

TALWD

# NEWSLETTER

<https://www.talwd.org/>



## TALWD Purpose Statement

The purpose of the Texas Association of Local WIC Directors shall be to act as a vehicle for the expression of ideas on planning, policy, coordination, implementation, and administration of the WIC program on the Local, State, and Federal level; to foster communication between local WIC programs and the Texas Department of Health with the goal of positively affecting the administration of WIC within the state; to bring together administrators of Local Agency WIC Programs, in order to provide peer support, orientation and/or assistance; and to promote professional and public awareness of new and existing Federal and State legislation.

From the Editor: Please contact us, if you have suggestions or story ideas. Hope you enjoy Volume 5, Issue 33

Meliza Garcia, Newsletter Reporter

Email: [mgarcia@sanpatriciocountytx.gov](mailto:mgarcia@sanpatriciocountytx.gov)

## 2026 TALWD BOARD MEMEBERS:

President - Jenifer Gregory  
 Secretary - Alissa Orozco  
 Treasurer - Christina (Brandy) Patteson  
 1st VP of Organization & Development -  
 Becca Reed  
 2nd VP of Operations - Jennifer  
 Ranspot  
 Past NWA Representative - Adela  
 Garcia  
 NWA Rep-Elect - Tecora Smith  
 Newsletter Reporter - Meliza Garcia  
 Historian - Clarissa Ramirez  
 Past Presidents Council Representative  
 - Benny Jasso  
 Past Treasurer - Sandie Lopez

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Business & Finance Chair - Margaret  
 Payton  
 Legislative Chair - Michelle Cummings  
 Marketing Chair - Jannette Sepeda  
 Membership Chair - Amanda Brogdon  
 Nutrition Education Chair - Kathryn  
 Almaraz  
 Breastfeeding Chair - Zahra Koopaei  
 Client Services Chair - Jammie Wright  
 Local Agency Administration Chair -  
 Kelly Bocanegra  
 Technology Task Force - Katherine  
 Galvan  
 Funding Formula Task Force - Margaret  
 Payton  
 Re-Opening Task Force - Amanda  
 Brogden  
 QA Task Force - Eileen Mendoza

## REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES & ALTERNATIVES:

Central Representative - Alissa Orozco  
 \*Alternate - Nicole Koenen  
 Panhandle Representative - Eileen  
 Mendoza \*Alternate - Margaret  
 Payton  
 Western Representative - Adriana Archer  
 Alternate - Vacant  
 Northern Representative - Janice Piper  
 \*Alternate - Kathy Oliver  
 Gulf Coast Representative - Becca Reed  
 \*Alternate - Zahra Koopaei  
 Southwestern Representative - Julie  
 Granado  
 \*Alternate - Mandi Wilcox  
 Eastern Representative - Scherry Barnes  
 \*Alternate - Kristi Kilgore  
 Southern Representative - Kathrine Galvan  
 \*Alternate - Yvette Viciniaz



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## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION:

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As a member of TALWD, you have the opportunity to participate in a number of committees (which gives you the chance to provide valuable input first hand) and events. You also have the opportunity to network with fellow directors and learn more about WIC throughout Texas. Your voice as a TALWD member is needed and valued!

Joining is easy! Simply go to your account and select "Membership/Renewal" and place in your cart. You can complete payment with a credit card online or complete the form below for payment by check.

Watch our Membership Video here!

