



National WIC Association
WIC for a Healthier America



Feed them well.
Love them lots!
Your child has you.
And you have WIC!

NWA'S MISSION

NWA provides its members with tools and leadership to expand and sustain effective nutrition services for mothers and young children.

The WIC Program

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children—WIC—has improved at-risk children's health, growth, and development and prevented health problems for more than three decades. WIC children enter school ready to learn, showing better cognitive performance. As the nation's premier public health nutrition program, WIC is a cost-effective, sound investment to ensure the health of our children.

WIC serves more than 9 million mothers and young children, over 1.5 million pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, more than half of America's infants, and one-quarter of its children 1 to 5 years of age.

Quality nutrition services are the centerpiece of WIC: nutrition education; breastfeeding promotion, education, and support; nutritious foods; and improved health-care access for low- and moderate-income women and children with, or at risk of developing, such nutrition-related health problems as being overweight or obese, or having Type II diabetes.

Families who turn to WIC for nutrition assistance are vulnerable and at risk. WIC food packages, including those specifically designed for fully breastfeeding mothers and their infants, and the nutrition and breastfeeding services that accompany them ensure that WIC mothers and young children stay healthy.

Research shows that breast milk is the best nutrition for a child's first year of life. Moreover, breastfeeding provides numerous and significant health benefits to both the mother and her baby. WIC promotes breastfeeding to all pregnant women as the optimal infant feeding choice. To assist in this effort, NWA has developed this Breastfeeding Strategic Plan for State and Local Agency staff to assure breastfeeding success for WIC mothers.

NWA Breastfeeding Strategic Plan

The National WIC Association (NWA) calls on all State and Local WIC programs to assume a leadership role in breastfeeding promotion and support and to empower WIC staff and postpartum participants to exclusively breastfeed their babies. NWA seeks to ensure that WIC, as the nation's premier public health nutrition program, is recognized as a resource and advocate for breastfeeding promotion and support. NWA encourages all WIC programs to adopt the following breastfeeding strategic goals.

GOAL 1

Promote and support exclusive breastfeeding for all mothers.

OBJECTIVE 1

WIC AGENCIES ADOPT THE NWA'S SIX STEPS TO ACHIEVE BREASTFEEDING GOALS FOR WIC CLINICS.

- ➡ **Action 1:** State WIC agencies will encourage Local agencies to assess their existing status in breastfeeding promotion and support.
- ➡ **Action 2:** Local WIC agencies will develop plans to become breastfeeding-friendly clinics by using the NWA's Six Steps to Achieve Breastfeeding Goals for WIC Clinics.

OBJECTIVE 2

NWA AND WIC AGENCIES PROMOTE BREASTFEEDING TO OTHER HEALTH-CARE ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS.

- ➡ **Action 1:** WIC agencies and NWA will work with the American Hospital Association (AHA) and other stakeholders to increase the number of baby-friendly hospitals in the United States.
- ➡ **Action 2:** State WIC agencies will partner with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Chapter Breastfeeding Coordinators and the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) at the state level to promote consistent breastfeeding messages.

OBJECTIVE 3

NWA AND WIC AGENCIES PROMOTE BREASTFEEDING WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

- ➡ **Action 1:** WIC agencies will support and become active members of state, regional, and local breastfeeding coalitions.
- ➡ **Action 2:** WIC agencies will collaborate with other breastfeeding advocates to market the benefits of breastfeeding within their communities.
- ➡ **Action 3:** NWA and WIC agencies will recognize exemplary breastfeeding promotion and support efforts.

GOAL 2

OBJECTIVE 1

WIC AGENCIES DEVELOP STAFF COMPETENCIES APPROPRIATE TO THEIR ROLES, TO PROMOTE AND SUPPORT BREASTFEEDING.

OBJECTIVE 2

WIC STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS GAIN COMPETENCIES APPROPRIATE TO THEIR PARTICULAR ROLE IN THE PROGRAM TO PROMOTE AND SUPPORT BREASTFEEDING.

OBJECTIVE 3

WIC AGENCIES INCREASE THE NUMBER OF SPECIALISTS TRAINED AS INTERNATIONAL BOARD CERTIFIED LACTATION CONSULTANTS (IBCLCS) AT BOTH THE LOCAL AND STATE AGENCY LEVELS.

All WIC staff members are knowledgeable and skilled in breastfeeding promotion and support.

