Lifting Up Our WIC Community

When we put out the call for stories for the Fall WIC Watch, we were thrilled to receive so many stories with such a wide variety of subject matter. It is impressive and heartwarming! You can read about innovations and partnerships that better support families and take WIC to new levels. Stellar breastfeeding support that results in lifelong impressions on WIC families, outcomes for their infants, and career choices. Advocacy to protect and improve WIC, especially as we are on the cusp of long overdue changes to make WIC a better and more accessible program. Supporting each other’s wellness at home and in the clinic. Professional development so that WIC staff ‘stick with WIC’ and continue to develop as public health leaders. Acknowledgements of, and well wishes for, WIC leaders who are celebrating retirement. The seeds of organizational change to ensure WIC is welcoming and inclusive of staff and participants. And finding love in WIC!

Embracing and lifting up our California WIC community can re-invigorate our resilience as we look ahead to an undetermined time when we will look back on the pandemic. We will work and live in new ways. Using technology and pushing innovation, we can better serve WIC participants, more easily network, spread and scale ideas, and create working partnerships and lasting WIC relationships across our big, diverse state.

We hope you enjoy this issue of the WIC Watch as much as we enjoy supporting you and sharing your valuable work.

Fall greetings and gratitude for each of you,

The CWA team-
Grace, Lena, Sarah, Jodi, and Karen
**Fall Education Events**

We are looking forward to Fall Virtual Education Day on November 16, and CDPH WIC Local Directors Fall 2021 Meetings, November 17 and 18. Local agency and state staff have accomplished herculean feats to adopt technologies and innovative work processes, and also adapt continuous quality improvement strategies during this pandemic. We have seen unexpected, but welcomed, opportunities to improve accessibility for WIC beneficiaries. With that in mind, we will be offering sessions on **WIC Linkages for Referrals and Care Coordination and Management Practices for Maintaining CQI with Remote & Hybrid Service.**

Additionally, the pandemic is but one of many extreme challenges impacting local communities. Racism, environmental threats, and prosperity inequities are issues which will impact WIC participation and outcomes magnifying the importance of WIC and safety net programs as critical foundations to the success of families and communities. During the Fall Conference attendees will dive into issues that drive program outcomes and community success when a holistic approach is taken to program management. CWA’s Fall Education Day will culminate in a special session on **Equitable and Joyous Leadership** with Dr. Melissa Franklin, CEO of Growth Mindset Communications. This will be in tandem with the new **Joyous & Equitable Leader Workshop Series** taking place over the next year.

Dr. Melissa R. Franklin is the Owner and Founder of Growth Mindset Communications, a 4-branch strategic communications and engagement consulting firm. Melissa is much more than a seasoned marketing & communications professional—she is a healer of organizations and systems. With over 20 years of experience and a Doctorate of Education in Organizational Change and Leadership from University of Southern California, Melissa locks arms with movements, organizations, and systems to help them conceive and activate positive change.

Another highlight for this upcoming conference will be a reading by Georgina Marie Guardado, former WIC employee, poet from Lakeport, California, and the Lake County Poet Laureate for 2020-2024. She is the first Mexican-American and youngest to serve in this role for the county, and in June 2021 she was selected as a Poets Laureate Fellow with the Academy of American Poets. Read more about Georgina Marie on page 27.

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**VIRTUAL EDUCATION DAY**

Dr. Melissa R. Franklin

Georgina Guardado
State Policy Updates

CWA had a busy legislative season, supporting multiple bills sponsored by our partner organizations. At press time, Governor Newsom has wrapped up the first year of a two-year legislative session by signing or vetoing hundreds of bills sent to him. There were some victories on our bill list, such as SB 95, which granted 80 hours of supplemental COVID-19 paid sick leave and was signed into law early in 2021, although the legislature failed to renew SB 95 or put other provisions for COVID-19 related sick leave in place when it expired on September 30th. SB 65 (the California “Mornibus” bill) which was included in the state budget, and AB 32, which, while not signed into law, was partially adopted into the health trailer bill. See our full bill list here: https://www.calwic.org/policy-center/state/. CWA also tackled some administrative issues, including securing increased contract flexibilities for local WIC agencies that will prevent funds from being returned to USDA and allow for more budgetary amendments as the needs of local agencies change during the year. Another front where CWA was less successful was in advocating with the Governor’s office regarding his executive order rescinding permission to use federal waivers authorizing remote service. WIC has depended on use of USDA waivers to keep WIC families and staff safe during the pandemic, and had hoped for an amendment to the Governor’s executive order, given the high risk population (pregnant people and children too young to be vaccinated) it serves, but an amendment was unfortunately not granted.

Federal Policy Updates

WIC Waivers Updates

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, local WIC agencies have remained open, but depended upon USDA waivers that allow them to enroll and serve participants remotely to maintain social distancing and keep clients and staff safe. In mid-September, USDA extended the phase-down period for the majority of WIC waivers, including physical presence, providing WIC providers additional time to transition back to in-person services. This grants WIC providers a 90-day period after the end of the national public health emergency declaration for COVID-19 to return to in-person pre-pandemic services. The public health emergency declaration was renewed in October, ensuring that nationally, WIC waivers will stay active until Spring 2022. However, California Governor Gavin Newsom issued an executive order in June ordering that all organizations operating under such waivers return to in-person services by October 1st, and despite a lengthy period of advocacy by CWA, that order was not amended. Local California agencies have gone to great lengths and complexities and returned to at least some amount of in-person services, and found creative ways to minimize in-person services and presence in the office in the interest of safety.

WIC Ambassadors

Have you ever considered being a WIC Ambassador?

WIC Ambassadors are local agency WIC staff who are ready and willing to represent WIC in meetings with policymakers. Our WIC Ambassador team is stronger than ever, with about 80 current WIC Ambassadors covering all regions of California. In the last year we’ve had nearly 60 visits with members of Congress and members of their staff to talk about things like USDA waivers, the CVB increase, online shopping, and other things of great concern to WIC staff and families. At the end of August, we held an informal WIC Ambassador Zoom lunch so that we could get to know each other a bit – we’d love to get to know you! Interested? Contact Sarah at sdiaz@calwic.org
FEDERAL POLICY UPDATES (continued)

CVB Increase/Stories Collection

On March 12, 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) authorized state WIC agencies to enhance the WIC Cash Value Benefit (CVB) for a period of four months, expanding the vegetable and fruit benefit from $9/month for children and $11/month for women to $35 per month, per participant over 12 months old. The CVB is credited with improving the dietary quality of WIC participants and reducing the prevalence of childhood obesity among WIC toddlers. California implemented the CVB increase beginning June 1, 2021.

Since June, California WIC staff have received many messages of appreciation and gratitude from families, who are now enjoying more fresh fruit and vegetables than they were previously able to. We’ve even heard that some families who were previously hesitant to enroll in WIC have enrolled just for the extra CVB, and redemption rates have risen! In June, purchases of fruits and vegetables by California WIC participants increased nearly 13 million dollars from May, to over 18 million dollars. CWA was active in the advocacy to secure the CVB increase during Congressional negotiations prior to the passage of the ARPA, and we followed the participant response to the CVB increase closely so that we could funnel those messages from participants straight back to Congress!

Together with our partners at NWA, NourishCA, and CinnaMoms, we conducted a series of Zoom sessions where WIC participants were invited to share their thoughts on WIC services and participation, with a special emphasis on what the CVB increase has meant to the way their families shop and eat. These videos from our “Minute With WIC” project can be viewed here!

The bump to the CVB was included in Congress’s continuing resolution in September, although the dollar amount was changed from $35/participant to levels consistent with NASEM recommendations ($24 for children, $43 for pregnant participants and $47 for lactating participants monthly). We are continuing our advocacy work to make sure that this increase is included in any Congressional budget deal so that it extends through September 2022.

When the summertime $35 cash-value benefit began, American Red Cross WIC wanted to ensure its participants took full advantage of the added fruits and vegetables. One of the Assistant Managers and Master’s Program student Connie Solis, RDN, CLEC, took on a pilot project to make this happen. She sent a Teletask message requesting that participants opt in if they wanted to learn more about using these benefits. From there, she developed and sent six infographics, one per week, sharing valuable information on all things WIC – including what you can and can’t buy, benefits of eating fruits and vegetables, and how to reduce food waste. At the end of the six-week campaign, 85% of participants said they felt very motivated to increase their family’s fresh food consumption, 59% said they think about reducing food waste in the home, and 78% said they feel confident using their WIC card to buy fresh produce.

Build Back Better Reconciliation

In mid-September, the House Ways and Means passed their committee specific provisions of the $3.5 trillion reconciliation package, Build Back Better Act, including a comprehensive paid family and medical leave program that would provide workers with 12 weeks of leave and proposed extension of enhanced child tax credit (CTC) through 2025.

This is an extension of the expanded CTC that was included in the American Rescue Plan. CTC promotes economic stability, reduces food insecurity, and promotes equity. Nutrition provisions in the Build Back Better package that could impact WIC families include authorization of Summer EBT and expansion of school nutrition programs through the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP).

At press time, Build Back Better has been whittled down to a $1.75 trillion package that leaves out many of the initial provisions, but is still opposed by Republicans.
Public Charge & Immigration

In March, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) formally announced that the Biden Administration would no longer be applying the Trump-era changes to the public charge immigration rule, and would revert to 1999 guidance. In August, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) unveiled an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) (ANPRM) on public charge, “to seek broad public feedback on the public charge ground of inadmissibility that will inform its development of a future regulatory proposal.” This comment period closed in October.

