



WIC watch

The Year of WIC Voices!

Spring, as a time of hope and renewal, is especially meaningful this year. People are being vaccinated and COVID case rates are declining. Aspects of everyday life are looking more familiar. We are all adopting new ways to live or do business as a result of the positive lessons of the pandemic. The federal administration, supportive of young families and immigrants, understands the value of WIC and safety net programs and is committed to addressing racism and implicit bias, and there is much to be done. The political landscape is still divided, but the daily stream of vitriol from our leaders is reduced, and we can focus on problem solving.

When it comes to addressing some longstanding problems for WIC, there are significant opportunities, and we can all participate. WIC was included in the recent economic stimulus American Rescue Plan. The WIC food package, which saw long-awaited changes in 2009 and was evaluated in 2017 by National Academy of Science, Engineering and Medicine, is expected to be re-examined by USDA this year. We know participants want and need new ways to shop and grocers and business partners want to make that happen. USDA is looking carefully at online ordering, store/curbside pick-up/delivery for WIC. Reauthorizing WIC via the Child Nutrition Act is expected, providing an opportunity to adapt critically needed improvements for longstanding challenges.

Get ready for the many opportunities for WIC staff, participants, and partners to speak up about WIC. You are WIC experts, we at CWA are committed to this work, and together - with the leadership of the National WIC Association and partnership of many organizations - we will make this a year of many WIC voices.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the WIC Watch and the stories of dynamic efforts underway in California communities. We appreciate partnering with you in this meaningful work.

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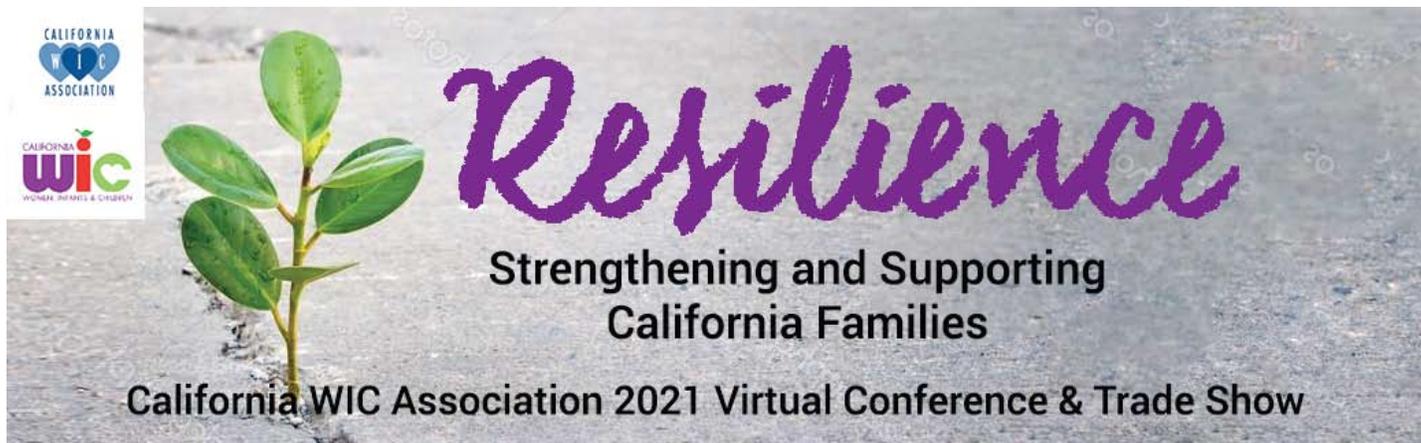
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After a year of adapting to so much change, the theme for our 29th Annual Conference and Trade Show — **Resilience: Strengthening and Supporting Families** — couldn't have been more timely. Local and state WIC staff, vendors, and all who labor to make WIC work have already shown incredible resilience. The Conference is a fantastic opportunity to celebrate that resilience while gaining more skills and connections to help us continue successfully into the unknown future.

As with every CWA conference, many people worked hard to provide cutting-edge presentations and relevant professional development as WIC feels the impact of real-world issues, offering RDs, IBCLCs, and RNs nearly 30 continuing education units. New this year: attendees have until August 31st to watch



— in their own time frame — any sessions they missed.

Given the popularity of our virtual events in 2020, we expect this Annual Conference to be just as vibrant and interactive. One advantage of a

virtual platform is that all levels of WIC staff, students, and allied health professionals can come together as collaborators, teachers, and learners. Engaging in the chat and Q&A sections can help attendees feel more connected, too.

SOME CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS:

Two pre-conference sessions offer training on Perinatal Opioid Use Disorder or Marketing Outreach and Social Media. In our **Plenary Session**, Dr. Arthur James, research expert and thought leader on the racial and ethnic disparities of infant and maternal mortality, shares insights on *Achieving Equity Through Birth Outcomes*, and Stephanie Weldy explores A Systemic Approach to Lasting Change.

In nearly **20 workshops**, attendees learn about topics

richly relevant to the challenges and changes WIC staff face. Workshop presenters integrate approaches vital to WIC's success, such as racial and social justice, wellness promotion, innovation, and collaboration. A few sample topics and speakers:

- Inclusive Nutrition Recommendations — Wendy Lopez & Jess Jones, Food Heaven Made Easy
- Culture, Trauma, & Breastfeeding — Camie Jae Goldhammer, Native American Breastfeeding Coalition of Washington
- Leadership & Emotional Resiliency — Michelle Cummings, Training Wheels
- Perinatal Mental Health — Nakeisha Robinson



Partnerships with grocers, educational suppliers, and other businesses are vital for WIC's success in every community. That's why CWA's **Trade Show and Exhibits** are so important. In the online version, all attendees can watch exhibitors' videos, view materials, and live chat or meet with our trade partners. Maintaining personal **wellness** helps boost our resilience, so the Conference offers ways to do that every morning.

We are inspired by your ongoing resilience! While we miss being with you in person, we hope you find the Conference offers valuable education that's equally as inspiring in an accessible and flexible format.



Better Tech & Connections New Resources from CWA!

In recent months, CWA has published two new reports that advocate for improved program access and promote [WIC Modernization](#). Although from different perspectives, each resource advocates for better connections and use of technology within WIC and related programs.

[WIC Tech: A Matter of Equity](#) expands on our 2018 TeleWIC paper, highlighting numerous opportunities to take what we've learned – especially during the pandemic – and apply technology to improve eligible families' access to and engagement with WIC.



[Linking WIC for Health Equity: Expanding Access to WIC through Horizontal Integration](#) describes how better connections between WIC and health and social service programs – whether for eligibility, benefits, or referrals – are critical for modernizing WIC and reaching

eligible families effectively. It provides a brief overview of existing and proposed program linkages—also called “horizontal integration”—with particular focus on linking the WIC program with other entities serving WIC-eligible families.

The conclusions and recommendations of this report are based on the findings of a 2018 online survey completed by all California WIC local agency directors. Respondents were asked to assess how well their WIC local agency was “linked” to other health care and social service providers for the purposes of identifying potential participants and improving overall health care for WIC participants. In follow-up communication during 2020, the directors indicated there is still a great need for better integration.

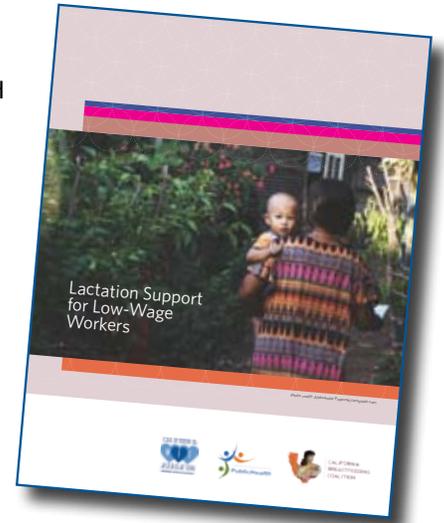
The report advocates for organizations and services to be “linked” so that the greatest number of eligible people can participate in them, get the most out of available benefits, and receive high-quality care. These connections to and from WIC can be achieved in several ways. More familiar “people and paper” processes include referral letters and shared participant lists, while electronic processes such as program portals with eligibility screens, applications, referrals, and appointment-setting are becoming more common and reliable.

Taking advantage of and streamlining deemed eligibility across programs would create needed efficiencies for staff and eligible participants and thus improve client access to benefits.

Lactation Accommodation for Low-Wage Workers

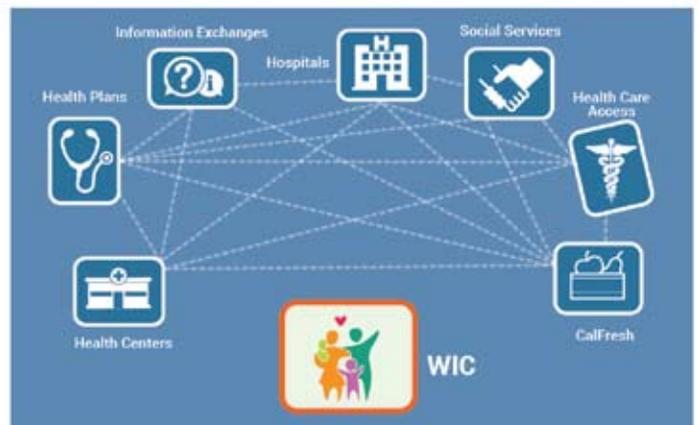
[Lactation Support for Low-Wage Workers](#), a new report, resulted from CWA's collaboration with the California Pediatric Obesity Collaborative Improvement and Innovation Network (CoIIN), with California Breastfeeding Coalition, and CDPH WIC, MCAH and Obesity Prevention. It expands and updates our related [2009 policy brief](#).

