

WWA NEWS BREAK



In This Newsletter :

- pg 1 WWA Updates
- pg 2 Advocacy
- pg 3 Professional Development
- pg 4 WWA Member Call to Action & Local Agency Spotlight
- pg 5 New Board Members
- pg 6 Annual Membership Meeting & Members Discussion
- pg 7 Conference Summaries
- pg 8 WWA Board Info

NWA Membership Information



Did you know all Wisconsin WIC staff are members of the National WIC Association? Here to [log in](#).

NWA has an online Member Community where you can connect and share with other WIC staff across the country and access webinars and other resources. Access the online member community [here](#). NWA website and Online Member Community use the same login information.

WWA Updates

Annual Fall In-Person WWA Board Meeting

On October 22nd, the WWA Board met for the annual in-person Fall Board meeting on the campus of the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point.

The meeting began with meet and greet; new, continuing and exiting board members shared about themselves and their "WWA Why." Next the team jumped into 2026 planning, committee overview and Executive Board selection, as well as new team photos with Kristina Ingrouille, a previous WWA Board member.

Kari Malone from the State WIC Office joined the meeting via Zoom to share a message about leadership with the state of WIC and the importance of a State WIC Association.

The group shared lunch at Debot, UWSPs campus dining hall. This visit across campus included a tour from the Dining Service's Registered Dietitian, Jennifer Hanlon. She shared about her position, how food is managed for college students as well as breastfeeding friendly practices on campus.

After lunch, the board met with WWA Member and WIC Director Ashley Chrisinger. Ashley discussed the importance of board engagement and connection and helped the team complete a SWOT analysis.

Board members left the meeting with a renewed sense of community and a better understanding of their roles not only on the board, but in WWA as a whole.

Board positions are recruited in July each year. Please reach out to WWA if you are interested in future participation in our board.



Advocacy Opportunities

Lobbying* Opportunity

***reminder- lobbying activities are not to be completed during work hours**

TELL CONGRESS: Protect Women, Infants, and Children

A prolonged federal government shutdown puts babies and young children at risk. Make your voice heard! Contact your members of Congress today to urge bipartisan action to pass a government funding bill ensuring no disruptions to the WIC program. [Take Action Now!](#)

Contact Governor Tony Evers: request to provide temporary state funding for WIC. Visit the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Action Center [here](#).

I urge your office to make available temporary state funding to keep WIC operating until Congress passes a government spending bill...

Save the Date: 2026 NWA Virtual Policy Conference and Hill Day

The National Policy Conference runs from February 24–26, 2026, and is NWA's annual forum to explore emerging and pressing WIC policy issues, strengthen leadership skills, and prepare for effective WIC advocacy at the local level — including topics for Hill Day visits.

The conference concludes with NWA's Annual Capitol Hill Education Day on Thursday, February 26, offering members the opportunity to virtually engage with Congressional leaders and their staff about the importance of WIC's services.

All WIC staff are encouraged to participate in Hill Day, especially in meetings with legislators from their own districts. WWA will share meeting details as they are confirmed. WWA Scholarships are available to support participation in this event. Apply by January 16, 2026.

Scholarships Available!

[Apply here!](#)

WIC Action Network

NWA holds a monthly call the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 2:30pm CST, sharing the latest updates on WIC Policy, legislative activity and advocacy opportunities. Meetings are open to all WWA/NWA members. [Don't miss out – register today!](#)

Find your Congressional District Representatives and Senators [here](#).



*Lobbying activity, must complete outside of worktime.

INVITE YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS OR CONGRESSIONAL STAFF FOR A WIC CLINIC VISIT

NWA is here to help you with resources for your visits. NWA has a recorded webinar available to members so you can learn effective strategies for organizing these visits, engaging clinic staff, and using personal stories to educate Members of Congress on the importance of sustained support for WIC.

Learn more:
bit.ly/wicedu



HELP US COLLECT WIC MILITARY FAMILY STORIES

NWA is leading an advocacy campaign to collect stories from WIC staff and military families. Help share the campaign with your participants!

