Thank You of the Week

Your commitment to mothers and young children powerfully impacts our nation’s families. Here is one WIC participant’s reflection on the good work that you do:

“I’ve used the WIC program for each of my four children. It has helped tremendously with getting benefits each month for my kids, whether it’s fresh fruit and veggies in the produce section, to help with getting cans of formula for my baby. It’s also a great place for resources for things. I always appreciate the Farmers’ Market. I recommend anyone who has become pregnant or has children under the age of 5 to see if they can qualify for WIC because they help so many families each month.”

—WIC participant, Ohio
**Legislative Update**

**NWA Elevates WIC in Child Nutrition Congressional Roundtable**
Last Thursday, NWA’s President & CEO Douglas Greenaway participated in a roundtable on Capitol Hill to engage members of the House Education and Labor Committee in conversation around child nutrition issues. The bipartisan roundtable – sponsored by Chairman Bobby Scott (D-VA) and Ranking Member Virginia Foxx (R-NC) – was an opportunity for members of Congress, including recently elected freshmen, to engage key child nutrition advocates about opportunities to improve and streamline programs like WIC. NWA was grateful to provide remarks at the roundtable and meet with members of the Committee at such a crucial time for child nutrition programs.

**New Effort to Lower Federal Poverty Limit**
Last week, the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) announced that it is reevaluating how the Federal Poverty Guidelines are calculated. The Guidelines, which have been in place for decades, are an essential tool in determining income eligibility across a variety of federal programs and benefits, including WIC.

OMB is specifically evaluating whether it should alter the metric used to calculate inflation over time. Should OMB elect to adopt a different metric, it may lead to the poverty level rising at a slower rate, leaving struggling families without access to vital supports and services and engendering greater confusion about eligibility limits.

This is the latest of several attempts to undermine the resources availability to families. NWA will continue to update members as OMB continues its deliberations and inform of any opportunities to weigh in on the process.

**House Moves Forward on Appropriations**
In the absence of a broader spending agreement, the House is moving forward with individual appropriations bills using temporary top-line numbers. The temporary House numbers are slightly higher than FY 2019 levels, anticipating a budget deal that will invest additional funding in non-defense discretionary programs. As a result, the House Agriculture Appropriations bill is allotted an additional $1.075 billion in discretionary spending.

Last week, the House Appropriations Committee began consideration of several appropriations bills; however, an Agriculture Appropriations bill has not yet been presented for consideration. Most notably, the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill has moved forward with an additional $10 billion in discretionary investments for domestic programs.

The House-approved bills will still need to be reconciled with the Senate after a final budget agreement is reached. A budget deal remains elusive, especially as the White House has signaled that it would prefer a year-long continuing resolution in order to put off spending debates until after the 2020 elections. NWA will continue to update members as the negotiations continue and an Agriculture Appropriations bill is unveiled in the House.

**House Committee to Consider Maternal Mortality Prevention**
On Thursday, the House Committee on Ways and Means will consider strategies to prevent maternal...
mortality, specifically focusing on persistent racial disparities and efforts to address the social determinants of health. The United States currently has the highest rates of maternal deaths in the developed world, and black women are nearly four times as likely to die of birth complications as their white counterparts.

Previously, Rep. Robin Kelly (D-IL) and Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL) had reintroduced the Mothers and Offspring Mortality and Morbidity Awareness (MOMMA) Act. The MOMMA Act takes steps to standardize data collection, enhance culturally competent care, and facilitate best practices in reducing maternal deaths. Most notably, the MOMMA Act will also expand postpartum coverage for women—including one-year eligibility for Medicaid and two-year eligibility for WIC. NWA has endorsed the MOMMA Act and is working to elevate its role in addressing the maternal mortality crisis.

House Committee Weighs National Paid Family Leave Policy

Last Wednesday, the House Committee on Ways and Means held a hearing on paid family and medical leave. With momentum building on this issue in Congress, the hearing drew bipartisan praise as legislators grappled with a variety of proposals.

Most Democrats have coalesced around the FAMILY Act—sponsored by Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY). The FAMILY Act would guarantee 12 weeks of paid family leave each year, funded through employee and employer contributions. This model builds upon state-level programs implemented in California, New Jersey, and Rhode Island. Republican plans, such as Sen. Marco Rubio’s (R-FL) New Parents Act, have put forth voluntary paid family leave programs that would require employees to postpone claiming Social Security benefits. NWA has called for a comprehensive paid family leave plan that will support the needs of WIC mothers and has endorsed the FAMILY Act.

