

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 6, Issue 3

Meliza Garcia, Newsletter Reporter

Email: mgarcia@sanpatriciocountytexas.gov

2026 TALWD BOARD MEMBERS:

COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES:

- 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 – Kathrine Galvan
- NWA Rep-Elect – Tecora Smith
- Newsletter Reporter – Meliza Garcia
- Historian – Clarissa Ramirez
- Past Presidents Council Representative – Benny Jasso
- Past Treasurer – Sandra Lopez

- Business & Finance Chair – Margaret Payton
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- Marketing Chair – Jannette Sepeda
- Membership Chair – Amanda Brogdon
- Nutrition Education Chair – Kathryn Almaraz
- Breastfeeding Chair – Zahra Koopaei
- Client Services Chair – Jammie Wright
- LA Administration Chair – Carolyn Operacz
- Technology Task Force – Katherine Galvan
- Funding Formula Task Force – Margaret Payton
- QA Task Force – Benny Jasso

- Central Representative – Nicole Koenen
- Panhandle Representative – Eileen Mendoza
- Western Representative – Adriana Archer
- Northern Representative – Janice Piper
- Gulf Coast Representative – Priscilla Ayanwale Cole
- Southwestern Representative – Manrique Fuentes
- Eastern Representative – Scherry Barnes
- Southern Representative – Aryana Valdez



MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION:

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!

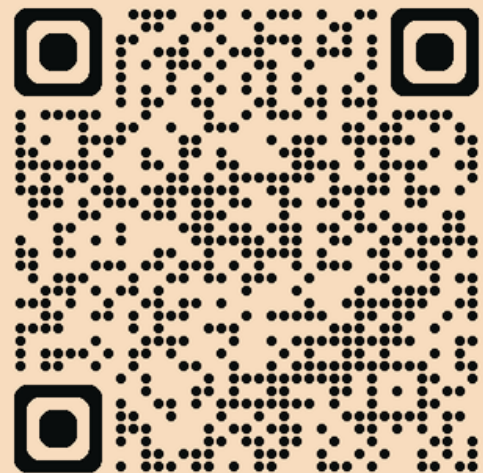
Joining is easy! Simply go to your account and select "Membership/Renewal" and place in your cart. You can complete payment with a credit card online or complete the form below for payment by check.

Watch our Membership Video here!

https://www.talwd.org/images/TALWD_membership_640x360.mp4

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
26-058	Updated WIC Director's Planning Calendar	8/12/2026
26-059	Nutramigen Toddler and Therapeutic Formula Updates	8/11/2026
26-056	Schedule for July and August Now Available	7/15/2026
26-055	Deletion of Blood Collection Posters	7/15/2026
26-057	WIC Materials With 2026 Income Guidelines Are Now Available to Order	7/15/2026
26-042	Deletion of Policy FD:01.0, FD:04.0, FD:08.0, and FD:11.0	6/26/2026
26-054	Revision of WIC Policy FD:18.0 and FD:19.0	6/26/2026
26-053	Revision of WIC Policy BF:02.0	6/26/2026
26-046	Revision of WIC Policy FD:03.0, CS:05.0, and CS:35.0	6/26/2026
26-047	Revision of WIC Policy GA:20.0	6/26/2026
26-051	Identity Verification for Remote Issuance - Revised	6/25/2026
26-050	2026 Disposal of Records	6/24/2026
26-044	Correction to Training Chart for Breastfeeding Coordinators (effective 07/01/26)	6/16/2026
26-049	Revisions to the Change in Custody Form (Stock no. F13-06-13553)	6/10/2026
26-048	Revisions to the Texas WIC Rights and Responsibilities card (Stock no. 13-06-14207)	6/10/2026
26-043	Revision of WIC Policy NE:01.0	6/1/2026

Approved Continuing Education (CE) and Live Breastfeeding Class process

Approved Continuing Education (CE) and Live Breastfeeding Class Registration

The following courses are approved for L-CERPs

- Breastfeeding Management- 3.0
- Breastfeeding the Compromised Infant- 2.5
- Lactation Principles (LP)- 7.0
- Advanced Lactation Management (ALM)- 13.5



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Updated Registration and CE Credit Process