In early September, Reps. Jayapal and Cárdenas introduced the Lift the Bar Act to eliminate the current five-year waiting period for immigrants access to Medicaid, the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. The bill would restore access to critical aid for Green Card holders, DACA recipients, individuals granted Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), and other lawfully present immigrants.

You can find resources regarding the Lift the Bar Act here. More literature is emerging on the chilling effects of the Trump public charge rule change, and we continue to occasionally hear from our local WIC agencies that immigrant families have concerns about using WIC - CWA has produced a flyer for use on social media and in WIC offices in several languages to help alleviate these fears.

CNR + Food Package

Although legislation is on hold until the budget process moves forward, the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act has kicked off with a few hearings, including Food for Thought: Examining Federal Nutrition Programs for Young Children and Infants -- House Hearing on WIC and CACFP in July. This CNR presents an opportunity for meaningful changes to the WIC program, the need for which were highlighted in particular by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some CNR legislative priorities are the WIC ACT, which would extend WIC eligibility to age 6, extend postpartum eligibility to 2 years, and extend the infant certification period to 2 years, and the WIC For Kids Act, which would extend the child certification period to 2 years, expand adjunctive eligibility programs, provide flexibility to align certification periods within families, and prioritize outreach to kinship families.

Other priorities that don’t yet have marker legislation attached include retaining some of the flexibilities for serving clients remotely (for some routine appointments), increasing funding for breastfeeding peer counselors, exploring online shopping options, and getting the CVB increase made permanent.

The WIC food package is up for its 5-year review! NWA will be providing template comments based on nutrition science, NASEM, DGAs, and feedback from stakeholders. You can learn more about NWA’s recommendations for the food package here - https://thewichub.org/enhancing-the-wic-food-package-impacts-and-recommendations-to-advance-nutrition-security/. Note that regulatory advocacy is not considered lobbying, and we encourage all WIC staff to submit comments!
CWA Presents “The Forum”

Communication and networking are more critical than ever because of new ways to provide WIC services, continuous emergencies, and new WIC staff joining during these unprecedented times. As another member benefit, CWA has launched the Forum, a NEW online discussion platform! WIC staff can join open discussion topics and be part of member groups. In addition to providing a forum for discussion and feedback, the platform can also host video meetings. Communicating on the platform is easily accessed via email and web browser; you do not need another app. Notifications can be received in real time or in daily or weekly digests – you choose how often you want to be notified. Each group has access to its own library for easy document sharing and reference. ALL WIC staff are invited to use this tool - you just need an email. Meet new WIC friends, share ideas, and expand your reach across California! To join the Forum or for questions, contact Lena at lworkman@calwic.org.

WIC & Healthcare Integration

New opportunities for WIC to be integral with health systems are opening as health care shifts from a focus on disease treatment to prevention. Providing whole person care, identifying social determinants of health, and addressing racial equity are foundational transitions in health care provision today that require better engagement with WIC and also a workforce of nutrition and lactation experts. WIC local agencies have always worked with health care providers for WIC referral and enrollment, obtaining therapeutic formula, identifying care needs and more. But historic opportunities are opening that will stretch how WIC agencies have worked with health care. It requires us to learn about the changes and elevate the value of WIC among health care decision makers.

Some California WIC agencies have been integrating into health care with staff visiting bedside in hospitals, while other agencies share nutrition and lactation staff with health centers or co-locate staff in health centers and provide WIC benefits as part of the health care team. Local agencies are meeting monthly to share their examples of WIC and health care integration, learn about state efforts to reform health care provided in Medi-Cal through the CalAIM initiative and the upcoming changes as the Medi-Cal plans will have new contracts in 2024.

Looking ahead, representatives from various health care programs and health care advocates will be invited to meet with the group to develop relationships and identify opportunities for WIC local agencies. For more information contact Karen at kfarley@calwic.org. For CWA’s background papers on this visit https://www.calwic.org/what-we-do/promote-wic-public-health/.

WIC Linkages

Sharing and access to data between WIC local agencies and health and social service programs is critical for improving recruitment, retention, and reengagement of eligible individuals. CWA and many partner organizations have been committed to advocacy efforts to improve WIC linkages in statewide systems. Expanding Access to WIC Through Horizontal Integration, published by CWA, provides survey findings of all California WIC local agencies and their linkages across the continuum of care. Located in six types of local administrations, community and Native American health centers, city and county health departments, hospitals, and non-profits, WIC local agencies have different opportunities and challenges for data and information sharing.

Not surprisingly the survey results showed how isolated WIC agencies are in sharing data and information that could streamline or improve provision of WIC benefits and care. Over the last few months in a series of interviews, fourteen agencies have shared details of their linkages. Several promising models are being used that could be replicated and scaled. In early 2022 all local agencies will be provided a series of meetings to learn from colleagues about data sharing models that could be adopted by their agency to provide better care, and an improved participant experience. Ultimately statewide systems of horizontal integration are needed, but establishing local linkages provides additional options.
Join us for some JOY this year!

Joyous & Equitable Leader Workshop Series
We are thrilled to bring you this timely, year-long series on leading with joy and equity. During the next 12 months, we will delve into operationalizing equity, from understanding implicit biases and cultural inequities, to incorporating equity strategies in all aspects of your operations. Melissa Franklin of Growth Mindset Communications, with over 20 years of experience and a Doctorate of Education in Organizational Change and Leadership, will teach and guide us to conceive and activate positive change in our organizations. This training is suitable for directors, supervisors, managers, and decision-makers in all departments of your organization including HR, finance, marketing, in addition to direct program staff. We hope you join us on this journey!

Register and Save the Dates!
https://calwic.regfox.com/joyous-and-equitable-leader

2021-2022 Schedule
WEBINAR PRESENTATIONS & WORKSHOPS
Understanding Implicit Bias & How it Shows Up in Us as Leaders, As Individuals, & in Society
November 16, 2021: Kick off at CWA Fall Management Meetings, 1:15-3:15pm
This promises to be a fun and interactive session and you will walk away with tools you can use right away!

All other sessions 10am-12:30pm
Understanding Implicit Bias Continued ..............................12/7/21
Cultural Humility in Service Delivery &
Interacting with the Public........................................2/22/22
Equity in Action – Hiring & Promotion Practices ............4/19/22
Equity in Action – Birth & Birth-Related Disparities.....6/21/22
Equity in Action – Metrics & Data ..............................9/20/22
Equity in Action – Being an Advocate for Equity.....10/18/22

OFFICE HOURS
Small group discussions to support your questions & comments and further explore topics. Get professional advice and feedback for the changes you are implementing for your specific organizational policy and cultural practices. Peer group sharing for resources and collaborative learning. January through September, additional optional opportunities.

Continuing Education Units will be offered for RDs, IBCLCs, and RNs.

Questions? Contact Lena, lworkman@calwic.org

CNC Scholarships
California Nutrition Corps Scholarships applications available now!
Supporting our community is fundamental to our mission, so we are happy to announce that CNC Scholarship Applications are now available on our website for the 2021-2022 term! As a reminder, applicants may apply once per category, must be currently employed in a WIC program with at least 6 months of continuous employment at the time of application, and currently enrolled in a dietetic internship, undergraduate, or graduate program. Applications are available now on our website for the 20th year of the CNC scholarships!

Important Dates:
November 15, 2021 – Applications available on our website www.calwic.org
3:00pm, January 14, 2022 – Completed Applications due! Email to lworkman@calwic.org (subject: CNC Scholarship Application; please combine all documents into 1 file attachment)
March 14, 2022 – Applicants notified via mail/email

WIC Works Summer Webinars
This summer, CWA hosted three successful webinars to inform and inspire WIC agencies across California. We are incredibly honored and grateful to have intelligent, thoughtful, and innovative individuals share their knowledge and expertise related to WIC. We began the webinar series in July with Dr. Zea Malawa, MD, MPH who shared about the progress of the Abundant Birth Project, San Francisco’s first pregnancy basic income program, with the goals to narrow racial disparities in birth outcomes and enhance WIC participation in urban communities. The following month, we invited Meg Beard MPH, MCHES, RDN, IBCLC from Santa Barbara County and Kayellen Young IBCLC, CD(DONA) from Riverside to discuss their agency’s implementation and lessons learned from lactation telehealth. The series closed with helpful information for social media marketing and management with Shannon Sneade from the American Red Cross WIC. We thank those who joined in the great engagement, thoughtful dialogue, and optimistic energy throughout the sessions to help improve best practices within their agencies. The recordings are available and CE units if you complete an evaluation. https://www.calwic.org/events/wic-works-webinars/
California WIC Colleagues Retire

Heidi Kent

After a 41-year career, Heidi Kent said "Adiós" to her Executive Director position and the staff at South Los Angeles Health Projects in September. She began her WIC journey in 1980 as a nutrition educator in a temporary summer job at the Compton WIC Center. She enjoyed working with moms and babies so much that she continued working for WIC while pursuing her master’s degree in public health nutrition at UCLA. Heidi also became a registered dietitian and, later, a certified lactation educator.

Heidi was promoted, and worked for three years as a site supervisor at the Hubert Humphrey Comprehensive Health Center until assuming greater administrative responsibilities for the agency, including hiring, training, and personnel management. In 1990, Heidi became deputy director of South LA Health Projects and played a key role in expanding WIC in the 1990s: growing the staff, adding new sites and programs, and enhancing services for families. Heidi moved into the Executive Director position at SLAHP in 2012. Since then, she and her staff have coordinated the work of approximately 250 employees. Heidi often said she is especially proud of the many staff who advanced through the ranks and now serve in leadership positions.

