (Alaska; Arizona; Delaware, Hawaii; Idaho; Kansas; Maryland; Montana; Nevada; Oregon; Utah; Washington; Washington, DC; West Virginia; Wyoming; American Samoa; Guam; the Virgin Islands; the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona; Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada; Navajo Nation; Osage Nation; and Pueblo of Isleta). OSA = Oklahoma State Alliance (Oklahoma; Chickasaw Nation; Citizen Potawatomi Nation; Eight Northern Indian Pueblos, Incorporated; Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians; Muscogee (Creek) Nation; Otoe-Missouria Tribe; and WCD Enterprises, Incorporated). MPR = Mountain Plains Region (Missouri; Nebraska; South Dakota; and North Dakota (beginning 10/1/2021)). NEATO = New England and Tribal Organization (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont (as of 10/1/2021), and Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma). SMPMR = Southwest/Mountain Plains/Midwest Regions (Iowa, Minnesota, Texas, and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma).

Note: The national average percent discount for previous contracts was 100.2 percent. The national average percent discount for current contracts was 108.6 percent.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service based on data from USDA, Food and Nutrition Service.

Researcher Spotlight

In upcoming editions of this newsletter, we aim to highlight the inspiring work of researchers who are advancing knowledge and improving outcomes within the WIC community. Whether through innovative studies, impactful findings, or creative solutions, these researchers are helping shape the future of WIC services nationwide.

If you are a researcher and would like to showcase your background and expertise, we invite you to complete this [short form](#)!

Your contribution will help us celebrate and amplify the research driving positive change in the WIC community.

In Case You Missed It: Finalists and Winners of WIC Learning Collaborative Research Impact Awards

On February 27th, 2025, the [NOPREN/HER WIC Research Learning Collaborative](#) announced the finalists and winners for the WIC Learning Collaborative Research Impact Award for 2024.

This year's finalists have made significant strides in evaluating WIC policies and communicating their implications for nutrition, health, and program effectiveness. Please join us in congratulating the authors of this impactful work!

Chancay, J., Gross, S. M., Koegel, K., Pompa, C., Eppes, E. V., Kang, Y., ... & Caulfield, L. E. (2024). A WIC Agency Drip Marketing Campaign Is Well Received and Improves Program Participation and Retention: A Quasi-Experimental Study. *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*.

Herrera, Y. M., Vadiveloo, M., Blau, S., Oaks, B. M., Quashie, N. T., & Tovar, A. (2024). Feasibility and acceptability of a personalized, pre-filled online grocery cart to improve benefit redemption and diet quality of grocery purchases among participants of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). *Appetite*, 202, 107647.

Kenney, E. L., Lee, M. M., Barrett, J. L., Ward, Z. J., Long, M. W., Cradock, A. L., ... & Gortmaker, S. L. (2024). Cost-effectiveness of improved WIC food package for preventing childhood obesity. *Pediatrics*, 153(2), e2023063182.



Nitto, A. M., Crespo-Bellido, M., Yenerall, J., Anderson Steeves, E. T., Kersten, S. K., Vest, D., & Hill, J. L. (2024). Mixed methods evaluation of the COVID-19 changes to the WIC cash-value benefit for fruits and vegetables. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 12, 1371697.

Smith, T. A., & Valizadeh, P. (2024). Aging out of WIC and child nutrition: evidence from a regression discontinuity design. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 106(2), 904-924.



New WIC Publications

In recent months, several noteworthy publications on the topic of WIC have appeared in peer-reviewed journals. Below, we've curated a selection of standout articles. Clickable links are provided for access to each article, and all listed articles are Open Access unless otherwise noted.

Recently Published Studies by Topic Area

Benefit Redemption

Benefit Redemption

Anderson CE, Yopez CE, Whaley SE. WIC service use, benefit redemption, and continued participation among participants in California. *J Acad Nutr Diet*. Published online May 17, 2025. doi:10.1016/j.jand.2025.05.009 (Not Open Access)

Coordinated Care

Ali S, Gibbs SE, Wiseman K, et al. A Qualitative Study To Understand Parental, Health Care Provider and WIC Nutritionist Perspectives on Early Childhood Beverage Choices for WIC-enrolled Families in a Southeastern US Health System. *Matern Child Health J*. 2025;29(5):628-638. doi:10.1007/s10995-025-04075-w

Ma Y, Bailey-Davis L, Moore AM, Ruggiero CF, McCabe CF, Savage JS. Effect of a care-coordinated responsive parenting intervention on obesogenic risk behaviours among mother-infant dyads enrolled in WIC. *Pediatr Obes*. Published online May 15, 2025. doi:10.1111/ijpo.70020

Food Package

Wang G, Bitler M, Schillinger D, Halla M, Stillman S, Hamad R. Impact of the 2009 WIC revision on infant and maternal health: A quasi-experimental multi-state study. *Soc Sci Med*. 2025;373:117974. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.117974 (Not Open Access)

Zhang Q, Patel PT, Neupane B, et al. Consumption of the Food Groups with the Revised Benefits in the New WIC Food Package: A Scoping Review. *Nutrients*. 2025;17(5):856. Published 2025 Feb 28. doi:10.3390/nu17050856

Telehealth

Chancay J, Gross SM, Koegel K, et al. A WIC Agency Drip Marketing Campaign Is Well Received and Improves Program Participation and Retention: A Quasi-Experimental Study. *J Acad Nutr Diet*. 2025;125(3):323-334.e3. doi:10.1016/j.jand.2024.07.163 (Not Open Access)