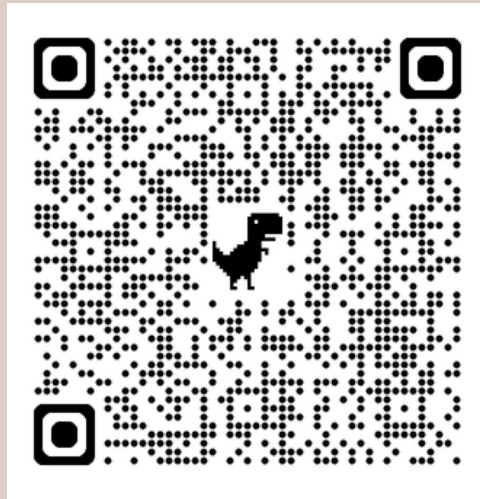
New Registration Process for LP and ALM- starting September 2026

- Registration is moving from TALWD to the WIC Training Site.
 - Registrants will have to register for each session separately
 - Instructions and session links will be provided through the training site.
 - LP- 3 sessions
 - ALM- 4 sessions
- No Partial Credit
 - Attendees must attend all sessions and complete the post-course survey to receive CE credit.

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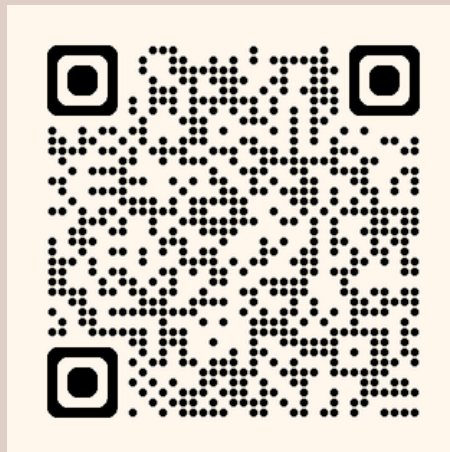
TXIN AND MYWIC LIVE TRAININGS

CHECK OUT THE LIVE TRAINING SCHEDULE FOR FULL DETAILS ON
UPCOMING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES.



Texas WIC Express Archive on Egnyte

Folder Texas WIC Express Archive shared using Egnyte



Happy National Breastfeeding Month!

Breastfeeding Support Anytime, Anywhere

This year's theme highlights the exciting change to WIC online services and the breastfeeding resources we have to answer our participants' questions wherever they are.

Resources for LAs:

- [Memo 26-029](#)
- [Press Release](#)

*If you are having an event and photographing clients at the event photo releases should be obtained.



2026 USDA Breastfeeding Award of Excellence

Gold Award

- LA 59 CommuniCare
- LA 130/131 South Plains
Community Action
Association, Inc. (SPCAA)

Premier Award

- LA 51 San Patricio County



2026 TALWD Annual Meeting



LEADING WITH PURPOSE ♥ SERVING WITH HEART

The Texas Association of Local WIC Directors (TALWD) is a professional organization made up of local WIC Directors who put forth efforts to influence program planning, changes to WIC policies, coordination between local and state agencies, and implementation and administration of the WIC Program on the local, state, and federal level. Our mission is to partner with the Texas WIC State Agency, advocate for WIC's mission, and provide a framework for WIC Directors.

LOCATION

Hotel Valencia Riverwalk
150 East Houston Street,
San Antonio, Texas, 78205

Reserve Your Room by August 14th: [Click here for Hotel Block](#)

DATES

Tuesday, September 8, 2026

to

Friday, September 11, 2026

REGISTRATION COST

\$550





National WIC Association

News



National WIC Association

Press Room

The National WIC Association (NWA) is the non-profit education arm and advocacy voice of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

 National WIC Association



National WIC Association

National WIC Association Condemns Trump Administration's Final Public Charge Rule Targeting Immigrant Families

The National WIC Association (NWA) condemned the Trump administration's final public charge rule, warning it will discourage immigrant families from accessing essential nutrition and health services, including WIC.

 National WIC Association



WIC Association CEO Responds to Trump Administration's USDA Reorg Plans

To learn more about what's ahead for the nutrition program that serves nearly 7 million people across the U.S., The Packer recently sat down with National WIC Association President and CEO Georgia Machell.

 The Packer / Aug 4, 2025



Blog

July 20, 2026

[Why Black Maternal Mental Health Week Is Important](#)

Black Maternal Mental Health Week (BMMHW) raises awareness of the disparities Black mothers face in accessing maternal mental healthcare and the importance of equitable, culturally responsive support. The observance encourages open conversations, challenges systemic barriers, and calls for collective action to ensure every Black mother has access to the care and resources needed to thrive during pregnancy and the postpartum period.