Filled with convincing and referenced data, practical suggestions for action, and recommendations for key organizations, the publication can help anyone advocating at local, state, and national levels for improving lactation accommodation, especially for low-wage workers.



Report recommendations apply to local, state, federal, and tribal agency jurisdictions. Some are easily implemented while others will take years of planning, coordination, and funding.

As with all CWA publications, recommendations for taking actions for this collective responsibility are provided.



WIC services are very isolated without meaningful bidirectional data sharing between programs.

Welcome WIC Leadership Academy 2021!

After over a year of unprecedented challenges and postponement of the WIC Leadership Academy, we are ready to rock with a revamped program of leadership development with the conscious inclusion of equity and a commitment to anti-racist awareness, culture, and practices! We are working again with management consultant, coach, and author Rita Sever, and are thrilled to add Melissa Franklin to our team, a trainer with specific focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion. We would like to welcome 39 applicants, some who made the commitment over a year ago, who are beginning their journey through personal growth and professional development!

2021 LEADERSHIP LIST

NAME	AGENCY	NAME	AGENCY
Grace Adame-Galindo	The Lundquist Institute WIC Program/South Los Angeles Health Program	Tracey Quesenberry	Contra Costa County WIC
Jaclyn Arnold	PHFE WIC	Leslie Rogozinski	True Care
Jorge Bazan	PHFE WIC	Aqueelah Russell	Northeast Valley Health Corp
Tina Benitez	Native American Health Center	Vanessa Sandoval	PHFE WIC
Vanessa Castillo	Planned Parenthood Orange and San Bernardino Counties	Maira Simeone	Sonoma County WIC
Christina Clayton	Community Action Partnership of Kern – WIC	Samantha Slaughter	Community Resource Project, WIC
Jasmine Croom	City of Long Beach WIC Program	Shannon Sneade	American Red Cross
Mikaela Curtis	Tiburcio Vasquez Health Center	Ronietra Stewart	PHFE WIC
Jennifer Duran	Lundquist- SLAHP WIC Program	Lindsay Taylor	PHFE WIC
Morgan Ervin	PHFE WIC	Brittney Vaughn	American Red Cross
Eileen Ferrer-Nguyen	Riverside County, Riverside University Health System–Public Health WIC		
Angel Flores	Sonoma County Indian Health Project Inc		
Allison Gabucan	PHFE WIC		
Debbie Galo	Watts Health		
Isabelita Garcia	The Lundquist Institute WIC Program/South Los Angeles Health Program		
Aurora Garcia-Lares	Community Action Partnership of Kern – WIC		
Sydney Hansen	Community Medical Centers		
Sheila HoPHFE WIC			
Terri Leon-Saldana	Gardner Family Health		
Suzanne Malone	City and County of San Francisco WIC		
Tanya Mansourian	PHFE WIC		
Tanya Mayton	Riverside County, Riverside University Health System–Public Health WIC		
Marie McCarty	Contra Costa County WIC		
Amber McPherson	Butte County Public Health, WIC		
Olivia Millan	Community Medical Centers		
Clemencia Paniagua	Mendocino County WIC		
Tiffany Peralta	Solano County		
Serey Phan	PHFE WIC		

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A TRAINING OPPORTUNITY: *Surviving Compassion Fatigue Through an ACEs Aware Lens*

We are happy to announce that Beverly Kyer, who presented very popular workshops on self-care during the Spring Conference, selected California



WIC for an extended training on compassion fatigue and traumatic stress to support WIC staff. Interested staff can save these times/dates: **8:30AM – 12:00PM, May 25-26.**

The training is open to all staff, at no cost (this is grant funded), and CE units will be provided. To learn more about Beverly Kyer, [visit her website](#). You are also welcome to read more about this training [here](#). Registration is live, so please [register here](#) and email Jodi with any questions.



Goodbye Meghan, Hello Thuy

Thank You, Meghan!

Words are inadequate to express our gratitude and appreciation for the cheerful presence and hard work that Meghan Saddler has brought to CWA as our Administrative Coordinator for nearly 10 years. She has been an important and



Meghan and baby Cameron attend an event at the Capitol to advocate for Early Childhood Education!

loved member of our little CWA family, and shared some major life events with us – including the birth of her two children, Sienna and Cameron! Meghan has proved unflappable in the face of chaos, ensuring that our conferences, meetings and education days run smoothly – we will miss seeing her face in the office (and on Zoom). She and her family will be relocating to Oregon this spring. We know that she will put her best Croc forward and tackle her new ventures with the same warmth and reliability displayed as part of our team. Working alongside you has been our privilege, Meghan, and we wish your family all the best in your new adventure!

Meet Thuy!

Since early September, CWA has had a new team member! Our new intern, Thuy Do, comes to us from the MPH program at San Diego State University. Thuy brings a lot of valuable experience to CWA, including leadership and research skills, as well as a sunny disposition that is always appreciated at our staff meetings. With certifications as a spin instructor, Vinyasa yoga teacher, and experience as a birth doula, it's plain that Thuy is very interested in helping people along in their health and wellness journeys. While we've never met Thuy in the flesh, thanks to the pandemic, she's nonetheless been an asset to our small but mighty team, helping all of us with our projects during these busy times. We will enjoy Thuy's help and sunny disposition as long as she is with us, but we know she will go on to do great working with vulnerable populations in the public health arena.




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Welch's is proud to be a Gold Sponsor of the California WIC Association's 2021 Annual Conference!

Phyllis Bramson Advocacy Award

To honor the memory of an inspiring and effective champion for the WIC Program, the California WIC Association established the Phyllis A. Bramson Advocacy Award in 2013. A generous bequest from Phyllis herself enables CWA to continue her amazing legacy of feisty and passionate activism on behalf of California children. The Bramson Award recognizes an outstanding WIC employee whose advocacy efforts on behalf of the California WIC Program achieved a demonstrated impact at the local, state, or national level. Bramson Award recipients are honored at our conference and receive a cash scholarship to help cover the costs of participating in national and state WIC legislative conferences in Washington, DC, and Sacramento.

About Phyllis A. Bramson

As California’s State Director from 1992 to 2002, Phyllis Bramson ushered California WIC out of crisis into an era of unprecedented growth and modernization. A unique and feisty administrator-advocate, she oversaw the implementation of the original WIC MIS system and aggressively pursued increased federal funds to support maximum service to eligible families, resulting in caseload growth to over one million WIC



participants per month. Phyllis understood the critical importance of close collaboration with California’s local WIC agencies, the backbone of the program. She established the California WIC Advisory Task Force and strongly supported CWA. Phyllis left a lasting legacy of transparency and community engagement that kept WIC community members united and excited about

their service to families. She partnered with CWA to support WIC annual conferences and worked on numerous state and federal policy reforms, including WIC Farmer’s Market funding and food cost containment efforts. As a new mother, she was passionate about WIC’s critical role in improving breastfeeding, and helped create the Breastfeeding Policy Advisory Committee and its groundbreaking publication, *Breastfeeding: Blueprint for California’s Future*. In a unique career move, Phyllis left WIC for the California Department of Education to take on the administration of the National School Lunch Program and its companion meal programs: School Breakfast, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and Summer Food Service Program. She brought the same high energy, passion and creativity to that role and oversaw nutrition improvements for millions more kids. Phyllis passed away in 2013 after a valiant struggle with ovarian cancer.

Liliana Prado

CWA is excited and honored to grant the 2021 Phyllis Bramson Award to **Liliana Prado, RD**, Site Manager at **Merced County Community Action Agency WIC (MC-CAA)**. Liliana serves as one of the two Ambassador Chairs on the CWA Board, and has regularly volunteered to make or attend state and federal advocacy visits.



Liliana hasn’t always considered herself an advocate, but when she started doing volunteer advocacy through CWA she saw how it helps frontline WIC staff provide better resources and services. In addition to her work as a WIC Ambassador, Liliana has been involved locally with faith-based community organizing, promoting health insurance for undocumented people and working on immigration forums, and with the local Democratic Party, serving as a state delegate.