As Congress weighs competing proposals, states are continuing to push forward with their own plans. Last week, the New Hampshire legislature authorized a state-level paid family leave policy similar to the FAMILY Act. The plan was vetoed by Governor Chris Sununu (R-NH). Only six states and the District of Columbia have enacted paid family leave policies.

House Advances New Disaster Relief Bill

Last Friday, House Democrats advanced another attempt at providing disaster relief to states affected by hurricanes and flooding, including Georgia, Alabama, Texas, Florida, and Nebraska. The bill is the latest attempt to move forward the process, which has been held up over White House opposition to increased support for Puerto Rico. 34 Republicans broke with the President to support the relief package.

House Democrats have prioritized disaster aid, and it was one of the first bills considered in the new Congress. Among other recovery needs, the bill advances funding for Puerto Rico’s block-grant Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP). NAP funding has been depleted for several months, with benefits reduced for thousands of families in need of nutrition assistance.

White House opposition has made negotiations in Congress quite difficult, and the Senate remains in a stalemate as legislators work to hammer out a compromise.
USDA Researchers Take Steps to Oppose Relocation Plan

For months, USDA has signaled that it intends to relocate the Economic Research Service (ERS) to a new location outside of the National Capital Region. Even after Congress held hearings and included report language that called for a halt to the move, Secretary Perdue is still moving forward – issuing a shortlist of location sites on May 3.

The proposed relocation – compounded with efforts to reduce the fields of research conducted by ERS – have led to attrition as researchers are leaving the federal agency. Now, ERS employees have voted to unionize in their latest attempt to prevent the relocation plan and maintain the integrity of the agency’s research.

ERS is the independent research agency primarily responsible for food security and nutrition research, as well as program evaluation for WIC, SNAP, and other nutrition programs. The nutrition portfolio is just one of many research focuses, including crop production, food safety, and trade. NWA has led other nutrition organizations in raising awareness about the value of ERS research and the harmful impacts of the relocation policy on the retention of researchers and the capacity of the agency to continue to conduct vital nutrition research.

New Proposal Would Limit Mixed-Status Families’ Access to Housing

Last Friday, the Administration issued a new proposed rule that restricts housing assistance to families with some immigrant members. Currently, housing benefits are limited to only citizens, but the government will prorate benefits to support citizens in mixed-status families. The new proposed rule would deem mixed-status families ineligible and increase verification on all families seeking assistance. Early estimates suggest that as many as 55,000 children could be evicted from their homes if this rule change was to take effect. The public comment period will remain open until July 9.

Action of the Month

No one knows WIC better than WIC staff. Your voice is incredibly valuable and can help educate policymakers on the importance of WIC.

Invite your local, state, or federal legislators to visit a local WIC clinic, which happened recently in Houston. US Rep. Sylvia Garcia of Texas’ 29th Congressional District visited the clinic of NWA member Zahra Koopaei on April 16. Koopaei, the WIC Bureau Chief in the Houston Department of Health and Human Services, was presented with NWA’s Leadership Award for Advocacy Surrounding Public Charge earlier this month. As she hosted the representative, Koopaei made sure Garcia understood how public charge was affecting the clinic’s participants.

A site visit by a policy maker is one of the best ways to demonstrate what is happening on the ground in their jurisdiction and to raise the challenges you are facing, whether it is public charge, clinic access, or other issues. If you have the capacity, invite the media to cover the visit as well, as Koopaei’s clinic did (see the coverage - in Spanish - by the Univision affiliate in Houston).

See more about hosting visits in NWA’s Contacting Elected Officials fact sheet, part of the larger Advocacy Toolkit.
Grants Available to Support Lobbying Activities Aimed at Helping Kids Grow up Healthy

Voices for Healthy Kids, a joint initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and American Heart Association (AHA), is offering grants to fund strategic advocacy campaigns focused on an issue that will help kids grow up healthy. Applications must be specific to an individual campaign for public policy change in one state, local, or tribal geographic location and address one of the policy areas supported by the initiative. Voices for Healthy Kids is allocating grants up to $250,000 per award for a period of up to one year. Voices for Healthy Kids has a two-step application process. Applicants are asked to submit a letter of intent by June 7 to be considered. All letters of intent will be reviewed, and select applicants will be invited to submit a full application by July 26. Campaigns aimed at historically marginalized communities and lead by organizations of those communities are highly encouraged to apply. More information can be found here.