June 16, 2026

[#NWAAnnual26 May Be Over, Now What? Three Ways to Keep the Momentum Going!](#)

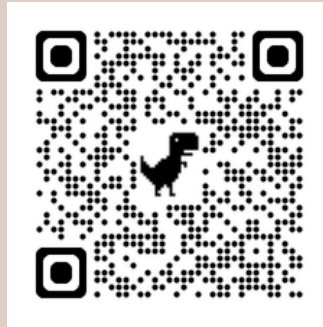
The 2026 NWA Annual Education and Training Conference may be over, but the learning doesn't stop there. This blog explores three ways attendees can build on the ideas, resources, and connections gained in Dallas, from reflecting on key takeaways and putting new ideas into practice to staying connected with colleagues across the WIC community. It also highlights upcoming opportunities to continue learning and networking through NWA conferences and events.

May 18, 2026

[A Healthier Future Starts with Healthy Mothers](#)

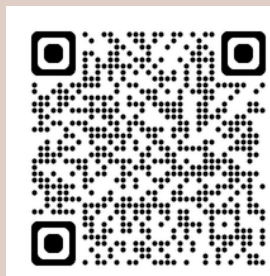
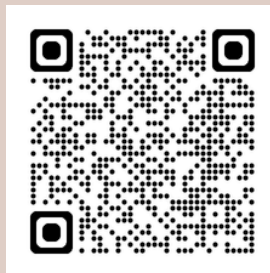
In recognition of Maternal Health Awareness Month, this resource-based blog highlights tools, research, and educational materials that support maternal mental health, participant-centered care, accessibility, and family well-being within WIC. The blog features mental health resources, NWA resource collections, AHEAD 3.0 materials, and upcoming webinars that WIC staff and agencies can use to strengthen support for families and communities.

Welcome to the NWA online community



<https://community.nwica.org>

NWA Events





February 23-February 25, 2027

2027 NWA National Policy Conference

Mark your calendars for the 2027 NWA National Policy Conference, which will be held virtually Tuesday, February 23 through Thursday, February 25, 2027.

Hill Day: Participants will have the opportunity to engage in Hill Day on Thursday, February 25, where attendees can virtually engage with Congressional leaders and their staff to educate them on WIC's essential services.

We look forward to your participation! More details will be shared as they become available.

April 11-14, 2027

2027 NWA Annual Education and Training Conference

We are excited to announce that the 2027 NWA Annual Education and Training Conference will be held in Chicago from Sunday, April 11 through Wednesday, April 14, 2027!



National WIC Association

Webinars

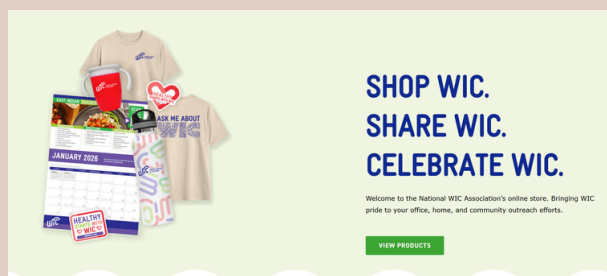


We invite you to explore our various WIC-related webinars. We offer webinars on Thursdays from 3:00 - 4:00 pm ET unless otherwise noted. See below for a schedule of upcoming webinars.

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.

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 and membership@nwica.org to your email safe senders list to be sure you get your confirmation and other important emails about the webinar.



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



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.

NWA Resources

As the education arm and advocacy voice of WIC, NWA produces fact sheets, position papers and toolkits to support WIC advocacy and education. Browse the selection below to find resources to support your work.

What Is NWA?

The WIC Hub

The WIC Hub is a website for WIC staff, researchers, and advocates to navigate and explore the world of WIC.

Action Central for all things WIC Advocacy

WIC State Profiles

Every year, NWA produces a fact sheet for each WIC program in the 90 states.





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

<https://www.eatrightpro.org/events/fnce/program>



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.

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: Becca Reed, BeccaB@brazoriacountytx.gov



**Let Your
Dreams
Shine!**



LOCAL AGENCY FEATURE



Port Arthur WIC partnered with the Healthy Mothers & Babies Coalition of Jefferson County to host the 2026 Jefferson County Breastfeeding Celebration on August 11 at the Bob Bowers Civic Center. With a “Super Moms” theme, the event celebrated breastfeeding families while connecting them with education, resources, and support to help moms reach their breastfeeding goals.