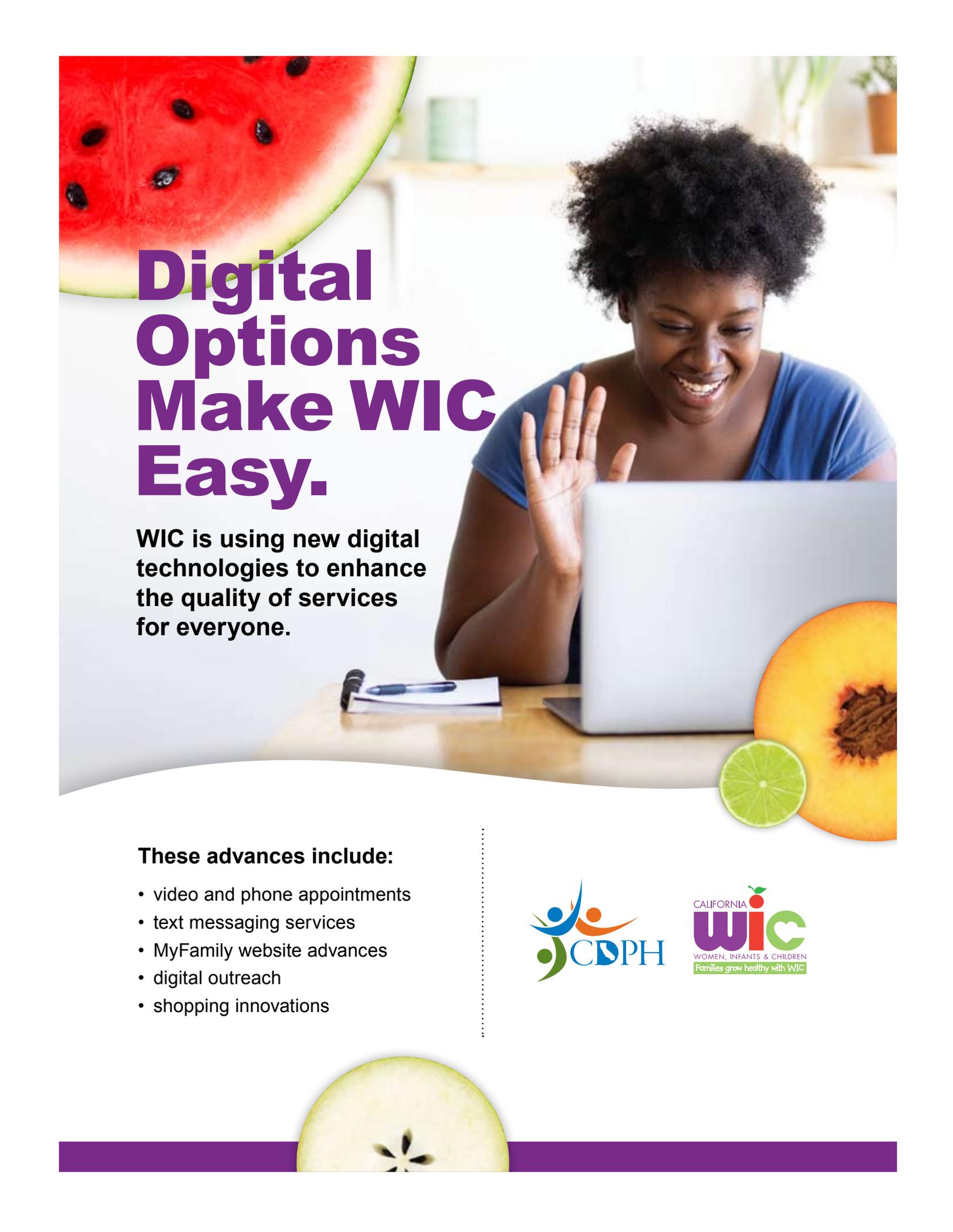
Liliana moved to the U.S. from Michoacán, Mexico, when she was eight. While growing up with a keen interest in food and medicine, she’d never heard of a Registered Dietitian until her nutrition class at Merced College. She wanted to pursue a pharmacy career and chose a nutrition science major when she transferred to UC Davis because it would qualify for pharmacy school application. But in her first semester there she changed to clinical nutrition and redirected her career goals to dietetics.

Liliana remembers, “my mom went to WIC for my younger siblings, and when I was at UC Davis WIC seemed like a place I would like to work. I was in Dr. Heinig’s class when California WIC had just started Baby Behavior training for WIC staff.”

Wanting to stay in the Central Valley, Liliana was hired at MCCA six months after graduation. With strong support from WIC Director Karen Gillian, Liliana completed a long-distance dietetic internship while working part time for WIC.

“WIC has provided me so many opportunities and experiences to grow as an RD that I would not have been able to find anywhere else. That’s why I’m still here!”

.....
“WIC has provided me so many opportunities and experiences to grow...”
.....



Digital Options Make WIC Easy.

WIC is using new digital technologies to enhance the quality of services for everyone.

These advances include:

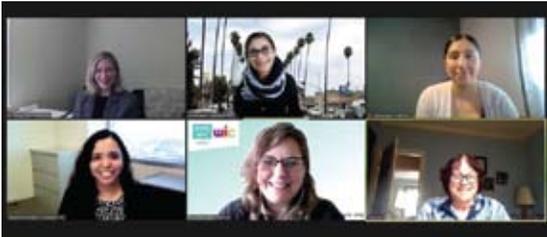
- video and phone appointments
- text messaging services
- MyFamily website advances
- digital outreach
- shopping innovations



Federal Policy Updates

Visiting Washington – Virtually!

Our annual trip to Washington DC to promote continued support and protection of WIC at the federal level looked very different this year – the NWA Policy Conference and our Capitol Hill visits were entirely virtual. After nearly a year of living our lives on Zoom, this change of pace did not daunt our team of California WIC Ambassadors, who completed 38 virtual visits with California Congressional Representatives and Senators and



A team of WIC Ambassadors from Lundquist WIC and PHFE WIC meet with a staff member from Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard's office.

their staff to provide WIC program education, updates and advocacy. Our ambassadors shared great news with our policymakers – that WIC has not missed a beat during the pandemic, services for families have considered without interruption, and staff and families have adjusted with grace to new ways of doing things. With plenty of convincing data, facts and family stories, these WIC Ambassadors easily described how WIC works and put a human face to families in need.

American Rescue Plan WIC Investment

In March, Congress passed and President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan (ARP), the Biden-Harris' administration's \$1.9 trillion COVID-relief package. Besides the \$1400 payments to eligible individuals, the ARP included \$880 million for WIC, including \$490 million to enhance WIC benefits for four months and \$390 million in outreach, innovation, and program modernization funding. The ARP also included other anti-poverty measures, including a one-year expansion on the child tax credit, which will increase household benefits to \$3,000 per child, and a \$600 bonus for children under 6, as well as extending P-EBT and the increase in SNAP benefits.

PUMP Act

The bipartisan Providing Urgent Maternal Protections (PUMP) for Nursing Mothers Act has been introduced in both Houses of Congress. The current law, Break Time for Nursing Mothers, (the Break Time law) requires employers to provide reasonable break time and a private, non-bathroom space for breastfeeding employees to pump. The PUMP for Nursing Mothers Act would strengthen the Break Time law by expanding coverage to employees unintentionally excluded, such as salaried employees and teachers, providing employers clarity on when pumping time must be paid vs. unpaid, and providing recourse for lactating employees who are denied lawful accommodation.

Pregnant Workers Fairness Act

Pregnant workers in the United States often still face workplace discrimination – in all industries, across race and ethnicity, and in every state. The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act would promote healthy pregnancies and protect the economic security of pregnant people and their families by: Clarifying that employers must make reasonable accommodations for workers affected by a known limitation related to pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions; Requiring an-



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teractive process between employers and pregnant workers to determine appropriate reasonable accommodations, similar to the Americans with Disabilities Act; Providing an exemption for businesses if an accommodation imposes an undue hardship on an employer; Protecting pregnant workers from retaliation, coercion, intimidation, threats or interference if they request or use an accommodation. The new law would apply to employers with 15 or more employees and provide protections for both job applicants and employees.

Child Nutrition Reauthorization and WIC Act

Every five years, Child Nutrition Reauthorization (CNR) provides Congress with an opportunity to improve and strengthen the child nutrition (including WIC) and school meal programs. Although the current law, the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-296), expired on September 30, 2015, the programs continue to operate. Congress has an important opportunity in 2021 to improve these programs by passing a strong reauthorization bill. The COVID-19 pandemic made it clear that more flexibilities, such as remote service, telehealth, and online shopping would go a long way toward improving the user experience for WIC participants, and we hope to see some robust modernization proposals to this effect included in the CNR. We also applaud the WIC (Wise Investment in our Children) Act sponsored by Sens. Bob Casey (D-PA) and Susan Collins (R-ME) in the Senate and Reps. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), Jenniffer González-Colon (R-PR), Linda Sánchez (D-CA), Kim Schrier (D-WA), and Don Young (R-AK) in the House, which would extend WIC eligibility to age 6 for children and for 2 years postpartum in order to address nutrition gaps, as well as extend infant certification periods for 2 years in order to ease the paperwork burden for families.

Public Charge

On March 9, 2021 the Biden Administration decided to stop defending lawsuits challenging the Trump-era public charge regulations. Federal courts reacted immediately, dismissing the government's appeals. This means that the final judgment entered in the Northern District of Illinois on Nov 2, 2020, which vacated the public charge rule nationwide is now in effect. We applaud and celebrate with all of the litigators and plaintiffs, advocates and community members who worked to overturn this harmful rule. The public charge policy now in place is as it was prior to the Trump administration's rule change, as outlined in the 1999 Interim Field Guidance. The Protecting Immigrant Families campaign has made an updated fact sheet available here: <https://bit.ly/2NFPqkz>.