Melnick EM, O'Reilly NV, Acciai F, Lorts C, Jossefides M, Ohri-Vachaspati P. Health Communications Theory-Based Text Message Reminders Boost Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Appointment Attendance Among American Indian Populations. *Nutrients*. 2025; 17(7):1112. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu17071112>

Martinez-Brockman JL, Granner JR, Buchanan B, et al. Evaluation and adaptation of a two-way text messaging intervention in the WIC breastfeeding peer counseling program: A qualitative analysis. *PLoS One*. 2025;20(1):e0313779. Published 2025 Jan 9.

analysis. *PLoS One*. 2025;20(1):e0313779. Published 2025 Jan 9.
doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0313779

WIC Participation

Choi S, Mendoza Kabua P, Andersen JA, McElfish PA, Brown CC. Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Participation during Pregnancy: Racial/ethnic Inequities among Medicaid-Covered Asian, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, and Hispanic Women. *J Racial Ethn Health Disparities*. Published online April 28, 2025.
doi:10.1007/s40615-025-02452-3 (Not Open Access)

Ayalasomayajula S, Melo Herrera Y, Frank HE, et al. Leveraging Implementation Science to Identify and Address Facilitators and Barriers to WIC Enrollment, Participation, and Retention. *J Nutr*. 2025;155(4):1246-1257. doi:10.1016/j.tjnut.2025.01.035 (Not Open Access)

WIC Participant Experience

Gilbert A, Frank T, McDermott L, et al. Access to and Satisfaction with the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program: Differences Across Race, Ethnicity, Income, and Urbanicity among Missouri Residents. *Food Nutr Bull*. Published online March 19, 2025.
doi:10.1177/03795721251323312 (Not Open Access)

National WIC Association

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202.232.5492 | comms@nwica.org

Follow Us



The National WIC Association (NWA) is the nonprofit voice of the 12,000 public health nutrition service provider agencies who serve over 6.7 million mothers, babies, and young children served by the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). NWA provides education, guidance, and support to WIC staff; and drives innovation and advocacy to strengthen WIC as we work toward a nation of healthier families.

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Disability Pride Month

WIC plays a critical role in supporting the health and development of children with disabilities by providing access to nutritious foods, individualized nutrition counseling, and referrals to health and social services. For children with disabilities—who often face higher nutritional risks or feeding challenges—WIC offers tailored guidance that addresses their unique dietary needs, including special formulas, adaptive feeding techniques, and collaboration with healthcare providers. As a WIC Provider, here are strategies that you can use to help families mitigate feeding and nutrition obstacles.

FEEDING & NUTRITION FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

SENSORY ISSUES & ORAL-MOTOR DELAYS



SIGNS

- Might **avoid certain textures** or **temperatures** of food
- Sticking to **specific brands** or variations of a certain kind of food
- **Gaging** at the sight, smell, touch, or taste of certain foods
- Engaging in **food pocketing**
- **Fear** around trying new foods



STRATEGIES

- Guidance on **responsive feeding**
- **Involve child** in grocery shopping or food prep
- Provide **non-judgmental** encouragement and support
- **Family-centered approach** through building feeding strategies into daily routines
- Help families create a list of “safe foods” while gradually expanding food options



RESOURCE FORMATS

- Handouts
- Props
- Videos

SOURCES

EDUCATION RESOURCES INC
MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & MINNESOTA WIC

Upcoming Events & Webinars

Join Us for a Pre-Conference FMNP Workshop at NWA's Technology, Innovation, and Vendor Management Conference!

The NWA Technology, Innovation, and Vendor Management Conference will include a 3-hour Pre-Conference Workshop focusing on the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP). The Workshop will offer attendees a chance to explore, discuss, and adopt promising practices and strategies to enhance FMNP delivery at both the State and Local levels.

This interactive workshop will include opportunities for peer learning, facilitated discussions, and insights into successes and challenges of FMNP implementation across the country. Attendees will leave with practical tools and actionable strategies to enhance access and impact of WIC FMNP in their states and communities.

The workshop will take place on Tuesday September 2, 2025, from 10 AM to 1 PM. NWA is applying for 2.5 Continuing Education Credits (CEUs) for RDNs/NDTRs in attendance for full workshop.

Register for the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program: Implementation Toolkit Webinar!

When: August 21, 2025 | 3:00 PM ET

Join us for an overview of the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP): Implementation Toolkit, developed as part of the Increasing Access to Healthy Food through Farmers' Markets initiative, funded by the Elevance Health Foundation. The webinar builds upon insights from the FMNP Landscape Scan Report, offering a deeper look into the facilitators, barriers, and promising practices of FMNP, electronic FMNP (eFMNP) and Cash Value Benefit (CVB). These findings served as a foundation to highlight effective tools and strategies that WIC Agencies from around the nation have used to enhance FMNP delivery. Explore how the Toolkit supports implementation across core focus areas, including farmer engagement, participant education and redemption, technology, and funding.

CIP-WIC Resources

ICYMI: Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Landscape Scan Report with Appendix and Social Media Toolkit!

The National WIC Association is pleased to announce the release of the **Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Landscape Scan Report**, complemented by an **Appendix** and a **Social Media Toolkit**.

This comprehensive report and toolkit were developed under the **Increasing Access to Healthy Food through Farmers' Markets initiative**, funded by the **Elevance Health Foundation**.

Employing an equity-focused, mixed-methods approach, this evaluation utilizes data from the NWA's Farmers' Market Landscape Analysis Survey, featuring responses from 32 WIC agencies across 27 states, alongside in-depth interviews with 26 WIC stakeholders from 6 states. By synthesizing both quantitative and qualitative insights, the report highlights promising practices that aim to enhance program accessibility and improve redemption rates.