Breastfeeding education was at the center of the celebration. Families tested their knowledge with a Breastfeeding Game Show and participated in an “Ask Us Anything” session with WIC IBCLCs and Peer Counselors alongside hospital breastfeeding professionals. The interactive Mission Room: Texas Mother-Friendly Worksite game also helped families learn about workplace lactation support and continuing breastfeeding after returning to work.

Recognizing that breastfeeding success is influenced by the support surrounding a mom, community partners provided education on maternal mental health, navigating Medicaid, fatherhood and partner support, and infant choking and CPR. Families also connected with local organizations and received welcome bags containing breastfeeding education and breastfeeding resource guides.

Breastfeeding outreach also extended to the community organizations participating in the event. Each organization received breastfeeding resource guides, information on referring families to WIC, and Texas Mother-Friendly Worksite information, helping equip our community partners to better support breastfeeding families and connect them with resources beyond the celebration.

Families also enjoyed activities, giveaways, and a 360-photo booth, creating a fun atmosphere centered around supporting and celebrating breastfeeding moms.

For Port Arthur WIC, the celebration was an opportunity to take breastfeeding promotion and support beyond the clinic walls. By educating families and equipping community partners, we strengthened the network surrounding breastfeeding moms and reinforced an important message: moms don’t have to navigate their breastfeeding journey alone.



It is with great pride that we announce San Patricio County WIC has been awarded the USDA Loving Support Award of Excellence at the Gold Premiere Level. This prestigious national recognition, administered by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service under the authority of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, honors WIC local agencies that demonstrate outstanding commitment to breastfeeding promotion and support.

The Loving Support Award of Excellence is structured across three tiers of achievement: Gold, Gold Premiere, and Gold Elite. Each level reflects progressively higher standards of breastfeeding support, staff competency, community collaboration, and measurable participant outcomes. Attaining the Gold Premiere Level places San Patricio County WIC among an exclusive group of agencies recognized for sustained excellence nationwide.

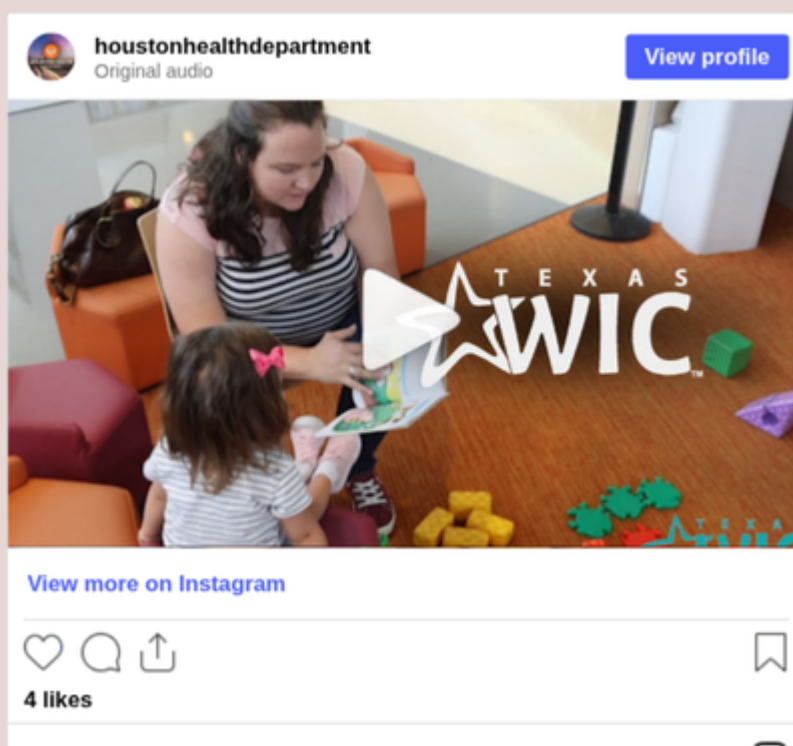
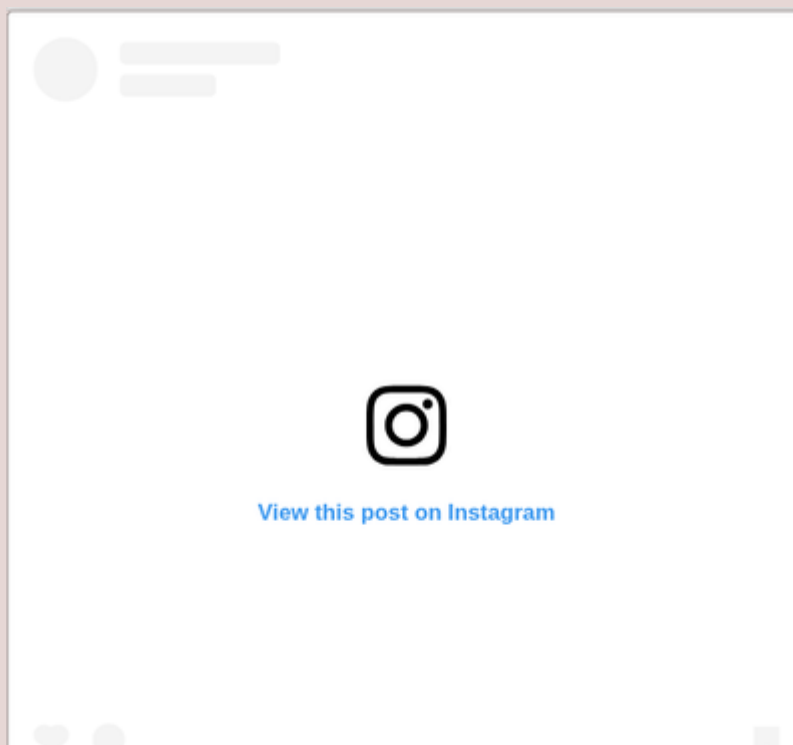
To achieve Gold Premiere status, an agency must demonstrate strong breastfeeding-supportive policies, maintain well-trained staff with current lactation credentials, operate an effective peer counseling program, and conduct meaningful follow-up with fully breastfeeding participants—reaching a threshold of 15% or higher. Additionally, the agency must provide comprehensive prenatal and postpartum breastfeeding education, maintain active collaboration with hospitals, healthcare providers, and community partners, and engage in ongoing quality improvement initiatives.