Heidi was involved in the formation of CWA in the early 1990s. She was active on the CWA board for many years, including as board president. Heidi’s contributions to CWA and her local WIC program also influenced the California State WIC program.

Heidi postponed her retirement for a year and a half to guide her staff skilfully through the transition from WIC MIS to WIC WISE, WIC checks to the WIC cards, and the pandemic. Her staff say, “Heidi’s departure is bittersweet. Yes, she deserves the joy, adventure and relaxation that retirement can bring, yet we will miss her! She has steered our ship with intelligence, diligence, integrity, flexibility, compassion, and good humor. We know this is really just "Hasta luego!" Once we return to ‘normal’ after the pandemic, Heidi will return - for the potlucks, the awards, the celebrations. All we ask is that she continue bringing those delicious chocolate-covered strawberries.”

Delia Castellvi

After 20 years of working with the Alameda County WIC Program, Delia Castellvi retired in July 2021. Delia studied food and nutrition at the University of San Agustin, Iloilo City, Philippines, and earned a Bachelor of Science degree there. She later completed a dietetic internship in the Philippines. When they came to the US, Delia and her family settled in New Jersey. There, she worked for 10 years as a nutritionist at a skilled nursing facility.

Delia’s WIC career began after she moved to California in the late 90s. For the first two years, she worked at the Drew Health Foundation WIC clinic in East Palo Alto. Once she came to Alameda County WIC, she worked as a nutrition assistant at all four of Alameda County WIC Program’s clinics, from Eastmont to Fremont.

Ultimately, Delia spent more than half of her 20-year WIC career at Alameda County’s Fremont clinic. As one of the original staff members of the Fremont WIC team, Delia moved from WNA to Nutrition Assistant II while helping the Fremont clinic blossom over the years and grow into the busy clinic it is today. She recalls that it started small, open only several days per week, but expanded and grew considerably over the years to a full-time clinic serving almost 2000 clients a month.

Delia’s employer recognized her as an independent, motivated worker and a self-starter who really valued the teamwork among Fremont’s tight-knit staff. Delia said she loved seeing children and babies come into the WIC clinic and really got to know the WIC families closely. In retirement, Delia hopes to spend quality time with her family, travel to scenic destinations, garden in her beautiful backyard, bike in the Bay Area, and continue cooking and baking delicious desserts.
Denise Kirnig

In June 2021, Denise Kirnig retired from Solano County with more than 29 years of service in the Health and Social Services Department, Public Health Division. She began as a Public Health Nutritionist with WIC as well as providing outpatient counseling for Family Health Services and the Child Health and Disability Prevention Program (CHDP). After a promotion, Denise created many of the WIC nutrition classes and expanded WIC services by integrating with other community programs.

Denise also led Solano Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (WORKs), a special project effective in supporting WIC families to be nutritionally ready for employment. Families learned about healthy meal shopping and preparation and received Welfare to Work credit for attending the classes. She served in leadership roles and encouraged statewide sharing of best practices through the California Conference of Local Health Department Nutritionists.

In the early 90s, Denise helped start the California Nutrition Network, later leading its restructure to the Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Program. This is now known as the CalFresh Healthy Living Program that uses a network of county partners to offer healthy eating and physical activity options for individuals with limited incomes.

After 27 years as the WIC Director and Nutrition Services Bureau Chief, Denise transferred to the Public Health Assessment and Policy Development Bureau. She led Public Health research and planning efforts, managed the Whole Person Care program providing wrap-around support for Solano County’s most vulnerable community members, and worked on a variety of efforts to prevent and contain the COVID-19 virus.

Upon her retirement, Denise shared: “I will be riding off into the sunset to put my energy in other places... I feel both excited and sad to leave an amazing place to work with wonderful people. I feel very lucky that this goodbye is so difficult.”

Helaine Moore

Helaine Moore retired June 30, 2021, after 30 years at E Center WIC in Lake County. She started working for WIC in the late 70s, spending three years with the Idaho Migrant Council Health Clinics, before earning her Masters degree in Public Health at UC Berkeley. Next, she directed the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) in Boise, where paraprofessionals provided nutrition education to lower income families in their homes.

When Helaine and her husband moved to California, she served the Lake County Public Health Department, then reconnected with WIC as a part-time nutritionist in 1991. By 2001 she was E Center’s WIC Director. She remembers how participation rates jumped with the WIC Food Package improvements in 2009, bringing “exciting and exhausting” challenges including remodeling whole buildings! She is proud that WIC has always been changing, using technology and other ways to meet families’ needs.

Helaine has moved to the Oregon Coast to enjoy more time with family and on the beaches. She told us, “I am having a difficult time realizing I’ll no longer be working with the best group of people: local staff, county agency and State WIC employees, and CWA support. Some of my best WIC memories are of all the friends that gather for CWA conferences and Washington DC legislative advocacy trips.

The WIC Program has heart. Our WIC staff are dedicated, smart, caring, and flexible — a great team. You feel good at the end of every day, knowing you are assisting young families to a better future. I couldn’t have had a better career!”
RETIREMENTS (continued)

**Pina Hernandez**

After 39 years working for PHFE WIC, Pina Hernandez was ready to retire in 2021. While Pina began her career with WIC as a WNA, she decided to go back to college and earn a degree. Initially she envisioned a degree in business, but once she experienced a political science class she wanted to learn more about how laws shape our environment. Pina earned a Bachelor’s degree in Political Science from Cal State Fullerton, which she feels made her an even stronger advocate for WIC’s program and participants.

In 1990, Pina began to work exclusively on outreach to clients. Her role was to supervise, guide, and develop strategies for outreach efforts that included contacting participants on the weekend, staffing community events, and ensuring in-person visits to professionals and organizations. She says her job advocating for the program was rewarding because she was able to help countless families in need.

In recent years, Pina’s position evolved from outreach and community efforts to include media campaigns and press conferences. Her own community group involvement helped introduce WIC to the mainstream media. As she built relationships, she promoted WIC services with the Hispanic media. Later, her PHFE WIC team also worked with Chinese, Vietnamese and Korean media.

Pina says, “I was honored to work alongside many wonderful people who helped shape my views about outreach, advocacy, media and community work. I treasure the learnings, the friendships, and the openings given to me. I would like to thank PHFE WIC for all the opportunities I have experienced. I have genuinely enjoyed my work at WIC where I grew professionally and personally from the very best teachers.”

Pina’s retirement plans include moving to Spain, a country she fell in love with years ago, because, “It’s time for a new chapter in my life, taking me far away, and I am ready for it!”

**Wendy McGrail**

Wendy McGrail worked with passion and dedication at PHFE WIC for over 43 years before retiring in September. In 1978, when WIC had only existed at PHFE for about a year and a half, Wendy started as a Nutrition Assistant. Over the next 10 years, she served as a Supervising Nutritionist and then an Area Manager. When she became a Senior Nutritionist, Wendy worked as the Staff Training Coordinator and Breastfeeding Coordinator.

Wendy became a Regional Breastfeeding Liaison in 2013 and served in this role until her retirement. As a RBL, Wendy has worked with countless hospitals, community partners and doctors’ offices to improve breastfeeding support and breastfeeding policies, not only for WIC families but for all families in California.

Wendy’s leadership and passion have earned her numerous awards, including the Golden Nugget Award alongside Breastfeed LA at the California Breastfeeding Summit in January 2020. She was recognized for her work with the Asian Breastfeeding Task Force to promote health equity through breastfeeding advocacy for Asian and Pacific Islander families.

Last April, Wendy was lauded as “a Breastfeeding Champion” as she received the Mitchel Goldstein Dedication to Community Award, given by the Perinatal Advisory Council: Leadership, Advocacy, and Consultation (PAC/LAC), for her help in building community partnerships.

Wendy has touched so many lives through her time at WIC, and she will be greatly missed at PHFE and CWA. About retirement, Wendy shared, “I am looking forward to spending more time in ministry for the homeless in the San Gabriel Valley, continuing to work with families as a volunteer. My challenge will be to not overbook myself so I have more time to relax and hopefully do some traveling to visit my adult children and my grandchildren.”

**Happy Retirement!**
Moving Forward Together

Partnering to provide modernized and innovative services that meet WIC families’ needs.

California WIC Program
New WIC Directors

Jane Boone-Brechwald
I am honored and excited to be the new WIC Director for the County of San Luis Obispo WIC Program. I have worked for WIC for 26 years, the last 5 years for SLO County and prior to that 21 years at Santa Barbara County WIC. Besides work, I love to spend time with my family, husband, two sons, and two fur babies!

Stephanie Buelna
Over 11 years ago, I started my WIC experience in Iowa WIC as a Dietitian, then Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Coordinator. Since moving to California, I’ve been RD/Coordinator of Nutrition Education and Training and now I am happy to serve as Assistant Director for Fresno EOC WIC. I have a Master’s degree in Nutrition from the University of Nebraska Lincoln and I am also credentialed as an IBCLC. Besides WIC, I have experience as a nutrition instructor and a wellness dietitian for a large corporation.