[https://www.talwd.org/images/TALWD\\_membership\\_640x360.mp4](https://www.talwd.org/images/TALWD_membership_640x360.mp4)

Membership Renewal Form

<https://www.talwd.org/account?page=join>



**Your Voice as a  
TALWD Member is  
Needed and Valued**

**Texas Association of Local WIC Directors**

# Texas WIC Memos

Number	Title/Notes	Date
26-028	Updated Travel Guidance Under Policy AC:05.0 Allowable Costs-In-State and Out-of-State Travel	3/30/2026
26-027	Revision of WIC Policy FD:06.0	3/25/2026
26-026	Update to Working Hours on Good Friday April 3, 2026	3/23/2026
26-022	Approved Vendors Authorized to Drop Ship Formula	3/17/2026
26-024	eWIC Policy Revision Effective Dates, FAQs and eWIC Policy Definitions	3/17/2026
26-023	Training Series on Offering Breastfeeding Video Consults	3/17/2026
26-025	2026 Texas WIC Participant Nutrition Education Survey	3/17/2026
26-021	Training Schedule for March, April and May Now Available	3/13/2026
26-020	Revision of WIC Policy CS:23.0	3/12/2026
26-019	Revision of WIC Policy CS:25.0, CS:26.0, and CS:36.0	3/11/2026
26-018	Revision of WIC Policies FD:10.0, FD:12.0, and FD:12.1, and Deletion of FD:09.0	3/10/2026
26-017	Revision of WIC Policy CS:11.0 and CS:27.0	3/10/2026
26-013	Prenatal Breastfeeding Education Bag Ordering Opportunity	3/9/2026
26-016	New Bilingual TexasWIC.org and BreastmilkCounts.com Promotional Handout	3/5/2026
26-014	Revision of WIC Policy CR:01.0 and CR:07.0	3/5/2026
26-015	Revision of WIC Policy CS:06.0	3/5/2026
26-012	TXIN Work Hours Calendar and myWIC Alert Banner Notification Process	2/10/2026
26-011	2025 Texas WIC Feeding Survey Statewide Report	2/10/2026
26-010	Material Delivery in March: eWIC Print Materials - Phase 2 and Shopping Materials	2/9/2026
26-009	Local Agency Contract Insurance Requirements	2/6/2026

## Upcoming Breastfeeding Courses – 2026/2027

### Breastfeeding Course Information

The Health and Human Services, Texas WIC Program collaborates with the Texas Association of Local WIC Directors (TALWD) to provide current, evidence-based lactation education to ensure consistent, accurate information across all levels of health care professionals. Courses are offered virtually, in-person, and on-demand. If your facility would be interested in hosting an in-person Lactation Principles class, please use the Contact Us feature.

Online Breastfeeding Management and Breastfeeding the Compromised Infant are offered online to take at your own pace. No pre-requisites and no cost.

Texas WIC employees must take the classes on the Texas WIC Training site.

Non-WIC employees must take the classes on our site for WIC Partners.

If you have questions or problems, email [WICPartnerTraining@hhs.texas.gov](mailto:WICPartnerTraining@hhs.texas.gov)



#### Live Classes

##### Breastfeeding Courses

- [Lactation Principles \(virtual\)](#)
- May 12, 2026, 9:00 AM – May 14, Noon
- 60/80 Tickets
- Please read the Information Page prior to registering. Who Should Attend: This is a basic level course that focuses on the counseling skills needed to provide optimal breastfeeding support to clients. The course will enable attendees to strengthen their problem so...
  
- [Lactation Principles \(virtual\)](#)
- Jul 14, 2026, 9:00 AM – Jul 16, Noon
- 21/80 Tickets
- Please read the Information Page prior to registering. Who Should Attend: This is a basic level course that focuses on the counseling skills needed to provide optimal breastfeeding support to clients. The course will enable attendees to strengthen their problem so...

Classes are offered in-person and/or virtually. Virtual classes are free to attend and require attending orientation at least once on the learning platform, Livestream, lasting about 20 minutes. Virtual classes are spread out over the course of several days. Registration is required in advance and closes a week prior to the class.

Effective 7/01/2026, breastfeeding course registration fees will increase to \$75.