Spread the word:
bit.ly/wicmilitary



Professional Development

**2025 NWA
Nutrition
Education &
Breastfeeding
Conference**



Engage, Inspire,
Energize:
**Nourishing
Generations**



NOVEMBER 5-6, 2025
VIRTUAL

Virtual NWA Nutrition Education & Breastfeeding Conference

Last
Call For
Applications!

WWA is accepting scholarship applications ASAP to attend the virtual Nutrition Education and Breastfeeding Conference. Over two days, participants will:

- Expand clinical expertise through case studies, protocols, and the latest research on breastfeeding and nutrition
- Gain practical tools for culturally responsive counseling, managing feeding challenges, and supporting families through postpartum transitions
- Build leadership skills in workforce development, team management, and fostering inclusive and resilient workplaces
- Connect with peers virtually to exchange best practices and spark new collaborations

Attendees will be alerted of their selection by 11/4/2025.

Apply here!

Lunch & Learn Series

WWA and the Waisman Center presented the final session in the educational series about the work WWA Members do in WIC. Recordings can be found on the WWA Continuing Education page.

Have ideas for a new education series next year? Email WWA with topics!



Waisman Center

Advancing knowledge of human development, developmental disabilities, and neurodegenerative diseases.

Scholarship Opportunities

Scholarships are available for WWA members to pursue professional development opportunities that impact WIC.

Apply for scholarships [here](#).

Scholarships can be used towards WIC sponsored and non-WIC sponsored events. Below are some organizations that put on continuing education that would fit the scholarship requirements.

If you have questions about scholarships, please email WWA at wic.wi.association@gmail.com.



**National WIC
Association**



**Academy of Nutrition
and Dietetics**



WALC
WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION
OF LACTATION PRACTITIONERS

WWA Member Call to Action

Annual Membership Survey

As a WWA member, the association wants to hear from you! How are we doing and what can the board do to help you feel better engaged? The survey will close **11/30/2025**. Please consider completing the annual WWA membership survey for your chance to win a \$20 WWA Apparel Store!

**Complete Membership
Survey Here!**

WWA Committee Spotlight - Connection

The Connection Committee oversees strategic communications that promote WWA's mission and increase member engagement. It is also responsible for ensuring each WIC region is represented on the WWA board. The Connection Committee is seeking motivated members interested in developing or sharpening their professional skills to help:

- Develop and maintain the WWA website
- Write and distribute quarterly newsletters
- Promote current news and events through Facebook
- Recruit At-Large and Regional Representatives
- Survey members about their experience annually

Interested members can reach out to WWA via [email](#).

Join a WWA Committee!

WWA has four committees supporting different aspects of the association. Please visit the [WWA Committees page](#) to learn about them and which one would be a good fit for you! All the committees are currently accepting new members. If interested in joining a committee, please sign-up [here](#).

WWA WIC Apparel Online Store



WWA added a new tab to the website called "Apparel" to make access to the sale easier. Thank you to all of the projects who have already ordered from the sale. New items will be added this month.

Interested in something else? Please email [WWA](#) and we will do our best to add!



Local Agency Spotlight - Grow with WIC

Bay Area WIC (Ashland) hosted its 2nd Grow with WIC event in July. WIC families learned about planting vegetables and were able to take one home to grow and harvest from and taste some new vegetables. WIC staff issued FMNP vouchers and public health programs were available to share their services. Planting materials were sponsored by a local hospital through a grant.



What has been going on at your agency? Please email advocacy, community events, or agency milestones to be in the Spotlight for the next WWA Newsletter!

Pictures L to R: Watering newly planted vegetables before taking home; fresh veggies for families to try; WIC staff Amanda with sign thanking sponsors of event; kids enjoying the warm weather with chalk activities.

Welcome New Board Members

**Marlena Oechsner, At-Large Regional Representative**

Washington Ozaukee County WIC - Breastfeeding Peer Counselor

WIC is such a wonderful organization and I feel so fortunate to be a part of a great team at my local project, but also as part of the WWA Board. There is great collaboration between members and it is always beneficial to share knowledge and insight into the trends in WIC and what other projects are experiencing. Learning from others on the board and being able to support members on my own team with what I have learned has been so rewarding. If I wasn't a WIC superstar, I would maybe be able to catch up on my "to be read" pile of books...maybe...