Annette Thorton
I am a native of Central Valley and have worked for Fresno EOC WIC since 1994. It’s been a joy for me to experience the many changes of WIC over the years, from embossing voucher booklets to launching & retiring WIC MIS, and now providing electronic services. I also serve on the CWA Board as a regional representative. So it’s no surprise that I’m thrilled with my recent promotion to WIC Program Director!
Volunteering can pay off with a permanent job. Two recent volunteers at Merced County Community Action Agency (MCCAA) WIC program now have permanent positions as Breastfeeding Peer Counselors in the agency.

Leslie Sandoval-Correa was a Nutrition major at Sacramento State University when she volunteered to run the summer lunch program at MCCAA in 2019. The Summer Food Service Program is a USDA federal nutrition program that provides meals for children 18 years of age and younger during the summer. MCCAA’s main WIC site is one of the county’s Summer Lunch sites for six weeks.

During the six-week program, a volunteer coordinates the program, from daily arts and crafts projects to scheduling community partners such as fire/police and the library’s bookmobile - all on a minimal budget. Leslie arranged for an additional $300 donation from a local business to fund these projects. She appreciated the chance to work with participants of different ethnicities and learn more about food insecurity.

While attending Sac State, Leslie had a baby. When her son was two months old, she returned to school, commuting two hours each way. She used two breast pumps supplied by WIC, one at home and another at school, allowing her to exclusively breastfeed for a full year. She certainly gained an understanding of breastfeeding under difficult circumstances. Leslie had hoped her volunteering at MCCAA might lead to a WIC job after graduation, and it did! She became a WIC breastfeeding peer counselor in December 2020.

Miranda Griswold breastfed both of her children. She says, “the first one was easy; the second one, now 20 months old, was not! But I was stubborn and determined to make it work.” When MCCAA advertised on a Baby Wearer Facebook group for leaders of a Breastfeeding Café, Miranda thought it would be fun and knew it was something the county needed. She was offered the volunteer position and, after a two-day training, she led the Breastfeeding Café at Dignity Health’s Mercy Medical Center each Wednesday morning, responding to questions on the Breastfeeding Café’s Facebook page. Once COVID restrictions were in place, she took the Café virtual, leading several meetings live on Facebook.

Miranda never expected this volunteer gig would lead to a paid job. After she started doing more outreach with MCCAA’s Breastfeeding Liaison, Karen Lopez, Miranda was soon taking classes to become an IBCLC. Not long after, part-time peer counselor positions opened at the local WIC offices, and Miranda landed a job alongside Leslie.

Miranda shares, “I love being able to serve my community in this way and feel so honored to be involved in such an important part of parenthood. I am passionate about giving up-to-date, evidence-based and unbiased support to the parents of Merced.”
Since 2009, Riverside University Health System-Public Health has trained future IBCLCs with the Grow Our Own Lactation Consultant/IBCLC Prep Course, also known as GOO. Over the past 12 years, 400+ students have completed the course, with an IBCLC Exam success rate of 95%.

Since its inception, the course has been offered annually throughout California as a way to grow future lactation professionals who can help promote, support and establish lactation in various public health settings, including WIC. GOO has collaborated with CWA for student registration and payment and to offer scholarships to WIC staff. This is the perfect course to educate a future Designated Breastfeeding Expert (DBE). The GOO course is proud to acknowledge our diverse student population from various sectors in public health, including birth workers and doulas.

In 2020, the pandemic caused us to rethink our classroom education model and regroup to offer the course virtually. In 2021, Kayellen Young IBCLC, Riverside County Breastfeeding Coordinator, along with Susana Berumen Oseguera, IBCLC, RBL, and Erica Bravo Castillo, IBCLC, Lead Peer Counselor, worked together to successfully offer the GOO program virtually to about 40 students. The class meets via Zoom for a full day every other week for a total of 15 classes. Students will complete the course in early November and we look forward to offering the course again in early 2022.

**Grow Our Own Student Comments**

“I have worked for the WIC Program for 10 years of which 5 have been with the San Ysidro Health Agency. In 2013, I became a Lactation Educator Counselor which gave me the tools to be able to help breastfeeding people with their concerns and breastfeeding practices, but I wanted to take it to the next level. I’ve taken online classes before and they are not usually my favorite, especially when there is zero interaction with the teachers and other students, but the Grow Our Own course is very different because I can be anywhere, everything is live, and we get to ask questions and get the answers right away. I highly recommend this class!”

MARIANA M. DN, CLE  
Senior Nutrition Assistant  
San Ysidro Health Agency

“First of all, I LOVE this training!  
I’m not a WIC employee, but I do work with lactating mothers in the Black Infant Health program of Riverside County.

I am so excited for every session of this class because I get to learn something new. And I’ve been able to successfully help 3 moms so far on their breastfeeding journeys! What I especially enjoyed was having to research a topic to present to my cohort (conditions that impact breastfeeding). That project allowed me to learn so much. I’m just so grateful for the opportunity to participate in this training because it is so important for me to be competent & be able to help the lactating parents that I work with daily.”

Maya D., MPH  
Black Infant Health
"My experience with RIVGOO has been nothing short of educationally amazing. I was elated when they opened a virtual option, as they’re always full, class wise (which speaks for itself). Before class started the teachers were very welcoming, answering any questions. I’ve learned so much more about breastfeeding in this class than I have while having assisted moms for 7 years. Kayellen’s knowledge is absolutely astounding! RIVGOO hands down is the most elite lactation program in California!"

Patricia Hollis, FT RN student

"Taking this course has been a very big inspiration; it has not only empowered me by affirming what I already know but also it has enhanced my knowledge to be able to help all the women in my community to the fullest of my potential. Being one of the few in my county to have some breastfeeding knowledge I wanted to grow and the Grow Our Own Curriculum has done just that for me. I am also very grateful to all the staff who made it possible for me to take this course. The support that was offered made it all possible. Thank you!! GOO for being part of my career. I couldn’t have gotten to this point without you."

Araceli C.
Peer Counselor/Nutrition Assistant
Yolo County WIC

"GOO course remotely is an excellent opportunity for WIC staff with small children (breastfeeding) to attend without being away a total of 2 days/month from their babies."

Cynthia T., RD
Fresno EOC

Inger Thomas Jackson has been the Regional Breastfeeding Liaison (RBL) for Colusa, Sutter and Yuba counties for several years. She is a registered nurse, legal nurse consultant and IBCLC (International Board Certified Lactation Consultant). Inger is funded through Ampla Health WIC. She is originally from New Orleans but now works at Adventist Health Rideout hospital. Her Aunt Catherine, who is also a nurse, was Inger’s inspiration to become a nurse. As a NICU nurse, Inger watches over who she calls “her little tiny humans”; the reward is seeing NICU babies get better and go home healthy and thriving. Inger copes with the challenges of a nursing career by prayer, meditation and singing with her choir (though virtually this year).

In 2021, Inger was the recipient of the Daisy Award, a national honor that recognizes nurses who have provided outstanding care to their patients. It is presented in medical facilities throughout the U.S. and the world, in support of the education, training, skill and care they provide. Nurses may be nominated by patients, their friends and families, co-workers, physicians and volunteers. Inger was nominated by a patient of Adventist Health Rideout for the award for her compassion in caring for a new mom who had previously lost a baby.

For several years Inger has been a member, and served as president in 2018, of the TriCounties Breastfeeding Alliance of Colusa, Sutter and Yuba counties, an organization whose mission is to improve the health and well-being of mothers, infants and families through breastfeeding education, outreach and advocacy. As the RBL for Ampla and Sutter County WIC programs, Inger shares her expertise in nursing by providing in-services to both WIC Programs’ 20+ staff. She is often seen at WIC’s World Breastfeeding Week events. She also provides a connection between medical providers in the tricounty area and our two WIC Directors, Rose McIsaac at Ampla WIC and Karrie Spencer at Sutter County WIC. In a few words, Inger promotes breastfeeding wherever she goes with her knowledge and contagious personality. Though Inger will be stepping away from the RBL position – she will remain a vital team member at Adventist Health Rideout, active in the TCBA and as a board member of the California Breastfeeding Coalition.

Please take a moment to watch the wonderful video that honors Inger (click on the link): Inger Thomas Jackson - YouTube
Since 2004, the Central Valley WIC Dietetic Internship (CVWDI), based in Fresno, has trained 81 Dietetic Interns who have graduated to continue serving the WIC program. In 2020, the CVWDI enrolled its first class of Master’s Degree/Dietetic Internship (MS/DI) interns. Four of the six interns work full-time for local WIC agencies across California while completing their master's degree classes online.

Starting in 2024, interns will need to complete at least a master’s degree and a dietetic internship to become a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN). To help interns meet this new requirement, the CVWDI collaborated with Russell Sage College to offer a flexible, online Master’s Degree in Applied Nutrition, combined with a Dietetic Internship.

During the first 1.5 years of the CVWDI MS/DI, interns can work full-time from wherever they are, while completing their graduate classes online. In the final year of the program, interns come to Fresno to do their rotations on-site and finish their classes. The first class of CVWDI MS/DI interns will start their rotations in Fresno in January 2022, and are on track to graduate in December 2022.

Luz Ventura, CVWDI Dietetic Intern who works for Tulare County WIC, says the two things that attracted her to the CVWDI were the internship’s focus on diversity and the MS/DI program. “Your program knows the struggles that non-traditional students have. I’m an older student with children and a household to support. Now I can get a degree and a dietetic internship that’s more affordable and manageable.”

Some may wonder how WIC employees find time to work on master’s degree classes while working full time. The CVWDI WIC employee interns say that the workload is definitely manageable. Nhan Chau is a CVWDI dietetic intern and employee at United Health Centers WIC. She is expecting her first baby this fall. Nhan Chau likes the flexibility the MS/DI program offers. “Because classes are 100% online, I can work on them whenever it’s convenient for me. After dinner with family and friends, and on the weekends, I work on my classes.”