The newly added **Appendix** encompasses:

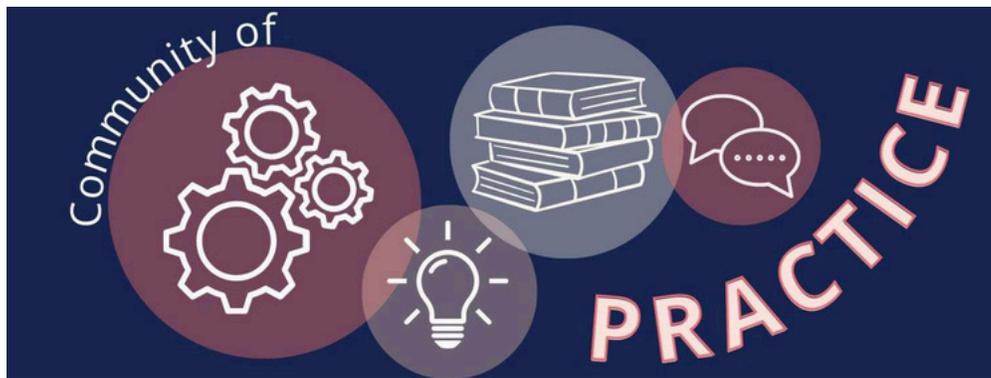
- **2024 NWA Landscape Survey Questions**
- **Interview Guides** used with FMNP non-implementing agencies, high-redemption paper voucher implementers, and high-redemption eFMNP implementers
- **FMNP State Profiles**, derived from data submitted by State Agencies participating in the Landscape Survey

This expanded resource provides in-depth insights into the methodology of landscape evaluation.

The findings from the Landscape Scan Report reveal valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities within the FMNP, underscoring critical areas where heightened awareness and education could foster improved participation. These insights have directly informed the development of the Social Media Toolkit, designed to bridge these gaps by providing resources and engaging content to promote the program effectively.

[Read the Landscape Report!](#)

[Access the Social Media Toolkit Here!](#)



Join the FMNP Community of Practice hosted on the NWA Online Community!

The Community of Practice will launch as part of the Increasing Access to Healthy Food through Farmers' Markets initiative funded by the Elevance Health Foundation. This three-year project aims to increase access to fruits and vegetables by helping WIC participants redeem their FMNP benefits and the core WIC fruit and vegetable Cash Value Benefit (CVB) at farmers' markets.

The **WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) Community of Practice** is a collaborative space for sharing best practices and resources, exploring challenges, and advancing the WIC FMNP through innovative solutions. The Community of Practice aims to strengthen FMNP implementation and increase the use of FMNP and WIC Cash Value Benefit (CVB) benefits at farmers' markets.

The Community of Practice will foster peer learning and knowledge exchange through interactive webinars, the development of new resources, and the collection and centralization of existing FMNP materials for easy access and use. Members will collaboratively explore programmatic and technical challenges, elevate promising practices, and accelerate the adoption of strategies that enhance access, advance equity, and increase impact across State and Local Agency FMNP efforts.

Access the group [here](#) and click "Join" to connect with peers, share best practices, review FMNP resources, and strengthen WIC FMNP together!

Spread the Word: Virtual Focus Groups for WIC Participants!

Help NWA Spread the Word: Virtual Focus Groups for WIC Participants!

The National WIC Association (NWA) is inviting WIC participants for a virtual focus group to share their experiences and help enhance the WIC program, making it more accessible, flexible, and responsive to participants' needs.

Who's eligible?

- Current or former WIC participants (within the last six months), or
- Caretakers of children currently eligible for WIC

Participants will receive a \$75 Visa Gift Card for their time and insights during a 90-minute virtual session.

We'd love your help spreading the word! Participants can register by visiting this [link](#). We also encourage you to print the recruitment flyer (available for download in this email) to display in your clinic or share directly with families you work with.

Questions? Please reach out to the **Center for Innovative Practices in WIC (CIP-WIC)** at cipwic@nwica.org.

Thank you for amplifying participant voices!

YOUR WIC EXPERIENCE MATTERS.
Join a virtual focus group and share your story!

The National WIC Association is looking for current and former WIC participants to share their experiences. What's working well for you? What could be better? Your feedback will shape a stronger, more flexible WIC program that better supports families.

Responses will be confidential and will not affect your WIC benefits or eligibility



Who is eligible?

If you are a current WIC participant or have used WIC in the last 6 months and identify as:

- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latina
- Native American
- Asian
- Pacific Islander
- White, non-Latina

When?

One session in July - September.
Virtual Sessions in English & Spanish

What's involved?

- 90 minute conversation on Zoom
- You'll join other WIC participants & share your thoughts on your WIC experience
- Culturally designed virtual space

Participants will receive a \$75 gift card!

REGISTER HERE!



CIP - WIC

Center for
Innovative Practices
in WIC



National Breastfeeding Month



This year's theme for National Breastfeeding Month, announced by the U.S. Breastfeeding Committee, is "**Forward Together**," highlighting unity, solidarity, and hope, as we celebrate the strength and determination of advocates driving policy, systems, and environmental change to improve access to human milk in the First Food field.

