

WIC Association of NYS, Inc.



Newsletter

NYS WIC Association Student Loan Payment Program

As an incentive for Qualified Nutritionists, eligible staff from member agencies* were given an opportunity to receive a one-time payment of \$2,000 to be paid directly to their student loan provider. Winners were chosen by lottery and five lucky Qualified Nutritionists were chosen:

Christine Devaney	Western Region
Dahlia El-Matary	MARO Region
Danielle Nicholson	Western Region
Amberlee Moskaluk	Western Region
Carolyn Niedzielski	Capital Region

Congratulations Winners!

**Just one of the benefits of being a member of the WIC Association*

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Child Nutrition Reauthorization Update

What now? How will WIC be affected by the election of 2016?

Every 5 years Congress reviews WIC and other Child Nutrition programs in order to make improvements or changes (additions, removals, corrections) based on feedback from many sources: elected officials; administering agencies; advocates; and participants. The process is called “Child Nutrition Reauthorization” and is already overdue.

Each house of Congress, the Senate and the House of Representatives, develops its own “bill” with detailed changes to the child nutrition programs. Once the bills are passed in each of these legislative bodies, the differences between them, if any, are negotiated.

To date, both houses have developed bills but they have not been voted on by their membership. The Senate bill would extend WIC eligibility for children up to their 6th birthday and would also allow infants to be certified for 2 years. The House bill does not contain these positive changes.

Since the presidential election of 2016, however, what happens now is anyone’s guess. The Presidency, the Senate and the House will be under Republican control, a party that has not traditionally favored health, nutrition or supplemental income programs for the WIC-eligible population.

We will keep you posted!



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WIC VENDOR PEER GROUPS AND COST CONTAINMENT

The use of peer groups is based on the philosophy that vendors with shared characteristics may be expected to have similar business practices and prices. By grouping vendors together based on these shared characteristics, New York State (NYS) can more easily identify the competitive price range for WIC foods and differentiate between vendors whose prices fall within or outside this range. This system results in greater cost containment because the maximum reimbursement levels are appropriate for each specific vendor type.

NYS adopted a WIC vendor peer group system based on the following three criteria:

- Geography (Is the store located in a rural or urban area?)
- Business Model (Is the store a grocery or pharmacy? Is the vendor part of a chain of stores or an independent?)
- Store Size (Based on the number of registers the store contains.)

Geography

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service developed the definitions for Rural-Urban Commuting Area codes. Rural Urban Commuting Area codes are a measure of geography that capture labor and food commodity market differences that contribute to differences in food prices. The urban/non-urban status of a location is based on census tract data, population data and traffic commuting flow. Each code is an indication of population density and commuting flow either within or outside of a specific area. Codes range from 1 to 10 based on the census tract Urban (codes 1 – 3), or Non-Urban (codes 4 – 10). Some small towns have an urban code because they have a high percent (30% or more) of out-commuting to an urban area.

Business Model

NYS WIC developed the definitions for business model based on how other state WIC programs categorized vendors. The business model criterion consists of two characteristics: store type and chain status. There are two designations for store type: pharmacy only and store (grocery or grocery with integrated pharmacy).

The chain status of a vendor is determined in the following way:

Independent store: 4 or fewer NYS WIC authorized stores

Minor chain store: 5-24 NYS WIC authorized stores

Major chain store: 25 or more NYS WIC authorized stores

Independent pharmacy: 4 or fewer NYS WIC authorized pharmacies

Chain pharmacy: 5 or more NYS WIC authorized pharmacies

Store Size (as determined by number of cash registers)

The number of cash registers was selected as a measure for store size. Vendors are grouped into one of four groups:

Small (1-2 cash registers)

Medium (3-7 registers)

Large (8-14 registers)

Extra Large (15+ registers)

The average redemption values of WIC checks for each peer group is analyzed and payment is established based on redemption values within each peer group plus an allowance for variation and inflation. The NYS WIC Program continuously monitors redemptions and rejections to ensure peer group assignments and reimbursement levels are appropriate.

H+H Elmhurst WIC Maime Café/ NYC Marathon

Gloria Paniagua and her husband Nestor Castano serve the Elmhurst Community with dedication and integrity. They volunteer their time to help encourage healthy lifestyles through creative art and physical activity.