Rachael Johnson, CVWDI Intern and PHFE WIC employee, says that the structure of the program “is awesome, with just two classes at a time. I think this is the best way to set it up, because you get to work and prepare for your rotations. It’s more manageable than I thought it would be. I did a lot of research, and your program has been so flexible.”

When asked what advice they would give to someone who was thinking about applying to the CVWDI MS/DI, but wasn’t sure they could manage work, graduate school and a family, Luz Ventura said, “It seems scary, but when you’re in it, they understand you, and give you all the right support.” Nhan Chau agrees, “Don’t be afraid to give it a try. When you step into it, you can do it.”
CinnaMoms Expand Their Reach

**California Science Center**

We are overjoyed that the WIC Card and CinnaMoms | PHFE WIC are featured in the California Science Center's newest exhibit, *Life! Beginnings*, which opened last June. This permanent exhibit with a residency of 20+ years introduces families with young children to the resources and support that WIC and CinnaMoms provide. We are thrilled to play a role in raising awareness of issues such as breastfeeding, Black infant and maternal health, and equitable access to nutrition and family support! Check out the exhibit online or in Los Angeles [https://californiasciencecenter.org/exhibits/life-beginnings](https://californiasciencecenter.org/exhibits/life-beginnings).

**Special Innovation Grant**

CinnaMoms is also celebrating their selection for a USDA Special Innovation Grant. With this grant, CinnaMoms was able to promote a CinnaMoms Project Coordinator, K’Lynn Mitchell, to work alongside Dr. Toncé Jackson, CinnaMoms Co-Creator and Senior Health Equity Manager. It also allowed us to hire three CinnaMoms Project Specialists to execute grant deliverables, such as improved WIC experience for Black families, targeted outreach, and the evaluation of CinnaMoms as an evidence-based model. The CinnaMoms Project Specialists will join the current CinnaTeam in facilitating virtual support circles.

**Virtual Support Circles**

In partnership with Kaiser Permanente, CinnaMoms has transitioned its support circles to Zoom! We thank our sister WIC agencies and Lactation Consultants from *Watts Health* (Ms. Lydia Boyd), *Northeast Valley WIC* (Ms. Aqueelah Russell), *Lundquist WIC* (Janice Ahana), and *Long Beach WIC* (Ms. Brandi Nicholson) for facilitating our support circles. We also thank our amazing CinnaTeam members, Lactation Consultants (Nurse Jadah and Asaiah), and our PHFE WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselors for facilitating, hosting, and moderating these support circles. For more information about CinnaMoms, visit [www.cinnamoms.org](http://www.cinnamoms.org) and follow us on social media (IG/FB/Twitter: CinnaMoms_ ) and [www.phfewic.org](http://www.phfewic.org).

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*Dr. Toncé Jackson at the Life! Beginnings exhibit.*
Council on Racial Equity Pursues Intentional Hiring

Last year the PHFE WIC Council on Racial Equity (CORE) team considered how to achieve a diversified workplace that actually mirrored the targeted communities that we serve. We were convinced that in order to have different results in terms of who responded to our job announcements it would require a complete overhaul of our hiring process. Considering both the small percentage of African Americans entering the fields of Dietetics and Lactation Support, and our past experience with only a small number of multi-ethnic candidates being recruited based on language skills, meeting our goal for diversification was doubtful.

First, we needed to identify where and how we could intentionally recruit a broader audience of candidates. This included exploring pathways to encourage our CinnaMoms alumnae to become part of the workforce. Since most of these former or current WIC mothers were not likely to be specialized in dietetics or lactation we needed to be intentional in creating points of entry for them to become employed.

Next, not only did we need to send our recruitment message to a wider audience, we also needed to modify our job announcements with inclusive language designed to recruit a broader group of candidates who bring varied backgrounds and experience working with the targeted communities. Modifying the job description took many discussions on multiple levels and ultimately buy-in from upper management and Human Resources to incorporate diversity language.

Lastly, we were strategic to ensure that the hiring team included representatives from the targeted communities for both the recruitment efforts and interview panels. This provided candidates with exposure to staff that were connected to communities served, while providing additional opportunities for recruiters to vet the candidates based on their skills as well as their interest and passion for working with the intended communities.

Thanks to this intentional hiring process, we have now incorporated eight new African American/Black staff members into our Breastfeeding, Nutritionist, and CinnaMoms USDA grant teams. While the increase in Black staff members did not increase exponentially, these efforts have definitely set us on a growth trajectory.

Check out our Racial Equity Progress Report to learn more from the PHFE WIC Program CORE Team here: https://www.phfewic.org/newsroom/phfe-wic-is-2/ and https://www.helunahealth.org/board-statement/
WIC WORKSITE WELLNESS

Wellness Initiatives

American Red Cross WIC has a long-standing partnership with San Diego’s Live Well @ Work Initiative, supporting the vision of a region for better health, living safely, and thriving. Nutrition Education Associate John Haubenstricker, also the manager of CWA’s W3 newsletter, connected the wellness coordinators from fellow San Diego WIC agencies SDSU Research Foundation, TrueCare, and San Ysidro Health Center to the Initiative to bolster their wellness programs. This fall, SDSU Research Foundation WIC, TrueCare WIC, and ARC WIC will support Live Well in determining project areas for the Childhood Obesity Initiative Business Domain and Live Well @ Work Domains.

Create Your Personalized Wellness Roadmap

When it comes to our health, it’s important that we’re intentional with how we take care of ourselves, from how we think to how we act. Last month for our WIC Wellness Wednesday session, we worked with Kelley Axelson, health and wellness coach, and Corinne Ferris, life coach, to set tangible wellness goals. They helped our WIC staff to identify where we weren’t taking enough care of ourselves, envision what an ideal day prioritizing our health would look like, and from there came up with goals moving forward, focusing in one area from the life wheel. If you weren’t able to attend, check out their handouts for inspiration to set one goal and then find someone to hold you accountable.

Curious to get personalized support on getting healthier, mentally and physically? Check out Kelley Marie Wellness and Corinne Ferris Consulting for more information. For weekly tips to get healthier in a sustainable way, you can sign-up for the Nourish & Flourish Newsletter here!

The W3 newsletter provides health tips for WIC staff.
CWA started WIC Wellness Wednesdays in mid-June! Our volunteers from local WIC agencies have guided us through some excellent wellness activities, including yoga, Qigong, Tai Chi, sleep health, guided meditations and visioning sessions, stress reduction, and more. Our sessions have been well attended by local agency staff. Do you have a wellness skill that you can share with the WIC community? Come host Wellness Wednesdays! Sessions are open to community partners and WIC staff. Attending AND facilitating sessions counts towards Well WIC Worksite certification and recertification. Questions? Email Jodi at jmulliganpfile@calwic.org.

CWA also provided Step It Up! a walking challenge. There were 29 teams throughout California with 117 walkers. Teams walked a total of 25,990,603 steps, which was like walking from London to Tokyo. One team won each week, for a total of four weeks, so that teams had a chance to step it up week over week to win some great prizes. Can’t wait to do it again next year.

Lastly, if you haven’t heard, we have a new wellness newsletter called W3, which is full of wonderful information about monthly wellness topics pertinent to WIC staff, healthy recipes that spell out the science of what we eat, information on free wellness apps, Wellness events, and more. Interested in getting on the listserv? Email Jodi at jmulliganpfile@calwic.org.

Dr. Tony Gryffin, author of Mindful Exercise: Metarobics, Healing, and the Power of Tai Chi is hosting a series on Tai Chi for Wellness Wednesdays.
The California WIC Program is proudly committed to building a healthy and equitable future for all of California’s diverse people and communities. Learn more at: cdph.ca.gov/programs/ohe.
California WIC Agencies Celebrate Breastfeeding Awareness Month

California WIC Association recognizes the creative and diverse efforts of WIC agencies across California to promote Breastfeeding Awareness Month in August. Despite the pandemic, WIC agencies facilitated a fun and safe space for families to engage in a variety of events, including drive-thru celebrations, virtual education, milk drives and social media campaigns. We thank all California WIC agencies who brought together community partners and families to celebrate and increase awareness about the benefits of breastfeeding. We hope you enjoy these photos and captions that capture some of their stories.

Here's the winning photo from **Butte County** WIC’s photo contest. The winner got a beautiful gift basket of items that support breastfeeding.

**Community Bridges**

WIC recognized four local businesses nominated by the community for supporting lactation accommodation. They also partnered with more than six organizations to host a drive-thru event, reaching 240 families.

**Contra Costa County** WIC co-hosted an online 20-hour loving support peer counselor training for nearly 100 people. For participants, virtual classes plus a drive-through Community Baby Shower in honor of Black Breastfeeding Week were other unique events.

**Community Resources Project**

WIC hosted their annual Breastfeeding Festival outdoors at three sites. Themed “the magic of breastfeeding,” families enjoyed the photo booth, gift bags, recognition and support.

**Fresno EOC** WIC’s drive-thru event had an Olympics theme. They even had breast look-alike cupcakes!
**Glenn County** WIC partnered with First 5, Oral Health, and other programs to provide book-laden goodie bags at a drive-thru celebration at a local park or the clinic. Staff also delivered bags to homes.

**Monterey County** WIC was determined to hold their annual breastfeeding awareness walk and health fair. Looks like they had a great turnout, masks and all!