World Breastfeeding Week

Each year, from **August 1 to 7**, individuals and organizations globally celebrate World Breastfeeding Week (WBW). To support the WIC community in honoring this important week, NWA's Breastfeeding Promotion Committee created an annual infographic, English and Spanish, designed for easy use as posters or flyers. WIC Agencies are encouraged to display the infographic in clinics, doctors' offices, bookstores, churches, and other community spaces. This year's theme, "**Prioritize Breastfeeding: Create Sustainable Support Systems**," highlights how WIC plays a vital role in building lasting breastfeeding support networks for families. Join us in spreading awareness and celebrating the power of breastfeeding support!

Cultural & Social Observances

Celebrating the diverse cultural and social observances surrounding breastfeeding honors the unique ways communities nurture and bond with their children. These celebrations foster inclusion, respect, and shared understanding, helping to create a supportive environment where all families feel empowered in their breastfeeding journeys.



MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	Guide	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	Guide
				1	2	3	Indigenous Milk Medicine Week 8th-14th	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Latinx Breastfeeding Week 8th-14th
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Breastfeeding Week 15th-21st	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Deaf and Hard of Hearing Breastfeeding Week 16th-22nd
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Military Lactation Celebration 22nd-24th	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	Workplace Lactation Week 1st-7th
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	Black Breastfeeding Week 25th-31st	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
25	26	27	28	29	30	31		29	30						

Learn more here:

- Indigenous Milk Medicine Collective
- AANHPI Breastfeeding Week
- Black Breastfeeding Week
- Global Military Lactation Community
- Latinx Breastfeeding Week
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Breastfeeding Week
- Workplace Lactation Week

Make Traveling Easier for Breastfeeding Families

The BABES Act (Bottles and Breastfeeding Equipment Screening Act) is crucial for traveling breastfeeding families, as it ensures that TSA agents are properly trained to handle breast milk, formula, and related supplies with care and respect. By standardizing procedures and reducing unnecessary hassle or delays, the Act supports parents in feeding their babies safely and with dignity while traveling, making airports more accommodating and less stressful for families on the go.

BOTTLES AND BREASTFEEDING EQUIPMENT SCREENING (BABES) ENHANCEMENT ACT



1. Require TSA to issue clear guidance on the hygienic handling of breast milk, baby formula, and other infant nutrition products
2. Mandate that guidance is developed with maternal and child health experts
3. Ensure guidance is updated every 5 years in response to the emerging needs of parents

SOURCE: U.S. BREASTFEEDING COMMITTEE

National Farmers' Market Week



Join us in celebrating **National Farmers' Market Week, August 3 - 9, 2025**. A time to recognize the vital role that farmers' markets play in supporting local food systems and increasing access to fresh, nutritious foods.

CIP-WIC Resources & Events

There's still time to sign up for the WIC Data Matching Community of Practice meeting!

The third quarterly meeting of the WIC Data Matching Community of Practice, hosted by MORE WIC!, is approaching on August 12, 2025 at 3:00 PM EDT / 12:00 PM PDT.

Join WIC State and local agencies in a collaborative discussion about models for data sharing and outreach, with a focus on key factors that facilitate or pose barriers to these efforts. The meeting will also feature results from a recent national survey conducted by Johns Hopkins about State agencies' data matching practices.

Staff from WIC agencies at the state and local levels, as well as from their data-matching partner agencies such as Medicaid and SNAP, are welcome to join. Sign up **below** today to receive your meeting invitation if you have not already done so!

The MORE WIC! Project (Matching, Outreach, Referrals for Enrollment in WIC) is led by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in partnership with the National WIC Association and funded through a cooperative agreement with USDA's Food and Nutrition Service.

[Sign Up Here!](#)

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[Register Here!](#)

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Access the group **here** and click "Join" to connect with peers, share best practices, review FMNP resources, and strengthen WIC FMNP together!

Let's continue working together to create a more accessible and impactful WIC FMNP for all families.

Safe Sleep, Sweet Dreams: SIDS Awareness Month

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (or SIDS) is the sudden, unexplained death of an infant under 1 year of age. Share these safe sleep practices with WIC families to help them reduce the risk of SIDS and help ensure babies sleep safely.

- Share a room, not a bed — always place your baby to sleep **alone** in a safety-approved crib, bassinet, or portable play yard. If you use a traditional cradleboard, follow safe sleep practices and check with your WIC clinic for guidance.
- Lay your baby on their **back** for all sleep times. Babies should be flat on their back during naps and nighttime sleep.
- Use a **firm, flat, non-inclined sleep surface** covered only by a fitted sheet. Avoid soft bedding, pillows, crib bumpers, and stuffed toys.
- Keep your baby's **head and face uncovered** while sleeping to prevent overheating. If their chest feels hot, they may be too warm.
- **Avoid tobacco and nicotine exposure** during pregnancy and after birth, **breastfeed** if possible, and stay **up-to-date on immunizations**.

To help guide conversations about safe sleep with families, the American Academy of Pediatrics has developed a suite of materials, including posters, infographics, videos, and social media messages.

[Access the Resources Today!](#)

October is Health Literacy Month!

Health Literacy and Why It Matters!

Health literacy is a person's ability to find, understand, and use health information and services to make informed choices about their health and wellness. Improving health literacy is an important step toward **health equity**—ensuring all WIC families have equitable access to the care and support they need.

Check out these resources from **NWA's Health Equity Champions** to see how WIC is working to create more equitable care for all populations you serve.

- Blog Post - Diane Landy is a WIC professional in West Virginia who is committed to reducing bias, prejudice, and anti-black racism attitudes. As part of this effort, she has created Chef WIC, a character she shared with families in her community through a literacy-based event.
- Enhancing Health Outcomes: The Role of WIC in Improving Health Literacy Recording and Powerpoint - Sonia Gamble and her colleagues at Franklin County WIC (Ohio) presented at the 2024 Nutrition, Education & Breastfeeding Conference on the importance of health literacy in WIC, covering the effects of low health literacy and practical strategies to improve it. Their presentation includes links to resources you can use to support and enrich your health equity training.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month!