#### Who Should Attend

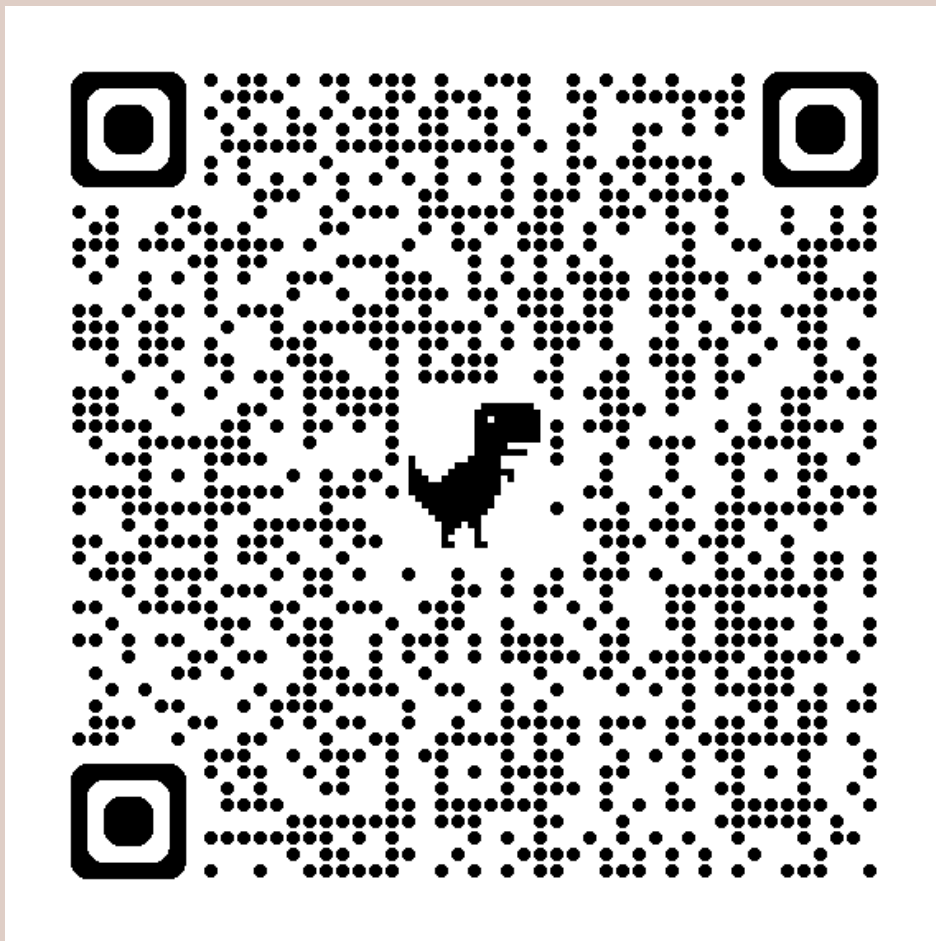
Live courses are designed for local agency WIC staff and health professionals who counsel breastfeeding mothers and would like to improve problem-solving and counseling skills. The classes emphasize critical thinking. You will work through case studies and activities as a group. Be prepared to join the discussions and share your ideas with others in class. There will be no written handout or syllabus so you can focus on discussions.

Active engagement is assessed in this virtual platform using participation via chat and polls. Evidence of consistent active engagement throughout the entire session day is required.

**TXIN  
and  
myWIC Live Trainings**

**Check out the Live Training Schedule for full details on  
upcoming training opportunities.**

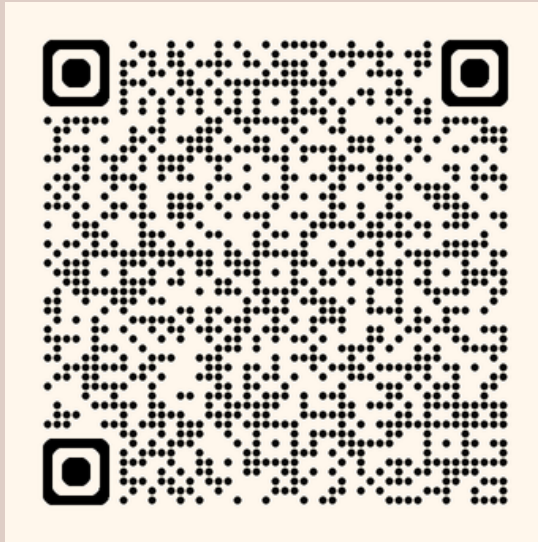
**04/2026 - 05/2026**





[Egnyte Directory on Egnyte](#)