**City of Long Beach** WIC hosted drive-thru giveaways at three locations, distributing gift bags while issuing Farmers’ Market vouchers. Black Breastfeeding Week was a big highlight, too.

**Merced County** WIC engaged their Fire Department to hang a banner above the street promoting WIC’s breastfeeding support and encouraging families to “Breastfeed Anytime, Anywhere.”

**Native American Health Centers** WIC partnered with the Alameda County Breastfeeding Coalition to promote a milk drive to their culturally diverse communities throughout the month.

To kick off the ninth annual Black Breastfeeding Week, **NEVHC** WIC and their regional African American Infant and Maternal Mortality Community Action Team hosted a drive-thru giveaway event.
PHFE WIC hosted livestreams on Facebook, including “Ask the Lactation Consultant” and an expert panel on donating breastmilk. Their “Reclaiming our Traditions” campaign promoted health equity and inclusion for all families.

San Ysidro WIC held a drive-up event, gifting WIC participants tote bags with breastfeeding perks and information. Plus: cooking demonstrations, recipes, and Q&A on Instagram, and a Spanish radio show interview.

San Ysidro WIC held a drive-up event, gifting WIC participants tote bags with breastfeeding perks and information. Plus: cooking demonstrations, recipes, and Q&A on Instagram, and a Spanish radio show interview.

TrueCare WIC co-hosted a free online educational evening designed to help child care providers support breastfeeding parents. TrueCare WIC’s first-ever milk drive event brought in over 55 gallons of donated breastmilk!

Orange County Nutrition Services Program held a New Parents Resource Fair, collaborated to promote breastfeeding through social media, and created a new lactation space for WIC employees and community members.

At two of their three drive-thru events, Tulare County HHSA WIC collaborated with the mobile vaccination unit to promote both breastfeeding and immunization and offer COVID-19 vaccinations.

Another great drive-thru event was hosted by Ventura County WIC, where staff at two sites provided WIC participants with tote bags containing breastfeeding and WIC information.

United Indian Health Services promoted beautiful breastfeeding images of WIC mothers and their babies, capturing precious bonding moments and the work that helps babies thrive.
Local Agencies Win USDA Breastfeeding Awards

Last August, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Western Regional Office recognized five outstanding California WIC local agencies for their work to strengthen breastfeeding programs in their communities. The recognition program is part of FNS’s WIC Breastfeeding Awards of Excellence program, designed to provide models to help other WIC clinics strengthen their breastfeeding support efforts and increase breastfeeding initiation and duration rates nationwide.

Just over 100 awards were handed out across the country, including six in our Western Region. Key strategies developed by the awardee clinics include:

- Offering WIC participants personalized breastfeeding support and ongoing assistance,
- Providing WIC clinic environments that support and promote breastfeeding, and
- Collaborating with community partners.

Below are just a few highlights from the five California local agencies receiving awards. Congratulations!

**Riverside County** (Gold) made an extra effort to have Breastfeeding Peer Counselors assist lactating mothers during the COVID-19 pandemic via phone and texting. One mother recovering from the virus credited breastfeeding with saving her infant’s life.

**Sacramento County Department of Health Services** (Gold) focused on finding creative ways to connect with first-time mothers, especially, and enhance breastfeeding education. They initiated hospital collaborations, and some of their Peer Counselors became IBCLCs. With multiple funding sources, they made the Breastfeeding Helpline available everyday – including weekends and holidays – and provided lactation consultations in person, by phone or video.

**San Francisco Department of Public Health** (Gold) saw a 241% increase in Peer Counselor program participants over two years due to a streamlined WIC WISE referral process and the capable breastfeeding support team. The team’s work is rooted in equity and focuses on addressing disparities in breastfeeding rates, especially among Black parents and those of Asian descent. They also collaborated with Black Infant Health to conduct in-person and Zoom breastfeeding classes.

**San Mateo County** (Gold) - Increased their PC enrollment by 4 fold serving today close to 450 families. They offered uninterrupted Breastfeeding support during COVID-19 shelter in place and made no contact deliveries of pumps, other breastfeeding aids and reading materials to our participant’s homes. They are proud to have been able to strengthen their referral process, both internally from WIC using WIC WISE, and externally with the San Mateo County Medical Center, receiving an average of 30 prenatal referrals to WIC and PC support services every month. The Peer Counselors also were key to making the Breastfeeding Class via Doxy.me a great success thanks to their promotion and participant signs ups.

**County of Sonoma** (Premiere) focused on a World Breastfeeding Week Celebration in addition to ongoing support from Breastfeeding Peer Counselors who “answered all my questions and helped me with my doubts,” per client exit surveys.
Tik Tok’s Breastfeeding Star

Last February, Merced County Community Action Agency (MCCAA) WIC Peer Counselor Miranda Griswold wanted to get the COVID vaccine. However, she was breastfeeding, and vaccine studies did not include lactating women. She knew more research was needed, but how was the research going to happen without test subjects?

A simple Google search led her to the Mommy’s Milk Human Milk Research Biorepository’s COVID-19 Vaccine study. Researchers were asking breastfeeding women enrolled in the study to supply a 2-ounce breastfeeding sample 24 hours, 48 hours, 7 & 14 days after the first vaccine and then 24 hours, 7 & 14 days after the second vaccine. The breast milk was analyzed to see whether any immunity a mom develops is passed to her baby in her breast milk.

Miranda was so excited to join the study, she made a video explaining how the study works and then shared it on Tik Tok under her username “The Nerdy Doula.” She made another video after taking her first and then second samples. In the video for the second sample, she shared how difficult and frustrating it was to pump two ounces. Although Miranda’s 19-month-old toddler was still breastfeeding, she had not pumped since he was 11 months old. With her honesty and infectious enthusiasm for breastfeeding and for participating in this study, this video grabbed viewers: 49,000 views in 24 hours and over 115,000 times and 590 comments as of last March.

“I got asked all these questions about antibodies, how the studies work and how to join the study so, of course, I need to find the answers,” explains Miranda. After researching online to find evidence-based answers for her replies, she posted several FAQ videos. Miranda continued to document in videos her experience after each breast milk donation. You’re a TikTok star, Miranda!

Asian American & Pacific Islander WBW Photos

Did you know? The third week of August was the very first Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Breastfeeding Week! If your organization needs images of Asian American breastfeeding moms, BreastfeedLA’s Asian Pacific Islander Breastfeeding Task Force has a beautiful photo library! A small donation is suggested. Digital photos can be used for banners, flyers, presentations for upcoming breastfeeding events and signage. Thank you for your support!

Click on the link below to request your photos:
https://forms.gle/Ga4pF NyWUo94CwD97

Pandemic Doesn’t Stop Breastfeeding Pair

During World Breastfeeding Week last August, WIC participants Elvira and son Alexander bravely shared their breastfeeding story. Alexander and his mom hit a rough patch three months after his birth, when both mom and baby tested positive for the coronavirus. TrueCare WIC Peer Counselor Amparo had supported Elvira through pregnancy and common breastfeeding challenges in the first weeks and months postpartum. Amparo continued to encourage and support Elvira when she experienced a drop in milk supply as both she and Alexander recovered from COVID-19.

Kim Speckhahn, IBCLC, shared Elvira’s words: “I was concerned since he refused to eat, and my milk supply was low, and we had to be quarantined as well. I had to supplement with formula for a few months. Amparo, my PC counselor, was quite helpful because she was always there to answer any questions. I had a strong emotional bond with her. My baby is now nine months old, and I’m exclusively breastfeeding him without the use of any formula. I’m shy, but I’m here to speak with you in the hopes of encouraging other mothers who are having trouble nursing to never give up.”

The Mommy’s Milk Human Milk Research Biorepository is a multidisciplinary research initiative of the UC San Diego Department of Pediatrics Center for Better Beginnings and the UC San Diego Altman Clinical and Translation Research Institute-Center for Life Course Research. If you are interested in joining the study, learn more and apply at https://mommysmilkresearch.org/participate/.

Peer Counselor Amparo (l) and Kim (r) with Elvira and Alexander.
Do you ever wonder what a coworker does when they’re not working at WIC? Do they volunteer? Sing at open mics? Teach yoga? How about write poetry? From 2016-2021, Georgina Marie Guardado worked at E Center WIC of Lake County as a Program Assistant and a WIC Nutrition Aide. When she was not working for WIC, however, Georgina Marie was a writer serving as Poet Laureate of Lake County. CWA is excited to feature her poetry reading at our Fall Virtual Education Day!

Beginning to write poetry as a young teen, Georgina Marie has pursued her passion for creative writing ever since. Appointed Poet Laureate for 2020-2024, she promotes poetry and literacy in her community by supporting and encouraging writers of all ages, backgrounds, and experience via workshops and readings - all virtual, given that she started in early 2020.

Georgina Marie is also Literary Coordinator and Poetry Out Loud Coordinator for the Lake County Arts Council; Poet in Residence for the Lake County Bloom and co-creator of their "Rooted in Poetry" column; quarterly host of the Wordweavers radio show; and a scholar for two regional writers’ conferences.

Last June 2021, Georgina Marie was selected as one of twenty-three Poets Laureate Fellows with the Academy of American Poets, the largest financial supporter of poets in the U.S. As part of her fellowship, she will install poetry displays in every Lake County community including, with permission, six Native American communities.

As part of the Broken Nose Collective, Georgina Marie has created two chapbooks - small paperback booklets of poems. She aims to make poetry accessible and inclusive to everyone in Lake County, and welcomes anyone to learn more at georginamari-epoet.com.