A reminder of the importance of breast health across all stages of life. Research shows that breastfeeding not only nurtures infants but also provides long-term health benefits for parents, including lowering the risk of developing breast cancer. This month, we honor survivors, support those in treatment, and encourage conversations about prevention, early detection, and the protective role breastfeeding can play in lifelong breast health.

Finding a lump or discomfort in your breast can be worrying, but you're not alone. Knowing the difference between a clogged milk duct and a possible cancer lump is important for your health and peace of mind. This infographic identifies differences between the two.

Defining Signs

Clogged Duct	Breast Cancer
Lump is small and tender to the touch	Lump is firm to the touch
Red or warm over the lump	Irregular shape
Pain usually improves with massage or warm compress	Usually doesn't cause any pain
Usually clears up within a few days	Doesn't move easily when touched
	May be accompanied by bloody or clear nipple discharge

→ [Bass Cancer Center](#)

Celebrate Breast Cancer Awareness Month with these **delicious pink (berry banana) popsicles** — a fun and tasty way to show support and start the conversation. Grab one, share one, and spread awareness one sweet bite at a time

Berry Banana Popsicle

Ingredients:

- 1 cup Strawberries, diced
- 1 Banana, diced
- 2 cups fat-free yogurt

Directions:

- Stir all ingredients together in a medium bowl.
- Pour mixture into popsicle molds.
- Freeze for at least 6 hours.
- Run molds under hot running water until popsicles can pull out easily and serve.



Makes 8
Popsicles



Preparation:
10 min

wicstrong.com

New CIP-WIC Resources

NEW RELEASE: Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Implementation Toolkit

Fresh Ideas. Stronger Connections. Better Access to Healthy Food.

The National WIC Association (NWA) is thrilled to announce the release of the *Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Implementation Toolkit*! Developed through the three-year initiative *Increasing Access to Healthy Food through Farmers' Markets*, funded by the Elevance Health Foundation, this toolkit is packed with proven strategies to help WIC Agencies strengthen FMNP delivery from the ground up.

This resource builds on the insights from our Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) Landscape Scan Report, which explored how FMNP, electronic FMNP (eFMNP), and Cash Value Benefit (CVB) are working across the country, and uncovered the keys to success.

From engaging farmers and educating participants to boosting redemption, integrating technology, and securing funding, this Toolkit puts practical, field-tested solutions at your fingertips.

Ready to grow your program's impact?

[Access the Full Toolkit Here!](#)

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[Read the Landscape Report Here!](#)

[Read the Full Social Media Toolkit Here!](#)



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Launched this year, this online space will help agencies strengthen FMNP implementation and increase the use of FMNP and WIC Cash Value Benefit (CVB) benefits at farmers’ markets. Members can exchange ideas, access resources, and collaborate on strategies to expand impact and equity.

Access the group here and click “Join” to connect with peers, share best practices, review FMNP resources, and strengthen WIC FMNP together!

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[Join the FMNP Community of Practice Group!](#)



Open CIP-WIC's Research-to-Practice (R2P) Newsletter!

Explore the latest research, where we highlight:

- ✓ Key findings from USDA, NWA, and academic research
- ✓ WIC caseload trends and insights
- ✓ Updates from the member-led Evaluation Committee
- ✓ Research Spotlight

Safe Sleep, Sweet Dreams: SIDS Awareness Month

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (or SIDS) is the sudden, unexplained death of an infant under 1 year of age.

Share these safe sleep practices with WIC families to help them reduce the risk of SIDS and help ensure babies sleep safely.

- Share a room, not a bed — always place your baby to sleep **alone** in a safety-approved crib, bassinet, or portable play yard. If you use a traditional cradleboard, follow safe sleep practices and check with your WIC clinic for guidance.
- Lay your baby on their **back** for all sleep times. Babies should be flat on their back during naps and nighttime sleep.
- Use a **firm, flat, non-inclined sleep surface** covered only by a fitted sheet. Avoid soft bedding, pillows, crib bumpers, and stuffed toys.
- Keep your baby's **head and face uncovered** while sleeping to prevent overheating. If their chest feels hot, they may be too warm.
- **Avoid tobacco and nicotine exposure** during pregnancy and after birth, **breastfeed** if possible, and stay **up-to-date on immunizations**.

Place your baby to sleep safely

Your baby needs only a few things to have a safe, cozy and happy sleep. With just a flat surface in a crib or bassinet, you can create a safe space for your baby to sleep.



Need help?

It's normal for infants to wake up frequently. We know this can be very tiring, but it's temporary. Talk to your pediatrician about challenges you are having. They can help you problem solve.

- Babies should always be placed on their back for sleep. Research shows this is the safest.
- Babies should sleep on a firm sleep surface that does not incline.
- Remove all toys, pillows, blankets and bumpers from the crib.
- It's OK to swaddle a baby, but stop swaddling as soon as they start learning to roll.
- If the baby falls asleep in a car seat, stroller, swing or infant carrier, move them as soon as you can.
- It's dangerous for babies to sleep on a couch, armchair or nursing pillow.
- Try giving your baby a pacifier at nap time and bedtime.
- Room share: Keep the baby's bassinet or crib in your bedroom for at least the first 6 months.