**Jessica Sepers, At-Large Regional Representative**

NEW Community Clinic - WIC Director

I've been the WIC Director at NEW Community Clinic for a little over a year. Before moving to Wisconsin, I served as a Health Officer in Nebraska and as a WIC Director prior to that. I'm excited to join the WWA Board, learn from others, and help advocate for this outstanding program and the people it serves. Outside of work, I enjoy quilting and exploring state parks with my husband and our two dogs, Gus and Bailey.

**Laura Tourdot, At-Large Regional Representative**

Sauk County WIC - Intake/Health Screener

I've been with WIC for 15 years, first as a Breastfeeding Counselor & then in my current role starting 10 years ago. As a former WIC participant myself, I know firsthand the incredible difference this program makes in a family's life & my personal journey has given me a unique lens of the families we serve. I look forward to championing for this fantastic program & the families it empowers. And if I wasn't a WIC superstar, I would probably be doing something art-oriented, as I started my college career as an art student at UW-Stout.

**Robyn Voge, Southern Regional Representative**

Juneau & Adams County WIC - WIC Director

I have been working in WIC for 5 ½ years, 3 years in my current role. In my life outside of WIC I love being outside and can usually be found running, hiking, kayaking, or wrestling with the weeds in my flower beds when the weather is warm. I have 4 kids and 7 awesome grandkids that I love to spoil. I am excited to be joining the WWA board and representing the southern region. I am looking forward to learning more about advocacy and using our collective voices to support the WIC program and the people we serve. If I wasn't a WIC superstar, I would be a personal trainer and group fitness instructor.

**Megan Zanon, Southeastern Regional Representative**

City of Milwaukee Health Department - Nutrition Coordinator

I have worked with WIC for 17 years and am excited to be joining the WWA Board! I enjoy helping families navigate feeding challenges, working with kids with special healthcare needs, and supporting WIC staff. As a new board member, I look forward to learning how to better advocate for our WIC families. Outside of work, I'm a baseball mom with my husband and our two sons (ages 12 and 9) and a member of Tradizione Vivente: The Italian Dance Group of Milwaukee. If I wasn't a WIC superstar, I would be a professional organizer.

Outgoing Board Members - Thank you!

The WWA Board would like to extend a huge thanks to our outgoing Board Members this year. We are so thankful for your service and hope to continue to partner with you with advocacy for WIC!

Morgan Thums (Healthfirst) served the WWA Board from October 2022 to October 2025. She made large strides in updating the WWA financial documents as Co-Treasurer, including better tracking of income and expenses, scholarship recipients and the reimbursement process. Morgan improved the “behind-the-scenes” of WWA, conducting herself professionally and always looking to streamline processes for the next Treasurer.

Alex Forsythe (Sixteenth Street Community Health Centers) served the WWA Board from October 2023 to October 2025. In her time with WWA, Alex revamped our quarterly newsletter, lead as Committee Chair as WWA merged the Communication and Membership Committee’s into the new Connection Committee, hosted our first Members Discussion and contributed at all meetings with innovative ideas which encompassed leadership, inclusivity and efficiency.

Emily Seltzner (previously Columbia County) served the board from July of 2024 to September 2025, when she left her position in WIC. We wish her well as she spends more time with her baby.

Members Discussion Take Aways

2025’s 2nd Members Discussion was held after the Annual Membership Meeting on September 18th. Many WIC staff shared thoughtful ideas, some highlights included:

- **Food Rule Rollout:**
 - Uncertain feelings about how the rollout is going to go, worried families are not going to be aware of the package changes or really understand the changes
 - Grateful that the formula brand is going to be the same.
 - Biggest concern is with decrease in the milk, overall positive
- **Document Portal issues/solutions:**
 - Use the app link for better success instead of text message
 - Assist families in-person visits to educate on using document portal on participant’s phones.
 - Zoom out, use typing instead of signing
 - Non-English speaking families get stuck at password creation because of requirements. Can the app can specify what was wrong in the future?
 - Ensure their zip code in ROSIE is up to date
 - Some agencies are worried that staff are struggling with using electronic resources (FMNP, food guide, R&R Signature)
- **Rights and Responsibilities signing success:**
 - Wait to begin apt until it is signed
 - Reaching out to families in person (at home) to get a signed copy, especially in some Hispanic communities
 - Sending R&R in mail with pre-stamped envelope to send back
- **Staff time allocated for appointments:**
 - Finding state recommended times are unrealistic – constant challenge to get everything done with in-person appointments.
 - New families, adding 15 minutes on top of what ROSIE selects because there is so much to go over, referrals to other programs, charting.
 - Scheduler meeting with state coming up – any information on that?
- **Education to request in FMR:**
 - [Unlock Card PIN.pdf](#)
 - Ways for WIC staff to embrace electronic materials: FMNP, ONE, R&R, Document Center, Shopping guide
 - Troubleshooting eWIC guide

Annual Membership Meeting Summary

Thank you to all of you that joined the 2025 Annual Membership Meeting. We appreciate all of you taking time out of your day to engage with the WWA board and take interest in WWA. It was great to reflect on all that WWA has accomplished this past year and plan for 2026. We look forward to welcoming new board members and continuing to build the WIC Community and Association.

We concluded the meeting with an update from Nell Menefee-Libey with NWA focusing on the current priorities as well as an update from Capital Hill on all that could affect WIC. As we navigate the challenging times it is always great to know we have support from NWA to help us support our families and the WIC Program.

NWA Policy Conference Summary

Thank you for the opportunity to attend and represent Wisconsin WIC at the 2025 National WIC Association Policy Conference. I am grateful for the scholarship support from WWA, which allowed me to engage in meaningful discussions, gain valuable insights, and strengthen my advocacy for the WIC program.

During the conference, I had the opportunity to attend sessions that covered important topics such as WIC modernization, legislative priorities, and strategies for enhancing program access and participation. I particularly found the discussions on how beneficial efforts we make can be to be insightful, as they provided actionable steps for improving outreach and policy engagement.

One of the highlights of my experience was connecting with fellow WIC professionals, policymakers, and advocates who share a commitment to ensuring WIC remains a strong and accessible program. Engaging in discussions about the challenges and opportunities facing WIC at both state and national levels deepened my understanding of the advocacy process and reinforced the importance of amplifying the voices of the families we serve.

Attending the conference has furthered my awareness of the policy landscape surrounding WIC and has equipped me with tools to be a more effective advocate. I look forward to applying what I've learned in my work and sharing key takeaways with colleagues to strengthen our collective efforts in supporting WIC participants.

Amy

NWA Education & Training Conference Summary

Many thanks to WWA for awarding me a scholarship to attend the NWA Annual Education and Training Conference in Las Vegas last April. I participated in several educational sessions on various topics ranging from nutrition and breastfeeding to technology and program innovation. The conference truly lived up to its theme this year; I left feeling energized by the knowledge I gained and inspired by the work being done across the country to enhance WIC services.

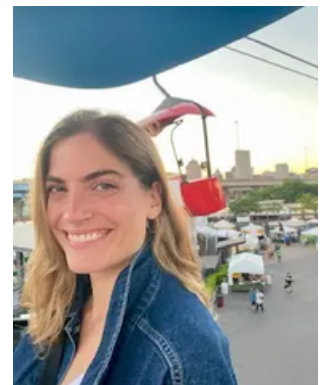
The warm weather in Vegas matched the energy of one of my favorite speakers, Dr. PBJ, during the opening session: Disrupting Burnout. Three strategies were shared to help reduce burnout including checking your baggage, building your boundaries, and discovering your brilliance. She recommended starting by getting rid of the invisible bags you are carrying that are slowing you down. This can be done by acknowledging what is causing pain and discomfort in your mind and body. After making yourself a priority, set boundaries or limits that protect what is valuable to you by asking, "What are you unwilling to lose?" Lastly, understand that your brilliance is something you are born with; it is not your job title, talents, or skills. I left the session looking at my career in WIC as just one of the many expressions of my brilliance, a passion but not my purpose. Let us all challenge ourselves to lean into our innate brilliance to disrupt burnout. Thank you, Dr. PBJ for your words of wisdom and encouragement! [continued on page 7]

Alex



Amy Richter,
Registered Dietitian,
Pierce Pepin WIC

Amy is a Registered Dietitian with over 10 years of experience in long-term care and community nutrition. In her free time, she enjoys reading and spending time in the kitchen with her husband, Atef, and chilling on the couch with their dogs, Bebe and Archie.