State Policy Updates

WIC Contract Advocacy

Every year the California WIC program sends money back to the federal government that they have been unable to spend, because of the inflexibilities and contracting process. The federal government interprets this as a need for less money, when in reality, WIC agencies could spend more of their budgets in very worthwhile ways if they had more line-item, amendment and contract flexibility. Some WIC local agencies find themselves returning un-spent funding, while at the same time looking to their parent organizations to pay for needed expenses, they are not able to shift within their budgets to cover. To remedy this problem, CWA has been advocating for a WIC exemption in the Public Contract Code to increase the number of amendments and provide for line item flexibility. Assemblymember Dr. Joaquin Arambula has our gratitude for taking up this request as a champion in the California budget process.

Paid Family Leave

Millions of California workers will get up to two weeks of supplemental paid sick leave to take time off to get vaccinated, isolate themselves from potential exposure to the coronavirus, or deal with the effects of COVID-19, under a bill signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom in March. California workers lost their two weeks of supplemental sick leave at the end of 2020, leaving them with as few as three days of paid time off a year. The new bill, which was supported by the California Work and Family Coalition, of which CWA is a member, is retroactive to Jan. 1, meaning employers may have to pay workers for any time they took off unpaid for the reasons listed above.

February COVID Relief Package

On February 23rd, Governor Newsom signed a \$7.6 billion pandemic relief package for California that included \$600 relief payments for low-income and undocumented residents, as well as more than \$2 billion in grants to help small businesses and fee waivers for those hit hardest by pandemic closures: bars, restaurants, barbers and cosmetologists. In addition to the direct stimulus payments, vulnerable families received assistance in the form of \$35 million for food and diaper banks and \$400 million in subsidies for childcare providers. At press time, California lawmakers expect a significant tax windfall this year and are not ruling out passing another stimulus package in the future. Sen. Nancy Skinner (D-Berkeley) said the relief package was tailored to help individuals and businesses that were left out of federal aid.

CNC Scholarship Awardees

California WIC Association and all participating WIC agencies congratulate the following individuals for their fantastic work and recognition with California Nutrition Corps Scholarships. We want to recognize them for their compassionate care and service to families in the community. We are very excited for their next endeavors in their professional development as public health nutrition experts.

YVONNE MAYA has been working at PHFE WIC for three years and is in their WIC Dietetic Internship program. As a first-generation university student, Yvonne balanced her undergraduate studies at California State University, Long Beach, while working part-time. She has always dedicated herself to helping and serving under-represented communities. Fluent in English and Spanish, she serves WIC participants in their preferred language to show support and meet their needs. Yvonne has shown excellent leadership potential through her empathy, compassion, professional skills, and experience in nutrition and health care. Having lived experience as a WIC participant, Yvonne recognizes the positive impact WIC has made for her, her family, and neighborhood through education about, and advocacy for good nutrition. Yvonne aspires to inform parents about nutrition to support them in adopting generational healthy dietary behaviors. Additionally, she hopes to use her professional certification to promote healthy eating habits and more beneficial food relationships within low-income communities. Yvonne currently counsels and equips parents with resources to provide their children a healthy pathway in life, and she knows that she makes a positive difference going to work every day. Yvonne wishes to pay it forward with education and hope for good nutrition.



MARIA VIANNEY MELGOZA CORTES has been working at Community Bridges WIC for about 3.5 years and is a recent WIC Dietetic Intern. She is committed to working with low-income communities and provides a safe environment through her exemplary language skills in English and Spanish. Maria has learned to apply didactic teachings from her courses at Cabrillo College and San Jose State University into applied practice at WIC. She helps clients set tangible goals for themselves and their families through motivational interviewing. As a Registered Dietitian, Maria wants to help create equity so that all families in her community can obtain adequate nutrition information and support. Maria is recognized by her WIC colleagues as being very collaborative, empathetic towards cultural differences, and able to demonstrate strong leadership through communication and organization. Through her experiences at WIC, Maria has become more aware of, and skilled in, problem-solving to assist marginalized individuals and groups access nutrition education and healthy foods. Maria’s goals are to support clients as they learn about the importance of nutrition and its role in physical and mental health, and preventive nutrition measures.



LIHUA MA is currently pursuing a Public Health Master’s Degree at California State University, Northridge (CSUN), with a concentration in disease prevention and recovery. She is enrolled as a Dietetic Intern in the CSUN program and has worked at Northeast Valley Health Corporation WIC over the past year. In her WIC job, Lihua has demonstrated extraordinary nutrition counseling abilities through motivational interviewing, lactation education, and a high level of commitment to working with WIC clients, peers, supervisors, and faculty. She is a first-generation immigrant in her family and has worked tremendously hard to attend CSUN while



Congratulations!

also maintaining her job. Her WIC team has praised her hard work and diligence, and passion for supporting families with excellent nutrition counseling. Lihua aspires to use nutrition education to reduce food insecurity and preventable chronic diseases among underserved populations, such as low-income, ethnic-minority families with young children, who experience systemic barriers and need access to healthier choices.

AMANDA ALONZOIS is currently enrolled in the San Diego WIC Dietetic Internship program while working full-time at the Native American Health Center (NAHC) WIC DI in Oakland. She has been with the WIC agency since 2018, and enjoys the focus on nutrition counseling for prenatal mothers and families with children from infancy to five years old. Amanda sees the importance of early intervention and recognizes the systemic barriers that make obtaining healthcare difficult. This realization has led Amanda to commit to continue to work as a dietitian in her community after obtaining her Registered Dietitian status. She understands the need for nutrition and health professionals in communities where it is challenging to receive proper nutrition care. Amanda believes that providing access

to nutrition education is critical to gaining control of individual and family health. Working for NAHC WIC has provided Amanda an opportunity to advance her professional path. The CNC scholarship allows her to concentrate on her work with SD WIC DI, a critical career accomplishment.



PHFE WIC's 25th Class of Dietetic Interns Graduate!

On March 1, 2020, eight WIC Nutritionists began their first day as the 25th class of PHFE WIC dietetic interns. With the usual mix of nervousness and excitement, they were ready for this 12 month challenge. After years of school, work experience, including many years working at WIC, becoming a Registered Dietitian was now a reality! Well, that is until about two weeks later, when COVID19 brought the world to a halt.

As dietetic interns, they were now completing their supervised practice hours along with frontline essential workers in hospital and medical facilities. However, as the pandemic took hold, some hospitals could no longer host students and interns. Three of the eight interns were immediately displaced, however, within a couple of weeks, they were placed at St. Vincent Meals on Wheels (SVMOW) in Los Angeles. As Kathy Sato-Trang, RDN and preceptor at SVMOW shared, "some of the best dietetic interns we've had at SVMOW" were: Candace Kim, Emily Mac, and Lucy Zamora.

As the months passed, this group of eight: Alejandra Rodriguez, Candace Kim, Emily Mac, Giovannia Garcia, Kelly Arceo, Lucy Zamora, Sharon Cai, and Yvonne Maya, never lost direction. Having to manage the many changes at their internship sites and keeping up with the rapid changes as a teleworking PHFE WIC Nutritionist, they remained on task. In addition, they remotely mentored 30 visiting dietetic interns, providing a virtual WIC rotation, which would have typically been at the WIC center. No matter what obstacles came their way, they remained optimistic, positive, and completed their supervised practice hours.

Fast forward and it is now Graduation Day, March 5, 2021, in a virtual world! With over 80 attendees over Zoom, the interns celebrated with their preceptors, families, friends, PHFE WIC, and Heluna Health. As with all milestone graduation events, there were lots of laughs, a few tears, and time to celebrate. The PHFE WIC Dietetic Internship 25th Class will be remembered for years to come!



WIC Nutrition Education Impacts Lives

Mandy Huynh is not your typical Dietetic Intern (DI), although many interns in California’s five WIC DI Programs share inspiring stories like hers. Mandy completed the highly competitive U.C. San Diego Dietetic Internship program this year, but her WIC journey began many years ago.



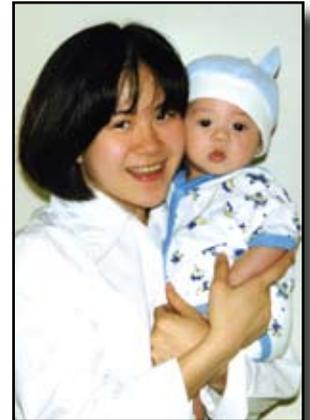
When she was a young mom with a new baby, Mandy sought support at **Native American Health Center** WIC in Oakland, where she learned healthy eating habits and found that WIC foods helped her put that knowledge into practice. While she was a participant, a job became

available at their agency and one of the employees asked her if she would be interested. She was hired and worked for them for five years as a bilingual (Vietnamese) WNA/CLE, passing on all she was learning to clients, family, and friends.

In 2005, Mandy moved to San Diego with her family and stayed home to raise her son. During his years in middle school, she completed her bachelor’s degree- the first in her family of that generation to do so. Years later, when her son went to college, she entered a Didactic Program in Dietetics. She says, “my son and I supported and motivated each other through college... it was motivating for him to see me working so hard.” They graduated at the same time: he from U.C. Irvine, she from the Didactic Program in Dietetics at Point Loma Nazarene University.

Mandy studied nutrition because her passion for helping others live a healthy lifestyle “grew every day” and she wanted to become a dietitian. As she completed the Dietetic program at PLNU, she was accepted to UCSD’s internship program. One

of her rotations as a dietetic intern was at **American Red Cross of San Diego and Imperial Counties** WIC agency in February. Mandy shared with her preceptor there, Lynne Officer, that this journey started for her because of the nutrition education she received from WIC as a new parent.