Observe National Women’s Health Week May 12-18

National Women’s Health Week (NWHW) will take place May 12-18. A weeklong health observance coordinated by the US Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women’s Health (OWH), NWHW kicks off each year on Mother’s Day. NWHW empowers women over 18 years of age to make their health a priority and encourages them to take the following steps to improve their physical and mental health and lower their risks of certain diseases:

- Visit a doctor or nurse for a well-woman visit (checkup), preventive screenings, and vaccines.
- Get active.
• Eat healthy.
• Pay attention to mental health, including getting enough sleep and managing stress.
• Practice safe behaviors, such as quitting smoking, not texting while driving, and taking steps to protect yourself from sexually transmitted infections.

Some NWHW promotional activities and event ideas that you can use in your clinics:
• Download, print, or share the Your Guide to Breastfeeding with the women you serve.
• Print and share fact sheets from womenshealth.gov that cover important women’s health topics.
• Share social media posts promoting NWHW.
• Invite a local fitness instructor to teach a free yoga or fitness class.
• Host a healthy cooking class.
• Include NWHW messaging in newsletters or email updates.
• Host a giveaway in honor of NWHW. Work with a local business, such as a coffee shop or boutique, to donate a product, gift card, or discount to use as the giveaway item.
• Organize a lunchtime “stroller walk,” where women are invited to bring their babies, meet other moms, and get some exercise.
• Start a friendly competition. Ask women to track their steps, water intake, or other healthy activities.
• Create a National Women’s Health Week bulletin board that invites women to share where they are on their health journey and where they want to go. The board can be titled: National Women’s Health Week: My Health Journey.” Accompany this activity by sharing social media messages through your channels that encourage women to share their health journey stories or their health goals using the #NWHW and #FindYourHealth hashtags.

HPRIL Request for Proposals for Improving Retention of Children in WIC

A partnership between USDA and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health is requesting proposals from local WIC agencies, Indian Tribal Organization (ITO) WIC programs, and US Territory WIC programs for projects that will identify, implement, and evaluate innovative tools to improve retention of children ages 1-4 in WIC. The partnership is called the USDA/Hopkins Participant Research Innovation Laboratory for Enhancing WIC Services (HPRIL).

Projects will focus specifically on using WIC management information systems (MIS): 1) to help identify the programs’ local problem with child retention; and 2) to evaluate the impact of selected innovative tools on retention.

HPRIL will provide three to five competitively selected grantees with up to $150,000 each over 18 months as well as implementation and evaluation technical assistance throughout the project period. Grants will be awarded to those agencies (or groups of agencies) that most successfully demonstrate the potential of their innovative tool to improve child retention in WIC, the feasibility of implementation and evaluation in their agency, and the likelihood of successful replication at other agencies, clinics, and vendor environments. Prior research and evaluation experience is NOT required.
Applications are due on or before Friday, May 24, 2019. Awards will be announced by July 12, and agencies can choose to start their project as early as August 1. Please visit the [project website](#) for more information about the project and how to apply.

HPRIL Proposal Development Technical Assistance Webinars
The USDA/Hopkins Participant Research Innovation Laboratory for Enhancing WIC Services (HPRIL) will be providing the following optional live technical-assistance webinars for questions about their recent RFP and related proposal development. All sessions will be recorded.

- May 15, 3:00-4:00 PM ET: Open Q&A session [Register](#)

Previous webinars ([recordings available](#)):
- Attachments Q&A session
- Local agency context Q&A session
- Project goals/objectives, description of proposed innovative tool, and implementation plan Q&A session
- Evaluation approach Q&A session
- April 24, 3:00-4:00 PM ET: Timeline and budget Q&A session
- Open Q&A session

**Scholarship Opportunity for the 2019 NWA Technology & Vendor Management Conference**

NWA’s Member Benefit Fund Committee is offering scholarships to the [2019 Biennial NWA WIC Technology, Program Integrity, and Vendor Management Education & Networking Conference and Exhibits](#) for NWA members who are WIC staff. Scholarships will cover conference registration, travel, and hotel costs for recipients. The deadline for applications is Friday, May 31, 2019, by close of business. [Apply by downloading this form today](#).