Folder\_Egnyte Directory shared using Egnyte  
txwic.egnytegov.com



**Texas WIC Express Archive on Egnyte**

Folder Texas WIC Express Archive shared using Egnyte

 Egnyte





National WIC Association

# News

## Media Contact

Roseline Hooks, Director of Communications, [rhooks@nwica.org](mailto:rhooks@nwica.org)  
<https://www.nwica.org/press-room>

## Press Releases

April 3, 2026

### National WIC Association Denounces Trump's Proposed Cuts to WIC's Fruit and Vegetable Benefits

The National WIC Association strongly opposes the Trump Administration's FY27 budget proposal, which would significantly cut WIC's fruit and vegetable benefits and threaten access to nutritious foods for millions of low-income families. The proposed reductions would reverse recent gains in maternal and child nutrition, putting pregnant women, infants, and young children at greater risk for poor health outcomes.

February 12, 2026

### National WIC Association Applauds 21st Century WIC Act; Urges Congress to Pass Legislation

The bipartisan 21st Century WIC Act would modernize the WIC program by permanently allowing virtual certification, reducing barriers for working families, rural communities, and those with limited transportation. Without Congressional action before September 30, 2026, WIC participants will lose the ability to certify virtually. The National WIC Association urges swift passage to ensure families can continue accessing WIC's proven nutrition and health benefits.

January 21, 2026

### NWA Announces 2026 Priorities to Keep WIC Strong and Maintain Virtual Services

The National WIC Association announced its 2026 policy priorities, calling on Congress to fully fund WIC, make virtual service options permanent, protect program access and eligibility, and safeguard critical USDA administrative infrastructure to ensure continued access to WIC services for millions of families nationwide.

April 13, 2026

### NWA Honors Black Maternal Health Every Day!

In recognition of Black Maternal Health Week (April 11-17), NWA highlights its ongoing commitment to improving maternal health outcomes and advancing equity for Black families. Through WIC services and initiatives led by the Center for Innovative Practices in WIC (CIP-WIC), this work includes expanding culturally responsive care, strengthening the workforce, and elevating participant voices. Supporting Black maternal health extends beyond one week and remains a core part of NWA's mission year-round!