Mandy’s career goal is to bring Dietitian services to minority communities and underserved families to help them overcome barriers, improve health, and prevent chronic disease. Her personal motto is “Focus on the present moment, enjoy the journey, and be grateful for every little thing in life.” She hopes that her story inspires others and is grateful for the opportunities she’s had as “an immigrant with limited educational background and several life obstacles. I couldn’t have done it without the help and support of my family, friends, professors, and preceptors.”

Just as we never know **where** life’s journey will take us, we never know **how** the education and services we provide in WIC will impact someone’s life. Yet, knowing they **do** make a difference can inspire us every day!

“Focus on the present moment, enjoy the journey, and be grateful for every little thing in life.”

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(Search for California WIC Association or calwic.)

Retiring WIC Advocates & Leaders

Shelly Lewis

After becoming a Registered Dietitian, Shelly Lewis began her WIC career in 1987 as a Nutritionist with Public Health Foundation Enterprises (PHFE) WIC. She supervised WIC Centers and served as Area Manager (Supervising Nutritionist) in the South Bay region of Los Angeles before finding her niche as PHFE's Senior Manager of Operations. For the past 25 years, Shelly supervised the PHFE WIC Warehouse Department



Shelly Lewis (r) with former USDA Under Secretary Kevin Concannon, Renee Alton (l) West Oakland Health Center WIC and Samar McGregor, PHFE WIC, at the National WIC Assn. DC Policy Conference.

and how that translated into persistent and knowledgeable legislative education and advocacy. Shelly says it all started with attending a WIC advocacy conference in Washington, DC. Recognizing the importance of the local connection in national policy advocacy, Shelly pioneered an organized and systematic approach to cultivating strong relationships with PHFE's many, many Members of Congress.

With amazing attention to detail, Shelly organized and trained topnotch local WIC teams for visiting legislators. She also perfected the art of putting together professional and memorable local agency site visits for elected officials and other VIPs – the best kind of advocacy! Over the years, Shelly then mentored hundreds of PHFE and WIC local agency staff to become skillful WIC advocates, with lasting impact on WIC policy advances.

Shelly developed relationships with, and the respect of, policymakers of all ideological stripes who knew she was not only a reliable WIC expert but also a go-to nutrition and public health expert. She developed excellent fact sheets to show the economic impact of WIC at the local level, linking the number of constituents and local WIC agencies to dollars spent in grocery purchases in each state and federal legislative district.

CWA is grateful for all of Shelly's contributions toward making WIC stronger! She received CWA's Phyllis Bramson Award for her advocacy efforts and was recently spotlighted for this work in the textbook, *Community Nutrition in Action* (8th

and enjoyed many projects ranging from participant-centered education and leadership to technology and outreach.

Yet, as many of Shelly's colleagues can tell you, her legacy as she retires from PHFE will be her passion for WIC

Edition). There, she acknowledges, "The main challenge for public policy advocates is that the political landscape is always in flux; policymakers leave office and new ones are elected, but the health and nutrition needs of our communities remain the same."

In the textbook, Shelly offers this advice to nutrition students which is sage advice for any of us: "Realize that you will be a different person in 5 years, 10 years, 20 years and beyond. Be curious, try new things, and build strong relationships with people. When people know you and trust you, together you have the power to make real change."

Cathy Cavanaugh

After enjoying a long career serving families, Cathy Cavanaugh, WIC Program Director for Community Bridges in Santa Cruz County, has retired. From her 1983 start as a WIC Nutritionist for Research Education Institute (REI, now Lundquist Foundation WIC) in Los Angeles, she moved to the Watsonville area and served as Community Nutritionist for Head Start and Salud Para La Gente Medical Clinic. In 1993 Cathy became an Adjunct Nutrition Instructor at Cabrillo College in Aptos, teaching three introductory nutrition classes for ten years and "loved every minute!" By 1996 she joined Community Bridges as a part-time WIC Nutritionist and became Director in 1999.

Cathy recently shared her gratitude and memories with CWA. "I take so many wonderful friendships and memories with me! CWA Conferences were especially inspiring, professionally and personally. They were a favorite time to reconnect with friends from other WIC Programs and enjoy off-site time with my team – learning, eating, shopping, relaxing and having fun!

Other standout experiences were Finding the Teacher Within with Global Learning Partners, WIC Leadership Institute (now WIC Leadership Academy) with Helene Dublisky, and Pearls of Change with Mike Elfant and the CDPH WIC team. I will miss the everyday camaraderie, talent and dedication of the entire WIC family. It was the best career – always learning and always teaching!

I have been blessed in relationships with my husband, sons, daughter in law, granddaughters, and many great dogs and cats along the way. I plan to relax, refresh, and renew with family and friends, and enjoy hikes, crafts, books, music, cooking ...and hopefully some travel."



Welcome Back to Wellness: A Special Section on What's New With WIC Worksite Wellness Team

Starting in March, CWA, in partnership with American Red Cross WIC, rolled out a new monthly worksite wellness e-Newsletter. You may have already received it, but if not, it goes by the name W³ and we welcome you and your coworkers to join the Wellness Listserv. Each month you will receive information regarding personal nutrition; healthy recipes utilizing WIC foods, that work for WIC staff as well as WIC participants; free or low-cost fitness, mindfulness, and nutrition apps; features on Well WIC Worksites; and Wellness events to look forward to. Read more below about the wonderful volunteer team that is putting this newsletter together.

Introducing the W³ Crew

Beginning December 2020, an audacious group of 10 undergrad and graduate students from San Diego State University, Point Loma Nazarene University, and the University of San Diego came together to create our first WIC Wellness Newsletter Team via the American Red Cross WIC program. Each person was selected for their unique talents and expertise to craft a wellness newsletter. Every month they will curate timely wellness topics informed by WIC Wellness Coordinators across the state, and provide credible and concise wellness information to inspire and empower WIC staff to thrive! Below are the faces and details of this distinctive Team.

Ashlyn Gonzales is from Danville and is currently attending the San Diego State DPD Program for a BS in Food and Nutrition. Ashlyn believes that Food and Nutrition play such a big role in her everyday life and could not be more excited to graduate in May and find a career in dietetics.



Brianda Gonzalez from Santa Clarita graduated from San Diego State University Foods and Nutrition DPD program in December, 2020. Brianda's favorite wellness quote is by Brian Krans, "Don't just exist, live!"



Bruna Honorio is from São Paulo, Brazil and is a senior at Point Loma Nazarene University's DPD program. Brunna believes in the power of education and continuously learning about our Earth, our bodies, and ourselves - empowering us to work together to be better-informed and co-create a better world.



Carla Corrales is from San Diego and is an undergraduate in the Foods and Nutrition program at San Diego State University. She hopes to one day travel to the coffee farms of Colombia and make herself a fresh cup of coffee with freshly roasted beans.



Danielle Haber is from San Francisco, and graduated from Point Loma Nazarene University in 2020 with a Bachelor's degree in Nutrition and Health. Danielle's advice is to listen to your body because health is wealth.



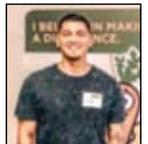
Jenna Murphy is from Sacramento, is a Psychology major at USD, and is on the waterski club at school!



Lauren Yowell is from San Diego and is currently a senior at San Diego State University studying nutrition science. Lauren is happy to be a part of the WIC newsletter team and getting to collaborate with local students to help our community.



Pedro Guzman is from Yuba City, served in the military, graduated from San Diego State University in Spring 2020 with a Bachelor's in Food and Nutrition, and is currently in the Dual Master's program for Exercise Physiology and Nutritional Sciences at SDSU.



Rachel Jensen is from San Diego, graduated from San Diego State University in Spring 2020 with a Bachelor's in Foods and Nutrition, and is currently attending Point Loma Nazarene University to get her Master's degree in Kinesiology and Integrative Wellness.



Sherry Dinh is from Los Angeles and is an undergrad at SDSU studying Foods and Nutrition. Sherry loves to say, "It's not what's waiting on the other side, it's the climb."



If you are interested in getting wellness delivered to your inbox monthly, please email Jodi at jmulliganpfile@calwic.org to be put on the WIC Wellness listserv.

Wellness Wednesdays:

A weekly gift for the self

Have you ever done Zumba during Zoom? What about a Walking Webinar? Can you live stream a sun salutation? Or do some lunges while you lunch and learn about leaning in on Wellness Wednesdays?

Join us for a new worksite wellness weekly event! WIC Wellness Wednesdays is a virtual event, every week, from 12:30-1:00pm via Zoom. Each Wednesday, a WIC worksite will host a wellness activity that anyone from WIC can join in on. Topics will vary each week and might be fitness-related; pertaining to burnout, mindfulness, and self-care; centering on how to stay healthy at work and on the job; or could involve nutrition and healthy eating, among other topics TBD. Check out this *Take Care of You*, breathing video put on by Lundquist WIC, as an example (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UabMqaB0ILM>).

If you are interested in hosting a Wellness Wednesday, please sign up [here](#) or <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0d45aee29aafdc61-wicwellness>, and/or reach out to Jenn Duran (jennaturan8@gmail.com) with any questions about loading a pre-recorded segment, sharing wellness videos that your worksite already uses, or hosting something live.