About bed-sharing

Bed-sharing significantly raises a baby's risk of injury or death. The risk is even higher if:

- The baby is younger than 4 months
- The baby was born early or with low birth weight
- A person in the bed is a smoker
- A person in the bed took drugs that make it harder to wake up
- Someone in the bed drank alcohol
- Someone in the bed is not the baby's parent
- The surface is soft (a waterbed, old mattress, sofa, or armchair)
- Pillows or blankets are on the bed



American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



To help guide conversations about safe sleep with families, the American Academy of Pediatrics has developed a suite of materials, including posters, infographics, videos, and social media messages.

[Access the Resources Today!](#)

October is Health Literacy Month!

Health Literacy and Why It Matters!

Health literacy is a person's ability to find, understand, and use health information and services to make informed choices about their health and wellness. Improving health literacy is an important step toward

health equity—ensuring all WIC families have equitable access to the care and support they need.

Check out these resources from **NWA's Health Equity Champions** to see how WIC is working to create more equitable care for all populations you serve.

- Blog Post - Diane Landy is a WIC professional in West Virginia who is committed to reducing bias, prejudice, and anti-black racism attitudes. As part of this effort, she has created Chef WIC, a character she shared with families in her community through a literacy-based event.
- Enhancing Health Outcomes: The Role of WIC in Improving Health Literacy Recording and Powerpoint - Sonia Gamble and her colleagues at Franklin County WIC (Ohio) presented at the 2024 Nutrition, Education & Breastfeeding Conference on the importance of health literacy in WIC, covering the effects of low health literacy and practical strategies to improve it. Their presentation includes links to resources you can use to support and enrich your health equity training.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month!

A reminder of the importance of breast health across all stages of life. Research shows that breastfeeding not only nurtures infants but also provides long-term health benefits for parents, including lowering the risk of developing breast cancer. This month, we honor survivors, support those in treatment, and encourage conversations about prevention, early detection, and the protective role breastfeeding can play in lifelong breast health.

Finding a lump or discomfort in your breast can be worrying, but you're not alone. Knowing the difference between a clogged milk duct and a possible cancer lump is important for your health and peace of mind. This infographic identifies differences between the two.

Defining Signs

Clogged Duct

Lump is small and tender to the touch

Red or warm over the lump

Pain usually improves with massage or warm compress

Usually clears up within a few days

Breast Cancer

Lump is firm to the touch

Irregular shape

Usually doesn't cause any pain

Doesn't move easily when touched

May be accompanied by bloody or clear nipple discharge



[Bass Cancer Center](#)

Celebrate Breast Cancer Awareness Month with these **delicious pink (berry banana) popsicles** — a fun and tasty way to show support and start the conversation. Grab one, share one, and spread awareness one sweet bite at a time

Berry Banana Popsicle

Ingredients:

- 1 cup Strawberries, diced
- 1 Banana, diced
- 2 cups fat-free yogurt

Directions:

- Stir all ingredients together in a medium bowl.
- Pour mixture into popsicle molds.
- Freeze for at least 6 hours.
- Run molds under hot running water until popsicles can pull out easily and serve.



Makes 8 Popsicles



Preparation: 10 min

wicstrong.com

Pregnancy & Infant Loss Awareness Day

October 15th

Losing a baby is never easy—no matter how or when it happens. During such a heartbreaking time, families need to know they are not alone. WIC is here to support pregnant and postpartum parents and their families through every stage, including the unimaginable loss of an infant.

While there is no single solution for healing, the Juneau County Health Department in Wisconsin created a thoughtful brochure designed to guide and support families during this time. If your WIC clinic does not currently have handouts or resources available for families experiencing loss, consider using this brochure as a template or inspiration when creating your own materials.

If someone needs immediate emotional support, please encourage them to contact their local health provider or reach out to a crisis line right away.

CIP-WIC Resources

NEW RELEASE: Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Implementation Toolkit

Fresh Ideas. Stronger Connections. Better Access to Healthy Food.

The National WIC Association (NWA) is thrilled to announce the release of the *Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Implementation Toolkit!* Developed through the three-year initiative *Increasing Access to Healthy Food through Farmers' Markets*, funded by the Elevance Health Foundation, this toolkit is packed with proven strategies to help WIC Agencies strengthen FMNP delivery from the ground up.

This resource builds on the insights from our Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) Landscape Scan Report, which explored how FMNP, electronic FMNP (eFMNP), and Cash Value Benefit (CVB) are working across the country, and uncovered the keys to success.

From engaging farmers and educating participants to boosting redemption, integrating technology, and securing funding, this Toolkit puts practical, field-tested solutions at your fingertips.

Ready to grow your program's impact?

[Access the Full Toolkit Here!](#)

ICYMI: Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Landscape Scan Report with Appendix and Social Media Toolkit!

The National WIC Association is pleased to release the **Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Landscape Scan Report**, complemented by an **Appendix** and a **Social Media Toolkit**.

This comprehensive report and toolkit were developed under the **Increasing Access to Healthy Food through Farmers' Markets initiative**, funded by the **Elevance Health Foundation**.

Employing an equity-focused, mixed-methods approach, this evaluation utilizes data from the NWA's Farmers' Market Landscape Analysis Survey, which features responses from 32 WIC agencies across 27 states, as well as in-depth interviews with 26 WIC stakeholders from six states. By synthesizing both

quantitative and qualitative insights, the report highlights promising practices that aim to enhance program accessibility and improve redemption rates.

