



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



REGISTRATION OPENING SOON!

We are thrilled to announce that the WIC Program is commemorating 50 years of dedicated service! And what better way to celebrate than by joining us at the highly anticipated 2024 NYS WIC conference, taking place from April 15th to 17th, 2024!

Our team is currently hard at work planning an incredible lineup of sessions for this conference. Make sure to mark your calendars, as registration will open in early January 2024. Get ready for a conference that promises to be both inspiring and energizing, leaving a lasting impact on all attendees!

Sponsorship opportunities are available! If you or your agency has a partner who would be interested in supporting this event, please kindly share the linked [prospectus](#) with them.

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MARKETING & MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE UPDATE:

The Marketing and Membership committee works to identify continuing opportunities to serve our membership and ensure that the Association's work is reflective of the needs of our community. Currently, we are planning all Meet & Greets for 2024, as well as working in collaboration with conference committee to plan for the 2024 conference. The Association newsletter is created in this committee too.





Legislative Update

Since the last newsletter Congress has approved another short term continuing resolution (CR) to fund the federal government, including a number of programs through January 19, 2024. This includes WIC at the current CVB benefit level. We heard from national partners that our message is being heard on Capitol Hill; but a “clean CR” is not a victory for WIC. NYS has the 3rd highest caseload in the nation (most recent data we have received from NYSWIC reported 430,000 participants - 58% children, 20% infants, 22% women - in September) and continues to grow as it should(!), so we are spending down allotted funds faster with our increasing caseload.

Our Representatives must continue to hear clearly from the WIC community and partners that additional funding is needed to serve current and projected caseloads with the full science based food package.

Please keep it up!

There are many different ways you and partners can help protect and strengthen WIC **today**, and in the coming days and weeks:

- Recommend partner advocates to the board. The Association currently has 4 of the 6 available advocate seats vacant. And 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.
- Consider joining NYS WICA members at [NWA's National Policy Virtual Conference](#)! And if your budget does not allow for it, we sent an email a few weeks ago announcing that the legislative committee is sponsoring registrations for several local providers' staff again this year; remember to submit your nominations [here by Jan 3, 2024](#)!

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- Ask your participants if they might be willing to speak with a member of the media when the opportunity arises. Reporters always have a tight deadline (often 24-48hours) and WIC will be best represented if we have participants standing at the ready to share their thoughts.

Recap from autumn edition:

- Raise your voice Now with our NYS leaders by using this [simple NWA online tool](#). Remind our leaders that NYS has seen over a 16% overall increase in participation since March 2020, and over 26% in children! The message? **Congress must act to serve projected caseloads with the current science based food package.**
- If you didn't before, use the [NYSWICA survey](#) to make your own, send out to your participants, and then share their thoughts with your elected officials and on your social media (tagging them and us so we can reshare!). We found posting testimony shared in bulk on our [facebook](#) and [instagram](#) channels effective.
- Participate in biweekly calls for the NWA's WIC Action Network and hear the latest on what's happening in DC and what education you can provide to support state and national efforts. [Register for the WIC Action Network here.](#)
- Learn the Facts: [Can you Lobby as a 501c3](#) terrific factsheet for all of us who educate and advocate for WIC!

Go Team NYSWIC!

Your Legislative and Public Policy Committee



Join us at our next Meet & Greet where we will have a guest speaker from Cornell Cooperative Extension highlighting the benefits of partnering with the WIC program across the state to support healthy outcomes for WIC families.

**Thursday, February 1st
12:00PM-1:00PM**

[Register Now](#)
We hope to see you there!

MEET & GREET RECAP

To kick start wichealth, the Marketing and Membership committee held a Meet and Greet on 11/2/23. WIC Director's Lauren Brand, from Stony Brook WIC Program, and Helene Rosenhouse-Romeo, from Ryan Health Center WIC Program, provided us with an informative presentation on their successful implementation of wichealth at their local agencies. Effective strategies were given on how to roll out wichealth, target your audience, engage staff to enroll participants, monitor compliance reports and document in NYWIC. Streamline practices such as assigning roles and having front staff introduce and set up wichealth accounts was extremely helpful. Step by step instructions were provided to access the dashboard both in NYWIC and wichealth to monitor reports such as The Participant's Eligible for Issuance Dashboard, Online Nutrition Education and wichealth statistics.