If you would like to tune in, WIC Wellness Wednesdays start June 2, 2021, and will generally be 15-30 min segments during the lunch hour (12:30-1:00pm). You can join via Zoom [here](#) or <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82456856968?pwd=amQ4bkhwMzNEQzZkZlVrYUJ3b01kQT09>.

If you have any other questions please feel free to email Jodi at jmulliganpfile@calwic.org.



Meet the New WIC Worksite Wellness Team - J³

Meet Jenniffer Duran, MEd Admin., CLC.

If you don't know her already, she is the MCH Specialist II for the Lundquist- SLAHP WIC Program. Jenn practices self-care by taking several moments throughout the day for mindful breathing, finds some alone time with a great book, and takes time with her family for nature hikes. She will be producing Wellness Wednesdays, so if you have questions about signing up, the who, what, where, how, and when, send her an email at jennaturan8@gmail.com.



Meet John Haubenstricker, MS, RD, CSSD, ACSM EP-C. If you don't know him already, John is the Nutrition Education Associate at American

Red Cross WIC in Southern California. John is managing W³, the new WIC Worksite Wellness newsletter, and his favorite self-care activity is resistance training. Please email him at john.haubenstricker2@redcross.org if you are



interested in becoming a featured Well Worksite agency/clinic or have ideas regarding wellness topics.

For everything else, i.e. re/certifications, joining the WIC Wellness Listserv, webinars, articles and pics for the WIC Watch Magazine, etc. please email **Jodi Mulligan-Pfile** at jmulliganpfile@calwic.org. She



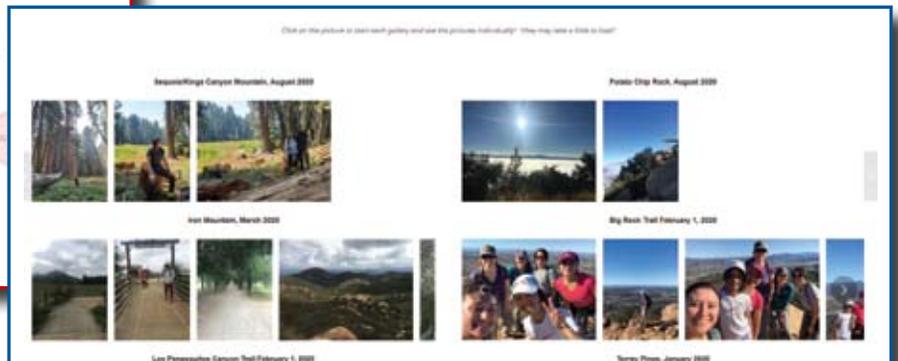
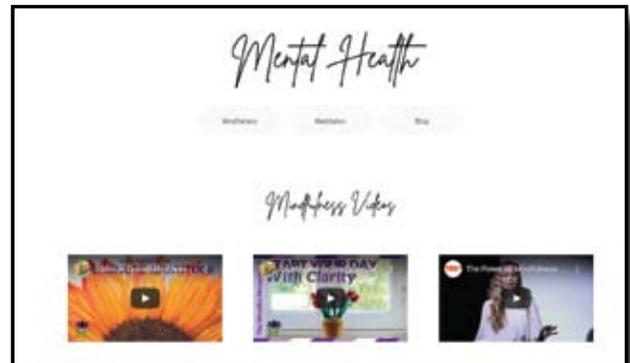
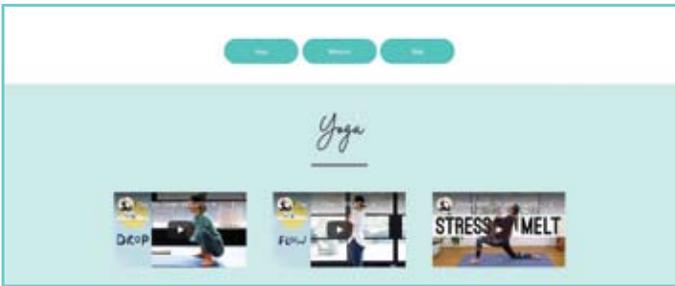
is the Project Manager for WIC Worksite Wellness at California WIC Association, and her new favorite self-care activity is going on bike rides with her 1yo bicycle buddy.

SDSU Wellness Blog

Karla Ticke is the Local Vendor Liaison and Projects Coordinator with SDSU Research Foundation (SDSURF) WIC. She leads the Employee Worksite Wellness Program within the organization and has developed a blog to encourage employees with helpful resources to maintain physical health and mental wellness. This year's blog theme is to focus on proper hydration and overall physical fitness. Karla's blog provides videos and posts on meditation, exercise, and nutrition. Visitors can browse through a wide selection of workout and yoga videos to fit their fitness needs. The worksite wellness blog also discusses the importance of sleep hygiene and incorporating nature into your workday for mental vitality. And if you need that soulful nourishment throughout the day or meal prep ideas, the site offers wholesome and hearty recipes that are simple yet delicious. Community building is essential to keep up morale and creativity, even on virtual platforms such as the WIC Employee Worksite Wellness Blog. Karla continuously updates the website to equip WIC employees with great ideas to stay healthy and safe during their workweek on this visually appealing, user-friendly site. So, be sure to stay posted on future updates [here!](#)



Karla Ticke out hiking with her two buddies, Jackie and Ellie



Advancing Equity in Local Agencies

Welcome Dr. Melissa Franklin

CWA is committed to ensuring equity, inclusion and diversity in our organizational policies, practices, and culture, and also extending support to WIC local agencies to advance



equity in your workplaces. Integral to our conferences and webinar curriculum are speakers and topics calling out racism, acknowledging its multi-generational impact and taking healing actions. Our communications channels including our social media, Flash newsletter and this magazine are also platforms we use to elevate news stories, research, resources and lived experiences to advocate for the

urgency of addressing racism in all forms.

We are pleased to announce CWA will provide additional assistance for WIC local agencies through a partnership with Dr. Melissa Franklin, CEO of [Growth Mindset Communications](#). Dr. Franklin has achieved a strong reputation for facilitating organizational and systems transformation from an equity and anti-racist frame that results in capacity building for organizations and individuals.

A few of her achievements include providing consulting support for: the creation and launch of several community and intra-organizational collaboratives, such as the Pritzker National Children and Infants Initiative Birth Equity Community of Practice, which consists of states across the U.S. engaged in addressing disparities in maternal and child health systems; the LA County African American Infant and Maternal Mortality Prevention Initiative and associated Steering Committee; the California Association of Black School Educator's Blueprint for Education Equity, which received funding support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, are a few examples.

CWA is grateful to PHFE and Lundquist WIC for the introduction to Dr. Franklin, who has been working with their agencies. She is already partnering with Rita Sever, [Supervision Matters](#), consultant, trainer, and coach, who has led the WIC Leadership Academy, to co-lead the 2021 class (see related article). In addition, Dr. Franklin will provide workshops and other trainings, coaching and "office hours" support for all WIC local agencies in their process to identify and foster organizational habits that are, in Dr. Franklin's words, "more just, equitable, diverse, inclusive, and joyous."

Details will be available soon!

Job Postings Promote Equity

In our role as a state WIC association, we strive to ensure our policies and practices engender equity and inclusion, recognizing and welcoming diversity. A recent job opening on our small staff provided an opportunity to improve our job posting and description, and recruitment strategy. The job was not changing, but how we described the job and where we posted the open position, would impact the diversity of individuals who would have an opportunity to apply.



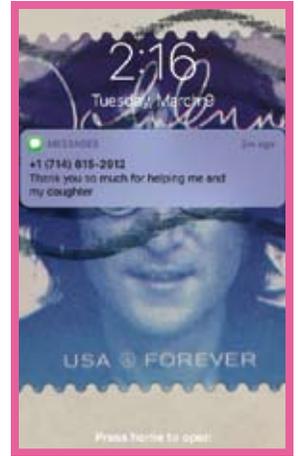
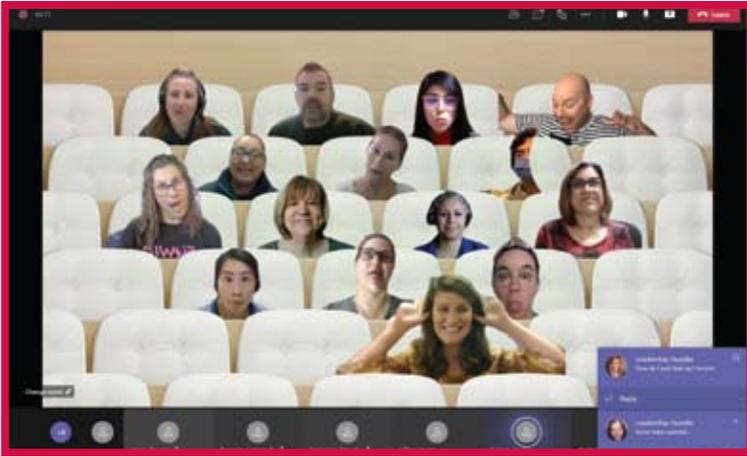
There are lots of recruitment tools and guidance to help employers be inclusive, beyond required language acknowledging being an equal opportunity employer. Here are just a few key components for the job description and posting that stood out to us.