Gloria is an independent artist who volunteers her time to the Elmhurst WIC program. She is an advocate of WIC and enjoys working with children. Mrs. Paniagua works closely with the breastfeeding support group, Maime Café, while inspiring creativity through art. Her focus is helping moms reduce stress through art while inspiring them to connect with their inner motherhood through creative painting and drawing. The art work is shared with WIC families and displayed at the EHC WIC program's lactation room.

Nestor ran the 2016 NYC Marathon in recognition of the Maime Café, further showcasing the importance of remaining

physically active.

Gloria and Nestor are a shining example of the generosity that can be found within our communities.



Nestor Castano/ Nov 6, 2016 NYC Marathon

DOH POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

Recently, there have been many NYSDOH WIC program policy revisions. One such revision is the Anthropometry Policy, WPM Section 1184. This policy outlines staff training, the collection of data, record keeping and equipment maintenance.

Highlights for Local Agencies:

- Welcome new hires to this updated policy and ensure a Quality Assurance checklist is completed at least once within the year.
- When you receive inaccurate or outdated (over 60 days) measurements, the local agency is required to complete measurements on site. Every effort should be made to obtain accurate measurements, however if obtaining anthropometric data becomes a challenge, document in *WICSIS Notes* and continue providing WIC services.
- Remember to maximize participant's privacy. Communicate in a good tone; use the anthropometry graphs as an educational tool. Visuals work well when helping participant's develop goals. Use your PCNA skills to maximize the importance of healthy weight gain.
- Maintenance of an Anthropometry log ensures and documents daily calibration of anthropometric equipment. You may be required to present it at your next LACASA visit.
- Don't forget to update your local agency Anthropometric policy and procedure manuals.

Adopt a Mindful Approach to the Holidays

BY BETHANY FRAZIER, MS, RD, LDN

Most of our lack of control during this time of year, which tends to lead us toward yo-yo dieting, is because of the mindless eating practices we follow the rest of the year. I often recommend a "no-diet" approach during the holiday season. This doesn't mean saying no to everything — rather it means saying yes to a healthy relationship with food.

Take the 10-Chew Test

It takes about 10 chews for your mind to get the maximum satisfaction out of what you eat. Our favorite "cheat foods" are often extremes on the sweet, salty or fatty spectrum. All of these tastes send positive, happy signals to our brains. When you are served Grandma's famous pie or your other favorite holiday foods, chew each bite at least 10 times. This allows you to enjoy the food more, meaning it will be easier to push away from the table when both your brain and belly are happy.

Avoid Substitutes — the Truth about Food Fretting

When we classify foods as "bad," we fall into a cycle that looks like this: "I cheated and ate a piece of cake so the rest of my day is ruined." This food categorization confuses us, meshing the positive emotions and brain signals created when we eat food like a piece of cake with a negative thought: "I failed because I ate this." This emotional turmoil leads to stress, which usually ends in emotional eating. Instead of engaging in the negative cycle of subbing your favorite cake for a healthier version, eat the cake — or whatever your favorite food is — but eat it more mindfully. This is a perfect opportunity to try out the 10-chew test.

Share Your Favorite Foods Online

A recent study found that taking pictures of food and sharing them on social media actually increases our enjoyment of what we eat. While you may not need to post that picture of your Thanksgiving turkey or pumpkin pie — since you probably already enjoy that enough — posting pictures of fruits and vegetables is a great way to enjoy them more! The delay in eating causes you to want the food more, and improves your experience.

Just like learning any new skill, learning to follow the no-diet approach takes practice. You don't need to be perfect to stay healthy this holiday season, but by incorporating these tips, you can mindfully eat your way through the holidays.



Bethany Frazier, MS, RD, LDN — the Kansas City Dietitian — is a private practice and consulting dietitian. She strives to help her readers and clients retrain their brains to find joy in healthy eating. Connect with her on her [blog](#) and on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

NWA CORNER

Lifting Up Your WIC Voice During this Uncertain Time: Weeks after the November 8th election, many of us are still feeling shocked, anxious, uncertain, and even fearful about the future of our country. We are now aware, more than ever, of the deep divisions that exist among U.S. citizens. The new political landscape that we will face in 2017 is likely to have significant implications for WIC, but we do not know at this point exactly what those implications will be.