February 4, 2026

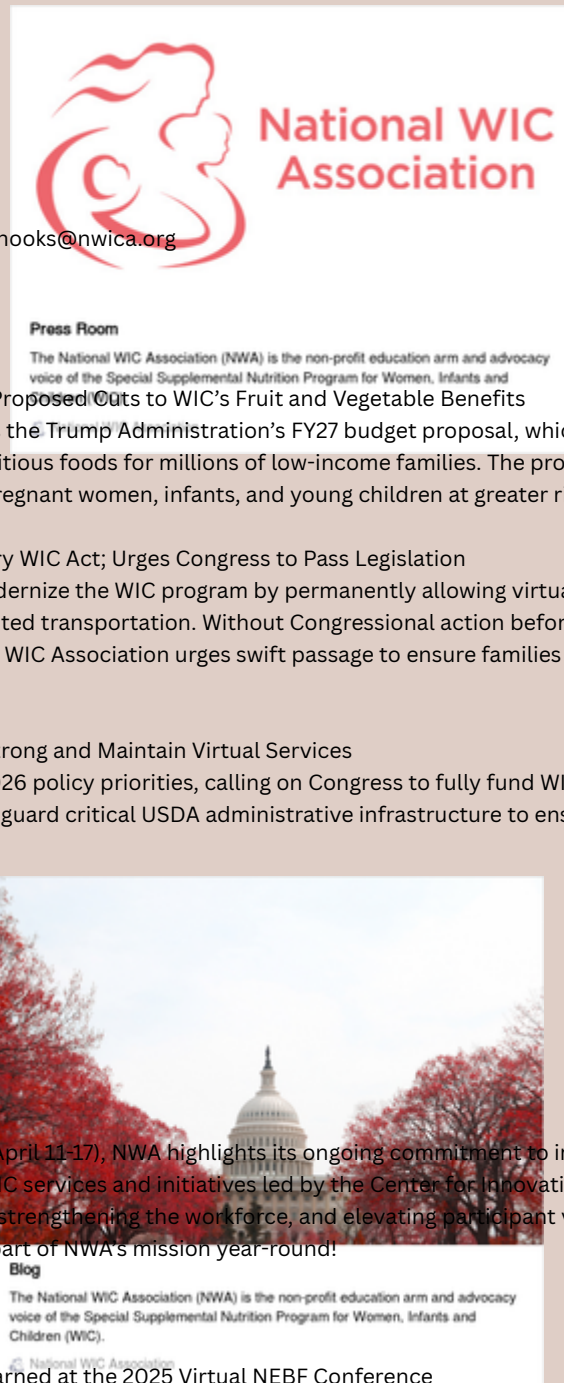
### From WIC Participant to NWA Intern: What I Learned at the 2025 Virtual NEBF Conference

This blog reflects Communications intern Samantha Myers' personal journey with the National WIC Association, connecting her background as a former WIC participant to her growing understanding of WIC's expansive impact through hands-on work and the 2025 NEBF Conference. Through standout conference sessions and behind-the-scenes involvement, she highlights how NWA and WIC support families through nutrition, breastfeeding, and culturally responsive care while inviting readers to access NEBF recordings themselves.

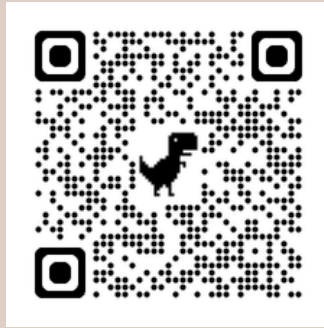
January 12, 2026

### Update on the 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans

The National WIC Association (NWA) would like to share an update on the recently released 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) and The Scientific Foundation For The Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The DGA provides recommendations for the eating patterns of Americans and sets a standard for the country's food programs to follow. The Scientific Foundation is an accompanying document that is meant to provide supportive evidence for the DGA.



Welcome to the NWA online community  
<https://community.nwica.org/community>



<https://community.nwica.org>

## NWA Events



May 27-30, 2026

2026 NWA Annual Education and Training Conference

We are excited to announce that the 2026 NWA Annual Education and Training Conference will be held in Dallas, Texas from Wednesday, May 27 through Saturday, May 30, 2026!

The conference will be held in downtown Dallas, with the venue to be announced when registration opens in December 2025.

The room rate will be at the federal per diem.

The Call for Abstracts is NOW OPEN!



# NWA Events



## **September 9-10, 2026**

### [2026 Virtual NWA Technology, Innovation, and Vendor Management Conference](#)

We are excited to announce that NWA will be hosting a 2-day 2026 NWA Virtual Technology, Innovation, and Vendor Management Conference on September 9-10, 2026.

Quick Links

[View the Program and Other Event Details](#)

## **November 16-18, 2026**

### [2026 NWA Nutrition Education & Breastfeeding Conference](#)

Save the Date!

We're excited to announce that our 2026 NWA Nutrition Education and Breastfeeding Conference will take place in Atlanta, Georgia from Monday, November 16 – Wednesday, November 18, 2026!

Date: Monday, November 16 – Wednesday, November 18

Location: Atlanta, Georgia

More details coming soon!