The newly added **Appendix** encompasses:

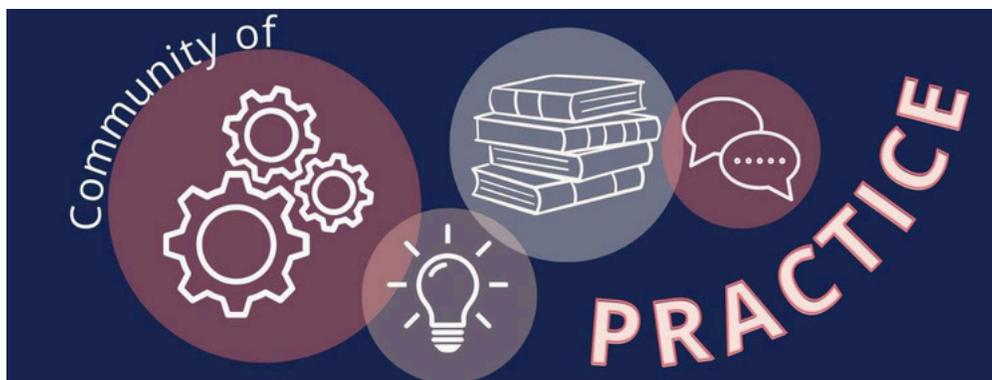
- **2024 NWA Landscape Survey Questions**
- **Interview Guides** used with FMNP non-implementing agencies, high-redemption paper voucher implementers, and high-redemption eFMNP implementers
- **FMNP State Profiles**, derived from data submitted by State Agencies participating in the Landscape Survey

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Join the FMNP Community of Practice Group!

Supporting Native Families in WIC

November is Native American Heritage Month!

To honor this month, WIC staff reflected on how the program supports Indigenous families' cultural traditions and shared their perspectives on how we can continue building trust and respect in their communities. Hear from **Cheri Nemec** (Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council Inc.) and **Amber Granite** (Waimanalo Health Center) below!

“What are some specific strategies or practices your team uses to ensure your presence in the community is seen as supportive and respectful?”

We include tribal language and images in our materials.

- **Cheri Nemec**

Our clinic integrates cultural understanding and our health center's Native Hawaiian values into everything we do. Living these values assures we give the highest level of care to our WIC clients and treat them as our own family.

- **Amber Granite**

“In what ways do you involve tribal leadership or elders in the planning and delivery of services?”

We seek stories from Elders about why breastfeeding is important and include them in conversations and events.

- **Amber Granite**

We look to our Native Hawaiian practitioners as leaders and guides in our work.

- **Cheri Namac**

National Prematurity Awareness Month

Each year, 1 in 10 babies in the U.S. is born before 37 weeks. Preterm birth can lead to challenges such as feeding and breathing issues or developmental delays. But there's good news, WIC helps! Through individualized food packages and nutrition education, WIC has been proven to reduce the risk of premature birth and support healthier pregnancies. Show support for preterm babies by proudly decorating your clinic with purple ribbons, the official color symbolizing the sensitivity and strength of families affected!



CIP-WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Fall Site Visits

This Fall, the CIP-WIC team hit the road to learn how WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) operations are evolving across the country! In September, we visited Minnesota's FMNP to see firsthand how the state successfully transitioned to an e-Solution for farmers to accept WIC benefits, a change that has helped recruit new farmers and expand program reach. To ensure a smooth transition, Minnesota FMNP provides ongoing training to ensure they know how to use the new system effectively and confidently.

NWA staff, Minnesota Department of Agriculture staff, and farmers' market managers during our site visit to the Minnetonka Farmers' Market



In October, our team visited New Orleans, Louisiana, to learn how the state is expanding access to fresh, local foods through the Greux the Good Market Match program. Through this initiative, WIC participants receive \$50 in FMNP benefits for the season, and once those benefits are used, they can receive an additional \$50 from Greux the Good, doubling their total \$100 in benefits for the FMNP season. We also had the opportunity to connect directly with local farmers and enjoy a farm tour, gaining firsthand insight into how these programs strengthen communities and support local agriculture.

NWA Staff Visited Grow Dat Youth Farm in New Orleans, Louisiana



These site visits provided valuable insights to strengthen FMNP implementation efforts nationwide and to share success stories from across the country. Thank you to Minnesota FMNP and Louisiana FMNP for your dedication to improving access to nutritious foods for WIC families!

CIP-WIC Resources

Join the Virtual WIC Technology Community of Practice!



The **WIC Technology Community of Practice**, hosted on the NWA Online Community, brings together WIC staff to share best practices, address challenges, and advance state and local-level initiatives that WIC staff together to share best practices, address challenges, and advance state and local-level initiatives to strengthen coordination between healthcare providers and WIC.

Access the group here and click “Join.”

Over the next two years, NWA will share resources, host webinars, and highlight promising practices to enhance how healthcare providers and WIC share information and referrals.

Whether your WIC agency is looking to implement new streamlined referral and data sharing systems or is a leader in the field, we hope you find this space useful to connect and learn from peers.

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CIP-WIC

Center for

Innovative Practices
in WIC



Happy Holidays from CIP-WIC

On behalf of NWA, the Center for Innovative Practices in WIC (CIP-WIC) team wishes everyone a safe, joyful, and restorative holiday season. Your dedication, creativity, and unwavering commitment continue to make WIC a more equitable, supportive, and empowering experience for families nationwide. We are truly grateful for the compassion and resilience you bring to this work every day.

As we close out the year, we hope you're able to take some well-deserved time to rest, recharge, and celebrate with the people who matter most. Here's to entering the new year with renewed energy and optimism!