- No matter the job duties and responsibilities, make sure the language used in the description and posting create a sense of belonging. State clearly that your organization and mission welcome diversity and are guided by equitable principles.
- Focus on the expected results of the position, rather than solely on the tasks of the position.
- Don't recruit for qualifications that are not required, such as a degree. This approach could open up the job to qualified individuals who may have a non-traditional career path.
- Be transparent and provide more details of the salary, benefits, and organizational structure.

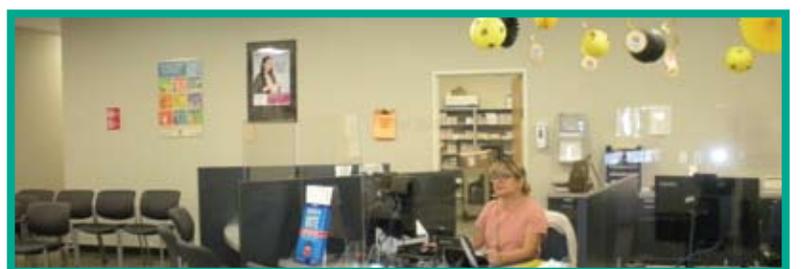
We also selected a few job posting sites that were recommended for their reach to diverse candidates and also advertised to the greater WIC community, beyond the geographic region of our office.

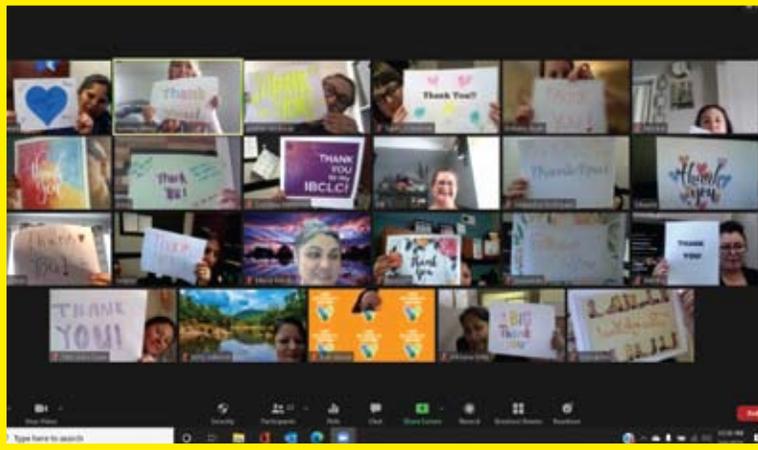
To support WIC local agencies, CWA is creating a webpage with tools and best practices for equity, diversity, and inclusion. Below is a sample of a few tools, blogs and companies, many which are free, that we found helpful.

- [The Management Center](#)
- [Textio](#)
- [Society for Human Resource Management \(SHRM\)](#)
- [Charity Savant](#)



Although WIC work looks different these days, WIC is working as hard as ever!





WIC Service Redesign

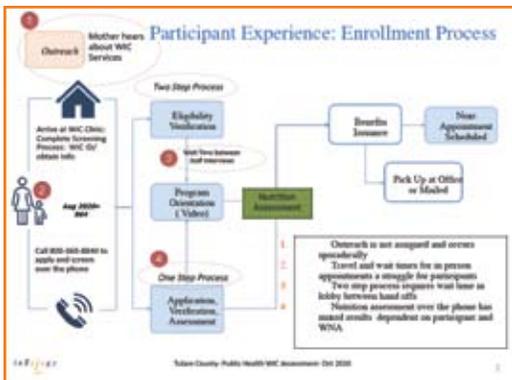
Situation Overview:

In the past few years California WIC has implemented process changing tools that have shifted the foundation by which local agencies can now provide service to WIC participants. Tulare County WIC took advantage of these new technologies to start a foundational change in service delivery. Tulare County WIC is part of the Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency within the Public Health Division. With a caseload of nearly 21,500, Tulare WIC maintains 9 onsite stand-alone clinics with approximately 50 total staff, including 5 Registered Dietitians and 37 WNA's. In 2019, they recognized it was time to evaluate their agency and modernize its operations. When COVID hit and upended onsite service delivery, they, like all WIC agencies, pivoted to serve their participants over the phone. Tulare WIC leveraged this experience and embarked upon a three Phased approach to modernize their operations.

This article will discuss the challenges faced and the results of Phase I – Creating the Strategy for the future. The second article will share the challenges and results of Phase II –Design and Build; the logistics of turning a high-level strategy into detailed plans and operational changes. The 3rd article will reveal the actual results of implementing the modernization strategy and tactics; what worked and what did not work .

Phase I – Assessment, Strategy and plan

When assessing Tulare WIC, the main objective was to understand the current Participant Experience and identify the desired Participant Experience. To complete this analysis approximately 40 interviews were conducted including current



staff as well as Public Health management and other WIC local agencies, 35 reports analyzed: WIC outcome measures, Cisco

call reports, Statewide data on participants and comparisons of other California WIC local agencies. Detailed process maps of "As Is" and "To Be" experience were created to understand

the gaps. Outside expertise was contracted to provide context to the current organizational design and the opportunities that may exist to leverage technology

The Participant Experience

The WIC participants are primarily young, millennials and for the most part busy and tech savvy. A survey found that 95% of participants prefer phone appointments. However, Tulare County WIC quickly recognized that although the preferred method, participant **engagement over the phone is low**. Participants are often not aware or prepared to conduct their appointments. Moreover, the WNA staff place outbound calls at their designated appointment time but most often must call 2-3 more times to reach the participant and the game of 'phone tag' begins. Initially a response to change this dynamic was to create a mini 'inbound' WNA team to conduct the appointment when the participant called in to re-schedule. This initial response worked but maintaining appropriate staffing for these inbound calls was a challenge. Although a great start, the organization realized there had to be a better way to leverage this shift in service without the **inefficiencies of telephone tag between WNA and Participant**.

The challenges and opportunities in the WIC Organization

The RDs are currently organized by clinic sites and focused on managing the WNA staff, scheduling, HR and program requirements. Many essential roles in outreach, responding to breastfeeding community needs, staff training, and quality assurance were left as secondary roles.

Breastfeeding and unissued food outcomes suffered.

Simultaneously, the technologies recently introduced make it possible and easier to conduct work remotely and not tied to a clinic site. A new organizational structure is needed to leverage both millennial skill with technology, the desire to conduct business remotely with the opportunity to streamline operations and increase participant engagement.



continued next column

The WIC of the future: Recommendation areas

A 75-page report detailing the current challenges, issues arising from old business processes and findings in both operations and infrastructure served as the baseline and rationale for the recommendations in 3 key areas:

I. Create Organizational efficiency:

- Organize by function not by geography; **Operations** (focus on efficiency and managing WNA personnel) **Nutrition, Planning and Outcomes** (focus on delivering Nutrition and breastfeeding expertise & programs to increase outcomes).
- Consolidate inbound Phone Functions; to include a Screener and a "Virtual WNA" roles.
- Manage scheduling centrally to be an "On Demand" organization.
- Reduce span of control to increase coaching, counseling, and production oversight.

II. Improve and Engage the Participant Experience:

- Flip Participant appointment management from outbound to inbound. Participants will call 'inbound' to WIC at their designated appointment time to decrease and/or eliminate telephone tag.
- Screen inbound phone appointments to increase participant engagement and their ability to be "Ready, Willing and Able" for their required contact.
- Integrate with FQHCs or medical clinic operations to leverage referrals, participant time and community WIC awareness.
- Increase Participant engagement in education: online and onsite appointments.
- Increase Outreach and Community engagement.

III. Modernize WIC's strategic Direction

- Increase communication with other Tulare County Public Health Departments.
- Implement data driven decision-making throughout the organization.
- Increase the budget through leveraging Grants: new and existing.

Each recommendation area has specific tactics. Workgroups are currently in place to design and build the new "Tulare WIC". Stay tuned for the next WIC Watch article that will share the progress of the workgroups in the design and build phase. In the meantime, please feel free to contact Sarah Smith, Tulare WIC Director, [Sarah Smith](mailto:SSmith@tularecounty.ca.gov), SSmith@tularecounty.ca.gov, or [Carole Dotson](mailto:Carole.Dotson@intelegy.com) cdotson@intelegy.com for additional questions.

Siskiyou County WIC

Supporting a Mom to Breastfeed Through Health Challenges

Siskiyou County WIC had a mother who enrolled in our program after she gave birth to her first child. She was excited to breastfeed and provide the best care for her baby with WIC support. Shortly after the delivery, the participant came into our office in tears, and reported significant pain from the baby's latch during breastfeeding. After extensive research and frequent collaboration with her obstetrician, we learned that the participant was diagnosed with Raynaud's Syndrome. This medical condition affects the blood vessels and blood flow in some regions of the body, such as fingers and toes, in which the person would describe the sensation to be numbing or cooling. In our client's case, she experienced vasospasms whenever she nursed her infant.