Congratulations to the entire San Patricio County WIC team on this remarkable national achievement. Your dedication to supporting mothers and infants through evidence-based breastfeeding practices exemplifies the highest standards of public health service.

Zahra Koopaei, LA026
WIC Bureau Chief
Houston Health Department
Women, Infants, & Children



Participation rates continue to be a challenge for LA 26 and other WIC agencies across Texas, so we've been exploring new ways to promote WIC in the community. Recently, we partnered with our parent agency's communications team to record client testimonials. Two of these testimonials have now been posted on the Houston Health Department's Instagram page; links are included below; with 2 more to be released



LOCAL AGENCY



SPOTLIGHT



After an incredible 47 years of service, we proudly celebrate the retirement of our valued colleague, Rosa Linda "Rosie" Montalvo, who has dedicated nearly five decades to serving families through the WIC Program. Rosie began her career in Starr County (Community Action Council of South Texas – WIC Program). Hidalgo County WIC Program acquired two clinics from Starr County (Roma and Rio Grande City) in 2007, and Rosie continued her WIC journey with Hidalgo County.

Beginning a career as a clerk and later serving as a WIC Certification Specialist, Rosie has consistently demonstrated compassion, professionalism and an unwavering commitment to improving the health and well-being of women, infants and children in our community. Throughout the years, she has been a trusted resource for participants, a supportive teammate and a mentor to many coworkers.

Her knowledge, kindness and dedication have made a lasting impact on both the families she served and the colleagues fortunate enough to work alongside her. The relationships she built and the difference she made will continue to be felt for years to come.

As she begins this exciting new chapter, we extend our heartfelt gratitude for 47 years of exceptional service and wish her every happiness, good health and countless new adventures in retirement.

Congratulations on your well-deserved retirement, Rosie, and thank you for your remarkable legacy of service to the WIC Program. You will be greatly missed, but your contributions will never be forgotten.

ART FUSTON:

Q1-Zahra Koopaei –

Zahra has been a trusted resource and respected leader for WIC Directors across Texas for many years. She is a true advocate for the WIC Program, consistently demonstrating her passion for improving services for families and supporting local agencies. Her dedication to TALWD and the mission of WIC is evident in everything she does.

As Chair of the TALWD Breastfeeding Committee, Zahra has been a strong and influential voice for breastfeeding support throughout Texas. She is deeply committed to strengthening breastfeeding services and works tirelessly to improve the program through thoughtful policy recommendations and meaningful collaboration. She is not afraid to speak up when important issues arise and consistently offers sound, practical advice that benefits both local agencies and the families they serve.

Zahra's leadership extends far beyond committee work. She has a remarkable ability to inspire innovation within her own local agency, creating engaging and creative approaches to nutrition and breastfeeding education that enhance the participant experience. Her enthusiasm for continuous improvement encourages others to think creatively and embrace new ideas that strengthen the WIC Program.

