



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



2023 44th Annual WIC Association of NYS Conference

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US FOR THE 2023 VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

THANKS TO ALL WHO ATTENDED THE 2023 CONFERENCE!

Many thanks to our speakers and to our Conference Committee! The recorded sessions will be available for 3 months from the date of the conference. Log in [here](#) for the recorded sessions!

Approval for CEU's obtained! Click [here](#) for the tracking form.

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Thank you to those that participated in the Meet and Greet session held on St Patrick's Day, 3/17/23, in celebration of National Nutrition Month®!

We appreciated Local Agency WIC Coordinators sharing what their agencies did to celebrate.

JOIN US!

Join us at the next Meet n Greet which will be on 8/3/23 from 12:00PM-1:00PM in celebration of World Breastfeeding Week!

The Harmony Healthcare Long Island, WIC program will share their wonderful fully breastfeeding success story.



A Change in Leadership

By Lauren Brand, Past Chair and Lisa Fermin, Chair

The role of Chair for the WIC Association of NYS, ensures the board's effectiveness and sets the strategic direction of the board. Serving for two years in duration and elected for another two years, the term of office begins January and concludes December. After serving a six-year term, Lauren Brand shared with the board of directors, the importance of having another board member take on the role of Chair. It was at that moment, that the wheels of change were ignited. In December 2022 board meeting, Lisa Fermin was voted in as Chair and Lauren and Lisa agreed to a transitional training period. This month, Lisa has commissioned the full role of Chair. Below is an interview between the Chair and Post Chair.

Lisa to Lauren:

Q1. How did you get involved in the WICA? - My initial involvement in WICA was through the board's Nutrition and Breastfeeding committee. I served as a committee member for a year before being nominated for the board of directors. My involvement on the nutrition and breastfeeding committee provided me with a good overview of what to expect as a board member. This is my shameless plug to push involvement with NYSWICA! If you can't commit to being a board member, consider joining a board committee.

Q2. What would you recommend for future candidates in taking on the Chair Association role? - Start by listening. The most difficult part about being chair is that you represent the entire state, not just your agency or region. There is always something new to learn which keeps things interesting!

Q3. What has been your experience during your tenure? I would say one of the best experiences during my tenure as chair has been getting to know colleagues from across the state and learning and listening to the various challenges or successes agencies endure.

Q4. What would be your wish for the future of the Association? - My hope is that the Association follows through with the strategic plan adopted in the last year. I would like to see the Association hire an Executive Director (ED) to help the board meet its mission and provide continuous advocacy within the state and on a national level. I think the WIC Program has some exciting program changes in the future, such as more permanent policies surrounding remote services, technology advances, and online nutrition education. I think an ED will help the Association provide meaningful and timely feedback to policy makers.



Lauren Brand, Past Chair

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Q5. What is a funny story you can share while on the board? The board was meeting with state staff in Albany during a transitional period, prior to Corie Nadzan moving in the WIC Director position. Therefore, her future boss joined our meeting via conference call. During the meeting a snake was slithering along the floor. Mid conference call half of the board members were screaming and jumping up on their chairs. Needless to say, it was hard to explain what was happening in the board room to the person on the other end of the call. Maybe you had to be there...lol!

Q6. What is your biggest accomplishment? It is hard to answer this question. I think one of my accomplishments was keeping the board together in the height of the COVID pandemic. Prior we did not meet virtually and, at the time, it seemed like a huge task to transition to virtual board meetings and continue committee work. The Association started to engage more in social media and work more closely with National WIC Association (NWA) to push for an increase in the cash value benefit for fruits and vegetables...it was exciting to be a part of that initiative during the pandemic!

Q7. Lauren What is/was your biggest fear participating on the board? – That's easy...public speaking! I initially did not want to be chair because I did not want to have to speak on stage at conferences. Now I would rather speak in person than through Zoom!

Personal Statement: I would like to use this platform to thank the board members for their support and dedication to the WIC Association. Please continue to work with Lisa Fermin in her new role as chair. She is ready to take on the work and I believe she will bring the Association to the next level with the support from our members and board.

Lauren to Lisa

Q1. How did you get involved in the WICA? I honestly do not remember how I came to serve on the board. Exposure to volunteer boards started with the *Metropolitan WIC Association, Inc*, where I was a member and held the Co-Chair and Secretary positions. I was asked to join the WIC Association of NYS as a provider around 2016 and quickly became enamored with a road trip to the Albany area every two months to spend time with a lovely group of like-minded people.

Q2. Why did you volunteer to become Chair? It seemed to be the right time to step in and take on this pivotal role that supports the contributions of those who work hard on the board and in support of local agencies around the state.