This year, San Francisco Health Commission awarded its Employee Recognition Award to the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) WIC team for their contributions, commitment and service to San Francisco communities, especially over the past 18 months. The Team was recognized for continuing to provide both in-person and remote services to WIC families throughout the pandemic, serving over 12,000 unique participants (a 25% caseload increase!) in 2020. Despite severe staffing shortages, the program continued to process all referrals and complete appointments in over 26 languages, with a focus on addressing health disparities, and providing WIC services in a trusting, supportive and safe environment for all families.

The team was applauded for their continued work to address food insecurity among pregnant and postpartum people and families with infants and young children. This includes distributing WIC benefits and Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program vouchers, plus related partnerships with programs such as EatSF fruit and vegetable voucher program, SF-Marin Food Bank’s Pantry At Home program, and the many Farmers’ Markets in the city.

The Health Commission also praised the WIC Team’s partnership with HSA-MediCal and CalFresh programs, including the opening of a new clinic at the MediCal office which has grown significantly during the pandemic. This partnership has allowed cross referrals and outreach to ensure families are enrolled in all safety net programs for which they are eligible. Additionally, the team was recognized for receiving USDA’s 2021 Gold Breastfeeding Award of excellence and for the 241% growth in the Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program since 2019.
San Francisco Department of Public Health WIC partners with Abundant Birth Project—the nation's 1st first pregnancy income supplement program to reduce premature births.

San Francisco has wide racial disparities in rates of premature births especially among Black and Pacific Islander (PI) babies. Structural racism is an important factor driving this inequity. Black and PI women in San Francisco face unique social and environmental risk factors, including substandard housing and housing instability, greater exposure to conditions of concentrated poverty including crime and violence, limited access to quality foods and adequate nutrition, unequal educational opportunities, and poorer quality employment opportunities. To address these disparities, Expecting Justice-San Francisco’s collective impact project has started a pregnancy income supplement program called the Abundant Birth Project (ABP). ABP will provide 150 birthing Black and PI birthing people in San Francisco $1000 per month unconditional cash supplements per month for the duration of their pregnancy as a strategy to reduce preterm birth and improve economic outcomes over the next 2 years.

Since reducing premature births is a key outcome of the WIC program, San Francisco Department of Public Health WIC has partnered with ABP for a collaborative approach to addressing this key public health issue. The partnership has focused on the following key areas:

Policy advocacy: Since income supplements do not have any exemptions or waivers, they impact WIC eligibility of current and eligible participants who urgently need WIC services. SFDPH WIC has worked closely with Expecting Justice and National WIC Association to educate policymakers on the impact of cash supplements on WIC eligibility. They are advocating for permanent changes in federal WIC eligibility rules to allow for income exemptions for recipients of such cash transfers through Child Nutrition Reauthorization (CNR).

WIC-ABP Liaison: Ms. Shronda Jackson, a SFDPH WIC WNA/PC, is the WIC-ABP liaison. Currently, almost 500 participants have applied to ABP and are awaiting the lottery results. Since ABP applicants are WIC eligible and need nutrition support, they are referred by ABP staff directly to Shronda who reaches out for screening and enrolling applicants. The WIC team also refers eligible birthing parents to ABP by sharing the online interest form.

In addition, Ms. Jackson assesses whether an ABP income supplement would impact a participant’s WIC eligibility. If it does, she explains it to the family so they can make an informed decision. Since a WIC team member makes the eligibility determination, it prevents participants from prematurely or inaccurately dropping off the WIC program.

Pregnancy is a critical period of development. The SFDPH WIC and ABP partnership provides an opportunity to generate long-term health and financial improvements for birthing people and families. To learn more about San Francisco’s Abundant Birth Project please visit https://www.expectingjustice.org/abundant-birth-project/.
In the first article of this WIC Watch three-part series (Spring 2021) detailing Tulare County WIC’s modernization efforts, we shared the challenges faced and recommendations resulting from our operations assessment process. This article summarizes our experiences with the project’s Design and Build phase, including the logistics of turning a high-level strategy into detailed plans and operational changes.

Design and Build – Planning for Change

Successful organizational change takes careful planning. Our Design and Build phase started in February 2021 with Change Management training for the WIC staff. This included an overview of the Design and Build workgroup structure, the recommendations that would be addressed, and strategies to prepare for the challenges of managing change.

Successful redesign work requires input and development from all levels of the organization. Tulare County WIC formed four workgroups for this effort: Steering, Organizational Realignment, Operations, Nutrition Planning and Outcomes - each tackling different aspects of the change. To engage staff, we conducted a naming contest to brand the project and future operations. The winner, WIC On Demand, was turned into a logo recognizable to all staff and used throughout this Design and Build phase.

Our next step was inviting participant input. Fully 1,970 English-speaking participants and 1,608 Spanish-speaking participants responded to a five-question survey. This input gave staff confidence and direction in modernizing the Tulare WIC operations. (If you are interested in the results of this survey, please contact cdotson@intelegy.com.)

The Steering and Organizational Realignment workgroups met every other week with members from the management team. Their primary objective was to provide oversight and approval to all aspects of the project. They were also tasked with redesigning the organization to increase efficiency and effectiveness of the staff and their ability to communicate with participants in new and modern ways.

The new WIC On Demand organizational structure at Tulare County WIC now reflects three key focus areas: 1) managing virtual/remote participant communications and outreach; 2) increasing the focus on participant engagement utilizing virtual tools (phone, text, Doxy.me); and 3) increasing breastfeeding support given to the community. Once the new organization was in place, these two workgroups turned to focus on data-driven management and creating dashboards that reflect and measure the objectives of each level of the organization.

The Operations workgroup was composed of WNA, Health Program Assistant and RD staff and tasked with the redesign of processes and technology for a renewed emphasis on inbound appointments. This effort included redesigning and centralizing the scheduling function for WNA resources. The goal of the new schedule was to ensure staff availability and flexibility to: answer inbound appointments, call outbound to eligible participants with no future appointments, and manage onsite Presence-Required Appointments (PRA).

Critical to planning for this change was the input from the staff on this workgroup. Each meeting revealed many insights that helped build processes from the ground up, ensuring both acceptance of these new processes and effectiveness with engaging the participants.

The Nutrition Planning and Outcomes workgroup created a support function for call center management, ongoing centralized scheduling, dashboards, and data analysis and, in the future, clinic integration processes.

Careful planning for change includes staff training for implementing the planned changes. Training conducted to conclude our Design and Build work covered topics such as:

- Remote Work: Leading and Managing Successful Teams
- WIC On Demand Go Live
- Why the change was needed
- New workflows and revised use of technology tools
- Continuous Quality Improvement
WIC Service Redesign Part 2 (continued)

Design & Build: Successes and Challenges

Redesigning an organization to position for the future is motivating and improves morale when input and involvement from all levels of staff is achieved. However, change is hard!

We recognize that change comes in all shapes and forms, must first be visualized then created through documentation, and must include discussion and collaboration which requires time and patience. We also know it’s important to nurture the environment that supports change, including having fun celebrating the minor successes, clearly communicating the objectives and goals achieved, and acknowledging (and laughing about) the challenges.

Our new WIC On Demand organizational changes launched on September 1. Early results show reduced management-to-staff ratio/span of control from 1:22 to 1:11, and 50% of inbound appointments being kept, which was double our first month’s forecast! By changing from outbound to inbound appointment management, we’ve seen a reduction in WNA efforts to ‘track down’ participants and/or participants requiring to be onsite. This reduced rescheduled appointments, created a more equal workload distribution, increased participant engagement and preparation for appointments, and increased WNA capacity. We are off to a good start!

The next and last article in this series will offer a data analysis of 3 months of efforts under this new model. We look forward to the opportunity to report the results!

North Coast Partners Create Harvest Boxes

Humboldt County WIC is located in coastal Northern California - right in the heart of the redwoods. With a staff of 13 we operate out of four different offices throughout the rural region. Luckily, when California was faced with stay-at-home orders, we were able to quickly change over to remote services. Staff could work out of their homes or in the office with little to no in-person client contact. Thank goodness we had already switched to the WIC Card!

Each year when Farmers’ Markets start opening up, our clients clamor for the Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) vouchers. To provide even more fresh produce for WIC families, our agency teams up with the local North Coast Growers Association (NCGA). In past years, this partnership resulted in Market Match paper vouchers which we would offer to clients who did not get the FMNP vouchers.

With all the changes in our world this past year, WIC partnered with NCGA differently this season.

NCGA offered weekly Harvest Boxes for $20 ($10 for those with CalFresh benefits). These are Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)-type boxes with a variety of seasonal, locally-grown produce. NCGA gave our WIC program 175 digital codes to give out to our clients to get one free Harvest Box this summer.

With the increase in WIC’s vegetable and fruit cash-value benefit (CVB) to $35 per person over the age of 1, we decided to target the Harvest Box offer to WIC families with infants aged 9-11 months. Using the WIC WISE reports function we were able to filter those families’ records into Excel files and use Teletask to get the message out to them. For those families without internet access, we signed them up for Harvest Boxes using our work email addresses, then passed the information along to them to pick up their Harvest Box. Our families loved the results of this partnership!
In 1987, WIC joined Northeast Valley Health Corporation (NEVHC), a federally qualified health center serving the medically-underserved residents of the San Fernando and Santa Clarita valleys. NEVHC WIC has grown to include 12 locations, three of which are co-located with NEVHC health centers.