Equally impressive is Zahra's investment in her staff. She recognizes that developing knowledgeable and confident employees ultimately benefits WIC families, and she actively supports staff participation in conferences, trainings, and continuing education opportunities. It is evident that she has fostered a culture of learning within her agency, as her staff consistently attend conferences eager to learn, share ideas, and bring back new knowledge to improve services for participants.

Throughout her years of involvement with TALWD, Zahra has remained approachable, kind, and generous with her time and expertise. She willingly mentors fellow Directors, shares her knowledge, and encourages collaboration among local agencies. Her willingness to support others has earned the respect and admiration of colleagues across the state.

Zahra exemplifies the leadership, service, and commitment that the Art Fuston Award represents. Through her advocacy, innovation, mentorship, and unwavering dedication to the Texas WIC Program, she has made a lasting impact on TALWD and on the families we serve.

Q2-Jenifer Gregory –

It is my honor to nominate Jenifer Gregory for the TALWD Art Fuston Award in recognition of her exceptional leadership, unwavering dedication, and outstanding service to the Texas Association of Local WIC Directors (TALWD) and the Texas WIC Program.

Jenifer has served the TALWD Board in numerous leadership capacities over the years, consistently stepping forward wherever she is needed. In her current role as acting President, she has made an immediate and meaningful impact through her thoughtful leadership, collaborative spirit, and ability to keep the organization focused on its mission while moving forward with purpose.

One of Jenifer's greatest strengths is her commitment to supporting and empowering WIC Directors across Texas. She is always willing to answer questions, offer guidance, and share her knowledge. She genuinely strives to make the WIC Program stronger, smarter, and more effective for everyone involved. Under her leadership, Directors—whether they serve on the Executive Board or not—feel welcomed, included, respected, and valued.

Jenifer exemplifies the type of leader every organization hopes to have. She consistently places the needs of TALWD and the Texas WIC Program first while maintaining a positive, solution-oriented approach. She approaches challenges with professionalism, grace, and integrity, always seeking collaborative solutions that strengthen relationships among local agencies and with State WIC.

In addition to serving as acting President, Jenifer actively participates on multiple task forces where her expertise, thoughtful insight, and practical perspective are highly respected. She is a trusted voice among her peers and consistently advocates for initiatives that improve services and strengthen the WIC Program statewide.

Despite her many leadership responsibilities, Jenifer remains deeply connected to the day-to-day realities of local agency operations. She works alongside her staff, understands the challenges clinics face, and remains focused on meeting the needs of both employees and WIC participants. This firsthand knowledge allows her to make informed decisions that benefit the entire Texas WIC community.

Perhaps one of Jenifer's most admirable qualities is her accessibility. She is approachable, listens with intention, and makes herself available to colleagues whenever they need support. She leads with humility, compassion, and authenticity, creating an environment where Directors feel heard, respected, and encouraged to contribute.

Jenifer's leadership has strengthened TALWD, fostered meaningful collaboration among WIC Directors across Texas, and positively influenced the continued growth and success of the Texas WIC Program. Her dedication, service, and commitment embody the very spirit of the Art Fuston Award, and I can think of no one more deserving of this recognition.

Q3 –Janice Piper:

It is my pleasure to nominate Janice Piper for the TALWD Art Fuston Award in recognition of her outstanding leadership, enthusiasm, and dedication to the Texas Association of Local WIC Directors and the Texas WIC Program.

From the moment Janice became the WIC Director for the Wichita Falls Local Agency, she hit the ground running. She quickly became an active and engaged member of TALWD, demonstrating a genuine commitment to both her local agency and the WIC community across Texas. Rather than waiting to find her footing, Janice immediately reached out to her fellow Northern Region Directors for collaboration, guidance, and support. Her openness to learning and willingness to build relationships exemplify the collaborative spirit that strengthens TALWD.

Janice has made meaningful contributions to the Association by consistently participating in meetings, sharing thoughtful perspectives, and raising important issues that help improve the WIC Program. She is never hesitant to contribute ideas or ask meaningful questions, and her input is always constructive, insightful, and focused on strengthening services for WIC families.

One of Janice's most significant contributions has been her leadership in planning the past Northern Region hosted annual TALWD Conference. She embraced this responsibility with creativity, enthusiasm, and exceptional attention to detail. Through her vision and hard work, she added her own unique touch to the conference, helping make it successful and one of the most memorable conferences TALWD has hosted. Her ability to organize, collaborate, and create an engaging experience for attendees is a testament to her leadership and dedication.

