



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



45th
ANNUAL
CONFERENCE

The WIC Association of NYS 2024 conference was a tremendous success, and we extend our heartfelt thanks to all attendees.

The conference committee and the WIC Association of NYS were thrilled to bring this event back in person, and we hope you enjoyed networking, reconnecting with old friends, and making new ones.

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Thank you 

Thank you for **40+ years** of service and dedication to the WIC Program. Your commitment and contributions have made a significant impact.

- Theresa Landau
- Diane Jenkins
- Domenica (Mickie) Ganci
- Sharon L Oliver-Murthy
- Harriet Berger

- Rachel Murray
- Sharon McClure
- Thomas Wilkins
- Linda Joseph

Snapshots and Thanks: A Letter to Our Conference Attendees



To: Our Attendees

Thank you for making the 45th WIC Association of NYS Conference such a success! We hope you found the breakout and general sessions informative, whether you learned something new about infant mental health or refreshed your knowledge on nutrition and breastfeeding. We believe everyone left with valuable insights to bring back to their local agencies. The conference committee had a fantastic time planning this event, and seeing it come together was incredibly rewarding.

Handouts from the conference can be accessed [here](#).

We hope the conference inspired you in your daily work and reminded you of the vital role you play in the WIC program and its participants' lives.

Thank you again for your participation!

*Warm Regards,
Conference Committee*

Meet Our Executive Director: A Vision for the Future

Dear Association Members,

I'm delighted and honored to introduce myself as your new Executive Director at the WIC Association of NYS! Throughout my career, I've been deeply passionate about supporting the health and well-being of women, children, and vulnerable communities, particularly those facing resource limitations.

I am focusing on:

- Advocating for WIC growth: I believe in the vital role WIC plays in ensuring healthy futures. I'll champion increased funding and program expansion to reach more families in need.
- Empowering our member network: I'm committed to developing resources and professional development opportunities to help WIC program staff advance their careers and better serve their communities.



Tasha Ortloff, Executive Director

Previously, at the United Way of Ulster County, I led women-centered initiatives promoting wellness, financial stability, and career advancement. At the Adoptive and Foster Family Coalition of NY, I played a key role in stabilizing organizational rapid growth and impacting families and children statewide.

I'm excited to leverage my experience and collaborate with colleagues to strengthen the WIC program and ensure your voices are heard. Together, we can make a significant difference by expanding WIC's positive influence and creating lasting change for women, infants, and children.

With a shared commitment, we can build a stronger community and achieve the positive changes we all strive for. I eagerly look forward to working with the board and association members to make a meaningful impact on the families we serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tasha Ortloff". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tasha" and last name "Ortloff" clearly distinguishable.

Tasha Ortloff
Executive Director

Meet and Greet Recap:

In an attempt to improve upon farmers market redemption rates, the Marketing & Membership Committee conducted a Meet & Greet on 6/20/24 for WIC Directors to gather together and share farmers market success stories. This session showcased NYS WIC Directors Nechama Stolzenberg from Yeled v Yalda WIC Program and Jackie Lalonde from Schoharie County WIC Program, who shared their best practices in successfully achieving high redemption rates with farmers market coupons in previous years. Their informative presentations kickstarted an interactive dialogue between the WIC Directors in which many successful strategies and ideas were exchanged.

Some proven strategies to reach high redemption rates are as follows:

- Provide consistent thorough nutrition education on the benefits of fresh produce, methods of preparation and dates of the season.
- Provide farmers market resources to assist them when selecting seasonal fruits and vegetables, and recipes for preparing them.
- Partner with Cornell Cooperative Extension and conduct in person food demonstrations at your local agency.
- Be proactive in contacting farmers markets in your area that are no longer listed to see if they are still participating.
- Have staff visit and take pictures of their conveniently located farms stand and farmers markets to post on social media. Choose a specific farmers market/stand to highlight each month.
- Bring the coupons to the farmers markets for distribution or collaborate with clinic sites to issue the farmers market coupons on site certain days of the week.
- Have WIC staff/volunteers conduct monthly reminders to participants either through text, phone calls or emails to use their farmers market coupons.
- Encourage participants who also have SNAP benefits to double up their food bucks at participating farmers markets.



Legislative Update:

On July 11, the Senate Appropriations Committee unanimously advanced an agriculture funding bill which includes \$7.697 billion for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), meeting levels needed to serve a projected 7 million participants in Fiscal Year 2025, and protects the scientific integrity of WIC's food packages. In June, the House Appropriations Committee proposed legislation for \$7.235 billion in funding for WIC, which unfortunately included provisions called “riders” that would interfere with implementation of the final evidence-based rule updating the WIC food package released in April by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Communicating with and educating elected Representatives on local WIC programs continues to be very important in the coming weeks and months. Here are the other ways you can help protect and strengthen WIC **today**, and in the coming days and weeks:

- Raise your voice with our NYS leaders by using this [simple NWA online tool](#). Remind our leaders that even higher than national growth, NYS has seen nearly 23% overall increase in participation (~360k in March 2020 vs. ~442k in March 2024), with over 30% increase in children, from ~191k in March 2020 to ~249k in September 2023, according to most recent DOH data shared with the Association. The message? **Congress must act to serve projected caseloads with the current science based food package.**
- **Use the [NYSWICA survey](#) that captures participants' thoughts on CVB and vital WIC services.** Send this out to your participants via text or email, or make your own survey, 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 last summer.
- Participate in biweekly calls (every other Friday, 3pm) 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.](#)
- Consider joining the [NWA's Leadership Summit](#) in September.
- Learn the Facts: [Public Charities Can Lobby as a 501c3](#) terrific factsheet for all of us who educate and advocate for WIC!

Although NYSWIC is serving the highest number of New Yorkers since late 2016, we serve about half of eligible New Yorkers statewide. How has your local participation changed during the same timeframe? Are you fully serving your target caseload? And is the unmet need in your service area so much greater? We have far to go for WIC to reach all eligible families with its vital public health services, and we need more voices - from the WIC community and beyond - helping to explain both the reality of its life-changing results and struggles.

Go Team NYSWIC!

Your Legislative and Public Policy Committee





Join Us!

Are you passionate about the WICANY cause? Do you want to make a tangible difference in our industry/community? We invite you to become an active member of our volunteer team!

We have various opportunities available from event support to administrative assistance. Whether you can spare a few hours a week or just want to help out at one of our events. Your contribution will be highly valued.

Together, we can create an association that inspires and empowers us all.

Let's build a brighter future together!
Email wicassociationofnys@gmail.com
to get involved.





Empowering Communities
Enhancing Services
Advancing WIC Together

 Dates: April 28-30, 2025
 Crowne Plaza Hotel, Albany, NY



Join Us for the 46th Annual WIC Association of New York State Conference!

Your Feedback Matters! Please Take Our Survey

We invite you to participate in a brief survey ([survey link here](#)) to help us better understand the needs and perspectives of individuals and agencies like yours. Your feedback is invaluable in improving our offerings and serving our community more effectively.

This survey seeks to explore the reasons why some individuals and agencies have not joined or renewed their membership with us. Your honest responses will help us address any barriers and enhance the value of our membership.

We greatly appreciate your input and look forward to hearing your thoughts.

Thank you for your time