Quick Links

[View the Program and Other Event Details](#)



# National WIC Association

## Webinars




We invite you to explore our various WIC-related webinars. We offer webinars on Thursdays from 3:00 - 4:00 pm ET unless otherwise noted. See below for a schedule of upcoming webinars.

You can also register for upcoming webinars and watch our archived webinars on-demand on the NWA Online Community Webinars Group. The community, including recordings of archived webinars, is for Local and State WIC agency staff with active NWA membership ONLY. If you have issues accessing the online community, please email us at [membership@nwica.org](mailto:membership@nwica.org).

### NWA Webinars

To attend NWA webinars, you must register in advance. The links below will take you directly to registration. Upon completing your registration, you will receive a confirmation email. If you don't see that email, please check your spam/junk mail folder. We strongly recommend you add [no-reply@zoom.us](mailto:no-reply@zoom.us) and [membership@nwica.org](mailto:membership@nwica.org) to your email safe senders list to be sure you get your confirmation and other important emails about the webinar.



**SHOP WIC.  
SHARE WIC.  
CELEBRATE WIC.**





Welcome to the National WIC Association's online store. Bringing WIC pride to your office, home, and community outreach efforts.

[VIEW PRODUCTS](#)



### ESSENTIAL WIC RESOURCES

Explore our curated products for WIC families: WIC Wall Calendar, Pocket Calendar, 360 Training Cup, Metal Water Bottle, T-Shirt, Polos, Stickers.

Recipe Calendars With Videos	Cups / Bottles	Apparel	Other Printed Products
 <p>WIC Wall Calendar, WIC Pocket Calendar—beautiful, practical tools to plan and inspire nutritious meals for WIC families.</p>	 <p>360 Training Cup, Metal Water Bottle—durable, family-friendly hydration solutions designed for infants and adults alike.</p>	 <p>T-Shirt, Polos, and Cardigans—comfortable, stylish clothing to proudly support and promote WIC's mission in your community.</p>	 <p>A fun and simple way to spread awareness and show WIC pride.</p>

Visit NWA's Action Center to contact Congress and take action on policies that protect and strengthen WIC.



## National WIC Association | NWA's Action Center

Reject the President's Budget and Fully Fund WIC!

Write

Pass the MODERN WIC Act/21st Century WIC Act in Appropriations!

Write

Reject USDA Reorganization that Threatens WIC Services!

Write

Protect and Strengthen WIC in 2026!

Write

### Advocacy Tools & Resources

Strengthen your outreach with these materials from the National WIC Association. These resources provide key data, policy context, and research to support your conversations with policymakers and partners.

#### [Policy Brief: Support for Permanent Virtual Services in WIC](#)

Why remote certification and permanent service flexibility are essential to improving access, reducing barriers, and sustaining WIC participation.

#### [Support The MODERN WIC ACT and the 21st Century WIC Act](#)

An overview of bipartisan legislation to modernize WIC by making virtual certification and benefit issuance permanent, reducing barriers to access while preserving program integrity.

#### [FY27 Appropriations Fact Sheet](#)

Funding priorities and policy requests to fully fund WIC, protect modernization efforts, and ensure uninterrupted access for eligible families.

#### [NWA's 2026 Policy Agenda](#)

A summary of NWA's 2026 policy priorities to strengthen and modernize WIC.

#### [WIC's Proven Outcomes - Summary of Key Research of WIC's Public Health Impact](#)

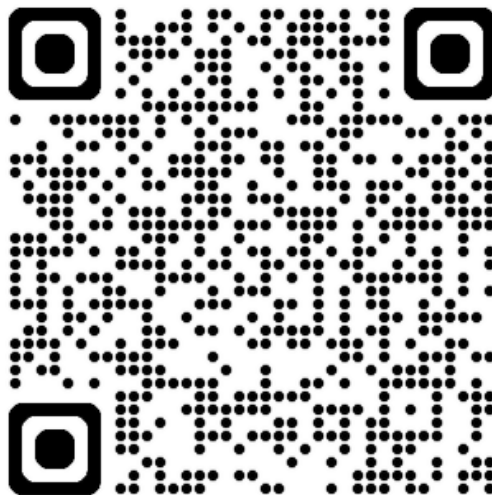
A summary of key research documenting WIC's public health impact.