Q4 –Jammie Wright:

It is my pleasure to nominate Jammie Wright for the TALWD Art Fuston Award in recognition of her outstanding leadership, dedication, and service to the Texas Association of Local WIC Directors and the Texas WIC Program.

Jammie has faithfully served as the Client Services Committee Chair, providing exceptional leadership during a year marked by numerous policy revisions and program changes. Throughout this time, she remained committed to ensuring that local agency voices were represented and that committee members had meaningful opportunities to participate in the policy review process.

Under Jammie's leadership, the Client Services Committee carefully reviewed proposed policy revisions, provided thoughtful and constructive feedback, and engaged in meaningful discussions that strengthened the recommendations presented to the State Agency. She ensured that every committee member had the opportunity to contribute their perspective, fostering an environment of collaboration, respect, and open communication.

Jammie also served as an effective liaison between the committee and the State Agency. She clearly communicated the committee's recommendations, thoughtfully represented the concerns and suggestions of local agencies, and consistently kept committee members informed of the State's responses and subsequent policy updates. Her transparency and timely communication helped Directors remain informed and engaged throughout the revision process.

One of Jammie's greatest strengths is her commitment to collaboration. She values the opinions of others, encourages participation, and works diligently to build consensus while always keeping the needs of local agencies and WIC participants at the forefront. Her leadership style creates an atmosphere where members feel respected, heard, and empowered to contribute.

Through her dedication, professionalism, and unwavering commitment to TALWD, Jammie has played a significant role in strengthening communication between local agencies and the State WIC Office. Her leadership has helped ensure that the voices of WIC Directors are heard and considered during important policy decisions, making a lasting impact on the Texas WIC Program.

Customer Service:

Q1- Alaina D'Auria:

It is my pleasure to nominate Alaina for the TALWD Customer Service Award in recognition of her exceptional commitment to serving Texas WIC local agencies and her unwavering dedication to helping Directors succeed.

Alaina has worked tirelessly to prepare Local Agency Directors for upcoming audits by developing user-friendly self-audit tools that simplify the audit process and significantly reduce the workload for local agencies. Her ability to translate complex audit requirements into practical, easy-to-use resources has been invaluable and has helped Directors feel more confident and prepared.

Beyond the tools she creates, Alaina has built strong, positive relationships with WIC Directors across Texas. She is approachable, welcoming, and always willing to answer questions or provide guidance. She greets everyone with a smile and goes above and beyond to ensure Directors and their staff understand WIC policies and feel prepared for the audit process. Her positive attitude and willingness to help have made her a trusted and respected resource for both local agencies and State WIC.

I have known Alaina since she first joined the Quality Management Branch (QMB) Team, and throughout that time she has consistently demonstrated professionalism, kindness, and a genuine desire to support others. She is highly responsive when contacted, provides timely clarification, and when she does not immediately have an answer, she follows through to ensure questions are answered accurately. Directors know they can rely on her to provide thoughtful, thorough assistance.

During audits, Alaina is attentive, respectful, and willing to listen to local agency concerns. She approaches every interaction with fairness, professionalism, and flexibility whenever possible,

helping create a collaborative atmosphere rather than an intimidating one. Her ability to balance policy compliance with understanding the realities faced by local agencies has earned the trust and appreciation of Directors throughout the state.

Alaina's dedication, responsiveness, and commitment to excellent customer service have made a lasting impact on Texas WIC. She consistently exemplifies the qualities this award was created to recognize

Q2-Allison McAdow:

It is my pleasure to nominate Allison McAdow for the TALWD Customer Service Award in recognition of her exceptional service and unwavering support of Texas WIC local agencies.

Although Allison is still early in her career with the State WIC Office, she has already served in a variety of roles and has quickly established herself as a trusted resource and invaluable partner to local agencies across Texas. She is knowledgeable, approachable, kind, and always willing to help. Her professionalism and genuine commitment to supporting local agencies are evident in every interaction.

Most recently, in her role as Nutrition Education Coordinator, Allison has taken on the tremendous responsibility of training and guiding local agencies through significant program updates, including the transition to eWIC. She has patiently answered countless questions, thoughtfully listened to concerns, and consistently worked to provide practical solutions whenever possible. Even during periods of change and uncertainty, she remains positive, encouraging, and focused on helping local agencies succeed.