During this time of uncertainty, you may be wondering how you can get involved in the effort to protect and preserve WIC. As new policymakers prepare to take office, and as incumbent officials begin to develop their strategy for 2017, now is a great time to get out and educate your legislators about the importance of WIC. Educating local, state, and national policymakers about WIC can help ensure that WIC continues to be a public health priority for members of both parties. Effective WIC education of legislators has helped fight off hundreds of millions of dollars in cuts to the program and unfavorable policies over the past two decades.

FY 2017 Funding: The Senate passed a FY 2017 continuing resolution (CR) last Friday evening by a vote of 63 to 36, narrowly averting a government shutdown. The Senate also passed the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation bill (WIIN, formerly known as WRDA) on Friday by a vote of 78 to 21. WIIN authorizes \$170 million in aid for Flint, Michigan to address its water pollution crisis. Passage of the CR, set to expire on April 28th, will most likely lead to a partisan battle over spending in the spring. Outgoing House Appropriations Chairman Hal Rogers (R-KY) warns that appropriators need to begin negotiating the spending bills in early January because meeting the April deadline will be "extremely difficult." Some conservative members of Congress are already demanding that the next round of spending bills immediately cut \$30 billion in domestic spending. For the duration of the current CR, government programs will be funded at the same levels of FY 2016, \$1.07 trillion. This means WIC will continue to operate at an annual funding level of \$6.32 billion until the end of the CR.

Child Nutrition Reauthorization: Last Tuesday, Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Pat Roberts (R-KS) announced that efforts to complete the bill to reauthorize child nutrition programs have come to an end.

This means that NWA successes included in the Senate bill to provide WIC to six, two year certifications for infants, a reasonable, common sense review of Medicaid Adjunctive Eligibility, among other priorities have, for the time being, been dashed. Senate Agriculture Committee leaders have said that they will renew efforts in the 115th Congress to move child nutrition through the Committee and the Senate floor, although with a new presidential administration and with the Farm Bill reauthorization process beginning in 2017, it is anything but assured that a child nutrition bill will be passed next year. In the meantime, WIC and other child nutrition programs will continue to operate under the policies set by the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010.

Chairman Roberts released a statement last Tuesday that read in part: "Today is a day I hoped would not come," Roberts said. "I'm very disappointed that the bipartisan, bicameral child nutrition reauthorization negotiations have come to an end for the 114th Congress. . . We have not been able to overcome minority objections and additionally those in the House. Though our committee passed a good, bipartisan bill — something no one said we could do — it wasn't enough for some. I'm proud to say the Agriculture Committee conducted this reauthorization process in an open and transparent manner that listened to all stakeholders, including schoolchildren. We wrote a well-balanced bill that increased program integrity, flexibility, efficiency, and effectiveness. . . It is [also] unfortunate that certain parochial interests and the desire for issues rather than solutions were put ahead of the wellbeing of vulnerable and at-risk populations and the need for reform. This is a lost opportunity to help hungry children and struggling schools. In addition, these programs will be vulnerable to attack without a reduction in the current error rates."

A MESSAGE FROM THE NYS WIC ASSOCIATION CHAIR

By Cindy Walton

It has been an honor to serve as Chairperson of the WIC Association of NYS for the past four years. As I prepare to end my term, I've been reflecting on the work that has been accomplished by this organization. In addition to providing an annual conference to help enhance staff competency, the Association has taken on difficult and controversial issues and in doing so, has made a difference in the lives of the families we serve as well as in the lives of our colleagues who work tirelessly on behalf of those families.

I have always said that WIC gets into your blood. We all have friends and colleagues who have worked in WIC for decades and most are still as dedicated to the program as when they first began. What a testament to both the program and the people! Despite the frustration stemming from all the regulations, policy and procedure changes, and sometimes difficult people (both those we work with and those we work on behalf of), folks dedicate their careers to WIC. Many have played a role in the successes of the NYS WIC Association in one way or another and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of them for their contributions.

If you have not been active in the WIC Association, I encourage you to get involved. If serving as a member of the Board of Directors isn't possible, join a committee, volunteer to help with a project, or simply communicate with your Board representatives. We need your input in order to continue supporting and enhancing the WIC program.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Mead