Lisa Fermin, Chair

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Q3. Where do you see the Association in two years? In two years, I see the Chair position working alongside an Executive Director supporting the strategic plan dedicated towards enhancing the services of the WIC program through advocacy, having a stronger impact with engagement and yielding participation from the membership to pursue the mission and vision of the WIC program.

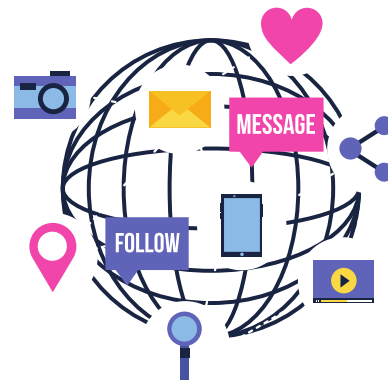
Q4. What do you like best about being on the board? I enjoy the exposure of a state-wide approach of how WIC programs operate. I mostly enjoy the interactions and time spent with board members. It is a de stressor to be surround by people who can relate to your struggles and support a better outlook to the future of WIC.

Personal statement: Taking on this role is huge and I will not stop commending Lauren for taking it on for this long. I look forward to the transformation of the Association as it pursues an Executive Director and influencing other leaders to take on Chair role in the years ahead. I want to be able to represent local agencies in their struggles and successes. I am ready to represent WIC programs through this interesting time of transition.

BECOME MORE SOCIAL MEDIA SAVVY

Social media platforms are a great way to engage with current and potential WIC participants. According to the Pew Research Center, today, 93% of American adults use the internet. No matter what platform you choose to use, here are some good pointers to get the best traction:

- Vary your posts - Try doing staff spotlight, agency news...maybe a recipe? Engage with local, state and federal organizations by reposting content that is relevant to your target market.
- Focus your content – communicate relevant information, community news, or local/legislative action as appropriate
- Tag local community-based organizations, school districts, local elected representatives, and news media when appropriate.
- Use hashtags! #WICWorks #diapers #whatsfordinner as this can help promote awareness, gain followers, and grow your network.



Board Member Highlight

By: Sherry Wilson

My involvement with the WIC Program began when a 4 County Program near the Canadian border became one of the 1st WIC programs in NYS. As North Country Children's Clinic (aka North Country Family Health) grew, we served families in our local communities and the Fort Drum Military Base. As Fort Drum expanded and became home to the 10th Mountain Division, we also began serving families originating from all over the USA.

As the WIC Program in NYS grew, so grew the need to:

- Respond to new federal regulations;
- Strategize to increase WIC funds;
- Develop ongoing communication networks among existing and potential programs, consumers, advocates; and
- Foster a platform for legislative change.



In 1978 I joined the NYS WIC Association as a member of the temporary Steering Committee and in 1979 as a member of the permanent Steering Committee (which became the Board of Directors). Since then, I have had an opportunity to serve on the Board intermittently as a Provider, Secretary, and Treasurer. After I retired, I became an Advocate.

As I look back over the years, I reflect on the many opportunities the WIC Association has provided. First and foremost, the ability to meet many new people. I have known a great many people who were involved with the NYS WIC Program, some current lifetime friends and some who are no longer with us. Second, the ability to impact funding by providing WIC Program education at the State & Federal levels. Lastly, the knowledge gained by participating in State and Federal Conferences with regards to the different regions of our state and the inner workings of our federal government.

My final comment — don't miss the experience!!



On 6/16/2023 Tammy Lana retired from the Board. Tammy started her WIC career at SPCC Finger Lakes WIC in 2008 and in 2016 was hired as the Administrative Assistant for the Board. She truly enjoyed getting to know the members.

Tammy is an integral part of our team. She will be whole heartedly missed. Please accept our sincerest thanks as we wish you well on your retirement.



The NYS WIC association is consistently creating content to keep you informed of what we at the association are up to, including information about our conferences, meet and greets, and our advocacy work. We are also creating content for you to share on your social media pages as well; this includes policy updates, upcoming program changes/opportunities, breastfeeding promotion, and much more! Our marketing and membership team is also looking to help highlight agencies across the association. Send us your agency's special events and success stories; we would love to share them!

Now that you know what we can do, please find us on social media by clicking on any of the images at the bottom of the page.

To share your stories e-mail us at wicassociationofnys@gmail.com.



Legislative Update

In February and in May, the Association's Legislative/Public Policy Committee drafted and submitted comments to the USDA on the proposed rule on updating the food package and the proposed rule on modernizing the shopping experience. You can review those written comments on our website's newly updated [Advocacy Page](#).

Did you know you do not have to be a Board member to participate on the Legislative/Public Policy Committee? We welcome all Association members! There will be many opportunities to educate our elected officials on the crucial public health services WIC provides in the coming months. Please email wicassociationofnys@gmail.com if you are interested in learning more about our work and discuss how you might get involved.