One of Allison's greatest strengths is her accessibility. When local agencies reach out, she responds. She takes the time to listen, understand each situation, and provide thoughtful guidance that is both practical and supportive. As a Local Agency Director, I know I can depend on her expertise, responsiveness, and willingness to partner with us to find solutions. That level of commitment and customer service is invaluable and exemplifies what it means to be a true partner to local agencies.

Beyond her technical knowledge, Allison has earned the trust and respect of WIC Directors across Texas through her kindness, patience, and collaborative approach. She understands that her role is not only to provide information but also to empower local agencies with the tools and confidence they need to successfully serve WIC families. She consistently goes above and beyond to ensure Directors and staff feel supported every step of the way.

Allison's dedication, expertise, responsiveness, and servant leadership make her an incredible asset to the State WIC Office and to every local agency she serves. She exemplifies the spirit of outstanding customer service and partnership.

Q3 –Alyssa Rubin-

It is my pleasure to nominate Alyssa for the TALWD Customer Service Award in recognition of her exceptional customer service, expertise, and unwavering commitment to supporting Texas WIC local agencies.

Over the past several years, Alyssa has been instrumental in implementing positive changes to the Texas WIC food packages. Her extensive knowledge of federal regulations and food package requirements has made her an invaluable resource to local agencies throughout the state. She consistently looks for ways to improve processes and ensure that changes are implemented as smoothly as possible. Her leadership and guidance made the transition to the new food package rules significantly easier for local agencies.

As a State WIC liaison, Alyssa is responsive, dependable, and always willing to help. She promptly answers questions, and when she does not immediately have the answer, she takes the initiative to connect Directors with the appropriate person to ensure concerns are addressed. She values the feedback of local agencies and listens thoughtfully and respectfully to ideas and suggestions, making Directors feel heard and appreciated.

One experience that truly reflects Alyssa's dedication occurred when I shared an idea for a simple tool to help staff explain grain benefits to participants without requiring them to calculate package amounts themselves. Rather than simply acknowledging the suggestion, Alyssa immediately recognized its value. Within a couple of weeks, she returned with a complete mock-up and asked for feedback. After receiving suggestions for improvement, she had an updated version ready the very next day. Her responsiveness, initiative, and commitment to creating practical solutions demonstrate her genuine desire to support local agencies and improve the participant experience.

Beyond her expertise, Alyssa is consistently kind, thoughtful, approachable, and encouraging. She greets others with a genuine smile and creates positive working relationships built on trust and collaboration. Her proactive attitude, willingness to listen, and ability to turn ideas into meaningful solutions make her an outstanding partner to local agencies across Texas.

Alyssa exemplifies the spirit of exceptional customer service through her professionalism, innovation, responsiveness, and dedication to helping others succeed. Her contributions have had a meaningful impact on Texas WIC.

Q4 –Doreen LaDuca-

It is my pleasure to nominate Doreen for the TALWD Customer Service Award in recognition of her exceptional dedication, professionalism, and commitment to supporting Texas WIC local agencies.

Doreen plays a vital role in ensuring local agencies have the information and resources they need to successfully operate their programs. She is responsible for developing and maintaining the WIC Directive and Operations (WDO) manual, working diligently to ensure it is comprehensive, accurate, and easy for local agency staff to understand and implement. Her attention to detail and commitment to producing high-quality guidance make her an invaluable resource for WIC Directors across the state.

In addition to her work on the WDO, Doreen is an incredible asset when it comes to the Improve the Participant Experience (IPE). She navigates the often tedious and complex process of coordinating reviews and obtaining the many approvals necessary for policy implementation. Her persistence, organization, and dedication help ensure that local agencies receive timely, accurate information while minimizing confusion during periods of change.

Doreen also dedicates countless hours to providing Lunch and Learn trainings for local agency staff. These sessions are informative, practical, and thoughtfully designed to help staff better understand policies and procedures. She has a gift for taking complicated information and presenting it in a way that is easy to understand and apply, helping staff feel more confident in their daily work.

What truly sets Doreen apart is her commitment to making life easier for local agencies. Her strong work ethic, attention to detail, and willingness to go the extra mile ensure that Directors and staff have the tools, guidance, and education they need to provide excellent service to WIC participants. Her behind-the-scenes work often goes unnoticed, yet it has a tremendous impact on the success of local agencies across Texas.

Doreen consistently demonstrates professionalism, reliability, and a genuine desire to serve others. Her dedication to improving resources, educating staff, and supporting local agencies exemplifies the qualities of outstanding customer service.