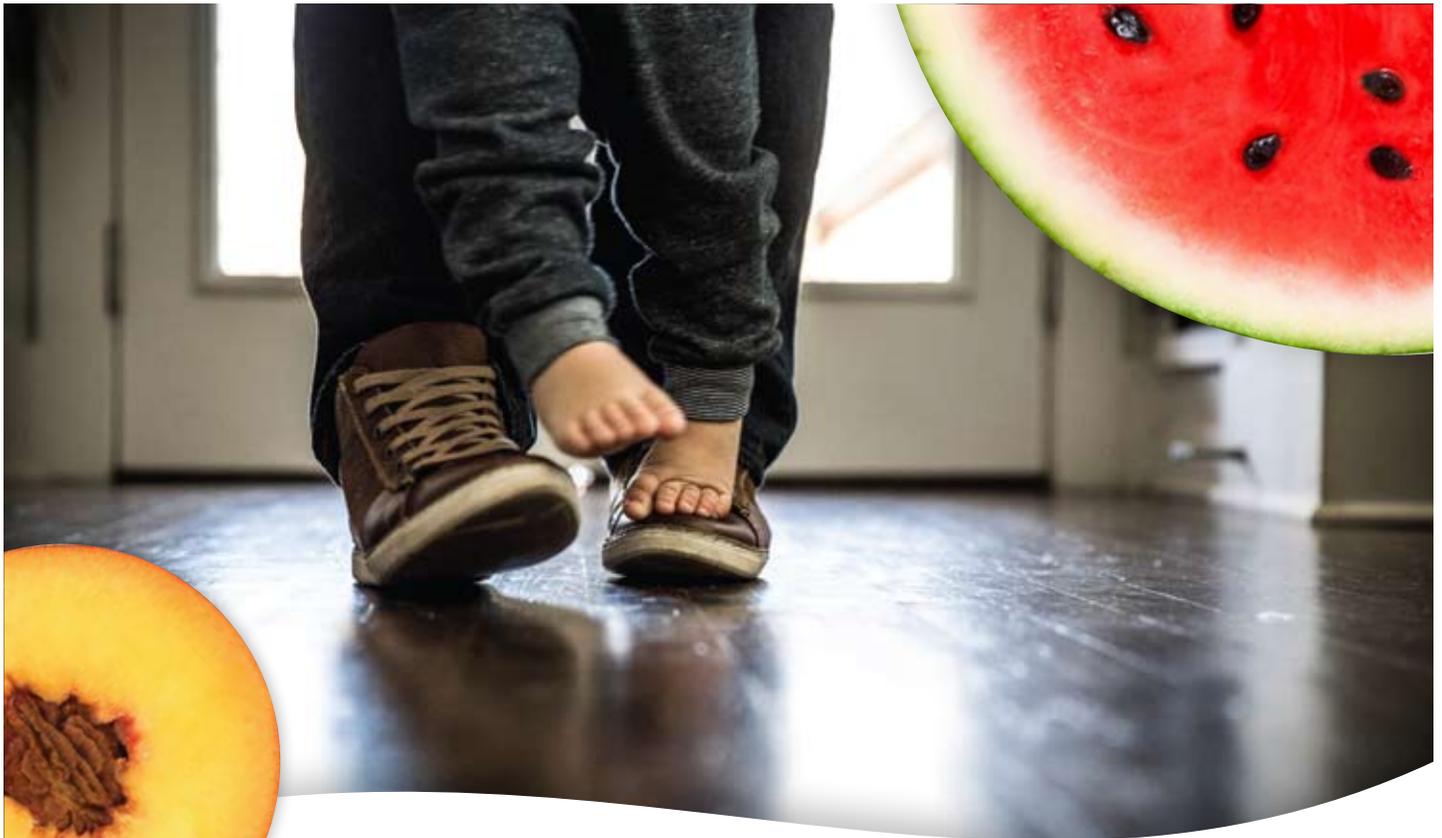
After more education and planning a course of action, our WIC office regularly stayed in touch with her to provide comfort and guidance. The participant frequently contacted us with continued reports of pain, and we offered her support. Because of how much pain she endured, I often thought she would have stopped breastfeeding. However, she never relented. This year in March, the participant and her family moved away to Modoc County for her husband's new job with the local police department. Since she moved, she no longer qualified in our region for WIC.

I recently ran into her while Christmas shopping, and she was elated to see me. She expressed gratitude and thanked us for the WIC support when she needed us during one of her most vulnerable moments as a new mom. She was still breastfeeding and pregnant with her second child! The participant shared that if WIC was not available, she would have had doubts about breastfeeding and may have indefinitely discontinued. I was amazed at her spirit and commitment. This mother's resilience to breastfeeding and her support from WIC have helped her and her children thrive!

- Contributed by Tracy Sandahl



WIC mom Murial Boyer and her family



Celebrating Resilience.

Thank you to our local agency colleagues for your resilience and tireless work in serving WIC families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

You help life (and its many precious moments) go on for our families.

— From The CDPH/WIC Team —

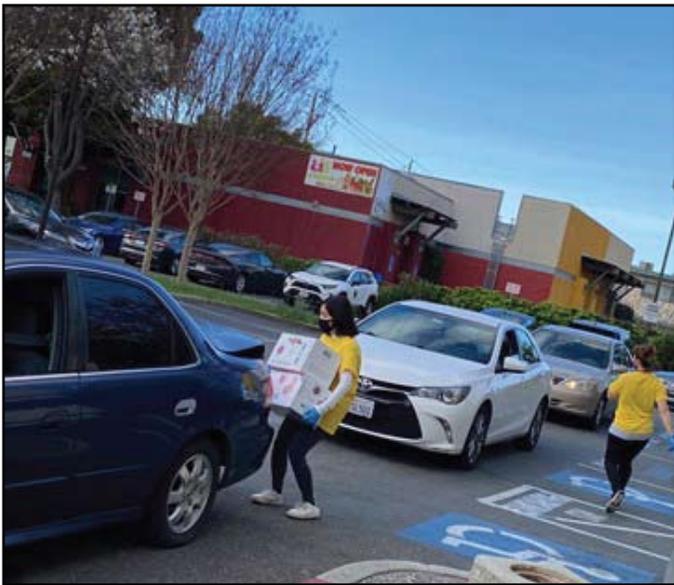


Help A Mother Out and Alameda County WIC Diaper Distribution

Diaper Day at WIC was a huge success!! Participants started to arrive well ahead of the 9am start time, with their cars lining up and blocking the intersection at Winton St and Amador St. With so many people waiting, we started the distribution early. The line seemed endless, and by the end of the day we had counted over 1000 cars! Everyone expressed feelings of accomplishment and exhaustion as we finished the day's work. It was shortly after closing, I assisted a woman who was delayed getting to the event. Although we did not have exactly what she needed, we found something that would work for her. The woman was in tears as she told me, "you just don't know what this means to me."

I was very proud of those who worked so hard throughout the day. The families we helped all expressed their gratitude. It was rewarding for us all. WIC should take great pride in the work we do and the help we provide to those in need. A special thanks to Help a Mother Out organization who partnered with WIC, donating all the diapers, to make this event the success it was.

-Contributed by Kathleen Willkom



San Francisco Success Story!

San Francisco Department of Public Health IBCLC home visits continue through the pandemic!

Imagine being a new mom, new to this country and home alone with a newborn. Now imagine doing your best to breastfeed with damaged nipples, engorged breasts, and worried that your baby seems unsatisfied. When Suzanne Malone, RD, IBCLC, took on her new role as the Breastfeeding Coordinator in 2019, such scenarios were all too common resulting in mothers prematurely discontinuing breastfeeding. Having worked for WIC for many years prior to moving into her new role, Suzanne knew that timely support from a LC was critical in such cases. Often these moms were home alone without much support and faced



barriers to meet with a lactation consultant at the hospital, outpatient clinics or even at the WIC office. Suzanne came up with the idea to conduct home visits for such urgent scenarios after a Public Health Nurse invited her to a home visit of a new mom who was struggling with breastfeeding. It was indeed an eye-opening experience and home visits made perfect sense!

Helping mom and baby in their home where all the feedings take place is ideal. The LC is able to observe how moms set up for breastfeeding and nurse a majority of the time, which is different when a mom feeds outside of the home. It also provides an opportunity to notice things that can cause baby discomfort such as the temperature and lighting in the house. These visits also provide socio-emotional support for the most vulnerable families in San Francisco by a health care professional who they trust!

Suzanne has so far conducted 10 home visits. The consultations have taken place after work hours and over the weekend as necessary. Most importantly home visits have continued throughout the pandemic when lactation support for families became even more challenging when in-person appointments in the hospitals and outpatient clinics came to a halt. Given the success of these home visits in improving access to lactation services, San Francisco Department of Public Health WIC Program is evaluating the impact of home visits in increasing exclusivity of breastfeeding duration with plans for growth and expansion. The program is excited to continue exploring options for lactation support through home visits, telelactation, phone appointments, and clinic visit thus meeting the breastfeeding families where they are- literally!

-Contributed by Priti Rane



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Lily Silva, Great South Region
 Megan Esparza, Orange-LA Basin Region
 Karen Gillian, Central Valley Region
 Andrea Weiss, Delta/Sierra Gold Region
 Priti Rane, East/South Bay Region
 Ankita Tandel, East/South Bay Region
 Gueidi Beltran, North Coast Region
 Nayan Patel, Sierra Cascade Region
 Karen Steppat, Sierra Cascade Region

SMALL AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE

Ashley Fasking

NATIVE AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVE

Nina Ayala

MEMBERS AT LARGE

Shirlee Runnings, Kiran Saluja

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Kanisha Neal, Liliana Prado

NWA Rep to Leg. Committee:

Samar McGregor



Save
the Dates

**FALL CONFERENCE 2021
 & SPRING CONFERENCE &
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