- ➡ **Action 1:** WIC agencies will include breastfeeding competencies in job descriptions and performance evaluations.
 - ➡ **Action 2:** NWA will encourage and collaborate with USDA to ensure that breastfeeding promotion and support language is included in the Nutrition Services Standards.
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- ➡ **Action 1:** WIC agencies will train all new WIC staff to provide breastfeeding support, as defined by their roles.
 - ➡ **Action 2:** WIC agencies will provide ongoing training to support staff competencies.
 - ➡ **Action 3:** NWA will include breastfeeding topics and tracks during annual association conferences, as well as at nutrition and breastfeeding conferences.
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- ➡ **Action 1:** WIC agencies will provide lactation-specific educational opportunities to staff preparing to become IBCLCs.
 - ➡ **Action 2:** WIC agencies will enable staff to obtain the required clinical experience necessary to complete their certification.

GOAL 3

OBJECTIVE 1
WIC AGENCIES EDUCATE PUBLIC HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS, EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS ABOUT WIC'S ROLE IN BREASTFEEDING PROMOTION AND SUPPORT.

WIC is recognized as a community resource for breastfeeding promotion and support.

- ➡ **Action 1:** WIC agencies will encourage Local Agency staff to visit medical staff offices, schools, universities, and community organizations to share information about WIC's breastfeeding services and specific breastfeeding programs.
 - ➡ **Action 2:** WIC agencies will invite representatives from public health programs and other community groups to WIC breastfeeding in-services and training sessions.
 - ➡ **Action 3:** WIC agencies will increase the visibility of and promote the Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program within their communities.
 - ➡ **Action 4:** State agencies will collaborate with programs that provide prenatal, postpartum, and infant health care at the Local Agency level to ensure comprehensive breastfeeding promotion and support services.
 - ➡ **Action 5:** WIC agencies will plan collaborative breastfeeding events within their communities.
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- OBJECTIVE 2**
WIC MANAGEMENT PLAYS A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN LOCAL, STATE, AND NATIONAL BREASTFEEDING PROMOTION AND SUPPORT EFFORTS.
- ➡ **Action 1:** WIC leadership will serve as NWA/WIC spokespersons at breastfeeding conferences, meetings, and seminars.
 - ➡ **Action 2:** WIC leadership will empower WIC personnel to actively engage in breastfeeding promotion programs and projects at the local, state, and national levels.
 - ➡ **Action 3:** NWA will host regularly scheduled breastfeeding summits.

GOAL 4

NWA and WIC agencies advocate for the development and implementation of local, state, and federal policies and procedures that protect, support, and promote breastfeeding.

OBJECTIVE 1

NWA AND WIC AGENCIES WORK WITH LOCAL AND STATE GOVERNMENTS, AS WELL AS WITH CONGRESS, TO PASS LEGISLATION THAT PROTECTS AND SUPPORTS WOMEN'S RIGHTS TO BREASTFEED.

- ➔ **Action 1:** NWA and WIC agencies will provide input to local and state governments, as well as to Congress, to help develop legislation that supports and promotes breastfeeding.
- ➔ **Action 2:** NWA and WIC agencies will garner support from the WIC community to advocate for legislation that protects women's rights to breastfeed, both in public and in the workplace.

OBJECTIVE 2

NWA AND STATE WIC AGENCIES COLLABORATE WITH USDA TO DEVELOP AND UPDATE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES THAT POSITIVELY IMPACT WIC'S BREASTFEEDING PROMOTION AND SUPPORT EFFORTS.

- ➔ **Action 1:** NWA will provide input to USDA to develop and update breastfeeding-related regulations and policies.
- ➔ **Action 2:** NWA will work with USDA to continually enhance the WIC food packages to support exclusive breastfeeding.
- ➔ **Action 3:** State agencies will seek USDA grants and operational adjustment funds to support and enhance breastfeeding programs.
- ➔ **Action 4:** NWA's Evaluation Committee will collaborate with USDA to recommend breastfeeding-related research and evaluation.
- ➔ **Action 5:** NWA and State WIC agencies will work with USDA to standardize both breastfeeding data collection and the reports issued relating to these data.

OBJECTIVE 3

ALL WIC AGENCIES DEVELOP POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR ESTABLISHING EXEMPLARY EMPLOYEE BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT PROGRAMS AND RECOGNIZE THOSE THAT ARE IDEAL.

- ➔ **Action 1:** WIC agencies will share policies and procedures that prove to be successful in increasing employees' breastfeeding rates.
- ➔ **Action 2:** State agencies will recognize Local agencies that successfully implement programs to increase employees' breastfeeding rates.