CIP-WIC 2025 Highlights

- The **Management Information System (MIS) Modernization Strategy Project** team wrapped up the first year of discovery research on the current MIS landscape and presented findings at NWA's Technology, Innovation and Vendor Management conference in Minneapolis.



- NWA launched the ***Strengthening Information Exchange between WIC and Healthcare Providers*** initiative to support WIC agencies in streamlining systems for receiving referrals and medical data from healthcare providers. NWA conducted a landscape analysis to identify best practices (report coming in 2026!) and launched the WIC Technology Community of Practice, where WIC staff can share resources and lessons learned.
- The **Advancing Health Equity to Achieve Diversity and Inclusion in WIC (AHEAD) 3.0** project team conducted 9 focus groups with 36 WIC participants to understand the WIC participant journey. The focus groups uncovered key experiences related to awareness, application and enrollment, participation and critical communication, benefit usage, and program retention and certification.
- The **2025 Multi-State WIC Participant Satisfaction Survey** included participation from 27 WIC Agencies and was offered to WIC participants in four languages. Across all participating Agencies, we received more than 56,000 responses—our largest sample to date!
- The **Increasing Access to Healthy Food through Farmers' Markets Initiative** has made big strides in 2025! NWA released a Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) Landscape Scan Report, which helped support the development of the FMNP Social Media Toolkit and FMNP Implementation Toolkit. We hosted a hands-on WIC workshop, presented at three conferences, led two webinars, and launched the WIC FMNP Community of Practice—all to strengthen FMNPs and boost use of FMNP benefits and Cash Value Benefits at farmers' markets.



Pre-conference workshop attendees and NWA staff after a successful and engaging FMNP workshop!

Highlights from the 2025 Virtual Nutrition Education & Breastfeeding Conference!



Last month, NWA was joined by a little over 500 of you during our annual Nutrition Education & Breastfeeding Conference! It was 2 days worth of learning, connecting, and a space to continue setting the tone for WIC and all that it does for families in every state.

ICYMI: Hanna Griffin (CIP-WIC), Nicole Acosta (CIP-WIC), and Rose Hooks (Comms) presented on social media best practices in relation to WIC FMNP in the session titled, “Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program: Social Media Best Practices and Strategies.” Access the on-demand recording here!

Learning Lab Opportunity for WIC Staff

You're invited to attend the University of Minnesota's January Learning Lab opportunity! Details below:

Topic: Peer Consultation Open Space: Bring topics of interest to discuss with your peers!

Date: Thursday, January 29, 2026

Choose your session: 1:00 p.m. CT or 5:00 p.m. CT

During this Learning Lab, you will:

- Bring your workforce's topic areas of interest and collaboratively create the agenda
- Identify the most pressing issues impacting the WIC workforce
- Generate creative, innovative ideas to address the identified WIC workforce challenges
- Share knowledge and best practices with your peers

All WIC staff are encouraged to attend.

Don't miss this chance to be part of a new movement in WIC workforce learning.

Click [here](#) to register for the 1:00 p.m. CT Learning Lab, or click [here](#) to register for the 5:00 p.m. CT Learning Lab. Let's build this learning space together — because ***you matter***.

[Register for 1 pm CT Learning Lab](#)

[Register for 5 pm CT Learning Lab](#)

MIS Modernization Strategy Project Update

The WIC Management Information System (MIS) Modernization Strategy project is a four-year cooperative agreement between the USDA Food and Nutrition Service and the National WIC Association (NWA), in partnership with Nava Public Benefit Corporation and Code for America. The project is comprehensively assessing the WIC MIS to develop a forward-looking national strategy.

Earlier this year, NWA released a project overview that provided a vision for a modern MIS and answered frequently asked questions about the project. Now, as the project team wrapped up the first year of the project, the team is excited to share an update on the progress made to date and what lies ahead.

Year 1 Progress

- Completed initial discovery research on the current MIS landscape, including surveys and interviews with WIC State and local agencies, participants, MIS providers, and other government programs
- Sought ongoing feedback from NWA committees and workgroups
- Used discovery findings to develop a set of characteristics of an ideal MIS and action areas for MIS modernization
- Shared progress and findings with the WIC community at two NWA conferences and a webinar

What's Next

- The team will present a webinar on **Thursday, January 22nd, 3-4pm ET** to summarize year 1 findings and answer the WIC community's questions. **Register here!**
- In 2026, the team will publish a report on discovery research findings and opportunities for modernization.
- Over the next year, the team will co-develop with FNS a near-term transitional plan for improvements to current MIS and a long-term MIS planning, product, and market strategy.

For more information or questions on the project, please email cipwic@nwica.org.

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the view or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

Share this warm and comforting recipe from Virginia WIC with your participants to ring in the chilly season ahead!

Gnocchi with Winter Vegetables Sheet Pan Supper



Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2.5 c butternut squash diced into ½ in. cubes
- 2 parsnips cut into ¼ in. cubes
- 3 c brussel sprouts, quartered
- 16 oz pkg potato gnocchi
- 2 c chopped Swiss chard
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp onion powder
- 2 tsp Italian seasoning
- 1 tsp poultry seasoning
- Salt/pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees
2. Add squash, parsnips, Brussel sprouts and gnocchi to a large rimmed baking sheet
3. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with the garlic powder, onion powder, Italian seasoning, poultry seasoning, salt, and pepper
4. Roast in oven for 30 min until veggies are tender and caramelized
5. Remove from oven and add Swiss chard. Toss to combine.
6. Place back in oven for 5-10 min until chard is wilted
7. Top with cheese and enjoy!



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 - ✓ NWA Update on Research Requests
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 - ✓ Requests to Spotlight Your Work
-