#### [Policy Brief: Impact of the One Big Beautiful Bill on WIC](#)

An overview of how proposed legislation could affect WIC funding, operations, and the families it serves.

#### [Program Integrity in WIC](#)

Data showing WIC's low improper payment rates and high accuracy in managing federal funds.



# Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo®

Each fall, the Academy hosts the world's largest meeting of food and nutrition experts. RDNs, NDTRs, researchers, policymakers, health care providers and industry leaders attend FNCE® to address key nutrition issues affecting the health of all communities.



Our Host City

Join us in San Antonio for FNCE® 2026!

With rich art, deep-rooted history, bold flavors and vibrant culture, San Antonio is a city made for discovery. Its old-world charm and multicultural spirit create one of America's most picturesque settings – home to iconic landmarks including The Alamo and the River Walk. As one of only two U.S. cities designated a UNESCO City of Gastronomy – and the birthplace of Tex-Mex cuisine – San Antonio is truly a destination worth celebrating.

Visit San Antonio





This meeting will be scheduled for Thursday, April 30.

Spill the Tea Chat is a bimonthly meeting held only with LA WIC Directors. We use this as a way to network, learn from each other, and discuss hot topics that we all need more information on. It is a brief chat, around 30 minutes, but can go longer if needed!

Please join – everyone shares important and unique insight.

The Chat: I will briefly review the information we gathered from the survey that was sent out regarding the hiring of nutritionists/CAs. The remainder of the chat will be open discussion. However, if you have anything specific you have had questions on, or would like to address, you can let me know ahead of time and I will put it on the agenda.

Whether you are a new Director or if you have been here a while, please join! It is beneficial to us all when hearing different perspectives.

And as always, if you are a Regional Rep and notice that I did not send this invite to Directors in your region, please let me know, and I'll add them.

email to attend: Microsoft Teams meeting

Join: <https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/270242143497033?p=Z6tVqgopE2Vc7Jo8Tv>

Meeting ID: 270 242 143 497 033

Passcode: qM9XZ76o



# Let Your Dreams Shine!



## LOCAL AGENCY FEATURE

### NWA National Conference Presentation

*(WOOHOO...lets all tune in and give our support!)*

*Tecora Smith, Christina Patteson, and Amanda Hovis have been selected to present at the 2026 National WIC Association Annual Education and Training Conference. Their session, "Leveraging Local Partnerships to Improve Infant and Maternal Health Outcomes," will highlight collaborative approaches used to strengthen breastfeeding support and maternal and infant health initiatives.*

*The presentation is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, May 27 at 4:00 PM.*



**WIC Team Vision Board Activity**

The Port Arthur WIC team recently took time away from their daily routine to participate in a vision board activity focused on leadership, teamwork, and future goals.

During the session, staff discussed what leadership means within the workplace, how management supports the team, and how the team continues to serve the Port Arthur community. Each staff member created a vision board that included both personal professional goals and goals for the team.

These goals were aligned with the Port Arthur Health Department's priorities and vision for 2026. The vision boards will remain displayed in the office as daily reminders of the commitments staff have made to their work, their colleagues, and the community they serve.

# New Staff Spotlight



## Angelica Figueroa Joins Port Arthur WIC as Registered Dietitian

The Port Arthur WIC Program recently welcomed Angelica Figueroa, MS, RD, LD as the program's newest Registered Dietitian. Angelica will support WIC families through nutrition education, counseling, and breastfeeding support services. Her addition strengthens the program's ability to provide high quality nutrition services to women, infants, and children in the Port Arthur community. As a Spanish speaker living with type 1 diabetes, she brings both professional expertise and personal insight to her work. Outside of work, Angelica enjoys spending time with her husband, playing with her corgi pup, visiting Disney World and other theme parks, and capturing life's moments through photography.