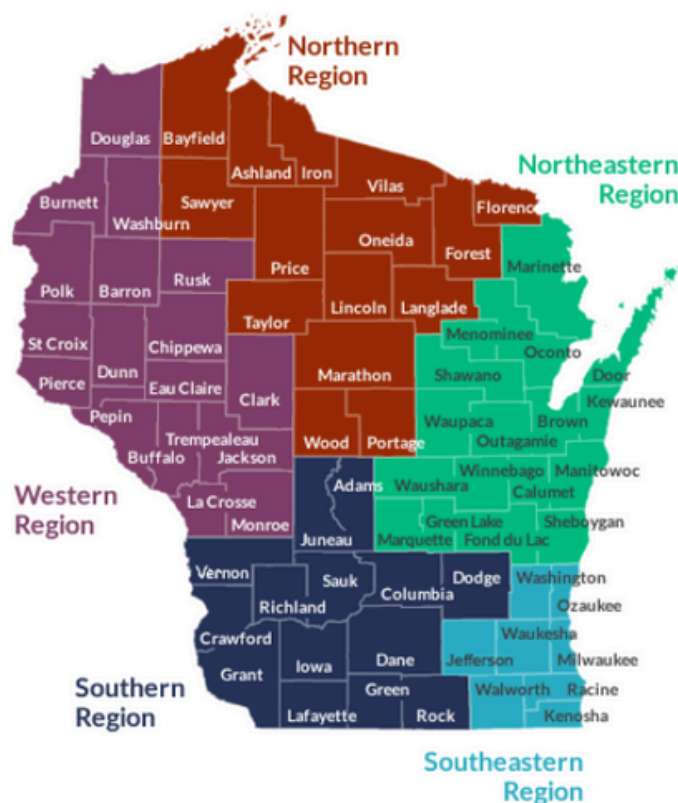
Alex Forsythe,
Registered Dietitian,
Sixteenth St WIC

Alex is a Registered Dietitian with over 6 years of experience in community nutrition. Her passion is for counseling families during their WIC appointments to achieve their health goals. Before WIC, Alex worked to increase access to healthy foods in the Indigenous community of Milwaukee through a CDC grant.

NWA Education & Training Conference Summary [Continued from pg 7]

Another favorite session I attended was titled Food Allergy Prevention in Action: Empowering WIC Providers with Early Feeding Strategies. It was shared that there is no evidence that delaying introduction of allergenic foods beyond when other complementary foods are introduced helps to prevent food allergies. Foods like peanuts, eggs, cow milk products, tree nuts, wheat, shellfish, fish and soy should be introduced when other complementary foods are introduced ([DGA 2025](#)). I left the session feeling better prepared educating WIC families on how to safely offer potentially allergenic foods and the importance of keeping them in the diet consistently and frequently as part of the food allergy prevention puzzle.

2026 WWA Board



Executive Committee

Co-Chair: Beth Scheelk
Co-Chair: Robyn Voge
Secretary: Rachel Bauer
Co-Treasurer: Shawn Handfelt
Co-Treasurer: Megan Zanon

Regional Representatives

Northern: [Kim Damrow](#)
Northeastern: [Rachel Bauer](#)
Southeastern: [Megan Zanon](#)
Southern: [Robyn Voge](#)
Western: [Amy Richter](#)

At-Large Representatives

[Beth Scheelk](#)
[Heidi McCann](#)
[Marlena Oechsner](#)
[Laura Tourdot](#)
[Shawn Handfelt](#)
[Jessica Sepers](#)

WWA Meetings & Minutes

Board Meetings are open to WWA Members. Upcoming meeting dates, times and link:

- [November 20th, 12:00-1:00pm](#)
- [December 18th, 12:00-1:00pm](#)

[View Recent
Board
Meeting
Minutes
Here](#)