Since 1997, NEVHC has launched an annual "I Support You" (ISU) employee giving campaign. ISU gives NEVHC and WIC employees the opportunity to donate to patient/client programs spearheaded by staff. These programs supply critical items to participants who may otherwise be unable to afford them, such as hygiene kits, books and blood pressure monitors. All employees are welcome to submit a proposal for a program to be a part of the ISU campaign.

NEVHC WIC sites have been providing services remotely and not scheduling in-person appointments because of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, WIC employees are mailing children’s books and developmental brochures to WIC families. To help pay for postage to continue mailing books to families until in-person appointments resume, WIC submitted a successful 2021 ISU campaign proposal for the Little by Little School Readiness program. Little by Little is an evidence-based early literacy program for children ages 0-5 among families engaged in the WIC program.

Prior to this year, WIC championed a Breastfeeding program that provided nursing bras and aprons to nursing participants. While this program is not included in this year's ISU campaign, employee generosity has provided additional funds to be allocated to the Breastfeeding program’s efforts as well.

Collectively, the Little by Little and Breastfeeding programs raised a total of $8,884 through the 2021 ISU Employee Giving Campaign! NEVHC is proud of our WIC staff for championing these initiatives as we navigate the ongoing pandemic.
Like many local WIC agencies, American Red Cross (ARC) WIC knows that partnering with other community organizations can greatly expand services helpful to young families. Read on to learn about some of their recent creative partnerships!

**Nutrition Education**

After more than a year of providing nutrition education virtually, ARC WIC decided it needed a way to connect face-to-face with participants... even if through a screen. What better way to do so than over a delicious meal? ARC staff partnered with United Women of East Africa, a cultural nonprofit organization in San Diego, to host a virtual cooking class. Although this is typically a paid event, they offered 20 free first-come-first serve spots via text message and filled them within an hour.

ARC’s Nutrition Education Coordinator, Maryann Miernicki, first ensured the dish of the night – Ethiopian collard greens and coconut rice – used ingredients that could be purchased using WIC benefits. She then provided nutritional commentary throughout the class. At the end of the virtual class, each participant left with a warm dinner to serve their families and a renewed sense of community.

**Dietetic Interns**

For the last decade, ARC WIC maintained ongoing partnerships with Dietetic Internships at UC San Diego Health, Veterans Affairs San Diego Healthcare System, and Utah State University. In a typical year, ARC’s Registered Dietitian Nutritionists and other staff help approximately 22 dietetic interns gain experience and complete competencies in community health, advocacy, counseling, and education for the WIC population. ARC also benefits from working with the interns by gaining fresh perspectives, learning new ideas, and staying current on the latest trends in dietetics. ARC believes this partnership helps contribute to the development of future dietetics professionals.

**Diaper Drive**

One of the top requested referrals from WIC participants is for diapers. This doesn’t come as a shock to anyone who’s taken care of young children. When ARC WIC heard about a Jewish Family Services diaper drive, they quickly connected to extend the invitation to WIC participants. After one quick mass text message to participants with diaper-age children in the vicinity of the event, many people were interested. While Jewish Family Services was unsure of the exact numbers stemming from WIC turnout, they reported it was their most attended event in a long time. Since then, ARC has promoted similar partner events with great feedback from WIC families.


At the Farmer’s Market in Long Beach

Staying true to our motto of “meeting the participants where they are,” the City of Long Beach WIC set up booths at two local Farmer’s Markets this year. At Bixby Knolls on Thursdays and Downtown Long Beach on Fridays, we distributed Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) vouchers to participants who qualified for the first time.

Like many other WIC agencies, we have not physically seen our participants since March of 2020. Understandably, we were nervous about many things. Was it safe? Will they come? What about logistics?

We shared a post on our Instagram about when and where we would be and worked out a visiting plan with the Farmer’s Market manager at each site. In our first week of distribution, we issued 35 FMNP vouchers to eligible WIC families. Not a bad turnout considering we are still in the pandemic era.

When we asked our participants how they found out about our distribution, most responded that they came because of our Instagram posts. It was wonderful for both WIC staff and the participants to see each other again!

WIC Match at CWA

Erick Medina attended his first CWA conference in San Diego in April 2017. Erick, a new Nutrition Supervisor for Clinica Sierra Vista, was able to meet up with friends from CSU Long Beach where he obtained his degree in dietetics in 2016. They spent time catching up while attending the sessions and socializing with other WIC staff. Stephanie Macias, a Degreed Nutritionist at PHFE WIC and recent Cal Poly graduate, was also attending her first CWA conference. They were introduced and exchanged numbers.

As time went on, they kept in touch and each applied to their internships. They shared a common bond and goal of becoming Registered Dietitians. They started dating and have had many adventures together, including passing the RD exam. They also decided they wanted to spend their lives together and Erick asked Stephanie to marry him in June of 2020.

During the challenging COVID 19 shut-down, they managed to plan a wedding and will marry in November 2021.

You never know what you will learn, who you will meet at the CWA conference!

“My heart is at ease knowing that what was meant for me will never miss me, and that what misses me was never meant for me.”

— Imam Al-Shafii an 18th century Muslim jurist
WICHealth

We are wichealth, and you might recognize us as your online nutrition education partner! Did you know that we also have a Blog, and your participants share their experiences of parenthood with a supportive community of readers and writers? Our blog is a continuation of wichealth with a focus on personal stories. We aim to provide a place for an online community. A place where people come together to share their experiences and what they’ve learned. Our blog is a space for real people who are willing to share real stories, hoping to make a real difference in the lives of others.

Our writers can write about any topic they wish. We also provide a list of topic needs in case a participant wants some clear direction. We have writers who have submitted a wide variety of posts. The topics cover just about everything: children’s dental hygiene, how to keep children active, and ways to fit daily veggies and fruits into their lives. As you can see, it is truly a place to voice your story.
Kudos to state and local agency staff for developing new breastfeeding class materials using videoconferencing in a conversation format. Many thanks to the participants for contributing their birth stories for the videos. Below are helpful details about these exciting new resources.

**Can you tell us about the new series of video and discussion-based Birth Story classes?**

These new interactive lessons provide breastfeeding education to prenatal participants in their first or second trimester. The topic-specific lessons guide prenatal parents through a "Birth Story" video featuring a WIC participant. Each video story will describe WIC participants overcoming common breastfeeding challenges using education and support provided by the WIC program. This series complements the "Let’s Talk: Newborn Feeding Secrets" class (taught in the third trimester) through focused discussions in which participants learn from their peers.

The lessons and discussion guides were designed for a video group session. All the classes begin with a group introduction, topic introduction, and then a 3-to-4-minute video featuring a WIC participant’s birth and early breastfeeding story.

**What were some goals CDPH/WIC had for the classes from the onset? How were the classes developed?**

We hope that more WIC participants will grow their confidence to meet their breastfeeding goals through the new series. The classes are aimed at first-time parents or parents considering breastfeeding for the first time. The classes facilitate a way for WIC participants to hear from other WIC participants who have met their breastfeeding goals during the pandemic.

To develop the classes, local agencies identified WIC participants who were willing to talk about their successful experiences with breastfeeding, share tips, and talk about how the WIC peer counseling program helped them along the journey. After reviewing the interview responses, a breastfeeding topic was chosen for each lesson. Discussion guides were developed by CDPH/WIC, and the materials were sent to local agencies on the Joint Education, Training & Breastfeeding Committee for feedback. The materials were then revised and piloted by several WIC local agencies.

**What has been the feedback from pilot WIC local agencies?**

Feedback from local agencies has been positive! The reviewing and piloting agencies reported that the first video released is a wonderful way to increase awareness of breastfeeding to first-time parents, the discussion guide is easy to use, and the video makes the topic relatable so that participants feel like they are learning from their peers.

**What has been the feedback from pilot participants?**

Participants have expressed that they feel they can relate and learn from another participant in the video. They liked that the video was short and to the point. They learned a lot about milk supply and tummy size, and the discussion made them feel more confident about breastfeeding and knowing help is always available through WIC.

**How do you think these classes benefited participants in addressing feelings of uncertainty, isolation, or concerns regarding accessibility to WIC services during COVID-19?**

Since these lessons can be taught in a small group setting via video conferencing, parents feel connected to each other without having to be in-person. They feel a sense of community because they hear (and see!) other parents with the same concerns. Providing the lesson on an individual basis over video or even over the phone can give great support to parents who prefer a one-on-one interaction with their WIC counselor.

**What are the next steps for video conferencing classes at WIC?**

We continue to grow our library of topics and lessons. More birth story video lessons are being developed for release soon. CDPH/WIC is also creating more “Let’s Talk” conversational style classes. Look for Birth Story lesson #1 on milk supply to be released this fall.

***

If you know participants who may be interested in sharing their breastfeeding journey, any challenges they faced, how WIC helped them, and how they were able to meet their breastfeeding goals, please email Marissa.DeCrom@cdph.ca.gov.

WIC local agencies can also sign up for ongoing video conferencing assistance on LASS under Staff Training > Virtual Counseling and Classes.
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Read this and past issues of the WIC Watch online at http://calwic.org/news-a-publications/wic-watch.

Share the link with colleagues, family & friends!

"I have been a part of the WIC family for four years now, what they educate you on - breastfeeding and the importance of eating right while pregnant, and then after your child starts eating grown up food is amazing. They are kind and informative and make you feel like you are a part of a family."

- Dawnelle, WIC Mom