## Wendy Barajas Named Grow with Me Community Garden Attendant

The Port Arthur WIC Program is pleased to welcome Wendy Barajas as the new Garden Attendant for the Grow with Me Community Garden. Wendy previously volunteered in the garden, assisting with planting seasonal vegetables, maintaining garden beds, and supporting the overall care of the space. She is currently pursuing a degree in Nutrition and holds several certifications related to breastfeeding support, food safety, and health education. Wendy's interest in nutrition and community wellness makes her a great addition as the Grow with Me Community Garden continues to provide education and fresh food inspiration for families in Port Arthur.

# Staff Recognition



## WIC Staff Celebrate IBCLC Day and Registered Dietitian Day

The Port Arthur WIC Program recently recognized two professional observances highlighting the expertise of staff who support maternal and infant health through nutrition and breastfeeding services.

Christina Patteson, Sabrina Jeanise, and Michelle Miller celebrated their first International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) Day, recognizing their specialized training and commitment to helping mothers successfully begin and continue their breastfeeding journeys.

The program also recognized Registered Dietitian Day, celebrating the work of Christina Patteson, Sabrina Jeanise, Michelle Miller, and new staff member Angelica Figueroa, who provide evidence-based nutrition counseling and education to support healthy pregnancies, infant feeding, and child nutrition for families in the Port Arthur community. These celebrations highlight the dedication and professional expertise of Port Arthur WIC staff who work every day to support healthy families.



City of Port Arthur WIC hosted a meet and greet for local students interested in nutrition careers! Nutrition experts from across the community joined as mentors and sat down with students in small group chats, sharing their experiences, answering big questions, and helping lay the foundation for what comes next.

Students also enjoyed healthy DIY lunches made with WIC-approved foods and went home with gift bags packed with information on nutrition programs throughout our community. ❤️

A huge shout out to our incredible mentors from Lamar University College of Nursing & Health Professions, UTMB WIC, Southeast Texas Food Bank, City of Port Arthur Health Department, Hardin County WIC, Port Arthur News, and the Port Arthur CVB (Visit Port Arthur, TX)! Thank you for giving your time and expertise to the next generation of nutrition pros!

And a very special thank you to Port Arthur ISD for bringing such amazing young people to the table! We can't wait to see where they go next! ❤️

## Q2 Art Fuston & Customer Service Awards

### Art Fuston-Zahra Koopaei –

Zahra has been a trusted resource to so many WIC Directors. She is a TRUE advocate for the WIC program. She is passionate about her role as the chair of the Breastfeeding Committee. She uses her voice to elevate the services being offered in WIC through policy revisions. She speaks up when it is important and offers sound advice when needed. She has been a member of TALWD for many years and has shown kindness to Directors. She inspires her agency to be innovative and fun with nutrition and breastfeeding education. She invests in her staff learning and continuing education. We often meet her staff at conferences and they are eager to learn and bring back information to better improve their service to WIC families.

### Customer Service – Alaina D'Auria:

Alaina has worked so hard to prepare Local Agency Directors for their upcoming audit. She creates user friendly self-audit tools to decrease the workload and simplify the audit process. She has built a positive connection with WIC Directors and offers a help in better understanding the audit process. She greets us with a smile and does whatever is needed to help Directors feel prepared in training staff on WIC policies. I have watched Alaina grow into a trusted resource for TALWD and state staff.

I have known Alaina since she first joined the QMB Team, and she has consistently been gracious in all my interactions with her. She is very responsive when contacted, promptly clarifies, and when she does not immediately have the answer, she ensures we receive follow-up after obtaining clarification. During audits, she is attentive, willing to listen and flexible when possible.