**Questions?** Please email [memberbenefitfund@nwica.org](mailto:memberbenefitfund@nwica.org), or call Emily Gilcher, NWA’s Manager, Membership Engagement, at 202-719-2606

**Submit an Abstract for 2019 NWA WIC Technology & Vendor Management Conference**

NWA’s biennial [WIC Technology, Program Integrity, and Vendor Management Education & Networking Conference and Exhibits](#) has been the most important venue for sharing technological and program-integrity innovations, EBT progress, and directions for WIC’s future. We invite you to share your work with other members of the WIC community at this year’s event in Oklahoma City September 17-19, 2019. By submitting your abstract for consideration for the conference, you become part of the momentum to establish, discuss, and promote WIC success and research on a national scale.

NWA conferences are a friendly and supportive environment for sharing your successes, and our abstract-submission process is straightforward. Information on the call for abstracts can be found on [NWA's website](#). For additional information on how to write a strong abstract, check out [this](#) helpful resource. In addition, NWA staff are always happy to provide feedback on your idea for an abstract; we are here to help! For more information, contact Shameka Jennings, NWA’s Director of Education and Events, at [sjennings@nwica.org](mailto:sjennings@nwica.org).
All abstracts are due by Sunday, May 12, 2019, and will be reviewed by the Conference Planning Committee. Interested in joining the conference planning committee? Apply here.

By sharing the work of NWA members and partners, we are confident that this year’s conference will have the most engaging and valuable content yet.

**Be Part of the Next Cohort of NWA’s Leadership Academy**

![CLIMB the CAREER LADDER in WIC](image)

NWA’s Leadership Academy will give you a leg up.

A reminder that NWA is accepting registrations for the next cohort of the online Leadership Academy (LA). Courses will begin in July. View this webinar to learn more about the program. Please contact Patti Hauser at phauser18@gmail.com for information on program content. For questions regarding registration logistics, please contact Emily Gilcher at egilcher@nwica.org.

**Join the Leadership Academy Development Advisory Committee**

NWA currently has two vacancies on its Leadership Academy Development Advisory Committee; one for a State Director and one for a State Nutrition Coordinator; or their designees. This committee is charged with reviewing, developing, and recommending content and strategies to grow and enhance the Academy. **Current Roster:**

- Celia Nabor, Chair
- Vacant, State Agency Section
- Vacant, Nutrition Services Section
- Dawn Ballossingh, Local Agency Section
- Manon Taylor, Native American Coalition
- Arilede Miano, At-Large
- Barbara Stahnke, At-Large
- Heather Elmore, At-Large
Apply today!

See other committee and task force vacancies [here](#).

**Upcoming Webinars**

A list of all upcoming NWA webinars can be found on the Online Community as well as on our website [here](#). We also send out an Association Update to all NWA members with an updated webinar list on a biweekly basis. An updated schedule of webinars is also included here every week in *Monday Morning Report*. Webinars with a * below are new this week.

We offer webinars most Thursdays at 3:00 pm ET for around an hour. See below for a schedule of upcoming webinars. Webinar archives are available to NWA members only. To access the archives, log in to your NWA account on [www.nwica.org](http://www.nwica.org). Go to “My Account” > “Go to Online Community” > “Webinar Archives,” which is located on the left menu bar. CEUs are available for most webinars.

Important: To attend NWA webinars, you must register in advance. The links below take you directly to registration. Upon completing your registration, you will receive a confirmation email. If you don’t see that email, please check your spam/junk mail folder. We strongly recommend you add sqldba@icohere.com to your email safe senders list to be sure you get your confirmation and other important emails about the webinar.

- **eWIC in the Community: Innovative WIC and Headstart Collaboration webinar** on May 16 at 3:00 pm ET. This webinar will highlight an innovative collaboration between WIC and Headstart to increase and improve retention of children over the age of one on WIC; provide information on the planning, implementation and evaluation of this collaborative effort; and provide information on the benefits of collaborating with community partners.

- **Military Family Advisory Network Introduction and Update webinar** on May 23 at 3:00 PM ET. The Military Family Advisory Network will share the history of the organization, their recent survey results, and the formation of the Military Family Food Insecurity Coalition. Presenters: Shannon Razsadin, Shelley Kimball, and Taylor Miller.

- **Do Incentives Aid WIC Retention? Three Minnesota Pilot Studies webinar** on May 30, at 3:00 pm ET. Many children in WIC drop off between 12-24 months. To increase retention, Hunger Impact Partners funded three WIC pilot sites to provide incentives. Participation data were compared with same-aged children at the same agency within a selected period. Lessons learned included: 1) incentives in the form of diapers and gift cards may be useful at retaining participants after one year but were not effective in preventing drop off at 12 months; 2) gift cards are easier to dispense than diapers and are well accepted; and 3) WIC foods are valued more than incentives or services.