Thank you to all that participated and for sharing your best wichealth practices. Copies of the presentation can be accessed [here](#).

WIC VENDOR MANAGEMENT AGENCY

The Public Health Solutions (PHS) WIC Vendor Management Agency (VMA) ensures an adequate number of WIC stores exist to meet WIC participants' needs. PHS VMA oversees all authorized WIC vendors, processes applications for new WIC vendors and provides training, monitoring and technical assistance to WIC vendors, participants, and local agency staff.

The VMA's main functions are:

- Processing WIC vendor applications and reapplications
- Providing monitoring and training to vendors.
- Providing training to Local Agency staff.
- Acting as a liaison, resolving disputes between participants and vendors.
- Ensuring program integrity.
- Representing NYS at fair hearings

In March of 2023, Public Health Solutions' VMA was awarded the contract to manage all WIC vendors in New York State. On October of 2023, PHS established two operational upstate satellite sites to complement our downstate site located in Flushing, NY. Our capital region satellite site is located in Colonie, NY, in Albany County and our western region site is located in Rochester. These locations allow us to monitor all 2700 WIC vendors in an efficient and economical manner.



Rochester VMA Team



Albany VMA Team

About Public Health Solutions and WIC Vendor Management

Public Health Solutions is a private, not-for-profit, self-sustaining organization incorporated on November 6, 1957, to provide resources and support for the health community of New York City in the areas of health research, planning and service provision. Public Health Solutions has been a contractor for two large city-wide WIC programs since the mid 1970's and has a long and active history of WIC vendor management. PHS began contracting with WIC vendors in 1978, and by 1983 had established contracts with approximately 180 vendors throughout the five boroughs. This volume rose and application processing demands continued to increase dramatically, such that by 1987 Public Health Solutions was managing approximately 320 active WIC vendors.

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In 1995, PHS successfully consolidated all WIC vendors in south Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island. In 1996 WIC vendors located in Nassau and Suffolk counties were being managed by PHS WIC VMA and in 2006, vendors located in northern Brooklyn were also successfully assimilated. In 2015, PHS started managing WIC vendors located in Manhattan, Orange, and Rockland counties. Finally, in October 2023, PHS assumed responsibility for managing all WIC vendors in New York State,

Our Goals

The WIC vendor management goals we envision are: (a) to establish and/or maintain adequate communication with the State, with WIC vendors and with local WIC agencies so as to further the primary goal of the WIC Program in making WIC foods accessible to its participants; (b) to provide a well-structured vendor program with sufficient staff to properly train and educate vendors in regards to program objectives and rules; and (c) to provide necessary surveillance such that a visible presence is established in the field to deter fraud and encourage good management.

Our contact information is as follows:

Contact

Telephone: 646-973-3942

Email: vma@healthsolutions.org

VMA Website: <https://nyswicvendors.com/>



Metropolitan VMA Team

MEMBER UPDATE

By Elizabeth Crofut

The WIC Association of NYS is thrilled to announce the newest additions to the NYS WIC Association Board of Directors! These individuals bring a wealth of experience, passion, and expertise to the NYS WIC Association Board of Directors, and we believe they will play a crucial role in shaping the direction of our organization in the coming years. Together, we will achieve great things.



We would also like to express our gratitude to the outgoing Board Members for their dedicated service and the incredible work they have done. Their commitment to our mission has been invaluable.

JOIN US IN WELCOMING OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS!



Latoya Thompson Provider, Metropolitan Region

I am excited to serve on the Board for the opportunity to meet with NYSDOH and work towards a common goal and advocate for the local agencies.



Victoria Steen-Huners Provider, Capital Region

I have always had a passion for making a difference. I have dedicated my entire career in helping others and proving to the community that anyone can make a change. Being a former participant, we can't forget about the consumers and why do what we do as board members. I hope to help the consumer voice be heard and the connections between state and provider continue to grow.



Amber Munch Consumer, Capital Region

I feel I would be a good member of the WIC association of NYS because I have not only been working at WIC but I have been able to receive WIC for my child. I enjoy helping other families find necessary agencies/ referrals so that their children can have the best life possible.



Deliza Cosme Consumer, Metropolitan Region

I am proud to represent the community and WIC families, being a WIC participant myself I am excited to learn more about how WIC program and represent it stands for.