- **Workplace Breastfeeding - A Policy, System, Environmental (PSE) Change Approach and Impacts on State Employees webinar** on June 6 at 3:00 pm ET. Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants and can reduce the risk for some health conditions for mother and child. Mothers are the fastest-growing segment of the US labor force, and workplace breastfeeding should be a priority among employers. State and federal laws advocate the importance of breastfeeding and rights of mothers to breastfeed. The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) updated its workplace breastfeeding program through a policy-, system-,
and environmental-change approach beginning in 2013, collecting data from annual health climate surveys and ongoing user-participation and satisfaction surveys administered through Qualtics/Survey Monkey, respectively, to gather data on duration of exclusively breastfed babies (EBF) of mothers participating, total duration of use of environmental supports, satisfaction of use, perceived organizational support and employee awareness and utilization of a workplace breastfeeding policy. With efforts created around PSE changes, participants have received both tangible and intangible benefits.

- **How to Motivate and Counsel Pregnant Smokers webinar** on June 13 (rescheduled from May 9) at 3:00 PM ET. Pregnancy is a life stage when women are motivated to attempt new health behaviors. Pregnant smokers may look to WIC staff for help with their smoking quit attempt. They rely upon WIC educators and staff to teach them how to set a quit date, fight cravings and break habits, and quit for good. This session will describe how some WIC clinics have successfully implemented the evidence-based Smoking Cessation and Reduction in Pregnancy Treatment (SCRIPT) program. SCRIPT is a brief, effective intervention that provides techniques and tools to pregnant smokers who wish to quit. The SCRIPT program components include counseling, a patient workbook and the use of "Commit To Quit," a DVD/digital download. SCRIPT builds upon the framework of 5As tobacco counseling: Ask, Advise, Assess, Assist, and Arrange.

- **Let’s Dig It: How WIC Gardens Turn the Participant Experience Inside Out, Transforming Nutrition Education, Building Communities, and Reclaiming Healthy Behaviors webinar** on October 10 at 3:00 pm ET. Looking to engage participants in nutrition education? Want to attract new WIC clients and build community? How can participants access more fresh fruits and vegetables? The answer is: garden, garden, garden! While WIC and fresh fruit and vegetable gardens are a natural pairing sometimes the process to start a garden is not clear and sometimes hard to sustain. This session will provide tools to agencies considering starting and sustaining a garden and discuss benefits of WIC gardens. We will examine existing gardens that are recently started, well-established, or somewhere in between from across the U.S. as real live WIC garden case studies. So get ready to "dig in!"

Missed a webinar? Check out our Webinar Archives tab in the NWA online community for all past webinars. Need help accessing the online community? Email webinars@nwica.org.

Webinars by others for the WIC community:

**Messaging to Advance Health Equity in Public Policy webinar** on June 12 from 3:00 PM to 4:30 PM ET, the second webinar in the National Academy of Medicine’s **Culture of Health Program Webinar Series**. The National Academies report, **Communities in Action: Pathways to Health Equity**, concluded that health equity is crucial and health inequity is costly. Communities across the country are deploying action strategies to reduce health inequities. However, it can be challenging to effectively communicate and message the value of health equity and ongoing efforts to diverse stakeholders. **Voices for Healthy Kids**, a joint initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the American Heart Association, developed a messaging guide that provides custom-built messages and insights for policy advocates to further the advancement of health equity. This guide provides an overview of shared values and the need to harness these values in mobilizing decision makers to take action. Experts will provide research-based tips and techniques for advancing health equity in public policy. A case study will illustrate how
value-based messaging has proven effective in creating common ground while unifying communities and decision makers to create needed change.

Career Corner

- Breastfeeding Coordinator, LA
- WIC Vendor Manager, LA
- Senior Nutritionist, MA
- Program Director, MA
- Registered Dietitian/Nutritionist - WIC, AK
- Public Health Nutrition Consultant, FL
- WIC Coordinator/Registered Dietitian, OR
- Nutrition Education Specialist, AZ
- Nutritionist, AZ
- Public Health Dietitian, AZ
- WIC Program Manager/Public Health Dietitian, AZ

Current opportunities are also available on our WIC Job Postings page.

NWA Calendar

- July 9-11, 2019 | NINAWC Conference | Cherokee, NC
- September 17-19, 2019 | Biennial NWA WIC Technology, Program Integrity, and Vendor Management Education & Networking Conference and Exhibits | Oklahoma City, OK